Gordon Mark Zerbe

Citizenship

Paul on Peace and Politics

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Gordon Zerbe

To my children,

Silvie and Micah,

fellow citizens by choice of the *civitas dei*

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Abbreviations

ABD — *Anchor Bible Dictionary,* 6 vols. Edited by David Noel Freedman. New York: Doubleday, 1992

ANRW — *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*. Edited by H. Temporini and W. Haase. Berlin: DeGruyter, 1972-

BAGD — Bauer, Walter, William Arndt, Wilbur Gingrich and Frederick Danker, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature,* 2nd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979

BCE — before the Common Era

ca. — *circa*, around

CE — common era

CEB — Common English Bible

cf. — confer, compare

DSS — Dead Sea Scrolls

e.g. — *exempli gratia*, for example

Gk. — Greek

Heb. — Hebrew

KJV King James Version

Lat. Latin

LCL Loeb Classical Library

L&N Louw, J. P. and E. A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament based on Semantic Domains,* 2d ed. United Bible Societies, 1999

LSJ Liddell, H. G., R. Scott, H. S. Jones and R. McKenzie, *Greek-English Lexicon with a Revised Supplement,* 9th ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996

LXX Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible; includes the Greek Old Testament plus Apocrypha

n. note, footnote

NAB New American Bible

NIDNTT *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology,* 3 vols. Edited by C. Brown. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975-78

NRSV New Revised Standard Version

passim here and there

Q From the German Quelle, "source," referring to the presumed common source used by the Gospels of Matthew and Luke.

RSV Revised Standard Version

TDNT *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament,* 10 vols. Edited by G. Kittel and G. Friedrich. Translated by G. Bromiley. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964-1976

TNIV Today's New International Version

v., vv. verse, verses

Introduction: Situating Paul (and Ourselves)

> But the Jerusalem above is free; she is our mother. (Gal 5:26)
>
> I swear (or affirm) that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second, Queen of Canada, Her Heirs and Successors, and that I will faithfully observe the laws of Canada and fulfil my duties as a Canadian citizen. (Canadian Oath of Citizenship)[1]

While retaining the citizenship papers, passport, and privileges of the United States, a citizenship bequeathed to me as an accident of birth (while not having received citizenship in the land of Japan where I was physically born and grew up as a foreigner), I lived as a migrant in Canada during my earlier adulthood, from 1976 until 2002, when I finally swore the Canadian oath of citizenship. To be precise, I "affirmed," but it was an "oath" nevertheless. And while some inductees were troubled by the monarchist imagery, I found it an appropriate symbol of the claims of state sovereignty. States do make sovereign claims on our being and loyalty (and even "demo-cracy" specifically invokes a form of "ruling power," *kratia*). According to Canadian doctrine, it is exactly at the moment when one takes this oath (for those not born into it) that one becomes a Canadian citizen and is "welcomed into the Canadian family" (a tribal kinship?), while accepting "the rights and responsibilities of Canadian citizenship."[2]

So, I now hold dual earthly citizenship. Nevertheless, I do not subscribe to the notion that one can always be a good dual citizen (in

the same way) of Christ's regime now secured in heaven (which is technically a global citizenship anyway) and a particular earthly regime. Just as the United States formally discourages dual citizenship, so as to avoid competing claims on our loyalty,[3] I would argue that Paul, Messiah's envoy (*apostolos*) of an alternative politics, would discourage trying to hold Messianic (Christian) and a national citizenship in some kind of equal balance: the former must always trump the latter, when it comes to a competition over our loyalty, and notably when it comes to creating a new, truly international people under Christ's sovereignty, and oriented to God's universal dominion as Creator. And so I was, and still am, troubled by my words to "be faithful" and "bear true allegiance" to a particular (and particularizing) human sovereignty, since there are no qualifications attached to those words of oath. My ultimate allegiance goes to the great mother Jerusalem above, not the great mother Queen of an earthly empire. My "truest allegiance" was declared in oath at the moment of my baptism into Christ, the Christian citizenship ceremony. And it is for this reason that balancing my two earthly citizenships is an insignificant matter, because of my primary commitment to Christ's world-reconciling regime. (And note that, by contrast, no modern state sovereignty is interested in having its subjects or citizens making oaths to a global citizenship—whether construed theologically, politically or ecologically—that trumps narrow state or national interests. But the imperative for such a globally oriented citizenship—what the Stoics called cosmo-politanism—is becoming increasingly critical.)

Politics, I recognize, is a subject that one should avoid, so as not to offend. My hope is that these brief words, offered in the spirit of full disclosure and not for political positioning, have provoked interest (invitingly, not adversarially) in the subject matter of this volume, a revisiting of Paul's theological vision and practical activism around the theme of citizenship.

Situating Paul: Envoy of Messiah's Global Politics

While the specific language of citizenship may not be frequent in Paul's writings, I am increasingly finding it to be a vital framework for understanding Paul's apostolic letters, and for reflecting on the contemporary implications of his legacy. Indeed, whereas discipleship (or "following," German "Nachfolge") has been the core watchword in my own Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition, I find that word easily susceptible to an individualist interpretation or practice. The notion of citizenship, however, not only conjures up the crucial element of personal loyalty and practice, but also that of a social and global-ecological vision, formation,

and identity (even if an identity that confounds prior identities, or undermines the very notion of identity)—that is, altogether, a politics.

In the usage of this volume, politics does not refer narrowly to the business of governing or to relating to a government. Rather, it is used in its more general sense as being and forming a polity, a citizen-community, participating in a social formation, whether as a particular community, or in relation to a society (and its ruling, political structures), or the global neighbourhood more generally. The Jewish historian Josephus (ca. 37-100), a near contemporary of Paul and similarly both a Pharisee and a dual citizen of Judea and Rome,[4] is the first writer to use the Greek term "theocracy" (*theokratia*),[5] as a way to describe the distinctive polity of Israel-Judea, relative to other political formations (e.g. kingship, democracy, oligarchy). This notion involves the basic concept of all of life under the rule of God, and is roughly a synonym of "the kingdom of God."

As with Josephus, the kind of personal and global vision that motived Paul cannot be subsumed under the constricted category of what we think of as "religion," having to do with what is specifically spiritual or narrowly supernatural, or that which pertains to matters of personal, private encounter in relation to the divine, as somehow sequestered from other arenas of living and interacting. Instead, the horizon of both Josephus and Paul is much better described as "theo-political," and in Paul's case, the particular polity under construction could be called a "christo-cracy"—a specifically Messianic political formation, something that would have made the elite, high-priestly Josephus uncomfortable. Granted, in both Josephus and Paul, the "ruling power" (*kratia*, whence "-cracy") of God is mediated: for Josephus, it was properly mediated through high-priestly oligarchs (and thus represents what the Greeks called "aristocracy," the "rule of the best, most worthy"); for Paul, it is mediated directly through Messiah, although that direct rule also requires a kind of interim, provisional mediation (a flexible leadership structure gifted through the Spirit, and otherwise anarchic), insofar as it is socio-political formation, as Christ's very body, yet to be fully realized. While Josephus and Paul may have agreed in principle on the notion of "theocracy," their visions diverge dramatically. Paul's Messianic politics is a world-transforming (not world-ending) vision of politics from below, from the margins, from the inside, or as he also puts it "from above" ("from heaven," Phil 3:20; "from Zion," Rom 11:26)—a radical future impinging on the present (1 Cor 7:29-31; 10:11). It is oriented to the "Jerusalem above," God's "free city," the "mother" city (Gal 5:26) of a domain that will one day reunite the entire world (1 Cor 15:24-28; Col 1:15-20). The sacerdotal, high-priestly politics of Josephus is much more a politics as

usual, not needing to embrace the radically disruptive. Still, the common Christian slogan—that the Jews longed for a purely political Messiah, whereas Christ was a merely spiritual Messiah—is actually wrong on both sides of the comparison.

Paul's Citizenship Language

The "political" (theo-political, christo-political) resonances of Paul's rhetoric are palpably evident throughout his letters, though lost in most English translations (or deliberately covered up). In a few crucial instances, Paul uses the specific vocabulary and distinctive notion of the Greek *polis*, "city-state," or more precisely "citizen-state" or "citizen-community." It is from this root that the array of English words for "politics" derives (political, politician, polity, policy, police). In Greek, a "citizen" (*politēs*) is literally the (privileged) member of a *polis*, in contrast to (and in exclusion of) those who are merely residents of a location, whether the lower class poor (below the minimal line for citizenship qualification), migrants from other regions, or the non-citizen farmers in the surrounding areas under the control of a *polis*. In his letter to the Messianic assembly in Philippi, Paul appropriates *polis*-language in a dramatic way, first in the opening thesis statement of his exhortation, and then in a climaxing declaration:

> Just one thing: *politeuesthe* (politicize) in a manner worthy of the gospel of Messiah. (Phil 1:27)
> For our *politeuma* (polity) exists in heaven, and from there we await a Deliverer, Lord Jesus Messiah, who will transform the body of our lowliness to be conformed to the body of his splendour, in accordance with the power with which he is able to subject the universe to himself. (Phil 3:20-21)

In the first case, Paul uses the verb *politeusthe* in a way that cannot be easily rendered into English: it involves the call both to "be a citizen community" (a body politic) and to "practice the citizenship identity" that members of that community have been "graciously granted" (Phil 1:30), a meaning covered up in standard English translations until very recently (see now TNIV). Emphasized immediately is the alternative foundation, formation, being, and practice of this alternative *polis* (whose foundational "constitution" is "the gospel of Messiah"), its defensive struggle in a hostile environment (its patriotic unity and its resistance to terror tactics), and its non-hierarchical solidarity (Phil 1:27–2:5). In the second text, Paul draws on the imagery of a government in exile—in exile because a hostile, unjust, and illegitimate power is now supreme

in the regime's proper and rightful dominion. It is for this reason that the adherents must wait expectantly and faithfully until the sphere of God's claim is fully liberated. The word *politeuma* in this text refers to the "ruling structures of a *polis*," that is, its "government," and by extension to the "political identity" and "citizenship" of those who place their hope in that regime. Paul is not referring to heaven as the homeland, nor as the destination for the faithful; rather, heaven is the place where God's rule still remains supreme, in a kind of exile, the location from which the global reclamation will finally and imminently emerge. In the interim, citizenship includes, among other things, a commitment to the practice of forbearing reconciliation (Phil 4:5), in the context of a security experienced (literally "guarded") through the "peace of God" (Phil 4:7), ultimately established under the rule of the "God of peace" (Phil 4:9). The final, global victory of that regime (*politeuma*) will mean a dramatic change in the fortunes of its loyal adherents, specifically pertaining to bodily life, but will also embrace the whole cosmos (Phil 3:20-21). Paul's words, in effect, are the declarative counterpart to the prayer that "God's reign be established on earth as it is in heaven" (Matt 6:10).

Paul also draws on city-state imagery in Galatians 5:21-31, and again with the nuances of global politics: the "Jerusalem above," to which the Messianic community gives its allegiance, is "free" (that is, not under the domain of any foreign imperial power), in contrast to "present Jerusalem" which is in bondage (that is, literally to the Roman empire, but symbolically to a Law-oriented regime not governed by direct Messianic rule). Loyal adherence to Messiah's global regime works in the framework only of "freedom" (Gal 5:1, 4, 13; 2 Cor 3:17). In addition, "Jerusalem above" is a "mother" city, taking up the common image of a "metropolis" (literally a "mother-city") that is the centre of a vast domain, and that establishes colonies in far-flung areas.[6] Citizenship in the ancient world—whether Roman, Judean-Jewish, or Messianic—was always genealogically understood, as descent from, or absorption into, an apical, often eponymous ancestor.[7] The "Jerusalem above" also represents a "covenant," which here means a particular "world order."[8] Paul's premise in this argument is that the "Jerusalem above" is a figure of global Messianic rule that one day will reign supreme throughout the world as a truly "international" capital city to which the nations give their voluntary allegiance (cf. Rev 20-22). In this sense, salvation is grounded in a "hope laid up [secured] in heaven," as it is put in Colossians 1:5. As in Philippians, heaven is the place where Messiah's world-reconciling work is secured, as if in exile, not itself the destination.[9] But, in the comfortable, symbiotic dualism of later Christendom (see Chapter 12), heaven became the soul's spiritual homeland and destination, whereas

the empire could claim the full allegiance of the embodied person on earth.

Resonances with these themes echo in other passages in Paul's writings, even though the imagery shifts from that of the "city-state" to that of the "kingdom":[10]

> We exhort you (all). . .to walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into his own kingdom and [its] splendour. (1 Thess 2:12). Faithful is the one who calls you, who indeed will do it. (1 Thess 5:24).
> We speak boastfully in the assemblies of God for your endurance and loyalty in all the persecutions and pressures that you are enduring, a sign of the righteous judgment of God, so that you will deemed worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering. (2 Thess 1:4-5)[11]
> We have not ceased to pray for you. . .so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, toward all that pleases (God)—bearing fruit in every good work, increasing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with every power according to the power of his splendour, toward all endurance and longsuffering, and we give thanks with joy to the Father, who has qualified us for a share of the inheritance of the saints in light,[12] and who has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son. . . . (Col 1:9-13)

Citizen-state imagery, along with peace themes, reappears in the letter-essay now known as Ephesians, which articulates Paul's theological vision in the generation after Paul's death. Here citizen-state imagery is applied to the extension of Israelite citizenship rights and privileges to former foreigners from the nations, through the person of Christ, in whom the entire universe will be reunited in one global body (1:10, 21-23; 2:15-18):

> Therefore remember that formerly those of you who were born among the nations. . .were at that time separate from Messiah, excluded from the polity (*politeia*) of Israel and foreigners to the covenants of promise. . . . But now in Messiah Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the sacrificial death of Messiah, for he himself is our peace, who made both (into) one and broke down the dividing wall of the barrier, deactivating the enmity. . . . So then you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but you are (fully) co-citizens (*sympolitai*) with the saints

> [Israel] and you are God's household members (*oikeioi*)[13]. . . , a holy sanctuary in the Lord. (Eph 2:11a, 12-14, 19, 21)

The Organization of This Volume

The chapters of this volume, some of them previously published (see Acknowledgements), have been arranged according to the citizenship themes of Loyalty, Mutuality, and Security. These topics are neither exclusive nor exhaustive citizenship categories, but they are arguably core themes in the broader domain of what we might consider in relation to citizenship. Essays in the first section, "Loyalty," draw attention to the fundamental personal and corporate dynamics of citizenship in the context of Paul's ecclesial politics. The second section, "Mutuality," is centred mainly on the internal characteristics of the Messianic assembly as a citizen community, including its approach to social diversity and economic disparity. The concluding essay in this section pushes mutuality to its limit, exploring Paul's hope of universal inclusion through God's unending and merciful embrace of all peoples. The third section, "Security," includes essays that investigate the questions of violence, peace, and warfare in and pertaining to Paul's writings. A last section, "Affinities," engages Paul's perspective with broader conversation partners beyond the fields of biblical and theological studies. Both of these last essays address crucial questions relevant to Messianic citizenship that emerge from contemporary reflection on Paul.[14]

Avoiding Historical and Conceptual Anachronisms in the Study of Paul

I should also admit at the outset that I am committed to understanding Paul in his historical, linguistic, and cultural particularity,[15] and believe that only after this hard work of un-domesticating Paul can we reflect coherently on the implications of his legacy. In other words, it is necessary to understand Paul first in his foreignness before (and as) we try to bring him into our present. Here's where translations can be exceedingly misleading, because they can leave the impression that Paul speaks our language and uses our concepts. He doesn't. When it comes to translating Paul, therefore, I tend to avoid renderings that have come to be merely church words, giving the impression that Paul used a kind of narrowly religious language (sin, salvation, church, righteousness, glory, apostle, Christ, etc.). When put in his own linguistic environment, however, it becomes quickly apparent that Paul used words used in common discourse, words that have a variety of deliberate political and

social resonances. For instance, *christos* in Paul is always a theo-political title as Israel's deliverer, not a name, and thus captured better by the translation Messiah (since Anointed doesn't have currency anywhere) than the transliteration Christ. And *ekklēsia* is properly "assembly," not church, regularly used for the body and gathering of citizens of a *polis* to enact citizen business. In this volume, all translations are mine, unless otherwise indicated.

A further problem with our translations and usual labels is that they can imprison Paul within a series of anachronisms. The later conclusions and assumptions of Christendom are thus retrojected back onto Paul. The most obvious example here involves the use of "Christian" or "Christianity," as opposed to "Jew" and "Judaism." Paul, in fact, lived and worked before Christianity,[16] that is before "Christianity" came to be understood as a movement and as a set of doctrines and practices distinct from and separate from "Judaism" (which itself also evolved dramatically during the first few centuries after the second temple period).[17] The term "Jew," then, is also misleading, since it conjures up the polar opposite to "Christian" in religious terms, and since it does not adequately render the historical sense of *ioudaios*, which literally means "belonging to Judah," with a geographical, ethnic-peoplehood, national-citizenship, and religious sense all in one. "Jews," wherever they are living in the ancient world, are properly "Judeans," those who affiliate with the land, people, religion, and polity of Judea (just as Romans belong to Rome wherever they live). Historically, then, it is best to regard Paul both as a self-identified Judean,[18] and a Jesus-Messianist, with all the tensions that that entailed (Rom 9-11; Phil 3:2-11).[19] As Krister Stendahl demonstrated, Paul understood all "Christians" (or Gentile Messiah loyalists) to be, in effect, honorary Jews (Judeans), attached by adoption into the root of Israel through Messiah.[20]

The Challenges of Contemporary Appropriation

Paul's voice should not, however, just stay in the past. Even some historical materialists are now seeking to recover Paul's theory (Chapter 12). And indeed, translations of Paul for the sake of liturgy (in its broad, inclusive sense; see Chapter 3) should aim for contemporaneity, a fusion of horizons (in contrast to establishing distance, as I just proposed). Indeed, this undertaking of a necessary translation of a different sort is faced with significant challenges. Let me draw attention only to a few things to be taken into account. The reality is that the ever-present "kyriarchic Messianism"[21] and "eschatological millenarianism" poses such a foreign sensibility to Western liberal democratic perspectives that it is nearly

impossible to engage in a direct conversation between these outlooks. Some questions that might be posed are: (a) Does Paulinism give too much over to Messianic agency, letting the redeemed community sit back and wait, preoccupied with its own purity and distinctiveness? (b) Can Paul's "kyriarchalism" (explicit "lordship," hierarchical, sovereignty language), a point of offense to some, be made relevant to modern (or post-modern) sensibilities?[22] (c) Does not the continued non-event of the full Messianic *parousia* (presence, arrival; Latin, *adventus*) cause us to question our commitment to this visionary world of universal reconciliation? I touch on these matters along the way, and can give no easy answers.

Wrestling with Paul may not be easy, but is absolutely essential for the journey—a life of devoted citizenship in alignment with the hope of the realization of Messiah's global *polis*, the *civitas dei*.

Part One

Loyalty

Chapter 1

Citizenship and Politics according to Philippians

John E. Toews[1] concludes his commentary on Romans with the following claims, with special reference to the opening messianic enthronement drama (1:3-4), the thesis about the gospel of Messiah (1:14-17), and the concluding assertion of universal messianic rule (15:7-13):…

> Romans is an anti-imperial tract. It begins and ends by asserting that Jesus is Lord, Caesar is not.
>
> Paul's claim that God is effecting universal salvation, righteousness, and peace through Messiah Jesus represents a subversive political statement. Paul frames Romans as a political manifesto—Jesus is the son of God and the only Lord worthy of confession. Caesar is not Lord, and Caesar does not bring real salvation, justice, and peace. But Jesus Christ does![2]

In two lectures for the March 2008 Janzen Lectureship at Fresno Pacific University, Toews further develops this reading of Romans and Paul.[3] My purpose in this essay is to extend John's argument on the counter-imperial character of the gospel in Romans, and on the subject of Paul and politics more generally, by specific attention to Philippians.

Paul and Politics

Before turning specifically to Philippians, however, I would like to make some comments that situate the current scholarly discussion of Paul and politics. One side of this is to situate ourselves as interpreters, taking into account our own social-political location, biases, commitments, and other factors that shape our treatment of biblical texts (including ourselves as beneficiaries of empire). Toews has spoken ably to this, most crucially by deconstructing our notions of the separation of religion and politics into separate domains, into the private and the public, a separation which in our context is actually a happy and mutually legitimating symbiosis.

But more to the point for this essay: how do we situate Paul? One thing is clear, what we call religion and politics were not separate spheres of life in antiquity, as Toews has emphasized; religion was embedded in politics and kinship; and politics, whether Roman or Jewish, was inextricably religious. To fail to see this means a failure to be able to interpret Paul on his own terms, in his own cultural, political and religious environment. The question is thus in what inter-textual world do we read Paul. Let me offer a very general caricature of the movement of scholarship on Paul in reference to his politics:

Stage 1: *Paul the Christian Gentile (former Jew), the self-identified Roman*. A pervasive image of Paul is that he is really like one of us, not really Jewish. Indeed, in traditional Christian thinking, it was assumed that Paul rejects his Jewishness absolutely (both its religion and its politics). On the other hand, it was assumed that Paul was really quite happy and comfortable with, indeed proud of, his Roman citizenship. By politics, Roman; by religion, Christian. Like us. If there is any fundamental antagonism for Paul, it is only directed against Judaism. Paul reasoned like a Gentile, not really like a Jew.

Stage 2: *Paul the Jew, redefining Judaism Messianically*. Especially as a result of what has become known as the "new perspective" on Paul,[4] it is now commonly held that Paul lived, thought, worked, and read scripture as a self-identified Jew, albeit one who saw in Messiah the fulfillment of the promises of old. His adherence to Messiah Jesus did not mean a rejection of his past; rather, Messiah constituted its fulfillment and redefinition, especially the inclusion of "the nations" (Gentiles) into a new people of God through loyalty to Messiah. Nevertheless, for many associated with this new perspective reading, it is still common to treat Judaism and its Messianic redefinition, and the new "people of God," as essentially "religious." Paul is read primarily in light of texts thought to be "religious"; and it is supposed that Paul

essentially spiritualizes the political character of his own sacred text, read religiously in light of Messiah.

Furthermore, while adjusting to some massive paradigm shifts in the wake of W. D. Davies, K. Stendahl, and E. P. Sanders, a generation of scholars (in which I include myself) learned to appreciate that Judaism was variegated, that Paul's engagement with Judaism was an intramural debate, and that he remained a self-identified Jew to the end. But at the same time, the "Jewish context" of Paul was often seen (in Christian scholarship) primarily in terms of a notion of religious-theological Judaism.

Stage 3: But there was still some shifting to do. The next step involved a re-discovery of the crucial relevance of Greco-Roman sources—especially those in the common domain, not just those of elite, literate society—to elucidate the world in which Paul worked and ministered. As a result, it became increasingly clear that Paul's words are not church words, religious-theological words, but vocabulary in common civic discourse, frequently with critical political edges.[5]

The result for many scholars is the following image: *Paul the Messianic Judean/Jew, critical-suspicious of Rome*. Paul remains as a self-identified Judean/Jew,[6] albeit a Judaism re-framed in light of Messiah, a fulfilled Judaism as a theocratic religio-politics, as one held over against adherence to Roman or any other religio-political structure and system.[7]

In retrospect: scholarship had first to disengage Paul from his presumed Romanness, understanding him to be thoroughly Judean-Jewish (albeit a Messianic one), so that his counter-Roman posture could be re-discovered. Once Paul's Jewish moorings became more manifest, his counter-Roman posture could become more obvious. Paul had first to be re-constituted in terms of his Jewish "apocalyptic" theological framework, and its special form of Judeo-Messianic religio-politics. Thereby, too, a new understanding of Paul's own socio-cultural hybridity, and its entanglements, ambiguities, and tensions could be recognized.[8]

Decisively significant in Toews's *Romans* and in his 2008 lectures, therefore, is his guidance of his audience into the urban, imperial world of Paul, its social structures, its propaganda and its political theology, a world that still doesn't get much emphasis in standard textbooks (except for the faulty notion that without the great peace and security offered by the empire, Christianity might never have expanded and succeeded).

Philippians and Romans Compared

I turn, then, to consider how Philippians extends Toews's thesis on the question of Paul and politics, especially in reference to the counter-

Roman resonances of Paul's texts. First, some general comments on Romans and Philippians. The two provide for a productive comparison and contrast on many levels. The political dimension of the rhetoric in both letters is so palpable that this agenda is not just a sub-text, but in the foreground and in the manifested text itself.

The differences between Romans and Philippians are obvious, and important to note: (a) Philippians is written to a congregation that has enjoyed a lengthy relationship ("partnership") of around five years with Paul; Romans is written to a group of congregations Paul has never met. (b) Philippians is written to a struggling and threatened assembly of between 30-80 individuals (including children) in a city of some 10 to 15,000; Romans is written to a varied number of house assemblies in a city of at least a million, also under some potential threat from Roman authorities (cf. Rom 13). (c) Philippians exhorts primarily through paradigmatic example (2:6-11; 2:19-30; 3:4-17; 4:9; cf. 1:12-16; 2:16-18; 4:10-13); Romans exhorts primarily through sustained theological and Scriptural argument. (d) Philippians is dispatched under duress while under Roman imperial custody; Romans is written at greater leisure, in the house of a rather wealthy adherent in Corinth (Rom 16:23). (e) Philippians hardly even alludes to Scripture; Romans is steeped in Scripture.

But notice also some crucial similarities: (a) Both letters are addressed to Messianic assemblies in centres of Roman imperial power. Metropolitan Rome, with over a million residents is master of an empire that can claim five million citizens,[9] and around ten times that in subjects; Philippi is a colony of Rome, founded as the final reward to veterans of Rome's imperial legions, in the wake of Octavian and Anthony's glorious victory over Brutus and Cassius on the plains outside of Philippi in 42 BCE. It was founded to honour promises made to the victors' troops, and involved the expropriation (and "centuriation") of over 700 square miles of prime agricultural land to become Roman soil. Philippi was a city with a population of some 10 to 15,000 (not all Roman citizens) in a magnificent 120 acre urban area (exhibiting a wealth disproportionate to its size), dominated by a small Roman elite descended from original veteran settlers, and controlling a mini-empire of at least 40,000 subjects in its surrounding territory. In both, Latin reigned supreme, in contrast to Greek-dominated Corinth or Ephesus. (b) Both letters deal directly with issues of Roman rule, and the imperatives of Messianic citizenship and community-building in contrast to Rome's claims of dominion and call to loyalty and patriotic allegiance. Paul's rhetoric on such politically-loaded topics as the supremacy of Messiah over all other rule, the character of suffering on behalf of Messiah, the

character of the Messianic assembly, and the character of its justice and citizenship overlaps to a considerable degree in both letters. For instance, in Romans the declaration of Messiah's supremacy over all other rule brackets the entire letter (chs. 1, 15); in Philippians this declaration constitutes its centerpiece (2:5-11; cf. 3:19-21). Yet, Philippians is roughly one-quarter the length of Romans, and so is elliptical on some points where Romans is more expansive; but on some points, Philippians is even more direct (Phil 1:27-30; 2:6-11; 3:18-21) where Romans is subtle.[10]

In many ways Philippians anticipates Romans, for instance on topics such as "justice/righteousness," "loyalty/faith," and an empire-countering "Christology." Indeed, Paul's circumstances during his writing of Philippians constitute a crucial backdrop for his theo-political discourse in Romans. This is most clear in his extended discourse on Messianic victory precisely in the context of suffering, and more particularly in the context of assault from the Roman authorities and their military tribunals (esp. Rom 8:26-39). Both 2 Corinthians (e.g. 1:3-11; 2:14-16; 4:7-12; 4:16-5:10; 6:3-10) and Romans are in large measure retrospectives on Paul's recent, life-threatening experiences under Roman incarceration. Philippians was probably written around the year 55 from Ephesus, while under Roman imperial custody, and awaiting a hearing or ruling by a Roman military tribunal, between 6 to 12 months before he wrote Romans.

This view is counter to that of Richard Cassidy,[11] who argues that Philippians answers the "compromises" that Paul makes in Romans, following the traditional view that Philippians was written five years after Romans, and from Rome. He claims that anyone who had experienced the kind of incarceration that Paul was under while writing Philippians could not have penned Romans 13. For Cassidy, Paul writes Philippians once he really knows, by the experience of severe torture, what the Roman imperium is all about, and thus Philippians represents Paul's final (and true) perspective on Roman rule (and politics more generally). Cassidy is right about Philippians (though not about its finality), but wrong about the dating, and wrong about Romans. As Toews argues, Romans 13 is supportive of, and consistent with the radical theo-politics (christo-politics) of Romans, once read appropriately.[12]

What this means is that Philippians and Romans are best read together. While Philippians anticipates Romans, Romans complements and extends Philippians, and is the best inter-text through which to understand some of Paul's elliptical statements in Philippians (esp. 3:9 on "justice"; and on the "Jewish identity" question of 3:2-6).

Along with statements in 1 Thessalonians and 1 Corinthians (and Colossians?), these two letters are the most politically provocative of Paul's writings. Whereas Paul's horizon of interest in Philippians is on one particular setting (e.g. focusing on the unity of the local assembly in its steadfastness), while referencing the global (2:9-11; 3:20-21), in Romans the horizon becomes much more explicitly global (e.g. the world-wide unity of the Messianic assembly is the key issue, e.g. 9-11; 15:7-33; cf. the global concern of 8:17-39), not limited just to the concerns of the local assemblies (e.g. 14:1-15:7).

The Political Foreground of Philippians

What makes Philippians particularly intriguing for the present topic is what was happening on the ground in Philippi.[13] First, the present situation in Philippi, including its demographic and culture, is the result of at least 500 years of successive colonization. While its first known occupants (in historical times) are the Thracians (ancestors of modern Bulgarians), the region was successively colonized by the Athenians, then the Macedonians, and then the Romans. The result of this is a fairly mixed population culturally and religiously, including native Thracians and varied Greek-speaking immigrants, all under the thumb of the newest colonial elite, the Romans. Philippi's strong Macedonian cultural connection is one explanation for why it is that women appear so prominently in positions of status, including those within the Messianic assembly (Lydia, Euodia, Syntyche). This history of colonization does not appear directly in the letter, but it certainly provides opportunity for reflection in relation to the text of Philippians (e.g. 3:21).[14]

Secondly, Philippi holds status as a mini-Rome, with a privileged elite of those holding Roman citizenship, mainly Latin-speaking Romans, who control the civic life and culture of the city, including the large Roman-controlled agricultural estates in the surrounding countryside operated by slaves or tenants. This very stratified social and economic system, along with its framework of political domination, legitimated by all kinds of propagandistic features through various media, is one that weighs especially on the marginal Messianic assembly (which perhaps mirrored the stratification evident in the society at large, but with an absence of the decurial elite).

The primary circumstance of the Philippian assembly, the majority of whom most likely did *not* hold Roman citizenship, is that it is experiencing "opposition" and "suffering," an "ordeal/struggle" of the same kind that Paul experienced earlier, and of the same sort he is

experiencing now (1:28-30). Precisely what this is cannot be discerned, but it most certainly had to do with a Roman problem, and involved the authorities. Perhaps the crisis arose after certain Messianic adherents disengaged from civic festivities in honour of the civic and imperial gods (devotion to the Roman gods and to the emperors was easily assimilated into the devotion to the region's traditional gods). Or the alienation might have had a primarily economic manifestation, as those who held Messianic allegiance found it difficult to work or participate in guilds (*collegia*) devoted to the honour of Roman virtues and gods: both jobs and commercial connections or opportunities were probably lost (cf. Rev 13). Needless to say, the seeds of the conflict were evident as soon as Paul stepped into the city five years earlier.[15]

The crucial issue in the letter, then, is how to maintain steadfast loyalty to Messiah and to the citizenship/commonwealth that is generated through his work. Part of this exhortation to steadfast loyalty is consolation and reassurance about Messiah's imminent victory, both in personal terms (resurrection), but also in global terms (global subjection, 2:9-11; 3:20-21). A secondary concern of Paul is with the internal common political life of the assembly, namely, that it retain the Messianic citizenship virtues of lowliness, neighborliness, and unity in contrast to Roman consumerist, status-pursuing, and self-promoting glory, along with its general immorality (2:14-16; 3:20-21). No doubt some of the tension within the assembly implied in the letter can be attributed to differences of opinion on how to respond to this Roman political-cultural-religious threat.

Personal and Relational, Political and Subversive

Paul writes Philippians for multiple reasons. The most obvious is that he must say thank you for a financial contribution recently received (4:10-20); and he must prepare for the return of their own emissary Epaphroditus back to Philippi, who probably also accompanied the letter or carried the letter (2:25-30). But these two immediate occasions are subordinate to Paul's chief concern: that the assembly remain steadfast and united in the context of a massive assault by the powers of Rome in Philippi. And his primary mode of discourse is an exhortation that has a deliberative (persuasive) intent (1:27-2:18; 3:1-4:9). This is not merely a nice, warm, friendly letter, as commonly thought.

Philippians, in fact, is both deeply personal and relational, but also deeply political and subversive, a remarkable combination. Paul's striking personal and relational expression, however, has often blinded readers to the much more fundamental political dimension of his

rhetoric, happily describing it as a "letter of consolation," or as a "letter of friendship."

There are indeed very significant personal and relational features of Philippians, having to do with (a) Paul's relationship with his readers (longing, deep feelings, joy, partnership, solidarity, actual persons named, etc.), (b) Paul's relationship with his co-workers (e.g. Timothy as "same-souled"; feelings relative to Epaphroditus), and (c) Paul's relationship with Messiah himself ("knowing Messiah"). Moreover, these are triangulated in a very important way, expressing a remarkable mutuality and con-formity (Paul and readers; Paul and Messiah; Messiah and readers). The letter is full of relational depth and feeling, of personal anxiety and prayer, and of the guarding of hearts and minds. And most strikingly, Paul consoles when he is the one who himself should be consoled. One might say, taking up the three-fold analysis of deliberative (persuasive) rhetoric in Aristotle (*Rhetoric* II.1-9), that while Romans has especially *logos* (that is, straight-forward argument), Philippians has a special dose further of *ēthos* (where the author inserts himself, his credentials, and his example into the deliberative rhetoric) and *pathos* (where the author seeks a solidarity of feeling with his audience, pulling on heart strings).

But most fundamentally, Philippians is an exhortation (discourse) on the "practice of Messianic citizenship," the keynote theme sounded in 1:27: "Singularly, be a citizen body and practice your citizenship in a manner worthy of the good tidings of Messiah." Each one of Paul's Greek words is loaded,[16] and this thesis resounds through the rest of the letter. But unfortunately, its explicit political significance is covered up by most modern English translations.[17] Paul had already prepared his readers for this thesis, when he described his own circumstances in Roman custody (1:12-26)—the highpoint of that narration is his determination that whatever the circumstance "he will not be ashamed," that "Messiah will be honoured in his body, whether by life or death" (1:18b-26). This is the language of public honour so significant in a setting like Roman Philippi, and it is a counter voice to measures of honour based on its status system. If the ultimate honour in a place like veteran-dominated Philippi was either high achievement of public honour through economic advancement and honourific public office, or willingness to go to the death for Rome's mighty victory in the name of Caesar, Paul turns that on its head and claims the nobility of death for his counter Lord who moves to embrace lowliness (cf. 3:7-11).

This theme of singular Messianic citizenship is unpacked in various ways throughout the main body of the letter, written in a primarily hortatory form (1:27–4:9). For instance, as soon as this primary issue

is put forward, Paul elaborates by employing the military imagery of a city-state (*polis*) defending itself against a siege: (a) "standing firm as one" in military alignment (an image also used in 3:17, *stoichein*), (b) "contending/fighting together with a united disposition," oriented to and driven by "loyalty" based on Messiah's "good tidings," and (c) refusing to be effected by the "terror" waged by opponents. The imagery is military-athletic (as then and now, of one piece), with the military aspect uppermost in this context.[18]

When the exhortation comes to a close, Paul comes back to these same themes: (i) the clarification of the alternative "heavenly citizenship" oriented to the saving work of Messiah (3:20-21, which clarifies its source and security, not its homeland or destination; Paul's theological vision is consistently next-worldly, not other-worldly); (ii) the call to "stand firm" is the primary implication of the declaration of Messiah's final, global victory, involving the subjection of all things, including the Roman imperium (4:1); and (iii) the need to "contend/fight together" in a posture of unified Messianic disposition (4:2-3). Other closing comments also round out this fundamentally christo-political exhortation: (a) Messianic citizenship takes the posture of celebrative rejoicing "in Messiah" (4:4), that is, in the deliverance that Messiah has secured, in contrast to the civic/imperial festivals of celebratory rejoicing over the salvation of Caesar. In Philippians, "rejoicing in Messiah" is parallel to "boasting in Messiah" (1:26; 3:3) or "putting one's confidence in Messiah" (1:14; 3:3), and has a strong political edge. (b) Forbearance (non-retaliation) even to hostile opponents can and must be displayed, because final vindication through Messiah is near, and to whom claims for justice can be deferred. (c) Anxiety (4:5; cf. "fear/terror" of 1:14, 28) can be let go of in recognition of the "guarding of hearts and minds" by "the peace of God" (4:6-7), another military image, and parodic word play on both the imperial *pax Romana* and the Roman garrison guarding the city itself. (d) Finally, the pursuit of civic "virtues" must continue, but through a discernment ever cognizant of their Messianic redefinition, as mediated by Paul (4:8-9).

This discourse on "the practice of Messianic citizenship" comes in two main parts (1:27–2:18; 3:1–4:9), interrupted by "travel talk" pertaining to two co-workers (2:19-30). Even this apparent interruption contributes to Paul's argument on Messianic citizenship by putting forward two supreme models of Messianic patriotism and life-risking soldiering. Both parts have as their centerpiece, and their primary foundation, two exemplary paradigms of "the practice of citizenship": that of Messiah (2:6-11), and that of Paul, who seeks to embody the path of Messiah (3:2-14; e.g. *doulos* in 1:1; 2:7; cf. 1:20), and whose example only leads to

a reminder of its foundation in the loyal act of Messiah (3:18-21). And after each declaration of Messianic deliverance, both of which emphasize Messiah's cosmic dominion (2:9-11; 3:20-21), the practical consequence is a combination of reassurance and call to steadfast loyalty (2:12-16; 4:1).

John Toews has impressively unpacked the counter-imperial force of the Messianic declaration in chapter 2: Messiah's enthronement drama (2:5-11) is a direct parody of imperial pretensions and claims, not a narrowly theological treatment of Christology for right doctrine. Rome is no less a head-on target in chapter 3.[19]

Messianic Citizenship Again

After the apparent digression about travel plans (2:19-30), Paul in chapter 3 resumes the discourse on Messianic citizenship. The words of Paul's resumption (3:1), however, have caused interpreters such great difficulties that they have resorted to all kinds of explanations of the apparent incoherence in Paul's argument.[20] Once it is recognized that part two of the exhortation (3:1-4:9) recapitulates the earlier exhortation in different terms (while still drawing on its patterns and words), the entire letter becomes eminently coherent, and the problems associated with 3:1 evaporate.[21]

The traditional and prevailing interpretation of chapter 3 is that Paul is suddenly introducing a new topic, targeting specific theological threats or "opponents," even "agitators," within the broader Messiah-loyalist community, if not within the Philippian assembly itself. Importing the agenda of Galatians (and 2 Cor 10-13), the most common opinion is that Paul is now primarily attacking a "judaizing" threat within the "church," namely, "false teachers" who are seeking to impose strict Law observance on Gentile converts, including the practice of circumcision. It is thus thought that Paul is trying to expound his doctrine of justification by faith against "works of Law," in the same manner that he is in Galatians.

But Philippians 3 in fact recapitulates (thus constituting "the same things," 3:1b) what has been Paul's consistent concern throughout the letter, namely, to clarify the distinctiveness of Messianic identity and practice for a persecuted, suffering, and (somewhat) fractious community. Paul essentially uses his own citizenship story to address the critical issues that his readers face in Philippi, namely, the pressure of Roman imperial authority against their own allegiance to Messiah, and especially the insidious draw of Roman values and the obvious attractiveness of Roman citizenship (for success and comfort, let alone survival). He thus first presents his own case on the basis of his primary, Jewish identity,

which is now redefined through Messiah (3:2-11). Of course, it is important to clarify this Jewish identity first, since Messiah's people is a redefined expression of God's elect people of old, in complete continuity with it as its climaxing fulfillment. Paul remains a self-identified Jew to the end; non-Jewish adherents of Messiah become attached to the root of Israel as, in effect, honourary Jews (cf. the gloss in Romans 11:17-24). The purpose of the chapter, then, is to lay the groundwork for ensuring the readers's own steadfast citizenship and loyal trust (faith) in Messiah in Roman Philippi, whatever the consequence (4:1).

The section comprising 3:2-21 is the longest, most closely argued passage in the letter. At issue is the establishment of a Messianic identity and citizenship, which involves a call to a focused and exclusive loyalty to Messiah, who is the intimate of any loyal follower (3:8-12), whose own fidelity is the ground for an alternative citizenship identity of "justice" (3:9), who is above any other, and who will reign supreme in the universe, exalting and redeeming his beloved (3:20-21). This Messianic citizenship cuts two ways: first it redefines membership and citizenship in Israel (3:2-11; "we are the circumcision"); but secondly it means the renunciation of imperial Roman claims, and the privileges, statuses, allegiances, practices, and values that accompany that citizenship (3:18-21). The climax is one of the strongest direct hits against Caesar and the Roman empire in Paul's writings.[22] The chapter takes up the themes of the Messianic drama (confession) of 2:6-11 in two significant ways. First, Paul's own story becomes an illustration of the "mindset" and practice that it represents, especially in the narration of his divestment of assets and status toward solidarity with Messianic suffering as the necessary path to exaltation and to the final prize (3:4-14, 15-17). Second, the climax of this section takes up the themes of Messiah's world-wide victory and dominion, while putting the readers' own story of humiliation to exaltation (resurrection) within that framework (3:20-21). Paul's story of divestment relative to his prior status in Israel (3:2-14) becomes the set-up and the point of analogy for the Philippians's own story of the "practice of Messianic citizenship" (1:27) in their own context (3:15-21). This carefully argued clarification of Messianic citizenship, with its assurance of final Messianic victory, becomes the foundation for the most crucial appeal of the letter: "Therefore, my brothers and sisters, . . . stand firm *in the Lord*" (4:1; cf. 1:27), the antiphonal counterpart to the parallel exhortations, "Rejoice *in the Lord*" (3:1; 4:4), and "boast *in Messiah*" (1:26; 3:3).

The initial alternative definition of citizenship against contrary understandings of Israel is set up with exceedingly sharp, ironic, and insulting caricature (3:2-3),[23] a set-up that builds toward the primary

point of re-evaluating Roman citizenship, status, practice, and values (3:18-21). But this latter Roman citizenship cannot be similarly named and assaulted directly without the consequence of Paul's immediate execution. Paul must remain somewhat subtle and coded on that front, for obvious reasons (cf. also 2:15, Roman society as a "corrupt and depraved nation," also somewhat indirect).

The climax to which the chapter has been leading entails a clarification of Messianic citizenship, along with its supreme benefits (resurrection) and ultimate scope (world-wide reign). Messianic citizenship stands over against those whose practice ("walk") of citizenship is an "enmity to the cross of Messiah," and oriented to a rival Saviour and Lord—unmistakably Caesar, for the first readers (3:18-21). What Paul specifically targets by way of caution is the pursuit of worldly status and privilege made possible through Roman citizenship (should one have or gain it), along with its characteristic values of consumptive self-aggrandizement and excess, and general moral bankruptcy (3:19). Such a pursuit and practice is a de facto denial of the meaning of the cross of Messiah (cf. 2:5-11), which means a solidarity with the lowly (1:1; 2:3-4, 7). Paul appears to be identifying both a general practice in the surrounding culture (cf. 2:14-16), and an insidious tendency that has affected (or could easily affect) the corporate life of the assembly of Messiah (cf. 1:27-2:4; 2:20-21; 4:2-9). And just as Messiah was the primary paradigm for the argument about citizenship in 1:27-2:18, now Paul becomes the primary paradigm, in imitation of that of Messiah. While the logic of his argument is that he is renouncing any serious identification with his own Roman citizenship (just as Messiah renounced claims to his status by birthright), he can hardly say so specifically here, without serious risk to his life. His nominal Roman citizenship, even though it really meant nothing to him, is what is keeping him alive by a thread.

Concluding Reflections

Some clarifications are appropriate by way of conclusion and reflection.

(1) Despite the quite palpable counter-imperial rhetoric in Paul (in effect, Paul out-empires the empire), it cannot be said that Rome is the chief or sole enemy to be overcome in Paul's theological rhetoric. Paul perceives the powers at work in the universe to be far more subtle and pervasive than to easily pin-point by referencing only one obvious exemplar. Nor is it true that Paul is motivated by some kind of built-up resentment focused on Rome and the glories of the Greco-Roman cultural world more generally (as F. Nietzsche would have it).[24] Paul is

not simply hostile to or envious of Rome. Rather, the point is that the good news proclamation (*euangelion*) of Messiah when experienced, articulated, and proclaimed by its own inner reality and logic simply runs against alternative totalizing allegiances and polities, whether public or private, political or religious.

(2) It is interesting that Paul refuses to dignify Rome by naming it specifically, even when directly referring to it. This is not just because it would be too dangerous to do so (which is so especially in the case of Philippians; cf. 1 Cor 2:6-8). Rather, Paul is hesitant to give Rome too much credit; it is merely one face of a much deeper crisis. Nor does he wish Messianic assemblies to be able to simplistically find an easy focus to their own resentment; the powers cannot be so easily particularized. Paul's move, rather, is to place even Rome under the ultimate sovereignty of God (e.g. Romans 13).

(3) For Paul there is no separation of the personal, relational, religious, and political. And Paul's primary practical political undertaking is focused on drawing people into and nurturing communities that celebrate (rejoice in) an alternative citizenship through Messiah, a citizenship in anticipation, a citizenship in exile, a citizenship with a nurtured mental disposition, and a corresponding practice. Paul's politics is not one of direct assault on powers such as Rome. But Paul's politics is also not one of mere detachment and idle waiting. As J. C. Beker puts it, in Paul there is a crucial combination of eschatological passion and practical sobriety. Paul's vision of a world in the process of transformation through the past and imminent intervention of Messiah is the very driving force of his "political" work in establishing and nurturing alternative assemblies as "the beachhead of God's reign."[25]

(4) Paul's Messianic politics is of a decidedly "patriotic" variety. That is, Paul expects those welcomed into the saving sphere of Messiah to be fervently loyal to it, to the point of death. As a result Messianic loyalty cannot co-exist with an equivalent zealous loyalty to any other dominion, human or spiritual. The notion of a co-existing "dual citizenship" is foreign to Paul's thinking. Life doesn't carve up easily into that dualism (or co-dependency). For Paul, there is only "heavenly citizenship," which means that its members, those from Israel and the nations, can only be "world-citizens" (Phil 2:9-11; 3:20-21). Paul rejects an identitarian particularism, whether statist or ethnic (Phil 3:2-6), but equally a coercive, universalizing Roman citizenship (Phil 3:18-21).

Chapter 2

Believers as Loyalists: The Anatomy of Paul's Language of *Pistis*

We are accustomed to thinking of early "Christians" simply as "believers," and this usage perpetuates the notion that the Christian faith is primarily about assenting to certain doctrines. But the translation "believers" significantly miscommunicates what Paul usually means when he uses the participle *pisteuontes*, a word that requires quite a number of words to properly render: "those who are convinced, submit in trust, and declare loyalty."[1] English simply does not have a good one-word equivalent that captures the breadth of *pisteuontes* in a number of texts. To anticipate our conclusions, if one were to select a better one-word equivalent—as we must, since it is far too cumbersome to say "those who are convinced, submit in trust, and declare loyalty"—it would be "loyalists."

In Paul's theology, "conviction, trust, and loyalty" are integral—that is, both central and interrelated. They cohere not only linguistically in the one word *pistis* (and its corresponding verb *pisteuein*), but they also cohere when we consider Paul's overall theological expression. Just as the Greek language has one word *dikaiosynē* that embraces both (personal) "righteousness" and (social and judicial) "justice," so also the one word *pistis* incorporates a broad field of meaning, including "trust" and "trustworthiness," "faith" and "faithfulness," "conviction" and "loyalty," "belief" and "fidelity," "relying upon" and "allegiance." Extending the notion of "fidelity" in an objective sense, it can even have the nuance of "credit," "proof," or "guarantee." But when the word is regularly rendered

merely as either "belief" or "faith," as in most English versions of the Bible, something of its broader significance is seriously lost in translation.

The Lexical Senses of the *Pistis* Word Group

To recover the significance that Paul attaches to the *pistis* word group, it is first necessary to summarize the range of meanings, uses, and resonances of *pistis* and its cognates that were broadly current in Paul's world. We begin with a lexical summary of our key words of interest:[2]

(A) the adjective *pistos*:

(1) faithful, loyal;

(2) trusting, believing.

(B) the noun *pistis*:

Subjective senses:

(1) trustworthiness, faithfulness, reliance, loyalty;

(2) trust, faith, reliance upon;

Objective senses:

(3), further to (1), that which is entrusted: pledge, guarantee, assurance, credit, ground of reliability, means of persuasion (the confidence one gives);

(4), further to (2), that which gives confidence, the content of the confidence: firm conviction, dependable truth (the confidence one has, as a result of the pledge of another, or of assurance provided).

(C) the verb *pisteuein* (which can be transitive or intransitive):

Active voice:

Subjective sense:

(1) trust, put faith (in), rely (on), have/place confidence (in someone or something);

(2) be faithful/loyal (to); act loyally (to); show loyalty (to); obey; show loyal trust;

Objective sense:

(3) entrust (something to another);

(4) further to (1), consider as true, trustworthy; believe; give credit (to); be confident (that);

Passive voice:

(1) be trusted/believed;

(2) be entrusted.

But beyond the mere lexical meaning of the words, more crucial are the domains of use within which these words function. It is to this that we now turn. What we immediately see is that *pistis* is not a narrowly "religious" word in Greek-speaking contexts.

Pistis and *Pistos* in the Domain of Interpersonal Relationships: Personal Loyalty and Trust

Specialists in Indo-European languages have shown that the original and primary realm for the abiding meaning of the Greek *pistis* (and its equivalent in Latin, *fides*) was that of interpersonal relations, especially the dynamics within the "institution of personal loyalty."[3] Prior to the establishment of formal legal institutions and meanings, *pistis* operated within the sphere of "binding obligations," often in connection with oath formulas, even used synonymously for the word "oath" (Greek, *horkos*). An *horkos* is that which is *pistos* (faithful) *par excellence*. Conduct or a person that honored an agreement or bond is what is *pistos*.

Within the processes of interpersonal loyalty in horizontal, friendship relations, the word *pistis* covers two sets of symmetrical (or reciprocal) meanings. In terms of the subjective dynamics, there is, on the one hand, fidelity, trustworthiness, faithfulness, reliance, loyalty; and on the other hand, there is trust, faith, reliance upon. And mediating this subjective symmetry is a kind of objective sense to *pistis*: on the one hand it is "a (provided) guarantee" (thus, a pledge, credit, trust, or assurance) stemming from loyalty and fidelity [the trust we *grant* someone]; but on the other hand it is also an "inspired confidence" (thus, assurance, conviction, basis of confidence, belief, with an emphasis on its content) characteristic of faith and trust [the faith or the credit we *possess*].[4] Giorgio Agamben summarizes it this way: "'Faith' (or trust) is the credit that one enjoys in another, the result of placing our trust in him, having consigned something like a pledge to him that links us in a relation of loyalty."[5] All dimensions of this, aspects that we are used to distinguishing lexically by using different words (faith vs. faithfulness, trust vs. trustworthiness, etc.), are expressed by the single word *pistis*.

In the case of vertical (suzerain) relations, however, where there is some power differential, the complete reciprocity begins to break down: the suzerain may offer authority and protection for someone who submits to it, in exchange for (and to the extent of) his submission. The weaker party will thus display the subjective posture of both trust and trustworthiness (faith and loyalty), whereas the stronger party will simply display trustworthiness (not needing to trust in the same way in return). The stronger party will offer pledges and promises (guarantees) of protection and security, whereas the weaker party will both offer pledges (guarantees) of fidelity and loyalty appropriate to the submission, and be able to trust the protection of the stronger party based on her perceived reliability, good faith (*bona fides*), of the promises, pledges, or assurances.

Trust in the sense of dependency or reliance, then, is not reciprocal in vertical relations: it is the weaker party who trusts in that sense. Accordingly, in the Greek lexicon, the verb *pisteuein* expresses the act of rendering loyal trust to a suzerain, but not the protective loyalty rendered to the weaker party. While both the weaker and stronger parties will display *pistis* (although in different ways), the actions of suzerain toward the dependent will generally not be expressed with *pisteuein* (but more commonly with the adjective *pistos*, faithful), although the dependent's actions toward the suzerain will be expressed with *pisteuein*.[6]

Anticipating our discussion of Paul, it is noteworthy that whether in horizontal or vertical (power-imbalanced) relations, *pistis* embraces both the soteriological dimension (receiving assurances of loyalty toward protection, and trusting those assurances) and the ethical aspect (demonstrating promised loyalty).

So important was this basic institution of Greek culture that *pistis* also came to life as a goddess (*daimōn*, guardian spirit) in Greek mythology. As the personification of good faith, trust and reliability, the goddess *Pistis* is closely associated with *Elpis* (Hope), *Sōphrosynē* (Prudence), and the *Charitai* (Graces), and is the guarantor of honesty and loyalty among people.[7]

Pistis in Social, Political Relations

In the domain of social and political relations, this usage of *pistis* and *pistos* carries over in analogous ways.[8] Here *pistis* entails "loyalty" or "allegiance" to a ruler, military general, or empire, and also "loyalty" to treaties, oaths, and covenants, founded on the symmetrical reciprocity of trusting and being trustworthy (thus, both giving and enjoying trust). *Pistis* is especially tied to oath formulations or demonstrations of allegiance to a suzerain (from local landlord to Emperor), in response to promises of protection or in light of demonstrations of power.

Both the Greek *pistis* and the Latin *fides* were also used regularly in the conventional practice of submitting to a conquering power: "a weaker city could take recourse to the institution of the *deditio in fidem*, meaning that they could unconditionally surrender themselves to the hands of the enemy, making the victor hold to a more benevolent conduct."[9] Those who took this course of action (so as to avoid death and destruction) are described as *dediticii*, those "who have given themselves over."[10] In Greek, this practice was described as "giving oneself over in loyalty [*pistis*]" (and thus "trusting" the "good faith" of the victor, and simultaneously showing "loyalty"). This submission is also expressed with the verb *peithesthai*, literally "to be prevailed upon/won over/persuaded" and by extension "to

obey." The classic example of this is in the self-promoting last will and testament of Caesar Augustus, *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* [Mighty Deeds of the Divine Augustus], etched in inscriptions across the empire in the time of Paul. Referring to nations that submitted to Rome without experiencing outright conquest, Caesar remarks: "a large number of other nations [also] experienced the good faith [loyalty, pledge of suzerainty: *pistis* in the Greek versions, *fides* in the Latin versions] of the Roman people during my principate."[11]

In Roman political propaganda, *fides* (*pistis* in Greek-speaking environments) figured prominently as a cardinal Roman value and essential concept. As Neil Elliott summarizes: "*Fides* was routinely illustrated on coins, for example, by the portrait of the Roman conqueror extending one hand in alliance, holding a spear in the other—to be wielded in protection of Rome's allies, of course."[12] As "the quintessential expression for the reciprocal responsibility between conqueror and conquered," *fides* signified both the "good faith" that protects the whole world, but also the "loyalty" that the world gives to Caesar. In Roman political propaganda, therefore, the emperor is celebrated as the model of fidelity, along with other virtues,[13] the basis on which his rule is secure and legitimate.[14] And on the other hand, *fides* (and *pistis*) is prominent in the standard ritual of requiring personal oaths of allegiance (loyalty) to the Roman Emperor, especially among annexed (conquered) populations.[15]

Accordingly, the goddess *Fides*, the counterpart of the Greek goddess *Pistis*, occupied a much more prominent political role in Roman culture compared to that of Greece. *Fides* was honored with a temple on the Capitol Hill, and in that temple, for instance, the Roman Senate kept state treaties with foreign countries, under the watchful eye and protection of the goddess.

Judean-Jewish[16] writers in Greek, during the first century, also use *pistis* in the same manner when it comes to describing political dynamics. The historian Josephus, for instance, uses *pistis* most frequently to describe the "allegiance" or "fidelity" of an individual, community, or nation to a king, military general, or the Roman *imperium*.[17] It is used synonymously with *dexia*, literally, the "right hand," but signifying a "pledge" of allegiance.[18] Josephus refers to his ploy, when serving as military commander of Galilee, to retain local powerful brokers under the pretext of friendliness, though ultimately "to have hostages of loyalty (*homēra pisteōs*)."[19] And he also uses *pistis* to refer to the "credit" (trust) that one obtains with a superior power, by taking a non-hostile stance.[20]

Similarly illustrating the practice of *deditio in fidem*, 1 Maccabees has the Syrian ruler Demetrius advising the Judean nation to keep "loyalty" (*pistis*) with him, in exchange for their immunity from punishment (1

Macc 10:27), and he promises that some Judeans would be given positions in his kingdom "into trust" (or, "for trust," that is, as quasi hostages and treated in good faith) should the nation acquiesce (1 Macc 10:37). On the other side of this practice, 3 Maccabees has stronger individuals "giving pledges [*pisteis*] of protection" to those in danger (3 Macc 3:10). Meanwhile, the propaganda of the Maccabees themselves is that Simon is the legitimate ruler of Judea, precisely because of "his fidelity," not just because of his military success (1 Macc 14:35).

Pistis in the Juridical-Legal and Commercial Spheres

As Roman and Greek societies developed more elaborate legal systems, *pistis* (and *fides*) came to be used especially in its objective sense. In law, *pistis* (and *fides*, especially *bona fides*) referred to "credit" and "trust," along with "obligations," deriving from contractual legal bonds. In family law, *pistis* could be used of a "position of trust or trusteeship," and as a guardian, one might leave something "in *pistis*" (in trust). In the area of commerce, *pistis* could similarly refer to "credit" or "trust." One could thus "give *pistis*" in the sense of giving credit, or one could hold something "in *pistis*" (in trust, to have a credit). Even the verb *pisteuein* is used for "depositing" (literally, "trusting") money in a treasury (e.g. 4 Macc 4:7).[21] And to this day, *pistis* continues to be used in a commercial sense, as in the designation *trapeza emporikēs pisteōs*, "Bank of Commercial Credit." It was coming across this last example that caused David Flusser to step away from Martin Buber's neat distinction between two antithetical types of faith—that the Greek (and thus Pauline) meaning of *pistis* is "recognizing something is true" while the Hebrew sense of the counterpart *emunah* is "exhibiting loyalty," or "having confidence." He concluded: "The Greek *pistis* means precisely the same thing as the Hebrew *emunah*."[22]

Pistis and *Pisteuein* in Philosophy, Theology, History, and Rhetoric

In the discourse of philosophy, theology, history and rhetoric, the usage of *pistis* expands even further. For instance, Plato uses *pistis* to define a particular faculty or aptitude of the (rational) soul, but also to designate a particular domain of knowledge. In the former case, *pistis* (as popular or conventional "conviction," not personal faith) along with *eikasia* (picture-thinking, conjecture, modeling), which deal with comprehending semblances (*doxa*), are lesser faculties in comparison to *noēsis* (intellect, reasoning) and *dianoia* (understanding), which deal with

apprehending "things of being" (*ta onta*). As for divisions of knowledge, *pistis* (conviction, belief) along with *eikasia* (picture-thinking, conjecture) are together classified as *doxa* (convention, opinion) as lower divisions of knowledge, in comparison to *epistēmē* (knowledge) and *dianoia* (understanding), which are together classified as *noēsis* (intellection). The former two deal with matters of change and generation (*genesis*), while the latter two concern matters of unchanging essence (*ousia*).[23]

In the field of ancient rhetoric, which in effect brings ordinary speech and vocabulary to a new level of precision, Aristotle uses *pistis* in the sense of "proof," though more precisely as the "basis/means of trustworthiness/believability."[24] Similarly, in historiography, *pistis* is used for "evidence" and "assurance" that adjudicates the truthfulness of historical accounts.[25]

In Stoicism, by contrast, *pistis* is not used primarily in the domain of intellectual inquiry. Rather, it is mainly treated as a virtue or an attitude, signifying "reliability" and "faithfulness," to oneself and to others. It never refers to a relation or obligation to a deity (*theos*) or divinity (*daimōn*).

Pistis and *Pisteuein* in "Devotion" (Greek, *eusebia*; Latin, *religio*)

In the Greek tradition, *pistis* and *pisteuein* do not have their primary home in the realm of personal "devotion" to the gods, and have even less to do with civic obligations to patron deities. When these words are used in this context, they are modeled on the use of these terms in other domains of life. In the classical period, for instance, regard for the gods was not expressed with the verb *pisteuein* (to trust in, to believe), but with *nomizein* (to have regard for), and *pistis* was not used in the sense of belief or trust in the gods. *Pistis* was used, rather, to refer to the "trustworthiness" of an oracle, or to whether or not the power of the gods (not their existence) could be "trusted" to save in the face of danger. *Pistis* could, however, be used to imply "obedience" to an oracle, or refer to "loyal" conduct enjoined by the gods.

By the time of the New Testament, however, *pistis* and *pisteuein* had come to be used also of devotion to particular divinities. In the mystery religions, for instance, *pistis* and *pisteuein* designated the abandonment to a deity, putting oneself in trust under the protection of a god (not first to "believing" in the god's existence).

In Greek-speaking Jewish-Judean contexts, and thus in the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures (the "Septuagint," abbreviated "LXX"), beginning around 200 BCE, *pistis* was simply used as an equivalent to the Hebrew *'emunah*, which means "firmness, reliability, faithfulness, certainty, dependability."[26] The LXX and later Greek-

speaking Jewish writings rarely use *pistis* in the sense of "faith" or "trust."[27] But toward the time of Paul and beyond, *pistis* comes to refer both to "trust" or "faith" in God alongside "fidelity" to God,[28] especially in response to God bestowing "trust" and "fidelity" via promises expressed in oath.[29]

In Josephus's *Against Apion*, his defense of Judaism for Greco-Roman readers, which clearly betrays his Pharisaic sympathies, *pistis* is used to designate God's "pledge" or "fidelity" (2.218), and in turn to signify both active "trust" toward and "conviction/belief" about God (2.163, 169). These uses occur in the context of discussing proper devotion [*eusebia*] or doctrine/conviction [*doxa*] about God, both of which have a strongly ethical flavor (2.179-18, 224, 254-58). Quite notably, Josephus remarks about Plato's preoccupation with "correct doctrine" (*orthē doxa*; 2.256), but refers to Moses's superiority in offering "the most righteous conviction" (*dikaiotatē pistis*; 2.163). Judaic fidelity is firstly ethical, not intellectual. When it comes to the realm of "devotion," Josephus sets God theo-politically as "the ruler of the universe," inventing the very word "theocracy" (*theokratia*; 2.165, 185).[30] In that context, Josephus uses the verb *pisteuein* to designate both relational and submissive "trusting" and cognitive "believing" (becoming firmly persuaded, convinced), arguing that Moses prompted this "unmovable fidelity/conviction" (*pistis ametakinētos*) in adherents by both intellectual precept and practical exercise of the character (2.171-74). At the same time, Josephus also uses *pistis* to designate the crucial virtue of "fidelity/loyalty" in human relations (*Jewish War* 2.134, 137).

As we shall see, Paul's use of *pisteuein* and *pistis* is closely aligned with that of Josephus, both theologically and politically (even as their social location differs markedly). This should not be surprising when their shared Pharisaic heritage is considered (*The Life* 7-12; Phil 3:5-6). Josephus claims that at the age of 19, in the year 56-57 CE, he began to "practice citizenship" (*politeuesthai*, engage in politics) according to the framework of the Pharisees (*The Life* 12), which for his Greco-Roman readers he likens to the philosophy of the Stoics. Like Paul, he also claims to have advanced far beyond most of his compatriots (*The Life* 7-10; Gal 1:14).[31] And as with Paul, central to his Pharisaic conviction is hope for a transformed world and a renewed blessed existence in "the revolution of the ages" (*peritropē aiōnōn*; *Jewish War* 3.374; *Against Apion* 2.217-19; Acts 23:6-7; 28:20). Radically different in Paul, however, is Paul's more thorough-going apocalyptic framework, and in particular the Messianic element, such that Paul advise s his readers to "practice citizenship (*politeuesthai*) in a manner worthy of Messiah's gospel" (Phil 1:27).

Pistis, *Pisteuein*, and *Pistos* in Paul's Vocabulary and Theology

The terms *pistis* and *pisteuein* are plainly crucial for Paul, especially to define "the fundamental option," "the appropriate human response to the gospel of God, the word of the cross."[32] *Pistis* even seems to function more fundamentally than the love of God.[33] As a result of this, Paul can refer to adherents of Messiah Jesus simply as "the trusting/loyal ones" ("believers"); he can summarize the content and goal of his preaching simply as *pistis* (Gal 1:23: "the faith, the loyalty"); and he can describe the Messianic community as "the household of *pistis* (faith/fidelity)" (Gal 6:10).

As elsewhere in Greek discourse, *pistis* and cognate words in Paul's letters have a remarkable polyvalence and range. Sometimes a specific use of *pistis* incorporates a broad range of senses that cannot be easily rendered in English, and sometimes a use highlights a particular sense of *pistis*. There are two key problems, however, in properly rendering Paul's language of *pistis* and *pisteuein* into English. (a) English lexically separates faith from faithfulness, and trust from trustworthiness. To truly render the full sense of *pistis* in many instances, one should really use a hyphenated neologism like "loyalty-faith," or "faith/fidelity," or a phrase such as "loyal faith," or "faithful trust." (b) English has no corresponding verb for the nouns "faith" or "loyalty," in the same way that "believe" is a counterpart to "belief." Nor does the verb "trust" have a corresponding participle "truster," in the way that "believe" has the rendering "believer." But we do have a word for people who are loyal, "loyalists," and in most instances, that is a far better rendering of Paul's meaning than the translation "believers."

While Paul does sometimes use *pistis* and *pisteuein* with the primary connotations of "belief" and "believe," these are minority examples, and not at the core of his proclamation. But in accordance with long-standing tradition, English translations still regularly supply "believe" when the meaning is actually "to trust," or a combination of "to trust and be loyal," or a blend of "to believe, trust, and be loyal."[34] Or, English translations supply "believers," when the meaning is "those who trust and are faithful," "those who trust and obey," or "those who declare allegiance." In a recent study, Michael Gorman summarizes proposals by recent scholars for the fundamental sense of *pistis* in Paul. These include: "obedience" (R. Bultmann; L. T. Johnson), "fidelity/faithfulness" along with "trust" and "obedience" (R. Hays), "submission/commitment" (J. A. Fitzmyer), or a "total surrender of the self" involving trust and loyalty (J. Fuchs).[35] Gorman himself encapsulates *pistis* in Paul as the "narrative posture

of faithfulness or obedience toward God," whose prototype is Christ himself, thus essentially "cruciformity." Faith has a "narrative" character because it is both initial and ongoing," "a dynamic posture. . .that involves movement and action." It has a cognitive aspect [affirmation, conviction], and an emotive, spiritual, experiential dimension, but still is fundamentally "devotion, total commitment, faithfulness."[36] All this goes in the direction of emphasizing the theo-political sense of *pistis* as "submission in loyalty."

In a good number of instances, the specific argumentative or hortatory context shapes Paul's use of *pistis* and *pisteuein* considerably. Three of these settings are noteworthy.

(1) The first is in Paul's polemic in relation to the Law (Torah), whether in regard to the revelation of God's righteousness (covenant loyalty), the ground of "justification" (not just "declaring right," but also "making right," as in "justifying" a margin), the means of salvation, or a framework for ethical conduct. In the specific texts dealing in some way with this question (Rom 1:16-5:1; 9:30-11:24; 14:1-23; Gal 2:1-5:6; Phil 3:9) we find nearly half of the total occurrences of the *pistis* word group in the undisputed letters of Paul.[37] *Pistis* (and its cognates) functions as a core "antithesis word" in Romans and Galatians, closely correlated with the themes of Jew-Gentile, circumcision-uncircumcision, righteousness of God, justification, salvation, no distinction, all, works of Law, Law, promise, Abraham, Messiah, hearing, preaching, and eating.[38] Paul's central agenda in these texts concerns the means and framework by which all peoples can be absorbed into the community of God, not just those of Abrahamic birthright, or those who strictly follow Torah.

It is these passages that have become most definitive for Protestant theological thinking, where the polemical character of Paul's rhetoric has been taken to an extreme, through the Reformation slogan of *sola fidei*, "by faith/belief alone" (even though Paul nowhere uses the phrase "faith alone"), with *fides* thought of especially as belief, cognitive assent. The resulting main contrast of "faith" versus "works" has been magnified, elevating "belief" over "practice." What Paul actually contrasts, however, is "fidelity" versus "works." He does not diminish "works" nor "practice" in general (nor even specific rules), but stresses a more fundamental "bond of loyalty," or "framework of conviction," not primarily defined or constrained by an analysis of particular behavioural rules themselves. Indeed, the central antithesis pits "the fidelity of Messiah," the prototype and ground of all reciprocal human "fidelity toward Messiah and God," versus mere "works of Law." This fidelity is both faith and faithfulness, both salvific and ethical. Indeed, Paul asserts that the problem with the Judeans-Jews in general is not so much that they remain largely "non-loyal" to Messiah ("unbelieving"), but in fact that their pursuit of the

Law itself was not from the standpoint of a deeper "fidelity," but from the perspective of mere "works" (Rom 9:30-10:8). It is this fundamental stance that made them unable to recognize Messiah as the "goal of the Law."

(2) A second crucial setting in which Paul's language of *pistis* comes to focused expression is in the polemic against Corinthian wisdom, arrogance, claims to knowledge, and even claims to spectacular "faith." Here, *pistis* takes on more of the sense of "loyal conviction," grounded in God's power, not words of wisdom. At the same time, however, this faith takes second place to the primacy of "love."[39]

(3) A final setting, in which the rhetoric of *pistis* is more hortatory than polemical, is in letters to the persecuted assemblies of Thessalonica and Philippi, whose harassment stems especially from those allied with the Roman *imperium*. In these letters, *pistis* takes on the particular sense of "allegiance" and "loyalty" to Messiah, specifically to Messiah's alternative "kingdom" (1 Thessalonians) or "city-state" (Philippians). Even Acts, written at least 25 years later, recognizes that the primary issues in the struggles of these communities with the prevailing Roman order were the proclamation of a rival Emperor (Thessalonica; Acts 17:6-9) and the practice of a subversive polity (Philippi; Acts 16:20-21).

While the language of *pistis* and *pisteuein* takes on a particular hue in each of these three rhetorical settings, one must also note that these are not exclusive of each other but instead that they resonate with each other. Thus, while Romans uses *pistis* especially in the polemic against certain approaches to the Law, this is not the whole story of Romans. Romans is as much an assault on the "arrogance of the nations" (11:13-32)[40] as it is a confrontation with the "boasting of the Judeans" (2:17, 23; 3:27). As we shall see, *pistis* in Romans also has a sharply theo-political edge, especially in the opening and closing of Romans.

We turn, then, to sample some crucial texts and themes in Paul's letters.

God's Fidelity and Human Infidelity: Fidelity aroused by Grace

The argument of Romans has sometimes been described as a defense of God's righteousness, understood in the sense of God's covenant loyalty (Rom 1:17; 3:21-22, 26), as suzerain lord, to both Israel and the nations.[41] At stake is the abiding validity of "promises" made to both Israel and the nations (15:7), especially the promise made to Abraham that in him all the nations would be blessed (Rom 4:1-25; 11:25-32; 15:7-12; cf. Gen 12:3; Gal 3:8). Vigorously defended, then, is the abiding "faithfulness

(*pistis*) of God" (Rom 3:2-6), despite the *apistia* (non-trusting, non-loyalty, unbelief) of those to whom God "entrusted (*pisteuesthai*) the oracles of God" (Rom 3:3),[42] and despite the continuing injustice of the nations (1:18-2:16), whose culpability God continues to pass over, but especially now through Messiah, insofar as he himself is the propitiation for all human infidelity (3:22-26; 9:22-29). "God's fidelity" is the same as "God's righteousness," "God's mercy," and "God's truth,"[43] which now through "Messiah's fidelity" is pre-eminently demonstrated (1:17; 3:1-26; 15:8), prompting a reciprocal "fidelity" among all human beings, and putting everyone[44] at the same level of disadvantage *and* advantage. In no way can the "gifts and calling" of God become irrevocable (11:29). Indeed, eventually "God's mercy" (as another dimension of God's fidelity) will ultimately conquer all human infidelity, whether that of the nations or that of Israel, bringing the cosmos to its appointed destiny (11:25-36; 15:8-9). This reminds us, moreover, that God's fidelity is a manifestation of God's grace, and that it is divine grace itself that generates human fidelity (e.g. Phil 1:29). Understandably, then, four of the eight occurrences of the word *pistos* (faithful, loyal) in the undisputed letters are emphatic predicates of the character of God (1 Cor 1:9; 10:13; 2 Cor 1:18; 1 Thess 5:24).[45] For Paul, then, God's fidelity is foundational.

The Fidelity (Loyal Trust) of Christ as Prototype for Human Fidelity

The solution to the crisis confronting humanity, Paul avers, is a new means of loyal submission to God (and thus deliverance), made possible by the loyal fidelity of Christ himself, who is thus both agent of salvation, but also prototype of subsequent human loyalty.[46] Developed especially in the context of his struggle to understand the Law, Paul's stress on the prototypical and salvific fidelity of Messiah is patently clear, though minimized in Protestant theology, and covered up in most recent English translations.[47]

> For we know that a person is justified (made right) not on the basis of the works of the Law, except through *the faithfulness* (*pistis*) *of Jesus Christ*, and (so) we have submitted in loyal trust (*pisteuein*) to Christ Jesus, in order that we might be justified on the basis of *the faithfulness* (*pistis*) *of Christ* and not on the basis of works of the Law, for on the basis of works of the Law not any person will be justified. (Gal 1:16)
>
> I died to the Law through the Law, so that I could live for God. I have been crucified with Christ. I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh, I live by the faithfulness

> (*pistis*) of the son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. (Gal 2:19-20)
>
> If a Law was given that was able to give life, then righteousness would in fact be on the basis of the Law. But the Scripture has locked up all human beings under (the power of) sin, so that the promise might be given, on the basis of *the faithfulness* (*pistis*) *of Jesus Christ*, to those who submit in loyal trust (*pisteuein*). (Gal 3:22)
>
> Through Christ I have lost everything, and I have come to regard everything as rubbish, in order that I might gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own on the basis of the Law, but a righteousness on the basis of *the faithfulness* (*pistis*) *of Christ*, the righteousness of God based on fidelity (*pistis*). (Phil 3:8-9)
>
> But now, apart from the Law, God's righteousness has been revealed, though confirmed by the Law and the Prophets: God's righteousness through *the faithfulness* (*pistis*) *of Jesus Christ* for all who respond in faithful trust (*pisteuein*). There is no distinction. (Rom 3:21-22)
>
> God put forward Christ, through fidelity (*pistis*),[48] by his blood [sacrificial death], as the place of sacrifice, for the purpose of demonstrating God's righteousness, on account of the passing over of previously committed sins, in the forbearance of God, for the purpose of demonstrating his righteousness in the present time, so that he might be [shown to be] just/righteous and one who justifies a person on the basis of *the faithfulness* (*pistis*) *of Jesus*. (Rom 3:25-26)

In accordance with this understanding of Messiah's foundational fidelity, Paul pens the opening thesis statement of Romans:

> For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is God's power unto salvation, for everyone who submits in faithful trust (*pisteuein*), to the Judean first and also to the Greek. For in it [the gospel], God's righteousness is being revealed, on the basis of [God's, Christ's] fidelity (*pistis*), toward the realization of [human] fidelity (*pistis*), just as it is written, "The righteous one will live on the basis of fidelity (*pistis*)." (Rom 1:16-17)

In the last quotation, Paul refers both to Messiah as prototype of fidelity as God's "righteous one," a Messianic title, but also to all those who follow in that same pattern, on the basis of Messiah's unique, salvific, and paradigmatic fidelity.[49]

While Romans 3:25 (citied above) likely refers to Christ's fidelity as manifested most supremely in his sacrificial death, expressing his self-giving love, other texts make it clear that this is indeed the case.[50] For instance, Romans 5:12-21 stresses that the efficacy of Christ toward salvation and righteousness, as an outcome of God's grace, is precisely in his "obedience," his own "righteous act" (5:18-19). The encomium to Messiah in Philippians 2:6-11 similarly proclaims that Messiah "lowered himself, becoming obedient all the way to death" (2:8), as the supreme expression of his salvific and paradigmatic "regard for the other" (2:3-5). This virtue of ultimate, submissive loyalty (*pistis*), then, becomes the foundation and the fulcrum that caused God to act on his behalf and on behalf of all humanity (2:9-11). Accordingly, Paul has Christ (through the mouth of David) make his own oath of allegiance to God alone among (and for the benefit of) all the nations (Rom 15:9).

Obedience of Fidelity: *Pistis* as Submission in Loyalty

At the beginning and close of Paul's argument in Romans, we find some of Paul's most forceful claims to Christ's lordship, and the response that that cosmic, theo-political supremacy should generate. The opening credo highlights Messiah's enthronement as lord (1:3-4) and the closing declaration announces Christ's universal reign among (over) all the nations (15:9-12). Together, these bracket Paul's entire main argument (1:1-15:13).[51] Not surprisingly, these two texts correlate precisely with the contents of Paul's highly charged encomium to Messiah's enthronement and universal lordship in Phil 2:6-11: the first restates the acclamation of cosmic enthronement in Phil 2:9, and the second reaffirms the realization of universal lordship in Phil 2:10-11.[52] Crucial for the present discussion, both passages in Romans are closely followed by a reference to the "faith/fidelity" (*pistis*) expected among all human beings as a consequence:

> We have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith/fidelity (*hypakoē pisteōs*; CEB: faithful obedience) among all the nations for the sake of his name. (1:5)
> May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in rendering submissive trust (*en tō pisteuein*), so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope. (15:13)

Read in light of prevailing conventions in Paul's world, *pistis* and *pisteuein* here can only be understood in the sense of "submitting in trust, and giving fidelity and allegiance" to the only true ruler of the universe.

Paul is not referring merely to "belief" and "believing," at least in the way that they have come to be understood. As Giorgi Agamben observes: "In Paul, *pistis* retains something of the *deditio*, the unconditional self abandon [in loyalty] to the power of another, which obliges the receiver [in loyalty] as well."[53]

In the closing doxology of Romans, Paul reiterates God's ultimate mission "to all nations. . .to bring about the obedience of faith/fidelity" (16:26). And other texts confirm that "obedience" (*hypakoē*) and "faith/fidelity" (*pistis*) are closely correlated in Paul's rhetoric, even synonymous.[54] At the opening of Romans Paul congratulates the "beloved in Rome" that their "*pistis* (faith/fidelity) is proclaimed in all the world" (1:8), while at the end he eulogizes that their "obedience is known to all" (16:19). Similarly, in Romans 10:14-16 Paul uses the verb "to obey" synonymously with the verb *pisteuein* ("to trust, be faithful, believe"). And thus he can describe his own mission simply as geared toward bringing about "the obedience of the nations," without the added element of faith/fidelity (*pistis*) that one might normally expect (15:18). Similarly, Philippians 2:12 makes reference to the readers' "obedience" in a way that parallels their "faith-fidelity" (1:27, 29).

Pistis as Confession: Pledge of Allegiance, Vow of Loyalty

In two key texts in Romans, "submitting in loyalty, trusting, believing" (*pisteuein*) is closely aligned with "swearing allegiance" (*homologein*), though misleadingly translated as "confessing."[55] The Greek verb *homologein* regularly refers to "expressing openly one's allegiance to a proposition or person," and is closely tied to oath formulations.[56] In explaining how "the word of *pistis* (fidelity, conviction, trust) that we are proclaiming" is "near to you, both in your mouth and in your heart" (10:8, quoting Deut 30:14), Paul continues:

> if you openly swear (*homologein*) with your mouth, "Lord Jesus [or, Jesus is Lord],"
> and come to loyal conviction (*pisteuein*) in your heart, that "God raised him from the dead,"
> you will be saved-delivered.
> For it is with the heart that it [the word] is received in loyal conviction (*pisteuesthai*) toward the goal of justice-righteousness, and it is with the mouth that it is sworn in allegiance (*homologeisthai*) toward the goal of salvation-deliverance.

> As the Scripture says, "Everyone who comes to loyal confidence (*pisteuein*) in him will never be put to shame." (Isa 52:7)

In the correlation of fidelity with an oath formulation, *pisteuein* here clearly has convictional content, but also relational fidelity, including submission in trust. Significantly, the convictional aspect is not simply a verbal declaration that focuses merely on predicative, denotative content, as in assenting to dogma. Rather, as Agamben shows, the text assumes the harmony of mouth and heart, and illustrates "the performative experience of veridiction," by precisely overcoming the duality of "recognizing as true" and "having confidence."[57]

"Swearing allegiance" and "coming to loyal conviction/confidence" are also correlated in the resounding conclusion of Romans 15:7-13, a text already noted above. In a litany of Scriptural promises pertaining to the nations (Gentiles), Paul includes: (a) a vow by David, here the Messianic prefigure,[58] "I will openly swear allegiance (*exomologeisthai*) to you [God] among the nations, and I will sing songs [in homage] to your name" (Ps 18:49); (b) the final line of the song of Moses, "let the nations exult, with his people [Israel]" (Deut 32:43); (c) a psalm of universal acclamation, "panegyrize the Lord, all the nations, publicly applaud him, all the peoples" (Ps 117:1, implicitly on the basis of God's "mercy" and "fidelity," 117:2); and finally (d) an oracle of Paul's favourite prophet Isaiah, "the root of Jesse [Messiah] will come, and he will arise[59] to rule the nations, in him the nations will hope" (Isa 11:10). Modern English translations make these oracles sound like merely "religious" liturgies. But Paul is referring to songs and praises of homage and loyalty. And the theo-political dimension of the liturgy is clear, not unlike the way Caesar Augustus celebrated his inclusion in the hymnic liturgies of Rome alongside hymns to the gods, receiving honours "equal to the gods."[60] Immediately following this litany, then, in a way that partly recapitulates their contents, Paul offers his concluding wish: "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in rendering submissive trust (*en tō pisteuein*), so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope" (15:13).

Paul uses the language of "swearing allegiance" theo-politically also in Phil 2:10-11 (quoting Isa 45:3), where the outcome similarly entails an act of universal submission in recognition of Messiah's supremacy. In effect, at the imminent *parousia* of Messiah we have the final *deditio in fidem* of all the nations.[61] And in the one place where Paul uses the noun *homologia* (oath, pledge, agreement, confession), Paul highlights its appropriate obedience, literally its "submission" (*hypotagē*, 2 Cor 9:13).[62]

Pistis as Allegiance: Believers as Loyalists

In the letters to the persecuted assemblies of Thessalonica and Philippi, *pistis* takes on the particular sense of "allegiance" and "loyalty" to Messiah, specifically to Messiah's alternative "kingdom" (1 Thessalonians) or "city-state" (Philippians). Both letters are addressed to communities experiencing some form of harassment from those allied with Roman rule, and both present the claims of Lord Jesus as directly counter to that of Caesar. In 1 Thessalonians, *pistis* is framed especially in relation to God's alternative kingdom: "you who show loyal trust" (usually "you believers") are described as those "who walk worthily of the God who called you into his own kingdom and [its] honour/glory" (2:10-12). Their exemplary "decision of loyalty [pledge] toward God" (*pistis pros ton theon*) is demonstrated in their commitment "to turn to (*pros*) the living God from idols, to offer slave service (*douleuein*) to the living and true God, and to await his son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus the one who delivers us from the coming wrath" (1:8-10). *Pistis* is specified as a "pledge" that involves a complete turn around (*epistrephein*) of life and loyalty, and oriented to the coming victory of God's son over all earthly and heavenly powers (as in Phil 3:20-21; Rom 15:7-13; 1 Cor 15:24-28).

As a form of *deditio in fidem*, then, the new loyalty will assure the necessary protection so as to avoid any future divine wrath against injustice and non-loyalty. The reality of Christ's future victory is highlighted later in the letter (4:13-5:11), with imagery of (angelic) military intervention (4:16), the overthrow of the present world system (using a thinly veiled reference to Roman rule; 5:3),[63] and the participation of all "loyalists" in the final, cosmic battle, using only their virtues, not any weapons of warfare (5:5-8). Paul's overriding concern in the letter is for their continued "loyalty" (3:2-10; esp. 3:2, 5, 6, 7, 10), which he hopes to "establish, ground firmly" (*stērizein*; 3:2), summarized in the exhortation to "stand firm (*stēkein*) in the Lord" (3:8).[64] Given the persistent usage of *pistis* in the sense of loyalty, the participle *pisteuontes* should be more properly rendered "loyalists" than simply "believers" (1:7; 2:10, 13). There is certainly a cognitive, convictional aspect to *pistis* in 1 Thessalonians (e.g. 1:5-6; 4:14), but this is oriented precisely to ground the readers' abiding loyalty in the context of competing claims for loyalty (to Caesar), not to establish precise doctrinal norms in themselves.

Pistis has a similar shape in Philippians,[65] where the context and hortatory aims are similar to those of 1 Thessalonians. Whereas loyalty in 1 Thessalonians is presented in terms of God's alternative kingdom, in Philippians loyalty is specified in terms of "being a citizen body and

practicing citizenship (*politeuesthai*) in a manner worthy of the gospel of Messiah" (1:27), and the struggle associated with that commitment, a struggle "for the loyalty (*pistis*) of the gospel." Loyalty is framed in terms of Christ's alternative city-state and citizenship, and (again) in recognition of the world deliverer who will ultimately bring the whole universe under his dominion (2:9-11; 3:20-21). Here too, then, Paul's main hope is that his readers will "stand firm in the Lord" (1:27; 4:1).[66]

Pistis as Conviction: Aroused by Proclamation and Hearing, and the Demonstration of Power

Paul also uses the *pistis* word group when referring to "conviction" or "belief" more specifically, in reference for instance to (variable, personal) ethical "conviction,"[67] variable personal "faith,"[68] or "giving credence" to an oral report.[69] The convictional dimension or content aspect of the gospel itself and its "loyalty" can also be emphasized in a number of texts.[70] *Pistis* and *pisteuein* are accordingly closely associated with preaching, hearing, understanding, or seeing, and with the word, or the gospel.[71] Indeed, *pistis* can be used as a synonym of the gospel itself, as the content and goal of preaching (Gal 1:23). "Coming to loyal faith" (*pisteuein*, "believing") is thus described as "receiving the word that was heard" (1 Thess 2:13), and is closely tied to "becoming confident/convinced" or "becoming persuaded" (*peithesthai*).

Paul stresses, however, that this preaching or hearing is not simply something that convinces at the cognitive level, but something that challenges at a deeper level of power. The "word" itself is described as "doing its work in/among you" (1 Thess 2:13), even as the gospel "comes not in word only but also in power and in the Holy Spirit, and in full assurance" (1 Thess 1:5). Paul's preaching has been accomplished, toward the goal of loyalty and obedience, "by word and deed, in the power of signs and wonders, in the Holy Spirit" (Rom 15:18-20). But in Corinth, where Paul confronts the arrogance of learned rhetoric and wisdom, Paul further undermines the exclusive primacy of reasoned argument. Paul asserts: "God was well-pleased to save those who come to loyal conviction (*pisteuontes*, "the believers") through the foolishness of the message (*kerygma*)" (1 Cor 1:21), and again:

> My rhetoric (argument; Gk. *logos*) and my message (*kērygma*) were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in the demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your loyal conviction (*pistis*) should not be founded on human wisdom but on God's power. (1 Cor 2:4-6)[72]

> I will come to you soon. . .and I will ascertain not the argument/rhetoric (*logos*) of the arrogant ones, but their power. For the kingdom of God is not founded on argument/rhetoric (*logos*) but on power. (1 Cor 4:19-20)

Later, Paul comes at the issues through another path, arguing that he is indeed engaged in a warfare for the hearts and minds (loyalty) of people. But he reminds his Corinthian readers that it is precisely not worldly weapons of the flesh that he wields, but the weaponry of the "powerful forces of God" that can undermine even the loftiest of mental and ideological fortresses lined up against the knowledge of God (2 Cor 10:3-6). Accordingly, the gospel itself is the greatest power that now exists for the ultimate goal of salvation, made available to and for "all those who come to loyal faith" (Rom 1:16-17), a movement that will one day embrace all humanity (Rom 11:25-32).

The importance of the cognitive dimension to *pistis* and *pisteuein* (in the sense of conviction in response to persuasion) does not mean that *pistis* is ultimately or first about assenting to doctrines. Quite the contrary, persuasion has as its aim loyal trust, faithful obedience.[73] Paul uses *pistis* in a way that directly counters both the theo-political claims of Rome and the intellectual claims of the educated elite. On the one hand, the gospel of Jesus Christ is about engendering "loyalty" by means of the word of the cross (signifying both its content, and its apparent weakness; 1 Cor 1–2). The loyalty that ensures deliverance is prompted, in other words, not by the standard means of military conquest or superior military display (the weapons of the flesh), but through the word of persuasion and preaching.[74] The apparently weak, and yet ironically powerful "word of the cross" will finally gain supremacy throughout the universe. It is the gospel itself, then, that holds ultimate power for salvation-deliverance (Rom 1:16-17).[75] And on the other hand, the deliverance that is assured through loyalty comes indeed through an act of power, though an alternative form of power, the power made manifest in the cross-resurrection of Messiah, not merely through intellectual persuasion narrowly understood. *Pistis* as "submission in loyalty" is not achieved at the level of mental persuasion alone, the level of "the word" alone. Rather, just as loyalty in the earthly arena (of the present age) is typically stimulated especially in response to worldly demonstrations of power (as seen pre-eminently in the Roman empire), so also loyalty in the realm of God's spiritual-cosmic regime (appropriate to the age to come, now reserved in heaven), requires a demonstration of power, the kind of power operating in the very resurrection of Jesus (Phil 2:9-11; 3:20-21). We see once again how the logic of *pistis* as *deditio in fidem*

operates within Paul's thinking. In sum: loyalty is stimulated, on the one hand, through the word of persuasion over against worldly forms of persuasion that require recourse to fleshly power, and on the other hand, it is enlivened through divine power itself, a power that will ultimately prevail over all worldly power, both intellectual and political.

Pistis as Cardinal Social Virtue

Finally, *pistis* is used by Paul to signify the social virtue of faithfulness (fidelity, loyalty, trustworthiness) in human relationships. This is most clearly evident in the fruit of the Spirit, where *pistis* follows "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness," and precedes "gentleness, self-control" (Gal 5:23). "Against these," Paul says, "there is no Law," and they presumably express, or conform to, "the law of Christ" (Gal 6:2; cf. 1 Cor 9:21; Rom 13:8-10). In many other texts, Paul's language is ambiguous enough that it is not entirely clear whether a given reference to *pistis* indicates fidelity toward God or Christ, or fidelity toward one's neighbors or partners. Indeed, in one text, Paul refers precisely to "love and fidelity *both* toward the Lord Jesus *and* toward all the saints" (Phlm 5).[76] Here Paul does not make a sharp distinction between fidelity oriented to God/Christ and fidelity to fellow human beings; these are of one piece. This suggests that in quite a number of other cases, when Paul refers to *pistis*, he speaks of fidelity in general, understanding it to be both toward God/Christ and toward humans. This is likely the case, for instance, when he congratulates the Thessalonians for their "practice of fidelity (*pistis*), work of love, and persistence of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess 1:3).[77] Similarly, the virtues of fidelity and love worn as a breastplate (1 Thess 5:8), appear oriented both to God and to fellow humans (especially in light of the litany of recommended virtues that immediately follow this image; 5:11-23), even as based foundationally on the God who is "faithful" (5:24).

Using a similar ambiguity, Paul often refers to salvation or justification "on the basis of *pistis*" (*ek pisteōs*) in general, not specifying (even contextually) whether the emphasis is on God's fidelity, Messiah's fidelity, or the response of human fidelity.[78] Presumably, the answer is, all of the above.

Conclusion

In current English usage, "belief" and "believe" primarily denote conviction and considering something to be true, and only secondarily trust or confidence in someone or something. Entirely absent from the

connotation of these words is the notion of loyalty and fidelity. Paul's *pistis* and *pisteuein*, on the other hand, have *primarily* to do with loyalty and fidelity, but are inclusive of trust, confidence, and conviction. In those places where modern translations refer to "believers," Paul actually refers to "those who show or come to loyal conviction and confidence." In the absence of a better one-word equivalent, the term "loyalists" would be the best approximation.

Indeed, Paul's expression of *pistis* and *pisteuein* is often framed over against competing claims to one's loyalty, including the competing theo-political claims of the Roman empire. Paul's rhetoric of loyalty to God's Messiah alone posed a powerful, even if sometimes implicit challenge, to the imperial claims on the allegiance of individuals.[79]

One of the advantages of the notion of "loyalty" is that it puts *pistis* into the broader sphere of one's social and political loyalties, not simply relegating it to the domain of private religious beliefs. Christians, in other words, are "Christ-loyalists," "Jesus-loyalists." Having become accustomed to life in a liberal-democratic state, we have been seduced by the notion of the autonomy and self-determination of the individual, and have forgotten that states as "sovereign" entities are still keenly interested in the loyalty (allegiance) of its citizens. Meanwhile, we live as if the obligations of "loyalty" to country, and convictions of "belief" in God operate in separate domains of life. But in the context of various stress points in global dynamics, liberal-democratic states are making an increasing claim on our allegiance, our loyalty. Paul's perspective invites us to discern continually what will be the limits of loyalty offered to any other polity other than that of God's inclusive reign of justice, peace, and the renewal of creation.

The notion of "loyalty" also has the potential to cut between the extremes of those who self-identify as "followers of Jesus," and those who stress "believing in Jesus," or between those who claim to base their Christian faith on the Gospels over against those who claim the supposedly "doctrinal texts" of Paul."[80] On the one hand, loyal trust stresses the performative sense of *pistis* as "loyal conviction," not the merely denotative sense as assent to doctrine. On the other hand, loyalty conjures up an even more fundamental (and still flexible) posture than that of "following," and it implies an honourific dimension, or exalted status of the one to whom loyalty is given, something not always apparent among those who seek simply to "follow" an ethical model bereft of a foundational claim on us.

In this new post-Christendom context, having reclaimed Paul's conceptuality of *pistis*, we may need to self-identify more regularly as "Jesus-loyalists," instead of as "Christians" or "believers."

Chapter 3

The Politics of Worship in Paul's Messianic Assemblies

> For we are the circumcision—those who render due service in/by[1] the Spirit of God, who boast (vaunt their identity) in Messiah Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh. (Phil 3:3)

When Paul uses the language of worship, for instance that of "rendering due service" (*latreuein*, Phil 3:3), he does not refer narrowly or exclusively to what contemporary Christians would think of as worship—ritual acts of religious devotion to God in the gathered assembly. Contrariwise, when Paul refers to activities of the gathered assembly, or to being "in assembly," he does not describe this activity exclusively as engaging in worship in some limited sense. Paul's loyalist believers gathered for more than merely worship (as narrowly conceived), and worship is more than what is done in the gathered community. Moreover, worship in Paul, as with the rest of the New Testament, never appears as some easily isolatable topic, discussed only in its own right. Rather, it is embedded in a variety of related topics, for instance, the Messianic assembly's communal being in the world, the activities and corporate reality of the congregation when gathered, the assembly's oaths of loyalty (creedal affirmations), or the exercise of "spiritual things" for the purpose of the community's edification.[2]

Worship in Paul's writings and assemblies, then, can be looked at from multiple perspectives. In the following discussion, we will first review (1) Paul's vocabulary of "worship." This will lead to (2) a treatment

of what can be known about the communal gatherings of assemblies in Paul's orbit of influence. In conclusion, the essay will offer (3) a synthesis of core elements of Paul's theology of worship.

The Language of Worship in Paul's Writings

Paul, along with the entire Greek New Testament, offers an extensive, rich vocabulary related to the theme of worship, or the act/posture/attitude of devotion or reverence to God. In the NRSV, for example, the English word "worship" occurs eighty-four times in the New Testament, translating five separate word groups. Of these eighty-four occurrences, fifty translate words related to *proskyneō* ("to prostrate oneself"; 61 total occurrences in the NT), twenty-one translate words related to *latreuō* ("to render due service"; 27 total occurrences), ten translate words related to *sebomai* ("to do homage, give reverence, be devoted"; 28 total occurrences), two translate words related to *leitourgeō* (the actual root of "liturgy," literally "to do public service"; 9 total occurrences), and one translates the word *thrēskeia* ("devotion, piety, religion"; 5 total occurrences). None of these words is translated in each of their occurrences with the English word "worship."

In today's usage, the English word for "worship" (when referring to an activity) is reserved for the "religious" exercise of honoring the Deity. By contrast, none of the words that Paul and the rest of the NT used for "worship" refer only to paying homage to the gods or the Deity. Rather, they regularly apply both to devotion to God (or many gods), and to reverencing worthy human beings, including kings and rulers (and institutions, symbols attached to them). Thus, in Paul's world, to pay homage to God alone is itself a crucial gesture with political consequences.

Paul's language of "worship," broadly understood (e.g. as "acts of personal or corporate homage to God"), can be placed into the following categories:

1. to render due service, to serve as a slave, perform public service:

The verb *latreuō* in Greek settings could refer to (a) rendering any kind of paid or due service [based on the noun *latron*, "pay, hire, wages"], as well as (b) serving the gods, giving them due service. In the Septuagint (LXX, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible) this word was used to translate the occurrences of the Hebrew *'bd*, "to serve," especially when it referred to temple or priestly service.[3] The word for "ido*latry*" (*eidōlolatria,* lit. "idol-service," e.g. 1 Cor 10:14) is also based on this root. Paul uses

the verb to refer to his apostolic "service of God in my spirit in the gospel of his Son" (Rom 1:9), and to "service in/by the Spirit of God" in parallel with "boasting in Messiah Jesus" and in contrast to "having confidence in the flesh" as general markers of the Messianic community (Phil 3:3). On the other hand, he uses the verb to denote pagan "service" of the creation (in idolatry) instead of the Creator (Rom 1:25). Paul uses the noun *latreia* (service, service rendered) to refer positively to the Jerusalem temple and its ritual service (Rom 9:4), and to denote the "substantive service" (*logikē latreia*)[4] rendered to God in the form of offering one's entire self (body) to God as a "living sacrifice" (Rom 12:1), in response to God's mercies.

Paul uses the closely related verb "to render slave service" (*douleuō*) and its cognate nouns "slavery" or "slave service" (*douleia*) and slave (*doulos*) also to refer to the yieldedness of a person to God or Christ, notably in reference to apostolic service[5] or to personal and ethical service to God: yielded and offered to God, one "renders slave service [to Christ] in the new life of the Spirit."[6] But Paul also stresses that this slave service operates within the context of liberation and freedom, apart from the constraint of a written law code.[7] This verb is also used for "serving the true and living God" in contrast to idolatry (1 Thess 1:9) and for "serving the Lord" in general, perhaps alluding to the regular practice of corporate worship, but certainly not limited to that (Rom 12:11).[8]

The Greek words from which "liturgy" is derived provide an interesting case (*leitourgeō*, to serve the people, to do public service; *leitourgia*, public duty, act of public benefaction; *leitourgos*, public servant/minister). In Greek contexts these words denote especially public duties and offices in service of the people, a master, the gods (especially by the priests), or the state. In the Septuagint, these words translate the words *srt* (to be an attendant, wait on) and *'bd* (to serve), referring often to priestly or temple service. While some NT writings use these words to refer to the ritual worship of the gathered assembly,[9] Paul uses these words to speak of (a) his sacrificial ministry for the congregation (Phil 2:17), (b) charitable service to the needy (Rom 15:27; 2 Cor 9:12; Phil 2:25, 30), (c) the state as God's "public servant" (Rom 13:6), and (d) his apostolic service in general (Rom 15:16). This last occurrence is used in parallel with the word *hierourgeō*, "to do temple/priestly service" (Rom 15:16), illustrating how the language of "public service" often implied "priestly service." Similarly, other words for "service/ministry" in Paul and rest of the NT are reserved for denoting service rendered to fellow humans (as an expression of obedient loyalty to God, resulting in thanksgiving to God, 2 Cor 9:13) or, less frequently, for human ministry in God's work of redemption, and do not have an overtly ritual or liturgical connotation or usage.[10]

2. to be devoted, be in awe, revere, venerate, show piety:

Significantly, various words regularly used in the Greek world for "religious" devotion, reverence, and piety toward the gods (or to the state and emperor) are relatively absent in Paul, although found more frequently elsewhere in the NT. Thus, Paul uses the common verb *sebomai/sebazomai*, "to worship, honour, venerate," only one time, and in reference to idolatry (Rom 1:25).[11] This avoidance might be because of the common Jewish practice of using this verb to refer to Gentile, monotheist sympathizers closely attached to the synagogue, but not full converts,[12] or because of the common use of this verb in pagan, polytheist practice. Paul uses the word *asebeia* (non-devotion) as a feature of both Gentiles (Rom 1:18, in parallel with their "injustice") and Israel (Rom 11:26) that must be surmounted, and he speaks of God's work as specially targeted to the "non-devoted" (*asebēs*, the "ungodly"; Rom 4:5; 5:6). The word *thrēskeia* (worship, religion, piety, devotion)[13] occurs in Colossians 2:18 to refer to the veneration of angels.

3. to give homage or obeisance, to prostrate oneself:

The most frequently occurring Greek word group translated with the English word "worship" in the NT only occurs one time in Paul.[14] This word *proskyneō* literally denotes "kissing up to," and is used in the NT and in contemporary writings to refer to (a) concrete acts of giving homage (with physical prostration), or (b) more general giving of honour. The English equivalent today would be "to pledge allegiance." In the Septuagint this word translates the Hebrew word *shh*, "to bow down, do homage, prostrate oneself." This kinetic posture is further indicated in the NT in places where the word is coordinated with the imagery of "falling before, falling down" (Matt 4:9; 18:26; Rev 4:10; 5:14; 7:11; 11:16; 19:4, 10; 22:8), "taking hold of one's feet" (Matt 28:9), and blowing "before one's feet" (Rev 3:9). Significantly, the one occurrence of this verb in Paul appears in the context of the specific worship activity of the gathered assembly, and is expressed in parallel with "falling on one's face" (1 Cor 14:25).[15] A closely related image in Paul is that of "bending the knee" before the judicial seat of God (Rom 14:11) or before Christ in an enthronement ceremony (Phil 2:10),[16] in both cases in connection with making an oath of allegiance (citing Isa 49:23-24; below). In general, it could be noted that prostration is a posture for (a) thanksgiving and praise, (b) pledging allegiance/loyalty, or (c) petition and supplication.

4. to swear allegiance, confess, reverence the name:

Closely related to the imagery of prostration is the act of "swearing allegiance," rendering forms of the Greek word *homologia* that are usually but less adequately translated as "confession." The word group related to *homologia* is originally at home in the practice of oath formulations, and that appears to be the case also in Paul's writings.[17] The close connection of "confession, swearing allegiance" with the act of prostration is evident especially in Philippians 2:10-11 and Romans 14:11 (citing Isa 45:23). The language of "swearing allegiance" is also tied to the themes of submission (2 Cor 9:13), of lauding in song (Rom 15:9, citing Ps 18:49), and of demonstrating loyal trust (Rom 10:8; 15:7-13).[18] "Swearing allegiance" is also tied to declaring or reverencing "the name" (Phil 2:9-11; Rom 15:9, 20; 2 Thess 1:12).[19] Accordingly, all activity, whether in word or deed, is to be performed "in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Col 3:17), and formal gatherings of loyalists occur "in the name of the Lord Jesus" (1 Cor 5:4).

5. to give honour, esteem, reverence, respect, status; glorify:

The word "glorify" has gone out of general English use, and is now restricted to "religious" uses. But the Hebrew and Greek words that it usually translates are not limited in that way, and simply mean "to extol, honour, esteem, respect, or revere," whether a person, institution (e.g. ruling dynasty), or divine being. Of its twelve occurrences in Paul, half refer to honouring (or not honouring) God, and the other half apply to honouring humans.[20] Of the former, Paul uses the term in reference to (a) idolatry ("not honouring God," Rom 1:21, parallel to "not giving thanks"), (b) charitable acts as "honouring" God (2 Cor 9:13), (c) "honouring" God with one's personal being (1 Cor 6:20), (d) and more generally "extolling" God as a corporate practice (Rom 15:6, 9; Gal 1:24). The noun *doxa* is etymologically "that which seems," and can refer to "suppositions" or "judgments," but also to having or ascribing social "esteem, reputation, and honour," and finally to "magnificent external appearance and splendour." The word occurs frequently in Paul, and can refer to the "glory" of God or to the "esteem/glory" characteristic of or ascribed to humans (by God or other humans). For the purposes of this essay, most important is the use of *doxa* in doxological formulations that honour God (Rom 4:20; 11:36; 16:27; Gal 1:5; Phil 4:20),[21] and in invitations to act, speak, or sing "for the glory" of God (Rom 15:7; 1 Cor 10:31; 2 Cor 1:20; 4:15; 8:19; Phil 1:11; 2:11).[22] Closely related to this imagery is that of "making [someone] great, exalting [someone]," using the verb *megalynō*.[23] Paul uses this language to describe his resolution to

"make Messiah great" in the course of his defence trial before a Roman imperial tribunal (Phil 1:20).

The language of ascribing "worth" and "worthiness" to God found elsewhere in the NT in worship settings is largely absent in Paul's writings.[24] Paul does, however, use the language of "worthiness" in regard to conduct appropriate to one's identity as a member of God's reign or of Messiah's city-state, or as appropriate to the status of the recipient of hospitable action,[25] and warns against practicing the Lord's supper "unworthily" by not properly "discerning the body" (1 Cor 11:27, 29).

6. to praise publicly, panegyrize, bless:

Closely related to the previous category are words for "praising, lauding, commending publicly." A litany of synonyms appears at the close of Romans through Scriptural quotations, extending the call to give God "honour" (15:6-7): "swear allegiance to God," and "sing songs [of homage] to God's name" (15:9, citing Ps 17:50); "be jubilant" (15:10, citing Deut 32:43); and "panegyrize"[26] and "publicly applaud[27] the Lord" (15:11; citing Ps 117:1). In its context, this entire closing flourish highlights the public acclamation of Messiah's world-wide rule (Rom 15:13, citing Isa 11:10) and has a distinctly theo-political charge.[28] The other occurrence of "praise to God" (used synonymously with "glory to God") is described as the ultimate goal of "the harvest of justice" made manifest in the believing assembly (Phil 1:11).

Reflecting the pattern of doxology in the synagogue (Hebrew *berakah*, blessing), Paul also uses the formula "blessed be God" (Rom 1:25; 9:5; 2 Cor 1:3-4; 11:31).[29] This formula is never used of Christ in Paul, reserved only for blessing God. Paul uses the verb *eulogeō* in the liturgical formula "blessing the cup of blessing" (1 Cor 10:16) and the practice of "blessing in the spirit" (1 Cor 14:16). Words of blessing upon a congregation is expressed by the opening formula "grace and peace to you," reflecting the language of the Aaronic blessing (Num 6:4-6),[30] and by the closing formula "grace be with your spirit."

Paul's language of "boasting in the Lord/Messiah" might also be treated here;[31] but this expression focuses more on the subjective posture of the one making the boast. The same could be said of the somewhat parallel expression, "being glad [rejoicing] in the Lord,"[32] which could be closely associated with "lauding with song" (below), but again emphasizes the subjective state of the one rejoicing.[33]

7. to laud with song:

Public praise of humans or the gods in the Judean and the Greco-Roman worlds was typically rendered in poetry and song, often resembling what

we would call chant. The gathered assembly does not simply sing, it "sings [the praise] *to God*. . .with psalms, hymns, and spiritual odes" (Col 3:16).[34] Other texts confirm that lauding with song was a core feature of worship activities in Paul's network of congregations (1 Cor 14:15-17, 26; Rom 15:5-13).

8. supplication, intercession, and thanksgiving:

The theme of supplication and intercession is extensive in Paul, using words for petition, asking, praying, interceding.[35] The counterpart is the language of thanksgiving. Paul uses the verb *eucharisteō* and the noun *eucharistia* (a) in thanksgivings for food,[36] (b) in thanksgiving for the bread and cup in the Lord's supper,[37] (c) in prayers of thanksgiving on behalf of his readers,[38] (d) in thanksgiving for specific acts of deliverance or service,[39] and (e) in close connection with prayer, petition, prostration, and praise as part of the assembly's corporate worship.[40]

9. to offer acceptable sacrifice or gifts, render priestly service, be God's temple:

The use of sacerdotal and sacrificial imagery is relatively rare in Paul's writings. Paul does speak proudly of the temple "service" (*latreia*) in Jerusalem as one of the great gifts to Israel (Rom 9:4),[41] and he positively describes the practice of priestly livelihood from the sacrifices as an analogy for the rights of envoys of Messiah in preaching the gospel (1 Cor 9:13; 10:18). Accordingly, Paul likens his own apostolic ministry for the gospel as a "priestly ministry" (Rom 15:16). Meanwhile, he can also allude to his suffering in the course of his ministry through the imagery of sacrificial ministry, with himself as the sacrificial victim (Phil 2:17). Paul also proclaims the meaning of Christ's death as both the place where (*hilastērion*, mercy seat), and the sacrificial victim by which ("by his blood"), sins are dealt with (Rom 3:25). He pronounces similarly, "Christ, our paschal lamb, has been sacrificed" (1 Cor 5:7).

Paul also refers to Messiah's community as "the temple," in which the Holy Spirit dwells (1 Cor 3:16-17).[42] Moreover, Paul's language of the assembly as "temple of God" implicates the community as an indissoluble unity, as a place of worship, and as a place of commemorative ritual.[43] Moreover, in response to God's mercies, the dedication of all life in ethical service,[44] the offering[45] of one's whole self "as a sacrifice that is living, holy, and acceptable to God," is the "substantive[46] service" that can be rendered back to God. Accordingly, an act of charitable ministry is "an aroma of fragrance, a sacrifice that is acceptable and

pleasing[47] to God" (Phil 4:18).[48] An opportunity for giving alms (lit. "doing acts of mercy") was apparently part of the corporate worship of the gathered assembly (1 Cor 16:1-4; 2 Cor 8–9).[49]

While Israel's priestly or sacrificial practice is now realized in the context of Messiah's new community, nowhere in Paul is there a rejection of the sacrificial system as such, or the idea that Messianic communities have "replaced" the temple liturgy. For Paul, it seems that Messiah has absorbed the temple liturgy into himself and his community, without invalidating or destroying it.[50]

The "Assembly in Assembly": Worship Activities of the Gathered Community

Nowhere in Paul (or the rest of the NT) is there any reference to "gathering for worship." We do read of "gathering to eat" (1 Cor 11:20, 33),[51] and simply of "gathering/coming together" (1 Cor 5:4; 11:17, 18, 34; 14:23, 26),[52] which apparently includes activities we would call worship.[53] These two expressions, then, seem to refer to gatherings/assemblies where "eating" and "worship" were two major, interrelated components. Paul refers to this combined activity as "gathering in assembly." Paul's preferred word for the "church," *ekklēsia*, is a word that denotes the citizen "assembly" of a Greek city-state, both as the corporate body or institution that does business, but also as the activity of that assembly "in session" (e.g. Acts 19:32, 39-40).[54] Similarly, the congregation in its gathering is explicitly the *ekklēsia* "in *ekklēsia*" (1 Cor 11:18; 14:19, 28). The formality of its gathering "in assembly" is expressed by Paul with the language of "gathering in the name of the Lord Jesus. . .and in the power of our Lord Jesus" in association with the presence of the Spirit (1 Cor 5:4).

Paul's letters give evidence that these gatherings and their observances were characterized by certain established "traditions" or conventional "customs,"[55] suggesting some level of commonality among Paul's circle of congregations. Gatherings, however, were not all of the same sort. Gatherings of "the whole assembly" (Rom 16:23; 1 Cor 14:23) in the locale of a city, for instance, seem to be distinct from gatherings of particular "household assemblies," the smallest unit of the broader "assembly."[56] Major events, such as the annual celebration of the resurrection in connection with Passover, perhaps constituted the occasion for plenary meetings of house assemblies in a given area. Special activities—for judicial assembly (e.g. 1 Cor 5:4-5; 2 Cor 13:1-4), for baptism,[57] for funerals,[58] or for other purposes—might have involved distinct gatherings, or have been incorporated into regular gatherings.

Gatherings were hosted mainly in the homes or apartments of the more relatively wealthy members of an assembly, depending on the size of the gathering, but also (less commonly) in rented space.[59] While some gatherings may have been in the separate *domus* (villa) of a wealthy member, Acts also suggests a common practice of using the upper rooms of the standard multi-story *insula* (apartment complexes), where the first floor was used as artisan or business workspace.[60] Regular gatherings in Paul's network were apparently held weekly, and normally on the "first day of the week."[61] But we should also assume that many assemblies, especially where there was a strong Jewish core, met on the Sabbath. Having gatherings on the "first day" might have made it possible for some members to attend both Jewish Sabbath gatherings, and gatherings specifically in honour of Messiah Jesus.[62]

Gatherings in Paul's network (and beyond) involved some kind of communal meal, formally referred to as "the Lord's supper" (1 Cor 11:17-34) or "the Lord's table" (1 Cor 10:14-22). While Paul considers the entirety of the meal to represent "the Lord's supper," and thus to be observed properly (without social hierarchy and class division) under the aura of solemn divine sanction (1 Cor 10:21-22; 11:27-32), a focal point was the blessing of and participation (*koinōnia*) in the bread and cup (1 Cor 10:16-17; 11:23-29).[63] Paul's advice in 1 Corinthians is not designed to eliminate the communal meal, but to ensure that the communal meal itself is not abused by forms of gluttony, or by having separate tables for the elite apart from the lowly (1 Cor 11:33-34). "The Lord's supper," then, was both an act of social commensality, and at the same time a liturgical event: a remembrance, a sacramental/mystical participation in Christ, and an anticipation of life in the age to come.

Insofar as "eating" was constitutive of gatherings, these assembly events are specifically occasions of hospitality, namely "welcoming one another," and "loving the stranger." This hospitality issue as affecting the possibility of plenary corporate worship is especially problematic in settings where household-based gatherings were divided precisely over disputes about clean and unclean foods (Rom 14:1-15:13). In Rome, for instance, dispute over food in particular is what negated the possibility of all the faithful to acclaim Lord Messiah Jesus "in one voice, in a united gathering" (Rom 15:6-7).[64]

It is also significant that Paul's restrictions on "idolatry" pertain not only to refusing homage to the multiple patron gods of a city, but to participating in the sacred ritual meals (even "liturgical" food handouts by the wealthy elite) in connection with these festivals (1 Cor 10:14-22).[65] For Paul, ritual participation in the Lord's table/supper involves an exclusive loyalty and identity ("you cannot have a part in both the Lord's

table and the table of divinities," 10:21), and thus specifically means an act of dissociation ("uncoupling, unplugging")[66] from the Greek or Roman political community, its altars, and feasts (1 Cor 10:1-22).[67]

Just as eating together "in assembly" was both (a_1) an act of social commensality (a ritual of solidarity) and (b_1) an act of liturgy (*koinōnia* with Christ), so also the non-eating parts of the gathering were designed both (a_2) for corporate and mutual upbuilding (edification), not for private edification,[68] and (b_2) for corporate acts of homage and allegiance toward God, while invoking and celebrating the very presence of God (1 Cor 14:1-40). Some basic elements of this "liturgical" part of the gathered assembly can be discerned from (1) explicit comments about communal activities while assembled (e.g. 1 Cor 5, 9–14; Col 3:15-17), (2) allusions to worship activities in communal gatherings (e.g. Rom 15:5-13; Phil 4:4-7), and (3) features of Paul's letters that seem to embed or replicate liturgical forms and formulations.[69] These elements evidently included some combination of formal greetings[70] or invocations, hymns of doxology or songs of meditation,[71] confessional affirmations[72] or oaths of allegiance, doxological acclamations,[73] prayers of petition or intercession, prayers of thanksgiving, mutual exhortation and teaching,[74] reading of scripture or other edifying literature,[75] words of prophecy and other outbursts of pneumatic ecstasy,[76] offerings for the poor, and closing benedictions and blessings[77] before dispersal. The only reference to any kinetic activity during the assembly is that of prostration, presumably in gestures of homage, loyalty, and supplication.[78] Much of this practice and material is patterned on the liturgy of the local Jewish assembly (the Greek term *proseuchē*, "prayer house," was the common word for the building, indicating the main activity it was known for; the term *synagōgē*, "gathering, assembly," emphasized the group or the gathering that met there). Particular elements showing influence from the Jewish liturgy include the *berakah* pattern of blessing God ("blessed be. . ."), the welcoming or closing grace and peace wish (modeled on the Aaronic blessing, Num 6:4-6), the Aramaic acclamation "Abba" (Rom 8:15; Gal 4:6), the Aramaic Messianic prayer *marana tha* ("O Lord, come!" 1 Cor 16:22), and the Hebrew/Aramaic "Amen."[79]

Paul's emphasis is on orderliness within spontaneity (1 Cor 14:26-33, 36-40), and on mutual participation without hierarchy. The openness to preaching and reading (and prophesying and praying) to any competent member probably reflects Paul's experience of synagogue liturgy.[80] He makes room for both inspired utterance (1 Thess 5:19-20; 1 Cor 14:39)—something characteristic of pagan ritual,[81] not Jewish practice—but also stresses the need for "testing the spirits" (1 Thess 5:21; 1 Cor 14:32). While Paul posits the relative importance or status of some selected gifts

or roles (1 Cor 12:27-30; 14:1), this is moderated by the emphases on the distribution of gifts by the one Spirit to the entire congregation as one body (12:4-13), the interdependence of gifts and functions within the one body (12:14-21), and the inversion of standard measures of status and honour (12:22-26). Thus even his own apostolic role (first in order of importance, 12:28) is framed within the context of mutual exhortation (e.g. Rom 1:11-12).

Just as the "Lord's supper" ritualized the sacred oneness and mutuality of the assembly, so also the non-eating worship activities emphasized the same. Thus, we must assume that Paul rejected any seating arrangement that ritualized social distinctions or hierarchies (as in the practice of the Lord's supper).[82] This would also explain why neither the distribution of gifts, nor speaking "in assembly," is restricted by gender,[83] even if different rules of head attire for men and women must be distinguished (1 Cor 11:3-16). Finally, Paul assumes that gatherings are open and welcoming, including both the uncommitted and the uninitiated; to that extent, the gatherings also have a witness horizon (1 Cor 14:20-24, citing Isa 45:14):

> For if the whole assembly gathers in the same place, and all are speaking in tongues, and uninitiated or uncommitted people should enter, will they not say (to others) that you are mad.
> But if all are prophesying, and uncommitted or uninitiated people should enter, they will be convicted by all, they will be adjudicated by all, and the hidden things of their hearts will be made manifest (to themselves); and so falling on their face, they will give homage to God, declaring (to others) that "God is certainly among you" (Isa. 45:14).

This final citation of Isaiah 45:14 (which alludes to the *Shema Israel*, Deut 6:4-6) is especially significant in that it occurs in a passage that emphasizes the universal lordship of God, and the final yielding of all peoples, both Israel and the idolatrous nations, within the scope of that lordship (Isa 45:14-25).[84] That is, the worship of God is decidedly theo-political and eschatological, anticipating with hope the future whereby God's restoration and rule of the cosmos is complete.

Excursus: Depictions of Early Christian Gatherings in Pliny the Younger and Justin Martyr

The earliest depictions of early Christian worship do not appear till the second century. One is by the Roman provincial governor of Pontus-

Bithynia (northern Asia-Minor) writing to the Emperor Trajan around the year 112, seeking advice on how to deal with those who are accused of being "Christian."[85] The second is by Justin Martyr (ca. 100-165), whose defense ("First Apology") of the Christian faith and practice is formally addressed to the Emperor Antonius Pius around 150-155 CE. Both of these imply that what was done "in assembly" was of significant concern to the Roman imperial authorities, who kept a close watch on unlicensed clubs and associations of various kinds for possible acts of disloyalty, treason, or sacrilege (acts of religious sacrilege are coterminous with acts of political sedition).

In his letter to Trajan, Pliny first details how he has proceeded with trials involving Christians. This mainly involved interrogation upon the threat of death, inviting the accused to renounce their faith by bowing before the image of the emperor and the statues of the Roman gods. Those who refused were executed, although those among them who were Roman citizens were shipped to Rome for further trial. According to Pliny, accused Christians who had recanted, sometimes after torture,

> affirmed, however, that the sum and substance of their fault or error had been that they were accustomed to meet on a fixed day before dawn and sing responsively a hymn to Christ as to a god, and to bind themselves by oath, not to some crime, but not to commit fraud, theft, or adultery, not falsify their trust, nor to refuse to return a trust when called upon to do so. When this was over, it was their custom to depart and to assemble again [in the evening?] to partake of food—but ordinary and innocent [non-sacral] food. Even this, they affirmed, they had ceased to do after my edict by which, in accordance with your instructions, I had forbidden political associations (*hetaeria*).[86] Accordingly, I judged it all the more necessary to find out what the truth was by torturing two female slaves who were called ministers (*ministrae*; Gk, *diakonoi*). But I discovered nothing else but a crooked and unrestrained superstition.[87]

In Pliny's letter, then, we see a separation of the practices of sacred worship and of gathering for a meal.

In Justin Martyr, however, we find a two-part service of what could be called "word and sacrament." In the process of explaining Christian doctrine and practice to non-Christians, Justin describes the ritual of baptism and of incorporating new members into the church, which includes prayers, the saluting of one another with the holy kiss, and concludes with the Eucharist, which is more fully described (*First*

Apology 61-66). Justin then describes (ch. 67) the weekly worship:[88] "And on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits; then, when the reader has ceased, the presider[89] verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things. Then we all rise together and pray, and, as we before said, when our prayer is ended, bread and wine and water are brought, and the presider in like manner offers prayers and thanksgivings, according to his ability, and the people assent, saying Amen;[90] and there is a distribution to each, and a participation of that over which thanks have been given, and to those who are absent a portion is sent by the ministers/servers (*diakonoi*). And they who are well to do, and willing, give what each thinks fit; and what is collected is deposited with the presider, who helps the orphans and widows and those who, through sickness or any other cause, are in want, and those who are in bonds and the strangers sojourning among us, and in a word takes care of all who are in need."[91]

Synthesis and Conclusion

(1) Members of Messianic assemblies certainly engaged in what we would call acts of "personal devotion," and in acts of ritual as families or households (especially through blessings at meal time, in continuity with Jewish practice). Paul therefore speaks of how he personally "renders due service to God in/with my spirit" (Rom 1:9), referring however not merely to religious acts of personal devotion, but broadly to the dedication of his whole being in all of its activities (cf. Rom 12:1). Key elements of Paul's "personal devotion" included prayer,[92] mystical/ecstatic experiences "in the spirit,"[93] performance of vows,[94] and perhaps fasting.[95] Paul also encourages all the faithful to engage in the regular practice of prayer and thanksgiving to God (e.g. Phil 4:4-7; 1 Thess 5:17-18). Moreover, some pneumatic activities, he says, are designed especially for individual edification in private (1 Cor 14:4, 17, 28).

(2) But Paul's language and theology of worship pertains mainly to what the Messianic community does as a community. Thus, even where Paul emphasizes the dedication of "your bodies" as a living sacrifice as "substantive service" (Rom 12:1-2), he uses the plural form of "you," and means this dedication as distributed, individual, and participatory acts of corporate being and practice. Accordingly, Paul presents the outworking of this dedication in the scope of corporate life and liturgy (12:3–15:13).

(3) The empowering presence of the Spirit is a critical aspect of Paul's understanding of "worship,"[96] whether in regard to the service of

the individual or that of the community, and whether in terms of more narrowly understood ritual practices of worship or the broader display of homage to God and Christ in individual or the community's service in the world.[97] Indeed, Paul depicts his ministry in service of a "new covenant" as part of "the ministry of the Spirit" (2 Cor 8:6-8). It is through and in the Spirit, therefore, that the loyal believer acclaims God as "Abba" (Rom 8:15; Gal 4:6) and Jesus as "Lord" (1 Cor 12:3; cf. 8:6). While "in assembly," then, the community liturgically experiences the very presence of God (1 Cor 14:25), the power of Christ (1 Cor 5:4), and the expression of "spiritual things" (*pneumatika*; 1 Cor 12–14).

(4) Liturgy enacts loyalty. Paul's language, theology, and liturgy of worship is decidedly theo-political, both in terms of the ritual activities the community practices and in terms of its very being as Messiah's alternative community that exemplifies and announces God's restoring work in the world. Just as the gods of the empire or the gods of a city-state have a polity, so also the one God has a polity.[98] And just as the sacral community and the political community were coterminous in the ancient world, so also the sacral and political dimensions of Christ's community are inseparable. Worship, therefore, is an expression of exclusive loyalty to, and (mystical-sacramental-corporate) participation in Christ, whereby the assembly becomes Christ's very body. It is for this reason, then, that Messiah-followers are advised to avoid the civic-imperial festivals in their community (1 Cor 10:1-22). The reason for this avoidance, then, is not simply "religious," but more deeply "theo-political." Worship in Paul's perspective is holistic, embracing multiple dimensions at the same time. At the core, however, is the posture of pledging allegiance both in sacred ritual (where vows of loyalty are renewed and reenacted) and in dedicated service in all of life. The politics of worship in Paul's network of communities, then, includes distinctly counter-imperial (and counter-idolatrous) resonances in its creedal affirmations.[99]

(5) But the politics of worship in Paul's letters is also about alternative community (polity) formation under Christ's lordship. This alternative community formation is expressed both "in assembly" (in its ritual and social activities as a gathered community), but also in its being and activity in the location(s) where it exists ("in the world" or "in the flesh" more generally, and "in local communities" more particularly). It is for this reason, it seems, that Paul is intent on ensuring that the gathered community, when "in assembly," expresses a being and a practice that is entirely non-hierarchical, non-sacerdotal (no cultic priests, as in Judaism or in civic and imperial cults), and mutual (esp. 1 Cor 11:17-34; 12:12-26), representing not only the new reality of Messiah already in the world, but also the final renewal of all things, of which Messiah's body is the micro-cosmic and

provisional anticipation. In this politics of worship in anticipation, former structures of divisions and identities are transformed and reframed (Gal 3:26-28). Strikingly, therefore, while Paul acknowledges the dimension of leadership in his communities (e.g. 1 Cor 16:16; 1 Thess 5:12-13), when it comes to the community in sacral assembly (which more than anything represents what is to come) there is no hint of order established by proper leadership, but only by proper exercise of the mutuality of gifts (1 Cor 14).[100] Liturgy enacts and enlivens a polity in anticipation—the polity of the age to come.

Part Two

Mutuality

Chapter 4

The One and the Many, the Part and the All: Unity and Diversity in Messiah's Body Politic

Paul's pastoral rhetoric frequently engages the issue of unity and diversity, in close connection to core themes of the gospel. This essay will attempt to schematize Paul's contribution in this area, while acknowledging that his varied exhortations or arguments emerge as contextual, fluid, and interventionist persuasion that often resists systemization. Paul does not treat the subject in the abstract, and his perspective on unity and diversity is itself marked by unity and diversity; his approach is varied and flexible, even if fundamentally coherent. His interest in various types and levels of diversity and of unity has much to offer contemporary readers.

The part and the all: *Differences and disparities that divide human beings will one day be overcome in God's ultimate act of cosmic re-unification.*

A crucial premise for any discussion of ecclesial unity and diversity in Paul's thought must be his eschatological vision, his world-transformational hope. Paul's mission is framed and energized by a vision of the imminent arrival of the universal reign of God, through the faithful agency of Messiah. For Paul, this goal of a restored creation means the ultimate merging of heaven and earth, overcoming the most fundamental division in the universe, so that God's imperial reign will be

universal, and "God will be all in all." Sometimes Paul pictures this drama as world-subjection,[1] and sometimes as world-reconciliation.[2]

Central to this vision is the notion that God's reign will ultimately embrace all humanity, overcoming not only the binary distinction between "Israel" and "the nations," but also the binary of belief and unbelief itself, loyalty and disobedience (Rom 11). In a grand drama of interdependence, the portion enlarges into the "fullness of the nations," and the remnant is reabsorbed into "all Israel." Paul bases this conviction on four logics: (1) God's overcoming of enmity through love, (2) the greater persistence of divine fidelity over human infidelity, (3) an asymmetrical economy of restorative justice, in which mercy ultimately transfigures distributive justice, and (4) the inevitably universal sovereignty and reconciling work of Messiah.[3]

But since theological assertion in Paul's writings never stands by itself, we must ask to what rhetorical end Paul makes these claims. The main target has to do with growing arrogance among the faithful of non-Jewish descent, not only over many Torah-observant faithful of Jewish descent (Rom 14-15), but also over the disloyal "root" of Israel more generally (Rom 11).[4] Paul's worry when he pens Romans 11, as he looks both east and west from Corinth (Rom 15-16), has to do with the global unity of Messiah-loyalists. Paul is very much aware that the growing gap between "denominationally" organized and increasingly separated house assemblies in Rome is being played out on the global scene more generally (the Judean assemblies vs. the assemblies of Asia and Greece).

Not only that: Paul is also confounded, despite his visionary resilience,[5] by unrealized eschatological hopes that relate precisely to what God's people is supposed to look like on the way to this cosmic goal. The concrete issue has to do with persistent disbelief by some (the occasion of massive anguish and grief),[6] but also pride of status among others—in particular, claims about who is in and who is out, left behind, disinherited, and on the way to inevitable destruction. Paul's rigorous rejoinder is that the persistent unbeliever (even hostile opponent) is always the one to whom God's mercy never ends. Identity and status, therefore, are mediated only on the basis of what is to come, never solely on what is in the past, or even what is in the present. Paul's eschatological horizon allows no room for any final ecclesial self-assurance, nor any confidence in a presumed destiny of the other, the unbeliever, or the enemy.

The assembly of Messiah, then, is the prefigurative, provisional, interim eschatological community, living as a sign of, in anticipation of, and in alignment with God's cosmic re-unification of all things, when the part merges into the fullness. In effect, the church exists to lose itself in the fullness. But two other crucial premises should also be noted. For

Paul, the Messianic community is that body politic patriotically loyal only to Lord Messiah Jesus. Incorporation into this global political community (*ekklēsia*) is by an act of "loyalty" (a pledging allegiance which includes conviction/belief and trust), and ongoing participation in that assembly is expressed and assessed by the "obedience" appropriate to that "loyalty-fidelity"—conduct worthy of Messianic citizenship.[7] Paul is not interested in particular boundary definitions as much as fundamental loyalty to Messiah, expressed through virtues, not casuistry. Finally, the assembly is as much an act of God in the world through the agency of Messiah, as a community of human willing, running, and acting. There is a divine energy and sovereignty in Paul's thought that confounds our modern liberal notions of the ultimacy of individual autonomy and freedom of choice (whether we think of how things happen, or of who is to be included and who should be excluded).

The one and the many: *What about differences in the present order of time?*

As for the diverse reality of the Messianic assembly as interim "part" in the present order of time, Paul uses the imagery of the "one" amid the "many" at critical junctures. This imagery occurs specifically in reference to (a) the baptismal unity of the new community, highlighting the notion of an incorporating rebirth that transcends or suspends other identities, rankings, and loyalties;[8] (b) the celebration of Lord's table;[9] and (c) the diversity of gifts, functions, and members, where it applies not just to harmonious interpersonal relationships, but also to giving greater honour to "dishonourable" members.[10]

When we trace exhortations that express the notion of "being of one mind" or of "having the same mentality" we find a similar diversity of use: (a) in caution about social ranking relative to gifts;[11] (b) in challenge against "superior thinking," arrogance, and status-seeking, in contrast to solidarity with the lowly;[12] (c) in confrontation against factions and divisions;[13] (d) in encouragement toward solidarity among leaders;[14] and (e) in exhortation to maintain a common front of loyalty to the gospel in the face of external pressure.[15] When Paul uses this wording of "thinking the same," or "having the same mind," he refers primarily to regarding each other to be of the "same" rank, value, or status, or to holding to a common purpose (in contrast to "thinking high" or "thinking of oneself"), not to having the very "same" ideas or thoughts, in the sense of unanimity of opinion.

For analytic purposes, we might say that sometimes Paul's discourse on unity and diversity in the new community addresses (1) issues that

involve biological and social factors of human life, and at other times (2) matters of conviction and practice that pertain to fundamental loyalty to Messiah. But even these two arenas are not always kept distinct. Paul's disputes with some congregations over matters that we might consider theological or ethical are inseparably linked to, and perhaps stem from, questions of social status and rank distinctions, or from ethno-cultural identities. For instance, Paul's discourse in 1 Corinthians on crucifixion (ch. 1) and resurrection (ch. 15), and on communion (ch. 11) and gifts (ch. 12), is in large measure a way to get at disputes deriving from disparities in social, educational, and economic status that have plagued the congregation.

If we focus, first, on how Paul understands the ecclesial meaning of those differences and disparities that pertain to biological and social factors of human life, we can distinguish four categories.

First, there are biological and social "givens" that stem from birth or birthright.[16] These include those binary distinctions of (a) male/female, (b) Jew/Greek (that is, genealogical community, which for Paul does not signify ethnic or cultural differences in the modern sense of multicultural arbitrariness, but genealogical community defined by birth, with its attendant customs), and (c) slave/free (that is, legal status as a function of birthright). The emphasis on re-birth or re-creation in Messiah as that which re-orients the meaning of these differences confirms that Paul perceives these categories primarily as functions of birth.[17]

Second, there are what we would term class or economic differences, evident in Paul's reference to the powerful and weak, the rich and poor (1 Cor 1-4; 2 Cor 8), and even the wise and foolish, a disparity based on the privilege of education (1 Cor 1; Rom 1). Even these differences, Paul admits, are largely functions of birth, even though not enshrined in law (as with slavery), such that he can refer to this "class" distinction in terms of the "well-born" and the "non-born," as a way to highlight its honour/shame implications (1 Cor 1:26-28).

Third, there are individual differences not primarily attributable to genealogical or social givens, or to class standing, namely those various abilities and functions of the many, as energized by the Spirit for the common good: for instance, gifts of public speaking or of knowledge (2 Cor 10; 1 Cor 2).

Finally, but most importantly for Paul, all of these in some way contribute to the construction of status and honour (inferior/superior; honourable/shameful; boasting/despising), which in many ways is the most critical disparity that Paul confronts concretely. Paul lives in a society ranked especially by status/honour-consciousness,[18] oriented around some combination of the prior three factors. Paul is far more

concerned about disparities of status/honour constructions pertaining to any or all of the factors above, than about class or economic means by itself, or even ethnicity by itself.

What, then, does Paul suggest we should do with these types of difference and disparity? We could schematize Paul's approach as follows.

1. Some differences are negated or suspended, and must be disregarded, by virtue of incorporation "in Messiah," a realm which anticipates the final eschatological reunion.

Here we can include those differences that pertain to certain "givens" of birth: sexual differentiation, genealogical community, and legal status. Paul indicates that these differences are in some way negated,[19] through the process of absorption into the body (politic) of Messiah.[20] But the question is what is meant concretely by this negation? Does Paul propose simply that an attitudinal shift must take place in how a person is regarded, while the structures of the status quo are maintained?

It is sometimes claimed that Paul consistently applied only the negation of the Jew/Gentile binary, while compromising on the male/female and slave/free binaries, for reasons of practicality or because of his own internalization of prevailing norms. There is some truth to this; but the matter is actually more complex. Paul's particular solutions in this area must be framed in connection with three factors.

First, Paul understands these binary constructions largely as givens of birth, and not generally amenable to change, insofar as they entail being and status "in the flesh" or "in the world." But, at the same time, there is being and status "in Messiah" and "in the assembly."[21] As givens of birth, these are things that one should not seek to change "in the flesh," with the proviso that a slave might make use of the opportunity of freedom if it should come.[22] But "in Messiah" and "in the assembly" all this is negated, while at the same time those other structures remain. One can only imagine the tension, perhaps the contradiction (from our perspective), that while masters will still have slaves, during the time of the assembly any disparity based on that difference must come to an end. Paul seems to think of the actual time of congregational assembly as a distinct, liminal space in which the final goal of cosmic re-creation is socially and ritually enacted, when no one who is poor can be humiliated by common banquet practice (as they are "in the flesh"), and when all join at the table without any status hierarchy or honour distinction (1 Cor 11:17-34).

Second, any hierarchical given "in the flesh" is subject to inversion in the arena "of Messiah" (see further below): "for the person called in the

Lord when a slave is a freedperson of the Lord; likewise, the person called who was free is a slave of Messiah" (1 Cor 7:22). The further radicality of the letter to Philemon is that Paul requests that Philemon make the slave Onesimus free not only "in the Lord" but also "in the flesh," that is, that Philemon grant freedom because of his "usefulness" in the work of the gospel (Phlm 11, 16). In the main, however, the negation (or inversion) of prevailing structures of the world happens most fully in the sacred space of the actual ecclesial assembly, when the charisma of the Spirit reigns supreme (1 Cor 12), not status and roles attached to being "in the flesh." We can thus understand the severity Paul attaches to "disregarding the body," when those who have nothing are "humiliated" in the sacred, ritual space of the gathered, banqueting community (1 Cor 11).

Third, for Paul these binaries of existence in the world will soon be overcome in the age to come, to which their final negation can be deferred. Just as justice must be deferred (as a warrant for non-retaliation, Rom 12:17-21), so also Paul proposes that other transformations pertaining to life "in the flesh" or "in the world" can also wait, because the "structures of the world are passing away" (e.g. 1 Cor 7:29-31). Apocalyptic mentality is paradoxically both revolutionary (in creating liminal spaces that unplug from the prevailing structures and norms) but also conservative (by inviting people to wait, to defer in matters pertaining to the world as a whole).

The problem of the legacy of Paul's voice is that once apocalyptic urgency is removed, what remains is a conservative affirmation of the status quo: let slaves and women stay in their place, even in the assembly (as becomes the prevailing view by the middle of the second century). The imperative for us is either to recover the exigency of radical apocalyptic destabilization, or to rethink agency. In other words: Paul puts the emphasis entirely on Messianic agency in the eschatological drama.[23] In what ways, however, must Messiah's assembly today take on a greater risk of agency in the world (never mind in its own midst), in light of a different eschatological situation?

2. Some differences are necessary and must be celebrated.

Here we can include those differences that concern individual gifts, abilities, and functions, which aid the common good. In addition, even though Paul does not mention this specifically, we might include here the variation of culture and gender as a specific benefit for the community and its ministries. Even Onesimus, though bound by his slavery, is thought to be a special "useful" asset to Paul's ministry. We should also observe that the Spirit's bountiful distribution of "charisma" on all

members is blind to structures of "order" or givens of birth, whether those of gender, genealogical community, or legal status. It is undoubtedly the charismatic nature of early Jesus-loyalist communities that accounts for the prominent roles of women in ministry and leadership, which at various times still conflicts with prevailing social norms (both outwardly, or internally, in the form of ambivalence, as seems the case with Paul).

3. Some differences and disparities must be eradicated or minimized.

Two key images need to be considered here. One is the vision of ecclesial "equity" in economic terms (2 Cor 8:13-14). While Paul acknowledges the role of donors (Rom 12:8), he explicitly rejects the system of patronage that accompanied most gift-giving in his society. Rejecting the balanced reciprocity of patronage relationships, Paul promotes a kind of general reciprocity as typical of village societies, which treats differences of means and needs as temporary. Acts of giving and receiving therefore imply no hierarchy of status or honour. Paul's commitment to refuse any subsidy and to work with his hands is directly tied to this rejection of the patronage/benefaction system. In the one case where he does accept subsidy, he carefully frames it in terms of the second key image: "partnership" (Phil 1:5, 7; 4:14, 15).

The imagery of "partnership" in Paul expresses his commitment to a mutualism that seeks to mitigate economic disparity and hardship, while refusing paternalism. Paul thus exhorts "partnership with the needy" (Rom 12:13) along with "solidarity with the lowly" (Rom 12:16), and refers to the massive undertaking of financial aid for the poor in Jerusalem as an expression of "partnership" (2 Cor 8-9; Rom 15). Indeed, he acknowledges that this mutualism of economic support is an integral part of a deeper "partnership" in the gospel enterprise (Gal 2:9-10). The financial gift for Jerusalem is meant not only to assist those in need, but also as a symbol of the world-wide unity of the Messianic community, and no doubt as a peace offering in the midst of the emerging rift in that new community. Paul emphasizes that it represents an exchange in kind (a mutualism of the spiritual and material), without presuming patronage one way or the other (Rom 15:14-33).

4. Some disparities based on difference are subject to inversion.

As hinted above, Paul's interest peaks, and his rhetoric becomes most radical, when it comes to (dis)establishing status and honour. The classic text on the inversion of the prevailing status and honour system of his

world is 1 Corinthians 1:26-31 (along with 2:1-8; 3:18-23; 4:6-21; 11:17-34; 12:4-26), which functions to shame (some of) his status-preoccupied Corinthian readers.

Paul's shaming sarcasm continues in 2 Corinthians, climaxing with his own ironic claim to status by boasting in weakness.[24] Philippians also includes calls to divest from status and honour, in accordance with the path of Messiah's humiliation and exaltation, which parodies Roman imperial claims and undermines prevailing social norms (Phil 2–3). This concern to invert status constructions is sprinkled across Paul's letters: others are to be considered "superior" in rank to oneself (Phil 2:3); the sign of devoted love for one another is to "outdo one another in showing honour" (Rom 12:10); one must "associate with the lowly," regard each other as having the "same" status, and refuse to consider oneself in "superior" terms (Rom 12:16). The model is Messiah "who though rich became poor for your sake" (2 Cor 8:9).[25] Indeed, Paul invites his congregations to imitate his own pathway of status divestment, patterned on the model of Messiah.[26]

Finally, we turn to consider differences that we might label as theological or ethical, while recognizing that these are intertwined (overlaid) with variations that we can identify as regional-political, socio-cultural, or even economic.

5. Some differences are to be challenged and confronted.

For Paul, those variations in conviction and practice that are inconsistent with loyalty to Messiah must be confronted and rectified through mutual exhortation or disciplinary procedures. These pertain to (1) idolatry, especially participation in civic festivals dedicated to local deities, which would have included aspects of the imperial cult (1 Cor 10:1-22) and (2) ethical immorality (1 Cor 5-6; 1 Thess 4), not to any ontological precision in christological confession (as would become crucial at a later time). Behaviour displaying (egregious) disloyalty to Messiah is subject to internal disciplinary procedure (1 Cor 5; 2 Cor 2, 7), and met with threats of potential[27] exclusion from the reign of God (1 Cor 5, 10). These judicial proceedings may result in punishments (2 Cor 2, 7), or decisions to exclude members from local assemblies (1 Cor 5), but do not include pronouncements on an individual's final destiny, which is left in God's hands (e.g. 1 Cor 5:5).

We might also include here Paul's confrontation (indeed, cursing) of those who preach a "different gospel," his disparagement of "false brothers and sisters," and his confrontation of Peter in (connection with "men from James") in the name of "the truth of the gospel" (Gal 1-2).

The issue in these cases has to do with controversy over matters of Torah-observance appropriate to loyalty to Messiah, and thus for some a marker for inclusion or exclusion. Paul also attacks opponents in 2 Corinthians for preaching a "different gospel" and a "different Jesus" from the one they received, but the particular issues at stake remain vague. Most likely the disloyalty warranting such attack has to do with a combination of moral laxity and status pre-occupation (of the sort that rejects the cruciform way of solidarity with the lowly and its inversion of prevailing status norms).[28] Key non-negotiables for Paul, against any mere spiritualizing of the salvation drama, are the crucified Messiah and its implications for a cruciform pathway of life (1 Cor 1-2), and the resurrection, which guarantees and anticipates the final victory of Messiah over all other rule, and undermines preoccupation with worldly status (1 Cor 15; Phil 2-3).

6. Some differences are to be approached through mutual forbearance, accommodation, and deferment to God.

We can roughly schematize the ecclesial situation in Paul's day as one in which the ethno-religious, regional-geographic, socio-political, economic, and confessional divergences among early Messiah-loyalists had fallen into two main "denominations": the majority of congregations (house churches) in urban centres of the Greco-Roman world on the one hand, and the congregations in Judea and Jerusalem, along with the remainder of congregations in urban centres, on the other. We might accordingly speak of those within the sphere of Paul and his associates, and those congregations within the sphere of Peter and James (Gal 2:1-10).[29]

The most important text in this connection is Romans 14–15. We are accustomed to thinking about the particular issues at stake here, and those for which we are therefore to forbear, as applying only to those things that are *adiaphora*, that is, indifferent, not significantly consequential. But that would hardly be the view of both parties. What was a matter of indifference to one group (Paul and "the strong") was a matter that for the other party (the "weak") involved the negation of the very status of the word of God, the essence of God's covenant.[30]

What we in fact find is that Paul's approach to some forms of confessional-ethical variation differs according to context. In Galatians, Paul is uncompromising in cursing his theological opponents (from the "other" denomination), all for the sake of defending the status in Messiah's community of those not of Jewish birth. And his rhetoric leads him to undermine almost completely the entire word of God, negating all those Mosaic commandments (in God-inspired scripture) that have to do with purity and separation. But in Romans, as he contemplates the emerging

rift between these very two communities, both locally in Rome and globally across the Mediterranean, his approach moderates significantly.

While Paul could use Peter's supposed hypocrisy in Galatians for very effective persuasion in solidifying the integrity of his congregations (Gal 2:11-14), we must also appreciate that Peter, no less than Paul, was simply trying to be "all things to all people" (1 Cor 9:19-23). Paul can hardly have been naïve to the fact that it is easy to accommodate to either community (those under the Law, and those not) when those communities don't interact, and are not aware of the shift in the conduct of the one doing the travelling, whether Peter or himself. But when those who seek to mediate the middle (and transgress the boundaries) are put to the test from their respective community of primary responsibility or affiliation (Gal 2:7-8), they will inevitably be forced to move one way or the other. Peter was forced one way, to protect the integrity of his community, while Paul was forced the other way, to protect the status of his community.

In Romans, however, Paul is desperately seeking a rapprochement between the two communities that he (ironically) helped to push apart in Galatians. With the integrity of his Gentile congregations assured, but with the (more?) worrisome trend that many of them would prefer to disinherit those of Judaic descent, the terms of his rhetoric shift, for the sake of the deeper and broader unity of Messiah's people, both locally and globally.

Paul has not changed his position ("I know and am persuaded in the Lord that nothing in itself is unclean," Rom 14:14), but now he asks the (liberal) "strong" who share that view to accommodate to the views of the (conservative) "weak," inviting them to consider limits to their legitimate "freedom" and evident "knowledge." Paul pleads for one side to cease "despising" and for the other to desist "judging." Ultimately, Paul says, the final determination as to what counts for loyalty to Messiah (for the strong) and fidelity to the word of God (for the weak) will have to be deferred to the heavenly tribunal (Rom 14:10-12).

In effect, Paul does not think everything can be fully solved by the internal, ecclesial procedure of theo-ethical discernment; indeed, some matters of grave importance to many, must be deferred to God.[31] But equally clear is that Paul is also not content with a false unity founded on perpetual separation, harmony through avoidance. He pleads, therefore, that parties embroiled in vigorous and divisive dispute about what constitutes Messianic fidelity (the key category for some) in relation to what constitutes scriptural fidelity (the key norm for others)[32] might somehow still be able to "welcome one another" in the mutuality of table fellowship, so that the world will hear the "one voice" of their allegiance to the God of Lord Messiah Jesus.

Chapter 5

Partnership and Equality: Paul's Economic Theory

> Every state (*polis*) is as we see a sort of partnership (*koinōnia*), and every partnership is formed with a view to some good (since all the actions of all mankind are done with a view to what they think to be good). It is therefore evident that, while all partnerships aim at some good, the partnership that is the most supreme of all and includes all the others does so most of all, and aims at the most supreme of all goods; and this is entitled the state (*polis*), the political partnership (*koinōnia politikē*). (Aristotle, *Politics* 1.1252a; trans. H. Rackham)

> Be in partnership (*koinōneō*) with the needs of the saints. . . Be in association with the lowly. (Rom 12:13, 16)

The theme of the "commons" or "that in which one partners or shares" (*koinōnia*) is central to the political philosophies of both Plato and Aristotle.[1] So also, *koinōnia* is a central feature of Paul's Messianic politics, the polity of Christ's community. But whereas Plato, Aristotle, and other Greco-Roman thinkers limited that notion to some kind of proportionality that favoured some members of the *polis* (city-state) over others, Paul radicalizes the notion. Paul envisions the Messianic polity as a global partnership, committed to a redistributive program that moves toward "equality" (*isotēs*), against the redistributive, tributary machinery of the Roman imperium that moves toward ever greater inequality. As Lawrence Welborn has shown, whereas thinkers in antiquity applied notions of equality mainly to the spheres of friendship,

the cosmos, or politics (e.g. *isonomia*, *isopoliteia*; equality of legal, political rights), Paul is the first author in antiquity to use the term "equality" in a specifically economic sense. And whereas prevailing thinking stressed a proportional equality among those of varying degrees of friendship or status, Paul proclaimed the goal of working toward a real economic "equality" between the haves and have-nots.[2]

This chapter will begin by reviewing Paul's most ambitious project of *koinōnia*—the "collection" for the poor of Judea as a measure of global redistribution. Following this, we will consider Paul's understanding of how economic mutuality operates within local assembly settings, and then observe his perspective on his own economic relationships with various assemblies. We will find that in all of these settings, the language of "partnership" is consistently applied. Space will not permit a review of the related matter of profiling the actual economic level or status of members of the Pauline communities.[3]

"Remembering the Poor": Paul's Global Redistributive Endeavour[4]

It is not often recognized that Paul spent a large portion of his waking energy organizing among urban Messianic loyalists in the Gentile world a relief fund for his fellow Messianic compatriots of Judea, impoverished by food shortages caused by both famine and the Roman empire's tributary system of economic extraction from conquered territories. But Paul does not promote just charity and benevolence; rather, in this project he champions in concrete terms the goal of mutualism, partnership, and equality with the lowly and poor.

From isolated passages in Paul's writings and the Book of Acts, the main contours of this venture can be discerned.

(1) The Commitment to Partnership: Around the year 48 CE, at the end of his visit with the "pillars" of the mother community in Jerusalem, during which he sought endorsement for his version of the gospel and a clarification of his sphere of missionary operations, a "partnership" was solemnized "with the right hand":[5] Paul and Barnabas would go to the Gentiles and they would go to the circumcised (Gal 2:1-9). But included in the terms of this "partnership" was a specific commitment requested by the Jerusalem leaders that Paul and Barnabas "remember the poor." For his part, Paul claims that he was in fact "eager to do this very thing" (Gal 1:10). This request was not at all a burdensome imposition balancing their concession that Paul was free to preach his Torah-free gospel to the non-Jews.[6] In fact, his Galatian readers (to whom he is writing a few years later) had already heard Paul make

appeals for contributing to a fund earmarked for the poor (1 Cor 16:1).

But, who are the "poor" here, and what is meant by "remembering" them? And why did the Jerusalem leaders ask for this specific commitment?[7] Two sides of an answer can be embraced. On the one hand, it appears that "poor" refers to the destitute anywhere, and that the leaders wished to ensure that the economic mandate of the gospel not be forgotten or compromised as Paul preached the gospel to the relatively wealthy urbanites of the Greco-Roman world. After all, a commitment to economic partnership, as a way to ensure no one among them was destitute, appears to have been a feature of the Jerusalem community from the very beginning (Acts 2:43-47; 4:32-5:11; 6:1-6).[8] On the other hand, it is appears that the "poor" referred in some way to the needy specifically in impoverished Judea, whether the destitute of the region in general,[9] or the specifically "poor" congregations of Judea and Jerusalem.[10] Indeed, some have thought that the term "poor" is especially an honourific self-designation of the assembly of Jerusalem, and that the leaders wished Paul simply not to forget about them, the mother community. In either case, the emphasis is on a broader relationship of partnership between Paul's increasingly Gentile assemblies, and the predominantly Judaic assemblies in Judea.[11] Even if the "poor" was a sort of label for the assembly, its economic aspect was not lost on Paul.

(2) After this initial commitment around 48 CE to "remember the poor" as part of the establishment of a "partnership," we are in the dark as to whether and how Paul worked toward mutual aid in particular local settings or with global relationships.[12] The first certain evidence for a collection specifically designed for distribution to Jerusalem is from 1 Corinthians (ca. 52-54 CE), where he assumes that his readers already know about plans, and where he indicates that the assemblies of Galatia are also already participating (16:1-4). But we should not assume that activities were limited to only these locations. At various times during the years 52-54, for instance, Paul probably informs believers in Galatia, Macedonia, Greece, and perhaps elsewhere about plans for such an endeavour, likely receiving pledges of support from various congregations (1 Cor 16:1-4; Rom 15:25-33; 2 Cor 8–9). It may well be that funds collected in different localities during these years were delivered to Jerusalem at various times.[13]

(3) Final preparations, ca. 55-56 CE: Eventually, Paul resolved to make a pilgrimage back to Jerusalem (Acts 19:21), and began to work more energetically to assemble a sizable fund that he could deliver himself. We know of specific appeals directed to the Macedonians (2 Cor 8:1-5; 9:2-4) and the Corinthians (2 Cor 8–9). Meanwhile, Paul made specific plans to secure, audit,[14] and transport the fund to Judea (2 Cor 8:16–9:5; Rom

15:25-33). And we observe Paul using classic "fund-raising" techniques: (1) first securing a pledge, then asking for completion (2 Cor 8:10-12; 9:5); (2) ensuring that the finances are properly secured and audited by trustworthy individuals (1 Cor 16:3; 2 Cor 8:16-23); and (3) playing the "honour" of one group off another, exhorting one group to match the giving of another group (e.g. 1 Cor 16:1; 2 Cor 8:1-7; 9:1-5).

This project was politically volatile, and no doubt care was taken to keep any knowledge of this from the authorities. Writing in the 90s, Josephus implies that many civic authorities were opposed the practice of Jewish synagogue communities in collecting and then transporting to Jerusalem the annual two-drachma temple tax on all adult males; some cities had expropriated the money for their own civic projects. The practice of collecting funds for a foreign nation was no doubt perceived as an act of disloyalty to the civic and imperial regimes, and a net economic loss.[15] (After the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple in 70 CE, Rome redirected the temple tax, renamed the *fiscus Judaicus*, to go toward the rebuilding of the Capitoline temple of Jupiter in Rome, a major affront to the already devastated Judean people.)[16] Paul may well have sought to legitimize this collection, if confronted, by claiming that it too was part of the annual temple tax (cf. Acts 24:17), offered on the part of his Messianic sympathizers with Judea. Conceptually, therefore, Paul perhaps thought of this as a sort of parallel endeavor to the temple tax, this one directed specifically to the needy community as "the temple of Messiah" (cf. 1 Cor 3:16-17).[17]

Eventually, the Macedonians (2 Cor 8:1-5), Corinthians (Rom 15:26), and probably other congregations contribute generously to the fund. By this time, Paul emphasizes the collection not as a charitable contribution, but as a token of a broad poor-rich and Jew-Gentile "partnership," if not also as a peace-offering to mend the growing tensions between the poorer Judean Messiah-loyalists and the increasingly Gentile-dominated, richer assemblies outside of Judea (e.g. Acts 21:18-25). Moreover, Paul begins to understand the project eschatologically, in fulfilment of biblical prophecy,[18] with himself as crucial agent: as the enactment of the reversal of tributary flow out of Judea, as accompanying the in-gathering and pilgrimage of the Gentiles to Jerusalem, and as marking promised Gentile sacrifice in the temple.[19]

(4) The delivery and debacle in Jerusalem, ca. 56 CE: Acts narrates the final trip to Jerusalem, including the names of those who were presumably part of the protective, auditing entourage (Acts 20:1-21:16), while not referring specifically to the relief fund. But the fund is alluded to, first in the way Paul is invited to become a financial patron for temple sacrifices, as a good-faith demonstration of his character (Acts 21:17-36), and then when Paul claims in his self-defence speech that he is in

Jerusalem to bring "alms [Gk. "an act of mercy"] for my nation and to offer sacrifices" (Acts 24:17).[20] Acts actually leaves us in the dark as to what actually happened to this relief fund, but implies that it was marked by disaster. Paul himself had expressed considerable anxiety around his arrival in Jerusalem: both over whether or not the Jerusalem assembly would in fact find the contribution "acceptable," and over his safety in light of opposition from non-believing sectors (Rom 15:30-32).

We can infer that the leaders in Jerusalem initially refused to accept it because it was thought by some as tainted money, given Paul's tarnished reputation among Torah-observant Messianists (Acts 21:20-21). A deal was eventually made by which Paul would pay a large sum for a sacrificial vow of purification in the temple (Acts 21:22-24). But following Paul's arrest, we have no hint as to what happened. We might assume, however, that his companions (e.g. Acts 20:4) were finally able to hand over what must have been a very sizable amount of coins (physically and financially).

For our purposes, most crucial is how Paul thinks of "this undertaking" (*hypostasis*, 2 Cor 9:4) theologically and economically. The two main sources for this are Paul's fund-raising appeal in 2 Corinthians 8–9, and his reflection on the meaning of this endeavour for the global unity of the Messianic assembly in Romans 15:25-28. At the most basic level, Paul calls the fund a "collection (*logeia*) for the saints" (1 Cor 16:1, 4) and a "harvesting" (*karpos*, fruit) that will be properly "sealed" (Rom 15:28),[21] and he describes its function as a "service-ministry" (*diakonia*) that will "replenish a lack" (*hysterēma*; Rom 15:25, 31; 2 Cor 8:4; 9:12; cf. 8:13-14)[22] and as a "giving to the poor" (2 Cor 9:9).

Paul's explanation indicates, however, a kind of two-sidedness to the project and any individual participation in it. On the one hand, it is simply an "act of generous favour" (*charis*; 1 Cor 16:3; 2 Cor 8:4, 6, 7, 9, 19; 9:8), based on God's prior "act of generous favour" (*charis*, grace; 2 Cor 8:1, 9; 9:14). It expresses "goodwill-eagerness" (*prothymia*; 2 Cor 8:11, 12, 19; 9:2), an "abundant liberality" (*hadrotēs*; 2 Cor 8:20), and "generosity" (*haplotēs*; 2 Cor 8:2; 9:11, 13).[23] Accordingly, it flows from "eagerness" (*spoudē*; 2 Cor 8:7, 8, 11, 16, 17, 22),[24] "zeal" (*zēlos*, 2 Cor 9:2), "willingness" (*thelein*; 2 Cor 8:10-11), "good pleasure" (*eudokia*, Rom 15:26-27), "cheerfulness" (*hilarotēs*, 2 Cor 9:7),[25] and "joy" (2 Cor 8:2)—an act of the "heart" not under any duress or necessity (2 Cor 9:7). Those who contribute do so "voluntarily" (*authairetoi*; 2 Cor 8:3), as appropriate to a "voluntary gift" (*eulogia*) that is "promised" as opposed to an "extortion" (2 Cor 9:5) by which redistributive tributes and usurious interests are assessed. Thus, it is a "sign-display of love" (2 Cor 8:8, 24).[26]

On the other side, however, is a complementary perspective. While Paul stresses that his appeal is not to be taken as a "command" (2 Cor 8:8), he nevertheless argues that participation represents an "obedience to the

oath of loyalty to the gospel of Messiah" (2 Cor 9:13). Thus it is a "testing of the genuineness of love" (2 Cor 8:8), a "testing of service" (2 Cor 9:13), an "overflowing of good work" (2 Cor 9:8), and "that which emerges from righteousness-justice" (2 Cor 9:9-10).[27] Accordingly, participation is first a matter of "giving of the self" (first to the Lord and then to others; 2 Cor 8:5), and it is a way to "glorify God" (2 Cor 8:19; 9:13).

Most importantly, then, the entire project expresses a "partnership" (*koinōnia*; Rom 15:26-27; 2 Cor 8:4, 23; 9:13), and the "obligation" (*opheilēma*) and expected "public service" (*leitourgia*, benefactions; 2 Cor 9:12; Rom 15:27) appropriate to a reciprocal partnership:

> They [the Macedonians and Greeks] were well-pleased (to contribute), but they are also obligated [in debt] to them: for if the nations came to be co-partners with them in spiritual things [cf. Rom 11:17], they are (in turn) obligated [indebted] to offer public service [perform benefactions] in fleshly [material] things. (Rom 15:27)[28]

It is through a new partnership of mutual interdependence, moreover, that one is "enriched" through mutual participation: involvement will result in an "overflowing of thanksgiving to God" from the recipients (2 Cor 9:11-12), and it will result in new bonds of "longing" and prayer between Messiah's adherents in geographically far-flung regions (2 Cor 9:13-14).[29] A "partnership" of mutual aid, Paul says, reaches beyond merely the poor of Jerusalem, and extends potentially to "all people" (2 Cor 9:13).[30]

Founded on and motivated by God's prior "generosity" (*charis*, grace; 2 Cor 8:1; 9:14-15), and made possible by God's own provision both for "adequacy" and for "scattering seed" to the poor (2 Cor 9:8-10),[31] participation enacts the radical orientation to the other evident in Messiah himself, to the point of inversion: "for you know the generous act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor" (2 Cor 8:9). When unpacking the implications of this model, Paul adds that the pledge can be fulfilled "out of what one has" (*ek tou echein*; 2 Cor 8:11), and that the "eagerness" can become "acceptable (*euprosdektos*)[32] according to what one might have, not according to what one does not have" (2 Cor 8:12). This accords with what Paul says earlier, that giving is "according to ability" (lit. *dynamis*, "power," that is, economic power)"[33] and sometimes "beyond ability" (2 Cor 8:3)—it should be based on putting aside on a regular basis "whatever one has prospered" (1 Cor 16:2).[34] In other words, Paul assumed there would not be a flat head-tax levy (as the temple tax), but a graduated (even if voluntary)

contribution by which the wealthier would contribute a greater level of their assets. (Herein is the disproportionality of Paul's redistributive project.) At the same time, this project is not one in which a handful of the wealthy individuals or assemblies are invited to contribute as part of their expected patronage. It is neither individual nor unilateral. Rather, Paul perceives the endeavour as involving all the members of the community and all assemblies in a region (1 Cor 16:2; 2 Cor 8:1-5; 9:1-4, 7; Rom 12:13; 15:26).[35]

To assuage possible fears by Paul's wealthy listeners over the suggestion of a graduated contribution, buttressed by the model of Christ's divestment from riches to embrace poverty (2 Cor 8:9; cf. Phil 2:5-8), Paul clarifies that he is not promoting an inversion of fortunes such that there should now be "relief for others" and "pressure for you," but rather that he is administering a project that flows "out of (the pursuit of) equality" (*isotēs*; 2 Cor 8:13).[36] He explains: "at the present time, your abundance is for their lack, so that their abundance might someday be for your lack, that there may be equality" (*isotēs*; 2 Cor 8:14). This double use of *isotēs* (equality/equity) for economic relationships resounds through the rest of Paul's appeal in 2 Corinthians 8–9. The paradigm for global economic relations among the diverse assemblies is one of mutual assistance typical of "general reciprocity"[37] among subsistence villagers, whereby the exchange of goods and services need not be accounted with any exact value, because it is understood that they will balance out over time.[38]

The clinching text comes from the manna subsistence of Israel in the wilderness: "the one gathering much did not have more (make more, have an excess),[39] and the one gathering little did not have less (2 Cor 8:15, citing Exod 16:18). English translations often suggest that one did "not have too much" and the other did "not have too little."[40] But this changes and softens the meaning considerably. The radical point Paul makes (in accordance with both the original Hebrew and the LXX) is that things equaled out: there was neither "having more" nor "having less." Whereas the philosopher Philo cited this text to dramatize the "proportional equality" of manna as divine wisdom distributed in creation,[41] Paul uses this text to promote a kind of disproportionate equality. And while the economically privileged Philo "dematerializes manna" and spiritualizes the text, Paul "materializes grace" and finds a concrete economic meaning in the manna text.[42] Paul not only engages in a specifically economic analysis that invokes the notion of the haves and have-nots, but also assumes that equality is a proper human pursuit through redistributive work, under the sign of God's Messiah voluntarily impoverishing himself (2 Cor 8:9). The ultimate goal is not a reversal of fortunes through some

kind of class warfare, but "equality" through the establishment of new economic relationships under the sign of Messiah's economic divestment for the sake of the other.

For Paul, this perspective undermines prevailing benefactor-beneficiary arrangements of reciprocity, and would have appeared perverse to many of his rich Corinthian readers.[43] In contrast to business as usual, this paradigm is premised on (a) the notion of God's faithful provision, in connection with (b) a consumptive posture of "adequacy" (2 Cor 9:8-10),[44] and (c) the mutuality of partnership by which needs and provisions will be supplied (2 Cor 9:13-14).[45]

In sum, Paul's ambitious collection undertaking for the poor in Jerusalem was infused with economic, social, eschatological, ecclesial (ecumenical), and Christological meaning.

Economic Mutualism in Local Assemblies

We turn, then, to consider whether and how Paul advised local assemblies to "remember the poor" (Gal 2:10) through measures of economic mutualism. Paul nowhere prescribes or describes measures for concrete mutual assistance, but from various comments it appears that this question was part of all assembly formation activities.[46]

Corinth. The first setting to consider is that of Corinth. First Corinthians commences with a lengthy challenge against the arrogant and sophistic elite of the Corinthian assembly, while emphasizing God's special concern for those of low degree. Repeatedly, Paul reminds his readers of the inversions that accompany the arrival of the reign of God. For instance, in 1 Corinthians 1:26-31 and 4:8-13 Paul ironically targets the few complacent rich:

> Not many of you are wise according to the flesh; not many of you are powerful, not many are of noble birth (*eugeneis*, well-born). But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise, and God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; and God chose the things [people] that are lowborn (*agenē*, lit. "non-born") and despised in the world, indeed the things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, so that no one might boast in the presence of God (1:27-28).

And Paul sarcastically ridicules their rich complacency compared to his own experience as marked by impoverishment and dishonour (4:8-13; cf. 2 Cor 4:3-12; 6:3-10; 11:7-11, 23-30; 12:7-10). And in 1 Corinthians 12:21-26 Paul advises his status-preoccupied members that

"God has so composed the body [of Christ], giving greater honour to the inferior part."

Some scholars, in fact, have proposed that almost every conflict that is referred to in 1 Corinthians stems in one way or another from economic disparity.[47] The most obvious example is evident in 1 Corinthians 11:17-34: the Corinthians are making a mockery out of the celebration of the "Lord's banquet." The difficulty, it seems, stems from the fact that in Corinth some of the most wealthy in society joined the Jesus-confessing movement, including the city treasurer (see e.g. Rom 16:23). These wealthier members became the patrons who hosted worship gatherings, which included the "Lord's banquet." What Paul has heard, though, is that these rich patrons are hosting the "Lord's banquet" the same way that they hosted regular social banquets in which they wined and dined their business partners and clients. Such banquets were common, and it was customary to leave women, slaves, and others of low status in the back rooms with food of lesser quantity and quality. Paul argues that by such a practice they are "showing contempt for the assembly of God and humiliating the have-nots [those who have nothing]" (11:22) and he considers it to be equivalent to "eating and drinking without discerning the body" (i.e., the mutuality of the community), a serious taboo for which some are now ill or have died. For Paul, this practice is a major affront to the fact that in Christ, social distinctions of class, gender, and ethnicity have been cancelled (e.g. Gal 3:28; 1 Cor 12:13). In this text we see Paul arguing that the suspension of divisions must be extended to the economic sphere: the "Lord's banquet" was the place above all where the equality of the assembly was to be demonstrated and ritualized.

Paul also warns the Corinthians about taking fellow believers to the civil courts for lawsuits (1 Cor 6:1-8). While we do not know the precise issues over which such lawsuits were initiated, many scholars suppose that it was largely the richer members (who had the financial means to do so) who were taking weaker members before the magistrates to claim what was legally (but not always rightfully) theirs, as was the common pattern in that society. And Paul warns the Corinthians twice about the immorality of the "greedy," who will be excluded from the kingdom of God (1 Cor 5:11; 6:10).[48]

Not surprisingly, it is also in 1 Corinthians that the proclamation of Messianic time earmarks a radically new orientation because "the present structures of the world are passing away" (1 Cor 7:29-31). Under this new reality "let those who do business live as not holding fast (to possessions), and let those who are bound up in dealings with this world live as not engaged in dealings with the world" (1 Cor 7:30-31). In other words, let the haves live as have-nots. All of this would suggest that in

Corinth a regular part of gatherings was a collection not just for the needy of Jerusalem (1 Cor 16:1-4) but also for the destitute locally.

Thessalonica. Whereas Paul's cautionary words in the Corinthian letters are directed especially to the rich of Corinth, in Thessalonians the words of caution are especially targeted toward the "disorderly" who refuse to work and who are becoming a burden on communal resources. It is evident that some sort of practice of supporting the economically poor had been introduced into the fabric of the Thessalonian assembly from the start. While Paul makes no direct reference to this, his remarks presume some such structure, especially in his concern that some "disorderly" members are becoming a burden to the community (1 Thess 4:9-12; 5:14; 2 Thess 3:6-13; cf. 1 Thess 2:5-12). This pattern of economic mutual aid is especially what is under review when Paul discusses their *philadelphia* (love for brothers and sisters).[49] Paul congratulates them for their performance in this area (both in their own assembly, and elsewhere in Macedonia) and invites them to excel even more in practical *philadelphia* (1 Thess 4:9-10). But he qualifies this by inviting them "to aspire" (literally, "love honour," *philotimeisthai*)[50] in three further ways: to live quietly, to manage your own (personal) affairs,[51] and to work with your [own] hands (4:11).

The purpose of all these directives—toward both *philadelphia* (4:9-10) and personal propriety in living and working (4:11)—is so that (a) one might walk with decorum before outsiders, and (b) so that no one "might have need of anything/anyone" (4:12).[52] Earlier, Paul had insinuated, by reference to himself, that those who do not work are likely "to become a burden" on certain people (2:9).[53] Thus, at the close of the letter, Paul exhorts on two sides: on the one hand, "admonish the disorderly"; and on the other hand, "encourage the fainthearted, keep close to the (economically) weak" (5:14).[54] The term "disorderly" (*ataktoi*) seems to be a general reference back to those who do not live quietly in decorum,[55] who do not manage their own affairs, and who do not work with their hands. Similarly, the closing of 2 Thessalonians emphasizes both of these sides: (a) a warning against the "disorderly" who refuse to work, such that they should not be given bread (3:6-12), and (b) an exhortation to "not grow weary in doing good," that is, in practical mutual assistance (3:13).[56] Paul assumes that in Messiah's manna economy, everyone should participate, even if they are able "to gather" and to contribute only a modest amount.

It is often supposed that these texts from 1 & 2 Thessalonians show that Paul simply preaches the morality of manual labour as the answer to economic hardship, communal welfare, and poverty—that Paul endorses a conservative, middle-class, or "bourgeois" economic ethic.

That interpretation, however, is surely in error. Paul is indeed opposing some sort of voluntary withdrawal from labour and work, for reasons not entirely clear. The motivation might have stemmed from an eschatological enthusiasm in connection with a sharp class analysis (the imminent dawn of the age of Messiah, in which the high and the low would be inverted).[57] Indeed, some in the Thessalonian assembly might have taken Paul at his word, had they heard statements such as those found in 1 Corinthians 7:29-31 (cited above). In any event, his concern is that this "disorderly" practice excessively burdens the system of mutualism, not that this system of communal welfare should be discontinued because of this burden. Moreover, Paul is not addressing the problem of those who are unemployed by circumstances outside their control. Paul nowhere suggests that certain people are poor because they are lazy—he only says that certain "disorderly" (and idle) people (because of end-time fanaticism) should not be allowed to be a burden on the community. Meanwhile, Paul exhorts the community to excel even more in the practice of mutual aid to support the poor (1 Thess 4:9-10; 5:14; 2 Thess 3:13). The Book of Acts confirms that Paul promotes manual labour by the able-bodied precisely as a way to "support the weak, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, for he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive'" (Acts 20:34-35).

Romans. The assemblies of Thessalonica and Corinth are among those that Paul actually founded and organized. The varieties of house assemblies in Rome, however, were known to Paul only through multiple relationship connections (Rom 16). There is no way to ascertain whether or not there was any structure of mutual assistance binding these groups together. Nevertheless, it is remarkable how much attention is given to promote economic mutualism in Paul's letter to the many "beloved of God" in Rome (Rom 1:7), split into the factions (at least) of the "weak in conviction" and "the strong" (Rom 14–15).[58] In the summary of the varied functions that make up the one body (12:3-8), three of the seven involve some kind of economic component: "ministry-service" (*diakonia*; including but not limited to economic ministry), "the donor in generosity,"[59] and "the one showing mercy in cheerfulness."[60] In the subsequent section of exhortation, alongside themes of non-retaliation and peace (12:14, 17-21) and practical devotion (12:9, 11-12), Paul similarly highlights economic and status dimensions of general mutuality (12:10, 13, 15-16):

> Be affectionate in friendship love (*philadelphia*) for one-another;
> Lead ahead in showing honour for one-another. . . .
> Be in partnership with the needs of the saints;
> Pursue love of the stranger (*philoxenia*, hospitality). . . .

Mind each other according to the same rank;
Do not put your mind toward things that are high;[61]
But be in association with the lowly;
Do not be mindful beyond yourselves.[62]

Finally, we should observe that Paul closes out his entire argument in Romans by highlighting the relief collection that he is about to deliver to the poor among the assemblies of Jerusalem (Rom 15:25-32). This is not just for information, and not just a way to emphasize the global unity of Jews and Gentiles in Christ. Rather, it is also a way to stress the importance of Messiah's community as a mutual partnership (Rom 11:17; 12:13; 15:27) through which material needs and spiritual benefit are interdependently and mutually shared.

Galatians. In Galatians 6:2-10 we find the same two-sided exhortation as in 1 & 2 Thessalonians, namely mutual interdependence (even in economic matters), balanced by individual responsibility (for one's own livelihood). While this text is often spiritualized to refer only to spiritual or interpersonal interdependence (based on the topic of Gal 6:1), it is clear that the entire text has a strongly economic component (at the very least in 6:6, 10), drawing on the emphasis on "kindness" (*chrēstōtēs*) and "goodness-generosity" (*agathōsynē*) from the forgoing text on the fruit of the Spirit (5:22-23). Both of these words have a decisively economic nuance as involving practical aid for the poor.[63] Moreover, this closing exhortation before his final hand-written words coheres closely with Paul's earlier rhetorical claim to "remember the poor" (Gal 2:10). The exhortation, "bear one another's burdens," accordingly addresses mutual support in all ways, especially in economic terms. The language of "burden" is consistently used in Paul's writings of economic burdens.[64] And, just as in 2 Corinthians 8:9, the paradigm is based on the pattern of Christ: to offer mutual support to one another is to "fulfil the law of Messiah," that is, the law of neighbourly love (Gal 5:6, 14; Rom 12:9-10; 13:8-10; cf. Acts 20:34-35). Paul had already reminded his readers that "the only thing that counts is fidelity working through love" (5:6), and had exhorted them: "through love become slaves to one another" (5:13). And significantly, the exhortation to bear one another's burdens is followed by a challenge to any "high-minded" attitudes coming from those of high degree (Gal 6:3-4), similar to Paul's exhortation in Romans (12:10, 13, 16; above). And then, as a counterpart to the exhortation toward mutual aid, Paul emphasizes responsibility on the part of all "to carry their own loads" (6:5), recalling Paul's warning against those in Thessalonica who are "disorderly" and becoming a needless financial "burden" to others.

Paul then moves to remind the Galatian congregations that they are to support "teachers of the word" financially, using the language of "partnership": "Let the one who is taught the word be in partnership in all good things with the one who is teaching" (6:6). Finally, Paul uses the language of "sowing" as a way to speak of financial conduct (Gal 6:7-10), as he does in 2 Corinthians 9:6-11 (cf. Phil 1:11) and as was common in his environment (e.g. "fruit-harvest" is the regular word for financial return on labour or investment). He cautions against "sowing to your own flesh," a metaphor of financial self-aggrandizement, and encourages "sowing to the Spirit," recalling the emphasis on the "fruit of the Spirit" (Gal 5:22-23) in its multiple dimensions, but here especially in financial terms. Paul's language conjures up themes of the Sermon on the Mount (giving to the poor as laying up treasures in heaven; Matt 5:19-34); he refers to the final "reaping" at harvest time in the Messianic kingdom. Thus he exhorts his readers in conclusion:

> Let us not grow weary in doing good. . . . So then, whenever we have the opportune time (*kairos*), let us work for the good toward all people,[65] but especially toward the household of loyal faith. (Gal 6:9-10)

While the emphasis is again on mutual aid within the Messianic community, significant as well is the extension of financial good work to all people, echoing Paul's exhortation in Romans "to pursue love of the stranger" (hospitality), as the counterpart to "being in partnership with the needs of the saints" (Rom 12:13).[66]

This consistent emphasis in Paul's writings suggests that some sort of measures for mutual aid existed in Paul's assemblies from their inception. Undoubtedly, the particular form in which this took place varied from one location to the next. Later evidence also indicates the presence of some kind of mutual aid system, suggesting the persistence of earlier practices: (a) The Pastoral Epistles (written anywhere between 80-120 CE) attempt to reduce the number of widows who are eligible for communal assistance (1 Tim 5:3-16; cf. the controversy in Acts 6:1-6);[67] Ignatius, the bishop of Antioch, urges (ca. 110s) that slaves "not desire to be set free from the communal fund (*to koinon*)" (*Letter to Polycarp* 4.3); and Justin Martyr (ca. 150 CE) explains that collections were taken at regular meetings to support the needy (*First Apology* 66-67).

Economic Partnership between Paul and Local Assemblies

In both the Thessalonian and Corinthian letters, Paul emphasizes that it was his right, as it was for any other apostle and teacher, to receive financial support for his ministry (1 Cor 9: 4-12, 16-18, 23; 2 Thess 3:9). In principle, he suggests to the Galatians, it is obligatory for assemblies "to be in partnership with" (financially support) teachers and apostles (Gal 6:6). And to the Corinthians he claims that the one who sows a spiritual good should reap a material harvest from those they serve (1 Cor 9:11). But in both Thessalonica and Corinth he refused any subsidy, and repeatedly emphasized that he worked with his own hands to support himself, so as not to be a burden and so as to preach the gospel "free of charge" (1 Cor 9:18; 2 Cor 11:17; cf. 1 Thess 2:8, "donating" himself).[68] What are the reasons Paul offers for this practice, contrary to the established norm of other apostolic itinerants (cf. 1 Cor 9:5)? And, why did Paul make exceptions to what he claims was his own practice (2 Cor 11:8-9; Phil 4:10-20)?

The reasons appear complex, and Paul explains his practice somewhat differently in different settings. In the Thessalonian context Paul explains his practice (a) in connection with his interest in maintaining a spotless reputation, in particular not to be associated with any greed (1 Thess 2:5-6, 10), (b) as a way to avoid becoming a burden, especially on a few key patrons (1 Thess 2:9; 2 Thess 3:8), and (c) as a model showing that all members ought to work to ensure their own livelihood and to contribute to the general welfare of the community (2 Thess 3:6-13; implicitly in 1 Thess 2:4-12; 4:9-12; 5:14).[69] Paul's explanation in 1 Corinthians 9 is more complex, since it serves rhetorically both to illustrate the way of not demanding one's own freedoms and rights, the path of accommodation so as to avoid causing someone to stumble (1 Cor 8–10, esp. 8:9, 13; 10:29-11:1), and to provide a self-defence (9:3) while continuing to shame (certain members of) the congregation. Paul's refusal of subsidy and commitment to work with his own hands, in fact, became a core part of the protracted dispute between Paul and the Corinthian congregation, prompting Paul to claim this practice of his as a very specific "ground of boasting" that will not be silenced in the entire region of Greece (1 Cor 9:15-16; 11:10).

On the one hand, then, Paul stresses that while he is indeed "free" (9:1, 19), presumably both in Christ and in the flesh, and can rightly claim certain rights to financial remuneration (9:4-14), he chose not to claim these "rights" (9:18) nor to magnify his "freedoms" (9:19; 10:29). This

argument seems designed especially to meet the slogan of some in the congregation that "all things are lawful" (6:12; 10:23), and that "liberty" is ultimate (8:9; 10:29). Accordingly, he asserts that he refuses to be the cause of any one's stumbling as an obstacle to the weak or the gospel (9:12; cf. 8:9, 13; 10:32), that he has made himself "a slave to all people" to win them for the gospel (9:19-23), and that he is motivated entirely by the desire to please the other for the glory of God (10:29-11:1). In connection with this, he claims that this pattern also demonstrates a commitment to a life of self-control and self-discipline (9:24-27) quite in contrast (implicitly) with the Corinthian tendency toward greed (1 Cor 5:11; 6:10) and self-indulgent licentiousness (1 Cor 5–6). His rhetoric in this area thus contributes to his repeated contrast between his own impoverishment and their riches, designed in part to shame some of his readers into embracing a different pattern (1 Cor 4:14), that of cruciform lowliness (1 Cor 1:10-2:5):

> For who sees anything different [distinctively special] in you? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you received it, why do you boast as if it were not a gift?
> Already you have all you want! Already you have become rich! Quite apart from us you have become kings! Indeed, I wish that you had become kings, so that we might be kings with you! For I think that God has exhibited us apostles as last of all, as though sentenced to death, because we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels and to mortals. We are fools for the sake of Christ, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You are held in honor, but we in disrepute. To the present hour we are hungry and thirsty, we are poorly clothed and beaten and homeless, and we grow weary from the work of our own hands… We have become like the rubbish of the world, the dregs of all things, to this very day. (1 Cor 4:7-13, NRSV)

This rhetoric of his own abasement relative to Corinthian comfort continues into 2 Corinthians: Paul and his companions minister "as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything" (2 Cor 6:10). And whereas that some have apparently seen his refusal of subsidy as an affront to them, or as a manipulative tactic (2 Cor 12:16-18), Paul does not hold back with the shaming sarcasm:

> Did I commit a sin by humbling myself so that you might be exalted, because I proclaimed the good news of God free of charge? I robbed other churches by accepting support from them in order to serve you. (2 Cor 11:7, NRSV)

> How have you been worse off than the other churches, except that I myself did not burden you? Forgive me this wrong! (2 Cor 12:13, NRSV)

Paul, then, stresses his pattern of "working with his hands" as part of his cruciform divestment of assets, and choosing the downward path of Messianic solidarity with the weak and poor (2 Cor 12:9-10; 13:3-4; cf. 1 Cor 1:29-31; 2 Cor 8:9).[70] But precisely on this point, Paul apparently has been attacked by some within the Corinthian assembly, and especially his apostolic rivals (2 Cor 11:5-13; 12:11-18); and in turn he ridicules the Corinthian response of slavishly giving into the demands of these apostles, presumably including that of financial remuneration (2 Cor 2:17; 11:19-21). The most likely explanation for Paul's refusal in the Corinthian context, then, is two-fold. On the one hand, he wished to avoid any patron-client relationship, precluding any dependency on and thus accountability to any rich patron. Indeed, he turns the table, by reminding them that he is the parent, and that they are the children in this relationship:

> I will not be a burden, because I do not want what is yours but you; for children ought not to lay up for their parents, but parents for their children. I will most gladly spend and be spent for you. If I love you more, am I to be loved less? (2 Cor 12:14-15, NRSV)

On the other hand, Paul sought, it seems, to dissociate himself from the lavish lifestyle of the rich, and to demonstrate the path of lowliness. But some in Corinth took the former reason as an insult, while many were not impressed by the austerity and downward mobility that he preached as central to the gospel.

But one last crucial element of Paul's practice becomes clear in the Corinthian correspondence: his primary motivation is as a "partner in the gospel" (1 Cor 9:23). He is thus not motivated by any immediate financial remuneration (9:17-18), but only by the enhancement of the gospel's broader equity.[71] Paul explains: "necessity is laid on me. . . I do not do this of my own will; I am entrusted with an administration" (*oikonomia*; 1 Cor 9:16-17), likening himself to someone compelled to enter public service so as to manage the affairs of a city-state. As such he can similarly disclaim any association with being a "retailer (peddler) of God's word like the others [namely, his Corinthian rivals]" (2 Cor 2:17).

This last outlook is central also to the economic "partnership" that was established between Paul and the Philippian assembly. Paul claims that this was an exceptional relationship: "in the early days of the gospel,

when I left Macedonia, no assembly partnered (*koinōneō*) with me in a formal accounting (*logos*)[72] of giving and receiving except you alone" (Phil 4:15), providing support while he was in Thessalonica more than once.[73] Paul explicitly uses the typical language of commercial and business partnerships, rendered by the term *koinōnia*. While the "partnership" had become practically dormant for lack of "opportunity" (4:10), even though close communication between Paul and the congregation had not lapsed, now five years later the Philippians had again provided for Paul's needs during his imprisonment in Ephesus, both in the form of a financial contribution and through the services of one of their members (2:25-30; 4:10-18). What is remarkable is that Paul quite specifically avoids referring to this as a "gift" (despite English translations) and dodges offering a specific "thank-you" (while giving thanks to God for their participation). Instead, Paul emphasizes that their contribution proceeds from their "partnership in the gospel" (1:5), and that as a result they are "all partners in generous giving" (*charis*)—emphasizing that the support has come from the entire community not just a few able patrons, and that "generous giving" (*charis*) is the work of all, not just a few. The entire assembly became "partners in his distress" (4:14). As a result, their contribution represents the (reciprocal and obligatory) "arrears" in their "public service" (*leitourgia*) toward him.[74] Accordingly, Paul says that what he really desires is the "profit" that thereby accrues to their equity in the partnership (4:17). At the same time he stresses that this is not something he demands, expects, or needs, given his learning of the path of sufficiency through dependence on the ultimate supplier (4:11-13, 19), and that their contribution is most importantly "an aroma of fragrance, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God" (4:18). Modern commentators have struggled over Paul's reticence to properly receive the Philippian assembly's contribution. But what seems to be most crucial for Paul is ensuring that the relationship between himself and the assembly not descend to that of an asymmetrical client-patron dependency dynamic, but that it be perceived as a reinvigorated "partnership."[75] And as a contrast to this relationship of mutual aid, Paul expresses in Philippians his disdain for those "whose minds are set on earthly things" and "whose god is their belly" (3:19-20), a common image for avarice and a consumptive lifestyle in the Roman world.

In the very same way, Paul carefully frames his relationship with his patron Philemon as that of being "brothers" (1:1, 7, 16, 20) and "partners" (1:6, 17). Practically, Paul is in the role of client in need, both because (as is most likely) Philemon sent his slave Onesimus to provide for Paul during his imprisonment (Phlm 13), and because Paul is asking even more of him, that he give Onesimus his full freedom so that he can be an

even more fruitful co-worker in the ministry (Phlm 8-21). And in this most delicate request to an actual patron, Paul reminds Philemon that he himself is indebted to Paul at another level—having to do with his very life —and that if there are any financial losses to be considered that they should in effect be charged to Paul's account (1:18-19). In this setting again, therefore, we find expressed the notion that the one who receives spiritual ministry should "partner" in return in concrete, material terms (Gal 6:6; 1 Cor 9:11; Rom 15:26-27).

Conclusion: Mutualism as a Survival Strategy and Visionary Project

Urban centres during the early Roman empire experienced remarkable affluence. But this affluence was very unequally distributed, with those displaying lavish lifestyles of conspicuous consumption living side by side with those experiencing abject poverty. The life of the urban poor of the early Roman empire, easily a majority of the urban population, was nothing but precarious.[76] As Justin Meggitt summarizes:

> The underdeveloped, pre-industrial economy of the Graeco-Roman world created enormous disparities of wealth, and within this inequitable, rigid system the non-élite of the cities lived brutal and frugal lives, characterized by struggle and impoverishment.[77]

Vertical support systems for aiding the working or non-working poor in Greco-Roman cities (whether from imperial or local governments, or from elite benefactors) were either non-existent or very limited in value, and horizontal interpersonal support networks were also of limited effect.[78] Survival strategies by the poor through direct action could also provide little security.[79]

It is in this context that Paul's economic mutualism must be understood, with its vision firmly based on his Judaic heritage and the ideals and practices of the earliest Jesus movement.[80] But while it can be understood as a survival strategy to meet very real need, it is also bound up and motivated by vision of a redemptive process established in and through Lord Messiah Jesus—that is, it assumes a participationist, corporate, and eschatological Christology. Adherents of this Messianic polity are not just bound in "partnership" (communion) with their Lord,[81] but at the same time established in "partnership" with each other.[82] And that emergent mutualism in Christ that aims toward equality both signs and anticipates the redemption of the world.

Chapter 6

(Modest) Challenges to Slavery and Patriarchy in Paul

Interpreters through the years have raised the question as to whether or not Paul was a "social conservative" on matters of gender, slavery, politics, and economics. Here we enter a polarized conversation, and significant points of tension and ambiguity within Paul's writings themselves. For some interpreters Paul is the guardian of the socio-political status quo, whether approvingly, or disapprovingly and needing censure. On the one hand, Paul is to blame for repression in the name of Christianity. On the other hand, Paul remains a visionary whose image of a transformed new world motivates liberating, world-transforming action in these domains of life.

The tension stems to a great extent from the fact that Paul was both a radical visionary and a pragmatic cell-group organizer (pastor). Thus he looked for the imminent transformation of the present evil world order and sought to live in that light. Yet, he insisted that believers should also accommodate to their present situation, the world as it still is—for the sake of getting along in the interim, both with fellow believers within the new, diverse community, and with those outside the community of faith.

The difficulty is that Paul's restrictive, cautionary, and conservative words are the most apparent, partly because of the pastoral character of the letters that have survived. And to this day these words are often preached the loudest. Indeed, it must be admitted that Paul's words are more easily used and manipulated by systems of domination than any other parts of the New Testament, perhaps of the Bible (even as Paul also

has some of the most inclusivist statements of the whole Bible). While some interpreters have held up Paul's advice as a warrant to maintain the current social order, others have sometimes argued that in Paul we have a kind of "failure of nerve," suggesting that Paul's own convictions should have led him to more radical steps in the real world. But some have also suggested that we actually have a more liberating and radical Paul than often thought, both in thought and in practice.[1]

The classic argument for Paul's social conservatism rests on the following texts:

(1) the so-called "household codes" of Colossians 3:18-4:1 (cf. Eph 5:22-6:9), in which people of lower stations are exhorted to obey or be submissive (women, slaves, children); (2) Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 7:17-24, which seem to invite believers to stay in their place (designated "callings") and not to change their situation; and (3) Paul's statements on submission to the governing authority, which seems to promote near blind obedience since the governing authorities are "God's servant" (Rom 13:1-7). This essay will limit itself to the questions of slavery and patriarchy.[2]

Paul and Slavery[3]

By the time of Paul, the institution of slavery had already been around for centuries throughout the Ancient Near East, including Israelite and Jewish society (despite Israel's origins and self-identity as liberated slaves). While ancient Israel's practice and law (well-known to Paul) was part of this widespread system, some limitations and protections were put in place. While slaves had the status of property (Exod 21:32; Lev 25:46), there were limitations on a master's power, especially excessive force leading to injury or death (Exod 21:20, 25-26). The enslavement of fellow Israelites was sharply limited: debt slaves were to be freed on the Sabbatical year (Exod 21:2; Deut 15:12; Jer 34:8-17), self-slavery was to end on the year of Jubilee (Lev 25:13, 40), and female slaves [sold by their fathers!] were given some protections (Exod 21:7-11). These limitations were based on the Exodus liberation from slavery. There were, however, hardly any limitations on foreign slaves (Lev 25:44-46) and female captives in war (Deut 21:10-14). Israelites were also supposed to grant fugitive slaves asylum (Deut 23:16-17; but cf. 1 Kgs 2:39-40). Slaves were a part of the household, fully under the master: they were to be given rest on the Sabbath (Exod 20:10; Deut 5:14) and to take part in the religious observances of the family (Gen 17:13; Exod 12:44; Lev 22:11; Deut 12:12, 18; 16:11,14). These laws, then, became the basis of evolving Rabbinic legislation pertaining to the continuing practice of

slavery in the second temple period and beyond in the Rabbinic period of Mishnah and Talmud.[4]

Slavery as a social institution and ideology, an economic instrument, and as legally coded in the Greco-Roman world is exceedingly complex. Slavery was widespread, and provided for much of the wealth of cities and landed estates. The status of slavery was the lowest of the legal social "orders" (Latin, *ordo*) in Roman imperial society: patricians (senators, equestrians, decurions), plebians, freedpersons, and slaves.[5] As property of their owners, slaves were given very little legal protection: they had no legal rights to marry or to have their own children; masters had absolute power—to punish, abuse, or to kill. Strict penalties were in place for fugitives and for those harbouring fugitives. Estimates are that between a fourth to a third of the population of Rome were slaves—a Roman senate proposal that all slaves be required to wear distinctive dress (so that mixing would be curtailed) was defeated since it was argued that this would allow slaves to find out how many of them there were, potentially leading to revolt. The small island of Delos in the Aegean was one of the major slave markets in the Roman empire; according to the geographer Strabo (64 BCE–21 CE) it could handle up to 10,000 slaves in one day.[6] The supply of slaves came from the following sources: military captives, self-sale by the poor, sale of one's child, abductions in border areas, indebtedness, and the children of slaves. A master could gain a supply of slaves through purchase, inheritance, or by home breeding (slave children were the property of the master).

The actual experience of a slave depended on the particular circumstances and character of the master: a master could range from benevolent to abusive; the work could range from that of menial, plantation labour to office-type, managerial, civil service-type work, and to medical occupations. Many of the Roman imperial civil servants were slaves; and many of the business managers of the landed elite were slaves granted jurisdiction over financial assets ("with *peculium*"), since it was held that actual business dealings were beneath the dignity of an aristocrat.[7] Note also that in Jesus' parables many of the business managers of landowners are "stewards" and "slaves" (e.g. Luke 16:1-12; Matt 25:14-30). In the Roman context, some slaves amassed fortunes as the business managers of rich landowners; and some in the upper classes freed their rich slaves (business managers) in reward for good service. Occasionally some of these became independently wealthy, rivalling the assets of patricians.[8]

The process of being liberated from slavery is known as manumission. One's freedom could be bought by oneself (through savings), by others (one's relatives or community), or could be granted freely by an owner.

The formality of manumission was customary at pagan temples, and also occurred in synagogues in Greek cities. At the temple to Apollo in Delphi, for instance, the purchase of a slave into freedom was ritually and legally brokered through the temple, such that slaves were fictionally "dedicated" to the temple, in service of the god.[9] A freed slave was in a special legal category as a "freedman/freedwoman" (*libertus/liberta*) and was expected to be a client of the master for life (with obligations usually clarified in the negotiation of manumission) and still carried the stigma of having been a slave. Only children of "freedpersons" were fully free legally.

Challenges to the institution of slavery were extremely rare. The Jewish Essenes denounced slavery and refused to own slaves (according to Philo, who seems to have sided with this viewpoint). In some mystery religions the slave status of an "initiated" member was to be overlooked by the rest of the "initiated," including the masters. And some Stoics proclaimed the equality of all humans based on the idea of common descent (Seneca; Justinian).

In Paul's writings most of the references to slavery or enslavement, or to the buying (1 Cor 6:19-20; 7:23) or liberating (Gal 4:5) of slaves, are used metaphorically. For instance, Paul often likens his own role as apostle to that of "slave of Lord Messiah Jesus" (Rom 1:1; Phil 1:1) even though he assumes slavery is a degrading status (2 Cor 11:19-21; Phil 2:7). Paul employs this image for his role in both positive and ironic ways (especially when confronting the status claims of the rich), without thereby seeking to legitimize slavery as an institution. He uses the image to highlight his sense of being "grasped" (cf. 1 Cor 9:16; Phil 3:12), implying both his obligation-ownership and his status in relation to his Lord, but also a downward mobility as the proper path of Messiah and his faithful (Phil 1:1; 2:7, 22). Or, Paul uses the imagery of being "enslaved" in terms of the choice of being either enslaved to God, grace, or justice, or to sin and impurity (e.g. Rom 6).

When it comes to concrete references to slavery, we see a fair degree of tension or ambivalence in Paul's letters. On the "conservative" side, we are confronted especially by the household codes (Col 3:22-4:1; cf. Eph 6:5-9). Codes such as these for behaviour appropriate to one's social position were well-known in the Greco-Roman world. In these passages, Paul asks slaves to obey and be submissive (even to masters who are abusive) and for masters to be fair. Paul seems merely to Christianize without much change the hierarchical household pattern of the Greco-Roman world. In 1 Corinthians 7:21-24 Paul refers to the situation of slavery in connection with (and as an example for) his argument that believers should not try to change those conditions that are a function

of birth or birth right (sexuality, ethnic identity, legal slave/free status given by birth), and one's status as married or single—in the light of the imminent world transformation (1 Cor 7:26, 29-31), which he assumed would happen in his own lifetime.

We also find passages, however, on a "liberating" side. First we notice the acclamations proclaiming the end of social distinctions in Messiah's community, including that of slave and free (1 Cor 12:13; Gal 3:28; Col 3:11). The question is whether Paul meant these in some concrete way as opposed to merely figuratively or spiritually. Does Paul propose simply that an attitudinal shift must take place in how a person is regarded, while the structures of the status quo are maintained? Other texts confirm that Paul meant these not only figuratively, but also concretely as representing the vision that will ultimately be realized in Messiah's community.

Paul indicates that differences between slave and free are negated or suspended by virtue of incorporation "in Messiah," which implies a kind of rebirth, and a change in status accompanying that rebirth. Paul understands one's legal slave status as a given by birth and not generally amenable to change, insofar as it involves life "in the flesh" or "in the world." But "in the assembly" and "in Messiah," which anticipates the final eschatological reordering of relationships, all this is transformed. Any hierarchical given "in the flesh" is subject to inversion in the arena "of Messiah": "for the person called in the Lord when a slave is a freedperson of the Lord; likewise, the person called who was free is a slave of Messiah" (1 Cor 7:22; see also 1 Cor 6:19-20; 7:21-31; 12:20-26).

The case of Onesimus is exemplary. While Paul nowhere commands Philemon to free his slave Onesimus, many interpreters argue that that is essentially what Paul was saying through his crafty rhetoric. It would appear that Paul is not just giving advice on a particular personal circumstance (as is commonly thought), but actually asking Philemon to reorient his perspective on the institution of slavery. In verse 16 of Paul's letter to Philemon, Paul expects Philemon to receive Onesimus as "more than a slave," that is, as no longer a slave. He claims further that Onesimus is dear to Philemon "as a brother" both "in the flesh (in his legal status) and in the Lord" (in his spiritual status). Paul emphasizes that as a "partner" with Philemon (vv. 17-19) he has equal claim over Onesimus, and might even have wanted the services of this slave (v. 13), thereby implying that Philemon really has no ultimate right to Onesimus. But Paul goes on to say that any loss of financial equity should, in effect, be debited to Paul's account in the partnership (vv. 18-19). Finally, the most likely scenario is that Onesimus sought out Paul in the first place

because he knew that Paul was the only patron (with something even over his legal master) that might be able secure his freedom, having heard (or heard about) his claim of the ending of social distinctions in the realm of Christ (e.g. Gal 3:28).

This interpretation goes against the traditional one that Onesimus just happened to run into Paul while Paul was in prison and was then converted. But had Onesimus run away, as a fugitive he would have kept himself clear of the authorities and far away from the prison. Moreover, since most slaves (officially) followed the religion of their master, we must assume that Onesimus knew (or knew about) Paul for some time, assuming that Philemon's commitment to Messiah occurred some time previously. Indeed, it may well be the case that Philemon sent Onesimus to Paul in the first place, to provide for his needs.[10] Given how Onesimus is exceedingly useful to Paul (Phlm 11) and a valued associate (Col 4:7-9), we can surmise that he was perhaps an educated or managerial slave, not at the lowest level of slave status.

The significance of Paul's letter to Philemon, whose gravity is such that it was copied (cc'd) to the house-assembly he hosted to give it more weight (Phlm 2), is that Paul requests that the slave-owner Philemon consider the slave Onesimus free not only "in the Lord," in the sphere of the Messianic assembly, but also that he grant him freedom "in the flesh," that is, in the legal sphere. It is probably because of the perceived precedent-setting—as opposed to exceptional—character of this episode that this letter was preserved alongside other letters of Paul. The importance of Philemon among Paul's letters, then, is inversely proportional to its short length.

We also need to take a second look at 1 Corinthians 7:20-24. Paul himself realized that the situation of slavery was not the perfect analogy for his primary concern about whether to change one's marital status (7:8-16). And so Paul claims in a cryptic passage (7:21) that when one has the opportunity to be liberated that one should avail oneself of it. The elliptical Greek, *mallon chresai*, "rather make use of," however, has sometimes been taken to mean that one should "rather make use of" one's slavery (e.g. NRSV). But this translation does not suit the clear direction of the passage as a whole. Paul emphasizes that "in the assembly" and "in Messiah" matters of status, honour, and role by virtue of birth right are all both negated and inverted (e.g. 1 Cor 12:21-26). Thus those born free are "slaves of Messiah," and those born as slaves are "freedpersons of Messiah" (1 Cor 7:22). As a result, Paul invites believers to be "enslaved to one another" (Gal 5:13). And in 2 Corinthians 11:19-21 Paul excoriates the status-seeking Corinthians for adopting a servile attitude, implying that slavery condition is certainly not a positive or

inevitable institution or condition. In other words, Paul assumes that freedom for slaves is the ideal situation; slavery for him is not the norm that God has ordained.

Given Paul's commitment to the ending of social divisions in the sphere of Messiah, including slavery, how do we explain why he nowhere condemns or works against the institution of slavery as a whole? One answer is that slaves represented a considerable amount of financial equity for those slave-owners who turned to Messiah, and that Paul was reticent to demand that they divest of their assets all at once. Another answer is that Paul, quite to the contrary of thinking that slavery represented God's will for human society, thought that God and Messiah would soon directly shake things up and that believers should therefore wait for that time. Perhaps a further reason for his hesitancy was practical—slavery was so widespread and established (and even among some of his converts) that one would have to work at it through a slow process of reform and on a case-by-case basis. Another explanation is that the horizon of Paul's vision of social transformation was primarily, though not exclusively, directed to Messiah's community, the sign and microcosm of God's reign, and not to all of society (and even in this new community the vision was not applied absolutely). At any rate, we are left with a tension in Paul: he assumes that "in Christ" there is no slave or free (in more than a merely spiritual way) and he assumes that soon God will thoroughly put an end to the institution. Yet, he also allows believing masters to still have slaves and asks slaves to obey and submit. And yet again, in the celebration of the Lord's supper especially, believers are to absolutely forget about and disregard these social distinctions (e.g. 1 Cor 11)! Paul the pastor lives in the midst of considerable tension and ambivalence. Unfortunately, it has taken the western church almost 1900 years to realize that Paul indeed thought that freedom for slaves was included in the range of Messiah's final liberating work and that slavery was not divinely ordained, despite certain restrictive passages. Most crucial, then, is the directionality of Paul's premises and statements, not the content of his particular solutions. Without a doubt, what Paul asked the faithful to wait for must now be actively pursued.

In the early church after Paul, two directions eventually developed: one worked against the institution of slavery, and the other accepted it fully, accommodating to prevailing Roman social values. First Peter 2:18-21, similarly to Paul's household codes, exhorts slaves to submit, even to abusive masters. There is no corresponding exhortation to masters, indicating either that masters were not typically members of the community, or that their behaviour was not thought to be a problem. In the Pastoral Epistles, the household codes also only address slaves, who

are asked to submit, even to believing masters (1 Tim 6:1-2; Titus 2:9-10). Masters are not addressed reciprocally, even though it is clear that masters are included in the Christian community. Overall, the Pastoral Epistles promote the Roman institution of the patriarchal household and Christianize it by claiming that the church and the Christian family are to mirror the ideal patriarchal household. Nevertheless, in one text, "slave-traders" are included in a list of those who will not enter the kingdom of God (1 Tim 1:9-11). Similarly, Revelation (18:13) includes an implicit prophetic denunciation of the slave trade by humanizing the "cargo of bodies" as representing "souls of humans." In the post-apostolic period, some texts show the church struggling against slavery. In 1 Clement (96 CE) and in Hermas (mid-second century) we see the church financing manumission for its members and proposing that members free their own slaves. And in the letter of the governor Pliny to the Emperor Trajan, we hear that two slave-women were included in the ranks of the "ministers."[11] However, a different trend became the norm in post-Constantinian Christianity. Already in Ignatius (120s CE) we see moves to retain slavery in opposition to these liberating measures: he advises that slaves "not desire to be set free from the common fund" (*Letter to Polycarp* 4.3). And in the Apostolic Constitutions (fourth century) slaves are not permitted ordination.[12]

Paul and Patriarchy[13]

Paul's perspective on gender dynamics is similarly multivalent, ambiguous, and fraught with tension. Some interpreters find in Paul a biblical mandate to preserve some kind of gender hierarchy (or gender-based division of labour); others find Paul's words on women to be straightforwardly marginalizing and irretrievably oppressive; some have sought to reconstruct the voice of the silenced women in Paul's circles; and still others find in Paul pointers toward a vision for gender equality and mutuality.

A very brief summary of Paul's social context is appropriate. Institutionalized and internalized (that is, unconsciously assumed) patriarchy was the pattern throughout the Greco-Roman world, including the world of Judea.[14] In Roman law, women were accorded greater rights than in Judean law (e.g. right of divorce, or to represent oneself in court), but this difference should not be exaggerated. Male heads of household had total control over all aspects of their household, including the women, as enshrined in Roman law (*potestas patria*, right/power of fatherhood). Girls and women were generally not permitted the same educational advantages as boys and men. Women were commonly assumed to be

not only physically, but also intellectually and spiritually inferior to men (1 Pet 3:7). To call someone "womanish" (*gynaikarion*, e.g. 2 Tim 3:6-7) was considered a particular insult. Indeed, given the low status and values accorded to women, both socially and economically, female infanticide was practiced and accepted (to some extent) throughout the Greco-Roman world. While the Jewish community would never accept such a practice, the status of women in the Jewish community was not substantially different from that of the rest of the world. The exceptions to this pattern of patriarchy in Paul's world were extremely rare and even the most liberal of Greco-Roman philosophers went only so far as to suggest that women ought to be educated so that they could be even more effective in domestic duties (e.g. Epictetus).

Given this context, we should already ask how different we should expect Paul to be in relation to his environment. We proceed by looking first at those texts where Paul's perspective appears to move against the prevailing patriarchy of his day, in giving women significant value and roles in the Messiah-loyalist community.

1. Numerous women named as "co-workers"

While Paul's innermost circle of associates was staffed by men, it is crucial not to miss the numerous women that he includes within the ranks of his trusted "co-workers." For instance, among the many names of individuals to whom greetings are to be sent in Romans 16, a third are women, and many of those designated with some honourific term in service of the gospel. Most prominent is Phoebe (Rom 16:1-2), called a *diakonos* ("minister," not just "deacon") and *prostatis* ("patron" or "leader," not "helper"). The latter is the noun form of the verb denoting the act of leading congregations (1 Thess 5:12).[15] While not much is known about Phoebe, what is clear from Paul's recommendation is that she is most likely the trusted letter carrier of Paul's letter to the Roman congregations, and his designated spokesperson and interpreter. Like Lydia, she appears to be an independent, relatively wealthy woman (not under a male head), and perhaps traveling to Rome on business,[16] although it is just as likely that her trip is financed by the assemblies of Corinth.

First in the list of those to receive special greetings are Prisca and Aquila (Rom 16:3-5). They are always referred to as a duo, with Prisca (or the diminutive Priscilla in Acts) regularly listed first (except in 1 Cor 16:19), leading many to conclude that she was the more gifted and prominent of the two "co-workers."[17] Also near the head of the list of greetings is a certain Mary (Miriam), applauded for her "hard work"

among the faithful (Rom 16:6). Similarly, three other women—Persis, Tryphena, and Tryphosa[18]—are congratulated for having "worked in the Lord" (Rom 16:12), a phrase that Paul often uses for apostles or workers in the assembly whose leadership should be recognized (Gal 4:11; 1 Cor 15:10; 16:16; 1 Thess 5:12). It is quite likely that these individuals are to be understood as leaders of particular household assemblies in Rome.

Junia and (apparently) her husband Andronicus (Rom 16:17) are named as "noted apostles," and also specially distinguished as Jewish kinsfolk, Paul's fellow prisoners (thus recent migrants to Rome), and as being "in Christ" well before Paul himself. Later editors of the New Testament tried to give the female name Junia (Lat. Juno, after the moon goddess) a masculine ending (Junias, otherwise unknown in Greco-Roman literature) so as to obscure the fact that a woman is called an "apostle."[19]

Women also appear to be particularly prominent in the leadership of the assembly in Philippi. Euodia and Syntyche (Phil 4:2-3) are called "co-workers" and are probably to be included among the overseers and ministers that are specially addressed in the salutation (Phil 1:1-2). They appear to represent partisans in a leadership squabble, and thus are singled out in the letter. Indeed, it is also possible that the person invited to mediate their conflict was a woman, named obliquely as "genuine Syzyge" (Phil 4:2-3).[20] Some have associated this ambiguous reference with Lydia, known from the account of Acts as the independent head of a household, merchant of textiles, migrant to Philippi, and patron of Paul and the congregation (Acts 16:11-15, 40). She is presented as a named example of the many "leading women" who joined the assembly (Acts 17:4, 12, 34).

Finally, we should note Nympha (Col 4:15), the host for a house church in Colossae (or Laodicea), and probably the female head of a household, and Apphia (Phlm 2), an originally Phygian name and someone who filled an important leadership position in the Colossian assembly ("the sister," as a counterpart of Timothy "the brother").[21] In the case of Nympha, the manuscript tradition clearly indicates some discomfort with her leadership role.[22]

In this connection, Thekla (Thecla) of Iconium who appears in the early third-century Acts of Paul could also be mentioned. While the current form of the text is overladen by multiple legendary features, there is evidently a historical kernel around which further accretions developed. The story of Thekla was transmitted orally for generations before being written down around the year 160 CE. Thekla was from a family of high social standing, was drawn to Paul's preaching and

then spurned the high ranking man to whom she was betrothed. After surviving a series of horrific ordeals for her faith, she eventually becomes Paul's associate. Paul commissions her as itinerant missionary "equal to the apostles," and she remains celibate (so as not to be under a man), and cuts her hair short (to look like a man) to indicate her independence from social norms. The church father Tertullian complains that her story is widely being used to endorse the presence of women in positions of leadership in the church.[23]

2. The Messianic charter of divisive hierarchies suspended

Another key text appears to cite part of an early baptismal liturgy:

> For in Messiah Jesus you are all children of God through [Messiah's] fidelity. As many of you as were baptized into Messiah have clothed yourselves with Messiah.
> There is no longer Jew or Greek,
> there is no longer slave or free,
> there is no longer male and female;
> for all of you are one in Messiah Jesus.
> And if you are of Messiah, then you are Abraham's seed,
> heirs according to promise. (Gal 3:26-29)

Paul's primary interest in the context of this passage is to break down the priority of the Jew relative to the Gentile (Gal 5:6; 6:15). But he goes beyond this particular duality, apparently quoting the traditional liturgy. The core imagery is of a re-birthing in Messiah[24] and re-clothing of Messiah that suspends those prior statuses or identities that are the product (mainly) of birth or birth right. We should surmise that this fuller expression of the baptismal charter was widely used in the early communities,[25] and that it signalled something more than the merely spiritual status of equality obtained in the realm of Christ.[26]

3. Gifts not gendered

A core feature of Paul's understanding of the Messianic assembly is that it is infused with God's spirit, which results further in the giftedness of all members for the common good. What is important to note is that in lists of "gifts" that are distributed to members of the congregation, Paul makes no distinctions according to gender (see Rom 12; 1 Cor 12). Indeed, he assumes that women will also express the most desired gift in worship settings, namely prophecy (1 Cor 11:4-5; cf. 14:1).

4. Passages assuming mutuality

Paul also makes a number of statements that indicate an assumed mutuality between men and women. For instance, in 1 Corinthians 7:10-16 he observes that women have equal legal right to divorce, although he discourages that option for both husbands and wives. As for conjugal relations, he argues that wives and husbands have equal rights over each others' bodies (1 Cor 7:2-5), a statement different from conservative Greco-Roman moralists who assert that in this area husbands have greater rights over their wives. Related to this, Paul puts the onus and responsibility on men "to manage their tools" (1 Thes 4:4), a euphemism covered up by modern translations.[27] Paul thus refuses to accept the "myth of the seductress" by which men blame women for their own deficiencies. Moreover, Paul claims that celibacy is a virtue for either men or women (1 Cor 7:32-35). Most other moralists assume that celibacy was reserved only for men, and assert that women should get married and fulfil domestic obligations.

5. Passages indicating subordination for women

Despite the remarkable texts just cited, a number of passages go in the opposite direction. For instance, in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 Paul asserts that women will pray and prophesy in gatherings, requiring only that they wear veils when they do so. But to argue this case, Paul makes the following claims: "Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of his woman" (11:3) and "[the original] man is the image and glory of God, but woman is the glory of man. Indeed, man was not made from woman, but woman from man. Neither was man created for the sake of woman, but woman for the sake of man." On the basis of these arguments for a hierarchical order established in creation (by which Genesis 1 is read in light of Genesis 2), he asserts that it is self-evident that a bare head is a shame for a woman, and that an unveiled woman is tantamount to a shaved head (11:4-7), and follows this with the oblique argument that veils for women are necessary so as not to offend or entice the angels (a reference to Genesis 6?), and an argument of attire based on the evident teaching of "nature" (confused with "culture"). But realizing that his readers might not have been convinced, Paul appeals simply to "what is proper" (11:13b), and to "common practice" (11:16).

Paul's difficulty or ambivalence can be seen in the disclaimer he adds in verses 11-12, by which he appears intent on forestalling any extreme marginalization of women based on his argument: man and woman are truly interdependent, and all is from God, not from the prowess of man

(11:11-12). For years interpreters have tried to ascertain the convoluted argument or the actual situation that caused Paul to respond in this way. Most have concluded that it was for some practical reason of balancing various attitudes regarding women's roles and attire. The mystery, then, is why Paul uses the theological argument of a male-female hierarchy to bolster his exhortation—why didn't he just say, "We should be cautious so as not to offend those with different scruples" (as he does, essentially, in 1 Cor 8-10 and Rom 14-15)? The answer is to be found in the prevailing ideology and practice of patriarchy that is never named directly.[28]

The same posture is evident in Colossians 3:18-19, expressing the typical pattern of so-called Greco-Roman "household codes": "Let the women [wives] be subordinate to the men [husbands], as is proper in the Lord; let the men [husbands] love the women [wives] and not be harsh toward them." While many regard Colossians as deutero-Pauline, such that this passage is not thought to represent the historical Paul, it is not possible to be that confident about this claim.[29] Especially when one considers the rhetoric of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, the social teaching in Colossians 3:18-19 should not come as a surprise. The text reflects a common pattern for social morality in the Greco-Roman world (and should not be treated as a natural extension of the social teaching of Jesus), promoting the "subordination" of women in the patriarchal household. Paul, however, does soften the similar advice of other moralists by adding that the male heads of households should "love" their wives, not "manage" or "rule over" them. Moreover, he contextualizes the propriety of subordination of those of lower stations as a pattern of conduct appropriate to the realm of the Lord (perhaps as a kind of concession), without enshrining the command itself as a universal, timeless principle. Even here, then, we see Paul as participating in the prevailing patriarchy of his day, while attempting to modify some of its extremes in a sort of "love patriarchalism."[30]

How are we to understand or explain the evident tension in Paul's letters on this matter? (1) Some have been tempted to explain this in terms of Paul's hybridized cultural identity (e.g. his Judaic vs. Roman heritage). But while there might have been some modest legal protections and freedoms for women in the Roman world relative to that of Judea, these are relatively insignificant in the overall picture of endemic Mediterranean patriarchy. Moreover, this generalization can easily lead to an anti-Semitic reading of emerging Christianity. (2) Also off the mark is the notion that Paul's subordinationist rhetoric reflects an idiosyncratic misogyny. (3) More promising is the evident tension in Paul's assemblies (and no doubt within his own person) between "charisma" and "order."

The leadership and ministry roles for numerous women (e.g. Rom 16) can be explained as expressions of Spirit-infused "charisma," the giftedness of the assemblies without regard to gender and other divisions that interrupt prevailing patriarchal norms for ordering communities. At the same time, however, it appears that the concern for "order" (*taxis*, Col 2:6; cf. 3:18-4:1) or the preoccupation with what is customarily "proper" (1 Cor 11:13-14) sometimes overtakes the liberating or democratizing winds of the Spirit.[31] (4) A related way to put this dynamic is in terms of the dialectic of Paul's apocalyptic, visionary "passion" and his pragmatic "sobriety."[32] On the one hand, the imminent arrival of the apocalypse means that the structures of this age could already undergo alternation within the sphere of Messiah's community, in which the Spirit resides as a "down-payment/pledge" that signals the imminent arrival of the age to come (2 Cor 1:22; 5:5).[33] But at the same time, Paul made numerous practical or tactical compromises for the interim period prior to Messiah's *parousia*, in the same way that slave masters could retain slaves short of the complete transformation of the world, while eating the Lord's supper only as absolute equals.

Excursus: Patriarchy in Paul's Name

The most strongly restrictive or subordinationist texts of the New Testament are found in texts written in the name of Paul some years after his death, and do not reflect the perspective of the "historical Paul." In 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, "Paul" legislates that women should be silent in the assembly and learn from their husbands at home. This text is widely understood to represent a later insertion by a pious, traditionalist editor some years after Paul for the following reasons: (1) the text-critical evidence, including evidence that some manuscripts consider these verses as a variant reading not found in all manuscripts, and signs of textual dislocation of the sort to be expected when sentences originally inserted into the margin of a manuscript are then inserted at different places; (2) the two verses flatly contradict an earlier chapter where Paul assumes that women will pray and prophesy in assembly gatherings as long as they have veils (1 Cor 11); (3) the verses intrude into the present context, breaking the natural flow from verses 33 to 36; and (4) they conflict with Paul's obvious practice of numerous women leaders in his assemblies (above).[34]

First Timothy 2:8-15 promotes the same restriction as in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, but with further elaboration and reasons: women are morally and intellectually deficient; Adam was formed first; Eve was

responsible for Adam's sin; women will come safely through childbearing (the ideal role of women) if they live pure lives. The Pastoral Epistles (1-2 Tim; Titus) promote other restrictions on the ministry of women and show a consistently negative attitude toward women (see 1 Tim 5:3-16; Tit 2:3-5; 2 Tim 3:6-7). Either Paul has turned 180 degrees from his earlier welcoming of women in his earlier career or someone else is writing in his name. There is compelling evidence that the Pastoral Epistles were not written by Paul but by an admirer sometime after his death, who wished to pass on what Paul would have said to the next generation.

Conclusion

Paul's Messianic proclamation included the claims that, in Christ (in the Messianic age/sphere, and in his person, the body of Christ), the divisions based on birth or birth right that separated Jew and Greek, slave and free, and male and female were overcome (Gal 3:26-29). Paul did not work equally hard on all three of these fronts, but seems to have chosen his battles. Paul is most consistent in his tireless work to overcome the Jew/Gentile divide. This is Paul's most enduring legacy. When it comes to the male/female and slave/free divisions, however, Paul embarked on modest steps in the direction of realizing the vision, though not as rigorously or as consistently as in the case of the ethnic divide that separates and excludes people.

Paul's specific teachings or interim (and cautionary) positions in this drama when taken in isolation often appear not to measure up to his own visionary dreams, let alone modern sensibilities, especially in the areas of slavery and patriarchy. Not to be missed, however, is the directionality of his vision within a set of ambiguous and ambivalent statements.

What became of his somewhat mixed legacy? What follows is a tragic story of moving backwards. (1) Within a generation after Paul, early Christian leaders assumed that the church was comprised of Gentiles only, and moved to sharply distance itself from the Jewish world, even expelling Jesus Messianists who sought to retain their Jewishness, and claiming exclusive rights over the previously Jewish scriptures. One can hardly imagine a sharper 180 degree betrayal of Paul's vision proclaimed in Romans. Paul's most extreme statement in Galatians, which in many ways he sought to moderate in Romans, became the canonical statement against Judaism. And Romans eventually came to be read as purely an attack on Judaism, while its even stronger attack on Gentile arrogance was overlooked and forgotten. Paul's vision of ethnic inclusivism in Messiah was rendered exclusivist. (2) With respect to the short advances

that Paul made toward the overcoming of slavery and patriarchy, these too were quickly interrupted, as Christianity accommodated itself to prevailing social norms, and the disruptive freedom of the Spirit was institutionally routinized.

What is crucial to remember, to recover, and to realize now is the directionality of Paul's Messianic vision.

Chapter 7

The Relevance of Paul's Eschatological Ecclesiology for Ecumenical Relations

The people of God is called to be today what the world is called to be ultimately. (John Howard Yoder, *Body Politics*[1])

Paul's writings provide a valuable resource for reflection on congregationalism and denominationalism. In the context of growing diversity and divergent streams within the emerging Jesus-loyalist movement,[2] Paul emphatically stresses the world-wide unity of the community of Messiah. But equally significant is Paul's accent on the future reconciliation between that elect community and the remainder of perishing humanity, within the scope of the reign of God. Foundational for both of these issues—that is, both intramural divergence and cross-mural distancing—is Paul's eschatological ecclesiology. Paul's understanding of the community of Messiah-loyalists is not just oriented to Messiah's prior career (life, death, resurrection) but just as crucially to the very goal (*telos*) of God's salvation for the entire created order—"the reign of God" made possible through the full presence and victory (*parousia*) of Messiah (e.g. 1 Cor 15:24-28). Paul's ecclesiology, not just his soteriology, has a critical eschatological dimension—that is, a future-oriented, world-transformational horizon—and to overlook it is a serious misunderstanding.

Paul's Eschatological Ecclesiology

What, then, is Paul's "eschatological ecclesiology?" The ultimate *ekklēsia* (citizen assembly) that Paul envisions is certainly not a notion of the heavenly congregation, past, present, and future. Nor is it some notion of the church invisible, and especially not the church universal as some remnant, a mere portion of those who are the subject of God's unfailing promises. Rather, it is the mediation of identity on the grounds of a universal hope of salvation through Messiah. It is, as a consequence of the dynamic activity of God through Messiah, the collapsing of the "portion"—the "remnant," the not-all—and its re-absorption into the "all." It is the process by which ultimately, as Paul puts it, "God will have mercy on all humanity" (Rom 11:32), and whereby "God will be all in all" (1 Cor 15:28). The *telos* that Paul envisions is nothing short of the shattering of the boundaries by which fidelity and infidelity (believers and unbelievers) mark divisions among humanity, further to the shattering of the boundaries marked by ethnicity, nationality, class, and gender (Gal 3:28). Thus the *ekklēsia* that now exists, that exists in Paul's now, is entirely provisional, interim, and contingent—a mere proleptic or vanguard expression of what must result ultimately through God's ongoing love story with all creation. In other words, it is an entity which exists to lose itself. Ecclesiology in Paul is subject to a crucial tension point between the so-called "not yet" and the "already," a tension point that has been typically collapsed into the "already," just as the overall drama of messianic salvation has been spiritualized into the drama of the individual's pilgrimage to heaven, and/or else muted into a drama of salvation-history, in which the church understands itself as the climax of God's redemptive work (and not as sign and agent toward the ultimate reign of God).[3]

But this characterization may require some elaboration, lest it be perceived to represent some notion of liberal universalism. The issue has instead to do with coming to terms with Paul's powerful and passionate vision of the reign of God, God's counter-sovereignty, and the implications of that for seeing our own identity and vocation as adherents in fidelity to Messiah Jesus, relative to those who, on that very account, are currently perceived (or named) as unbelieving "enemies of God" (cf. Rom 5:10; 9:25; 11:28).[4]

The central framework that gives coherence to Paul's entire theological vocabulary and to his activist, missionizing, and organizational undertaking, is his conviction of the imminent and inexorable arrival of the universal reign of God.[5] The underlying script in Paul's letters is the story of God's sovereign, imperial faithfulness from creation to re-

creation, whereby God will soon triumph throughout creation, signalled by the resurrection of Messiah (the "first-fruits"), himself victimized by the powers of darkness and death as operating in the framework of empire (1 Cor 2:6-8).[6] Whereas the creation was created good, it has suffered the entry of mysterious, created, yet rebellious powers that oppress God's creation (even as creation has also been subjected to its futility by God, Rom 8:20). Among these disparate powers Paul includes Error (Sin), Death, Law, Satan, Rulers, and Authorities. But beginning with and through Messiah, God is in the process of reclaiming all creation for God. Paul's script expresses this through the notion of the "age to come" versus the "age that now stands," a dualism that is at the same time cosmic (God vs. Satan, and their respective forces), anthropological (the conflict resides in each individual), historical (the conflict has a *telos*, goal), epistemological (God's wisdom vs. worldly wisdom), and soteriological (in the sense that final salvation can only come through a dynamic intervention from the transcendent "outside"). In Paul's understanding, his own generation is on the verge of a cataclysmic world transformation (e.g. 1 Cor 10:10; 1 Cor 7:26, 29, 31; Rom 13:11-14), a salvation-drama that is not fundamentally world-ending or world-denying but world-transforming (e.g. Rom 8:18-25; 11:15; 2 Cor 5:17-21; Col 1:20). It is a vision far more terrestrially next-worldly than vertically otherworldly, anticipating the goal not as disembodied individual immortality but as corporate re-embodiment in the context of a restored creation.[7] Final salvation in Paul does not entail the departure of the righteous from earth to heaven, but an ultimate merging of heaven and earth (another division overcome), so that God's imperial reign (now only supreme in heaven) will be universal.[8]

Within this framework, then,

> the church is primarily the interim eschatological community that looks forward to the future of the coming reign of God. . . . [It] is the proleptic manifestation of the kingdom of God in history,… the beachhead of the new creation and the sign of the new age in the old world that is 'passing away' (1 Cor 7:29). . . . The true *ekklēsia* is a future eschatological reality that will only be realized when it comprises the whole people of Israel (Rom 11:25).[9]

An eschatological understanding of Messiah's community resolves not only the matter of its ethical character as an assembly of the regenerated (e.g. 1 Thess 3:12-13; Phil 1:6, 9-11; 1 Cor 1:8), but also that of its ultimate reconciliation with a restored creation, a creation now hostile to God and Messiah (e.g. Rom 8:17-39; 11:1-36).

Ultimate Salvation in Paul

There is a brief dramatic sequence of "final salvation" as envisioned by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:20-28 that can provide some specificity to this generalized picture. It is a picture of the "ultimacies of the ages that have come upon us" (1 Cor 10:11), and more precisely an explication of the process by which "in(by) Messiah all [humanity] shall be made alive" (1 Cor 15:22).[10] (1) First, Messiah is made alive as "first-fruits," by being raised by God (cf. 15:20, 23a). (2) Then, also "made alive" at his coming, are "those who belong to (are of) Messiah."[11] (3) Then there is a making alive by "the de-activation (rendering ineffective) of every rule, authority, and power," by which Messiah will put all his enemies under his feet, concluding with Death itself (1 Cor 15:24-26). And (4) the culmination is the handing of the kingdom over to the Father, the subordination of Messiah to God (cf. 1 Cor 2:23), so that "God will be all in all" (1 Cor 15:27-28).

The third part of the sequence, the question of the "powers," is especially pertinent here. English translations have traditionally used the word "destroy" to translate the verb *katargein* in this passage (e.g. NRSV, TNIV). But a more adequate rendering would be "de-activate" or "render ineffective."[12] The verb contains the same sort of ambiguity of our use of the English verb to "pacify." Indeed, when one observes the imagery that Paul uses elsewhere of this part of the eschatological drama—that is, how the hostile powers of the cosmos are dealt with—there is a curious persistent tension: we find both images of conquest (and its attendant "pacification"), and of "transformation" or "reconciliation" (and its attendant "clemency").[13] And this tension corresponds with Paul's treatment of "salvation" both in negative terms (as a deliverance from judgment, condemnation, destruction, wrath, fiery purgation, etc.) and in positive terms, as the total transformation of the cosmos and the human individual within it into the design that God originally intended.[14]

For instance, some texts employ the imagery of conquest or world-subjection (Phil 2:9-11; 3:20-21; Rom 15:8-12; 1 Cor 2:6-8; 15:24-28). On the other hand, as an exhibit of final reconciliation imagery in Paul we have Romans 11:15, where the "reconciliation of the *kosmos*" is parallel to the coming of "life from the dead." Moreover, there is Romans 8:18-25, where the claim that "all creation will itself be set free from its bondage to decay" is parallel to the hope of the "redemption of our bodies," and Colossians 1:19-20, where Paul claims that in/by Messiah God intends "to reconcile all things unto Messiah, making peace by the blood of his cross, whether things on earth or in heaven."[15] Thus, Paul's language of "de-activating (*katargein*) the powers" signals not their "destruction" as

such, but ultimately their transformation and reconciliation. A proper Pauline ecclesiology, then, must take into account (a) the past messianic event of resurrection which inaugurates the "ends of the ages," (b) the eschatological vindication and perfection of those now allied and secure in the sphere of Messiah, and (c) God's eschatological deliverance to deal with all powers now opposed to Messiah, including unbelief.

The Part (Remnant) and the All: Romans 11

Romans 11 is the crucial text which explores how the very make-up of the ecclesial community is itself transformed in this telic dynamic. Romans 11 is indeed the highpoint of Paul's argument in Romans, but it is also a most subversive text that the church has continued to mute.

Romans is most fundamentally a bold proclamation and defense of God's own fidelity: if God is not faithful to promises of old, all new messianic proclamation collapses into irrelevance. From beginning (1:2) to end (15:8-9) the centrality of God's promise is highlighted: these are promises both to Israel, and to all the nations, together the constructs that for Paul make up all humanity (e.g. 1:16-17). Thus Paul rests his case on the Scriptures, cited more frequently in chapters 9-11 than elsewhere in his letters. This crucial section concludes with the most astonishing claim: "God will have mercy on all humanity" (11:32). Despite all appearances to the disconfirmation of the promises, Paul's hopes for the universal realization of God's promise is unwavering, just as Abraham resolutely expressed "hope upon hope" (Rom 4:18).

Romans 11 is especially designed to challenge the arrogance of new arrivals (11:18, 20, 25)—that is those "grafted in" where others have been "cut off." Thus Paul emphasizes the provisionality of both grafting in (potential inclusion) and of cutting off (potential exclusion; 11:17-24). In effect, there can never be a Part that takes the place of the All. Only the Part that understands itself as Not-All is worthy of being secure in the role of that Part relative to the All.[16] More specifically, in Messiah's time and instrumentality (11:26-27), and in God's mystery (11:25, 33-36) and grace (11:5-6; cf. 9:11, 16), that is, not by any human willing or running (Rom 9:16), the "remnant of Israel" will collapse into the salvation of "all Israel" (11:26), that is, into its "fullness" (or "wholeness," *plērōma*, 11:12). In the same way, the proclamation among the nations will become "the fullness of the nations" (11:25; cf. "wealth of the world, wealth of the nations," 11:12), nothing short of the "reconciliation of the world" and "life from the dead" (11:15). Corresponding to the messianic enthronement drama at the outset of the letter (Rom 1:3-4), this very theme of the world-wide (ecumenical) realization of Messiah's

reign concludes the argument of the letter, through a litany of scriptural citation (Rom 15:10-12): "Rejoice, O nations, with his people [Israel]" (Deut 32:43); "Praise the Lord, all nations, and the all the peoples praise him" (Ps 117:1); "The root of Jesse shall come, he who rises to rule the nations; in him shall the nations hope" (Isa 11:10). Any attempt to see Paul's language of fullness and universality as really only some mere portion (e.g. as a partial "full number" of willing or predetermined individuals) disregards the force of Paul's argument. Paul is not talking about individuals here; he is talking about corporate entities that together make up all humanity.

Romans 11 is perhaps one of the most telling texts for Paul's vision of messianic redemption. It is not easily discarded as some situational outburst; nor is it the conclusion of some theoretical discourse on predestination and free will. And even less does it express some residual emotional attachment to an ethnic heritage (Israel) that goes against the logic of the gospel. Rather, Paul here is at his most consistent logic. Indeed, it is crucial to unpack here Paul's fundamental logic, further to its moorings in the overall cosmic drama of God reclaiming all creation, and its specific foundation in Scripture. Four critical logics need to be identified.

(1) First, Romans 11 expresses the movement from enmity to being loved. Romans 9-11 is one of the most profound discourses on enemy love in the New Testament, even as Paul nowhere explicitly says "love your enemies."[17] Paul takes up this logic specifically in Romans 11. Those "cut off" on account of their "infidelity" are from a certain vantage point certainly "enemies of God." But Paul reminds his predominantly and increasingly arrogant (and supersessionist) Gentile readers that this was "for your sake," in a grand drama of mutual interdependence and asymmetric reciprocity (11:28-32; cf. Rom 15:22-33). The outcome or counterpart of this enmity is that they are "beloved according to election" (11:28). This is the very same logic expressed earlier in the letter, notably in Romans 5:6-11 ("while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God"),[18] and more proximately in 9:25-26, when in fact Paul describes the counterpart movement of those nations (Gentiles) who were "not beloved" (that is, enemies) into the realm of being "the beloved." It is the movement from being "not my people" into being designated "my people," indeed, to becoming "sons [and daughters] of the living God," at the very moment when the very status of the apparently elected appeared to be in complete jeopardy (9:27-29). The fundamental logic is that God wills to move enemies into the status of the beloved, whether the nations or Israel.[19]

(2) Also foundational to Paul's universal claim is that no human infidelity can compromise God's fidelity, or the working out of God's intention: "What if some were unfaithful? Does their infidelity render ineffective (*katargein*, de-activate) the fidelity of God? By no means!" (Rom 3:3-4) Thus, let God be true if every human is false, and let God be just if every human is unjust (Rom 3:4-8). While Romans 3:1-8 refers especially to Israel, Paul later uses similar language of God's promise toward the nations: no imposition of Law can be allowed to "render ineffective (de-activate, *katargein*) the promise" (Rom 4:14-15, 17-18). Nothing can compromise the covenant fidelity and justice of God relative to the promises both to Israel (Rom 3:1-4; 11:25-29) and to the nations (e.g. Rom 15:7-13), for their final and interdependent salvation in God's work of universal restoration.[20]

(3) Thirdly, we have the interplay of the polarity of wrath and mercy in the divine economy of salvation, which in Paul entails an asymmetric economy of restorative justice, in which mercy transfigures distributive justice. This interplay can hardly be fully treated in short order.[21] But this theme is crucial in the present text, providing both the prelude to Paul's final claim of universal, interdependent salvation for Israel and the nations (11:17-24) and the concluding explication (11:30-32), the final statement of which is that God's mercy ultimately overcomes all human disobedience. This dynamic is also introduced at most critical junctures earlier in the letter. The very logic of salvation now in Messiah is that it represents a demonstration of God's justice (that is, covenant fidelity) precisely as an exhibition of God's mercy toward previously committed sins, namely all those sins that were the subject of the condemning excoriation in 1:18-3:20. The crux of the argument is that while the "whole world" is liable to the threatening wrath of God (3:19-20), God has acted in such a way that this wrath has been simply averted, "passed over" (Rom 3:21-26). It is only on that basis that anyone has any claim to status in the messianically reconstituted people of God.

This logic is repeated in Romans 9:19-26, a more direct counterpart to Romans 11. God is God insofar as it is completely in God's domain to show mercy instead of wrath: "What if God, while willing to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much forbearance the vessels of wrath made [i.e. destined] for destruction, in order to make known the riches of his glory for the vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory" (Rom 9:22). As such, God's mercy shatters any notion of a predictable economy of salvation based on distributive justice. It is in the very being and prerogative of God that humans simply cannot presume on God, whether God's mercy, in regard to any claims of insider status (Rom 2:4), or God's justice, relative to any

certainty about outsider destiny (Rom 3:21-26; 8:19-23; 11:22-24, 30-32; 12:17-21).

(4) Finally, we have the logic of imperial world-wide sovereignty. Romans 11, which challenges any final answer being limited to a partial remnant, is founded on a logic of Messiah as God's agent of universal, counter-imperial, cosmic sovereignty. Here, we return to that theme of God's ultimate "de-activation of all rule, authority, and power" through Messiah (1 Cor 15:24), as expressed most clearly in Philippians 2:9-11: "so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acclaim, Lord Jesus Messiah, to the glory of God the Father." Naturally, the query is immediately: Well, is this acclaim coerced or voluntary? And aren't the true believers those that acclaim Jesus voluntarily? With this text, we are back to the tensive imagery between ultimate messianic victory as conquest, and ultimate deliverance as reconciliation and transformation. This imagery is indeed difficult for those of us immersed in liberal democratic ideology, that is, an approach which puts all the eggs on the side of individual choice, the autonomous individual. So the best way to unpack this imagery is in direct reference to imperial ideology, which this very proclamation uses in order to subvert or counter it.

Paul's imagery of the universal reign of Messiah is strikingly similar in some respects (as its anti-type) to the imperial rhetoric of Octavian (Caesar Augustus) himself, as contained in the *Res Gestae Divi Augusti*, "the mighty deeds of divine Augustus."[22] Augustus composed these memoirs to be released and published at his death, mounted on bronze tablets in front of his mausoleum, and which by the time of Paul could be found in multilingual translations broadcast from imperial temples across the empire, the most complete version surviving in Ancyra, the then capital of Galatia. A good portion of the *Res Gestae* concerns the account by which Augustus "subjected the whole world to the sovereignty of the Roman people" (*Res Gestae* 1; cf. Phil 3:21), through divinely-appointed and benevolent rule, and it highlights the concomitant honours that Octavian received as a bringer of such salvation and "peace." The whole rehearsal builds to the climax that confirms the true character of Augustus as exemplifying the virtues of "valour, clemency, justice, and piety" (*Res Gestae* 34). And his acts are meant to demonstrate that during his principate "other nations experienced the faith [fidelity; Lat. *fides*, Gk. *pistis*] of the Roman people" (*Res Gestae*, 32). That is, the other nations were not simply forced to make oaths of allegiance (e.g. *Res Gestae*, 25); rather, they voluntarily submitted in loyalty (faith) to the rule of Romans through the Romans' own demonstration of "fidelity" (faith) and friendship, through the agency of Augustus himself. Finally,

Augustus makes sure to highlight that he was only acting on behalf of the Roman people and Senate, not for his own personal aggrandizement: following his conquest and pacification of the world, he "transferred the republic from my own power to the will of the Senate and the Roman people," on the basis of which he was given the quasi-divine name of "Augustus" (*RG*, 34; cf. 1 Cor 15:24-28; Phil 2:9-11).

This parallel does not merely show how Paul appropriates imperial rhetoric in his messianic proclamation that nullifies (de-activates) any contrary sovereignty. More importantly, and specific to the argument here, this parallel illustrates the manner in which the imperial rhetoric, of which Paul is here a species, is not preoccupied with any final distinction between submission that is purely voluntary or submission that emerges out of demonstration of power (Rom 1:3-4; 11:25-27; 15:8-12; Phil 2:9-11; 3:20-21). In either case, the submission (loyalty, faith) is real, and the effect is "peace," resulting in the universal inclusion of peoples within the inhabited world (*oikoumenē*). The point, here, is that no ecclesial vanguard of those who are "on board" with the bringer of universal rule can claim that all outsiders (e.g. the current disloyal or pockets of resistance) are forever lost. Rather, the true deliverer, whether the Imperator ("Commander," thus Emperor) or Messiah, must embrace and reconcile the "whole world" in the saved dominion. Universal sovereignty actualizes universal acclamation and loyalty-faith. Nevertheless, while both the imperial and the messianic aim toward universality, what most significantly distinguishes imperial from messianic rule is the different modality of Messiah's effective rule: the latter involves (a) the embrace of the path of lowliness and weakness, indeed that of the cross, an ironic twist on the prime mechanism of imperial terror (Phil 2:5-11; 3:10-11, 20-21), (b) the operation of enemy love, not self-promoting benevolence and pacification by ruthless conquest, and (c) the primacy of mercy over justice, of restorative justice over distributive justice.

To summarize, then, Paul's eschatological ecclesiology involves a *telos* (goal) in which the provisional and interim Part (Remnant) collapses into the realization of the All, as expressed in the binary "fullness of the nations" and "all Israel." This vision of universal restoration is a subset of Paul's broader vision of final cosmic restoration through Messiah, and is founded on God's promises in Scripture which cannot be "de-activated" ("rendered ineffective"), and more particularly on the logics of (1) enemies transformed into becoming the beloved, (2) divine fidelity as more persistent than human infidelity, (3) an asymmetrical economy of restorative justice, in which mercy transfigures distributive justice, and (4) the universal sovereignty and reconciling work of Messiah.

The Theme of Wrath, Condemnation, Destruction on the Unfaithful (Unbelievers)

No doubt the rejoinder will come, that this presentation does not take into adequate account Paul's expectation of judgment, wrath, condemnation, or destruction upon the "non-believer"—that is, expressions of what appears to enact the simple logic of distributive justice (albeit transformed from one based on works, to one based on "belief"). Space does not permit a full discussion of this matter.[23] Suffice it to say that there are indeed points of tension in Paul's rhetoric.[24] Perhaps one can let the interplay stand, although articulated in a carefully nuanced way. On the one hand, according to Paul, no one (neither the unbeliever nor the believer, the just or the unjust) can presume on God's mercy (Rom 2:4)—the threat or prospect of wrath or destruction is real; there are real consequences. On the other hand, and this is the side I am highlighting in this paper, no one can calculate or predict the final outcome of God's justice—the potential of mercy, of the forbearing, long-suffering love of the enemy, can never be exhausted.

It should also be emphasized that Paul's universal hope in no way spells any diminution in the ongoing and active proclamation of the gospel by the church. In effect, here we are also left with an ongoing tension: (a) The active proclamation of Messiah, toward the animation of loyalty-belief both within and outside the church must continue, along with the church's witness to the powers-that-be with the uncompromising claims of messianic sovereignty. This active proclamation will necessarily involve gestures of separation and dissent, insofar as the gospel is inherently counter-imperial. But meanwhile, (b) the church must recognize that any division or boundary originating from that very proclamation is not one for us to calculate with any finality, but is rather one whose resolution toward the animation of universal loyalty, in response to universal messianic merciful sovereignty, is to be left in God's hands. This allows no room for any final ecclesial self-assurance, nor any confidence in a presumed destiny of the other, the enemy.[25]

Situating Paul in the New Testament

Paul is the only New Testament witness with such a profoundly universal and unwavering hope for God's redemptive work through Messiah. Paul stands at a critical juncture. As the earliest NT writer, he stands at a point before the church comes to terms with the non-fulfillment of the vision, the non-event of the *parousia*. Later, the church accommodates by, in effect, lowering (or delaying) expectations. Very soon after Paul,

in a process already evident in some of the later writings of the New Testament, the church increasingly adopted the premise of an economy of distributive justice, seeing itself (in its current formation) as the apex of God's plan. Its economy of distributive justice, along with an economy of scarcity (by which someone's loss helps to magnify someone's sense of gain), became the confirmation and legitimation of its own self-assured reality. Paul, however, stands at a point before the emerging institutional church routinizes itself as the thing in itself, which, granted, took place in the wake of hard practical realities (namely, extensive and persistent unbelief, not to mention severe persecution). But Paul is fiercely combative against any consequential form of supersessionism, and ultimately refuses a final identity-definition and self-understanding based on the loss of hope, based on someone else's misstep.[26] "In hope upon hope he believed" (Rom 4:18), as did Abraham, expecting nothing less than a miracle ("the mystery" of Rom 11:25; cf. 11:33-36). As a result, he pens Romans 9–11 with the deepest of anguish and sorrow, claiming that he himself would rather be "cut off" and be "accursed" (Rom 9:1-3) than for God's program of "(re)grafting in" toward the reconciliation of the *kosmos*, the fullness of the all, to be left with a final mere portion. For Paul, grief is the appropriate posture during the "not yet" when hostile unbelief still challenges Messiah's universal reign and thus divides humanity.[27]

Implications for a Believers Church Self-Understanding

Paul's ecclesial vision is nothing less than an ecumenical one—ecumenical in the sense that it concerns the reconciliation of the *oikoumenē*, the entire inhabited world, under the sovereign lordship of Messiah. Thus it is an ecumenicity that shatters even the boundaries of those who are currently believers and non-believers. Paul's ecumenicity, his global universalism, then, challenges any contentment with a final diminution of the messianic into a mere part, a subset, that is, into any final form of "denominationalism." Naturally, this ecumenicity also challenges any retreat to "congregationalism," although that matter is perhaps better addressed with Pauline texts other than those dealt with in this paper.[28] Paul's understanding of messianic sovereignty means that universality mediates identity, which fundamentally questions the finality of any partitive identity formation (e.g. I am of Paul, Apollos, Cephas, Christ, etc.; cf. 1 Cor 1:12; 3:21-23).[29] In the current post-denominational reality (which unfortunately is not a function of a Pauline universalism, but rather its opposite, namely congregationalism and regionalism, including nationalism and individualism), it may in fact become a necessity or

reality that networks of "believers," or transplants of the Anabaptist impulse, will be found across and beyond denominations.

This argument might also mean that one ought also to raise the question as to whether the term "Believers Church" is still the best way to carry the "concept." This issue might be raised in connection with other Pauline themes, in particular the character of belief itself as "loyalty" and "fidelity," and its consequential expression with the gesture of separation from the realities of empire. A generation ago it was felt that terms such as "free church" or "dissenters" or "non-conformists" were not well-suited for liberal democracies where there is a clear separation of church and state; thus the term "Believers Church" became the preferred way to express the concept that was once foundational to a family of denominations.[30] But in a context where "belief" is increasingly a private matter, but in symbiotic co-dependency with patriotic allegiance to a liberal democratic state, the term "Believers Church" increasingly lacks meaning. Less important than a focus on a mechanism for entry will be the matter of fundamental messianic allegiance and fidelity (what Paul especially means with the word *pistis*), along with its gesture of dissent or non-conformity (relative to any other dominion, spiritual or imperial). But that very gesture of separation will ultimately need to be accompanied by an equal passion for the hope in the final realization of messianic sovereignty, in the mode of cross-oriented humility, by which current partitions will give way to universal acclaim in the lordship of Messiah, to the glory of God.

Paul's ecumenical hope offers a challenge to any arrogance or complacency in the formation of a part that is short of the telic vision. That is, it questions any ecclesial formation that does not see itself as provisional or contingent relative to the reign of God, both spatially and temporally. The reign of God is both spatially and temporally not limited to its current expression in any bounded group of the faithful. Moreover, Paul's eschatological ecclesiology means that a messianic citizen is by consequence a global citizen, not just in the resistance to any current national sovereignty, but also in the hope that messianic sovereignty may be actualized globally, animating loyalty among all humanity and reconciling all creation.

Part Three

Security

Chapter 8

Soldiering and Battling: The Function of Military Imagery in Paul's Letters

> The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. (Rom 16:20)

A few years ago, a full-page ad caught my eye inside the front cover of the magazine *Faith Today*.[1] What drew me was the large background photo of what appeared to be American troops with their lethal arms, on the move in a dusty place like Iraq or Afghanistan. Overlaid was a crosshairs, and across the picture in bold letters was the word "CONQUEST." From the small print I learned that this was the title of a conference sponsored by the Calgary-based organization, Tehillah Monday (held June 6-10, 2004). Later, when consulting the web page version of the conference, I noticed that the text of Romans 8:37 was placed over the same combat image: "in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us." Further in the conference website, I found more images of military warriors, overlaid with Bible verses with military themes.[2]

The case I have just described illustrates one contemporary reading of Paul's military metaphors. It would be an interesting exercise—though undoubtedly complex and perhaps combative—to explore whether the crusade promoted by the conference is the sort of conquest that Paul would have endorsed, or whether he might have vilified it with equally charged imagery as representing a "different gospel" or "different Jesus."

But more to the point, is there a parallel here between, on the one hand, Tehillah Monday's use of military images, which seemed to give rather favourable endorsement (albeit implicitly) of the American military and its mode of crusade and conquest, and, on the other hand, Paul's appropriation of warfare and soldiering imagery? That is, did Paul likewise implicitly (in his use of military imagery) give a favourable endorsement of the Roman imperial order and the military machine on which it rested, or promote the idea of combative crusade in relation to his own cultural surroundings?

In light of these issues, this essay will explore the following questions. (1) In what contexts and for what rhetorical purposes does Paul employ military imagery? (1) What is the inspiration for Paul's use of military imagery: the military imagery of his sacred scriptures alongside its development in his apocalyptic theological heritage, the ubiquitous presence of the Roman military in his own world, the military imagery of moral discourse in Greek philosophical tradition, or all of the above? (2) Does Paul's use of military imagery suggest a favourable, antagonistic, ambivalent, or indifferent attitude toward Rome and its military machine? (3) Is the military imagery in Paul separable from, opposed to, or intrinsic to his peace-promoting ethic? Does Paul's use of military imagery (alongside related destructive imagery) subvert its peace and reconciliation rhetoric, leaving irresolvable incompatibilities, or does the military imagery clarify and even enhance the peace theme? (5) Does the military imagery, along with other apparently violent, oppressive, destructive, escapist, or exclusivist aspects of Paul's rhetoric undermine its validity or usability in the contemporary world?

Credit goes to Michel Desjardins for raising some of these questions in his book, *Peace, Violence and the New Testament*.[3] Desjardins (a) takes a broad perspective on violence (not limiting himself to military or lethal violence), finding not only that the New Testament occasionally accepts or endorses military violence, but also that other forms of less overt, non-physical structural and social violence pervade the New Testament; (b) suggests that there is a provocative polarity between the peace-promoting and violence-promoting aspects or potentiality of the New Testament; and (c) raises the matter of the contemporary impact or potentiality of military images or possible violent dimensions of the New Testament. His argument pertaining to Paul is that the numerous military metaphors found in Paul's writings "reflect his recognition of the importance and worth of the military—or at least his acceptance of it."[4]

I will not attempt of full review of this thesis, but will limit myself in the essay to the function of Paul's military imagery. In order to engage

properly with this thesis, my first task will be to review the language and texts where Paul employs military images.

Warfare Terminology and Imagery

The first thing to observe is the vast array of words and images for military warfare in Paul's writings,[5] as is the case with texts throughout Hellenistic and Near Eastern antiquity.[6] Some of the words Paul uses derive specifically from the setting of warfare realities. Other words that he employs with martial connotations derive from other contexts (e.g. athletic contests) or have quite broader uses besides that of military combat (e.g. business, law), but are still regularly found in Greek writings to describe warfare (both real and mythic) from Homer to Herodotus and Thucydides, and in Jewish writings from the Septuagint[7] to the Maccabees and Josephus. One finds, for instance, that in the Greco-Roman world the athletic and military aspects of struggle/fight and contest/battle are inseparable.[8]

From Paul's few letters, then, we find more than enough words to tell an engaging and gory tale of real military encounter, even though Paul never uses these words and images to describe actual warfare or to celebrate/glorify military intervention.[9] The military connotations of these words are not always evident in English translation. We find words in the following categories:[10] (1) for battling, fighting, contending, struggling, engaging in a military campaign;[11] (2) for soldiers or fighters (including mythic combatants);[12] (3) for other protagonists, including enemies, opponents and rebels, rulers, lords and authorities, and deliverers;[13] (4) for weapons and armour, and war preparations;[14] (5) for rousing the troops to battle readiness and demonstrating (war) virtues;[15] (6) for ritual curses upon the enemy;[16] (7) for tactical terms, including base of operations, stealth, orderly lines, and battle commands;[17] (8) for inciting fear and terror in the enemy;[18] (9) for features of a city siege, including fortresses, defensive ramparts, fire, tearing down, destruction and devastation;[19] (10) for killing, crushing, squeezing, striking down the enemy;[20] (11) for search and destroy mission;[21] (12) for conquering, delivering, bringing to submission, coming to reign, royal arrival for making a reign effective, subduing rebellion;[22] (13) for ruin, peril, affliction, and tribulation experienced by the devastated;[23] (14) for taking captives;[24] and (15) for executive requital, including meting out punishment on the defeated, parading captives on their way to execution, and finally crucifixion of captives.[25]

But much more crucial than the mere words is an assessment of the uses of these words and the imagery conveyed, and to this I now turn.

Uses of Warfare Imagery in Paul

The primary framework for Paul's warfare imagery is the comprehensive millenarian (or millennial, apocalyptic) script that undergirds Paul's writings and his entire life's work.[26] On this, Paul is heir to a cultural script widely held in diverse forms in the ancient world, evident first and foremost in creation myths, whereby the created order and political regimes come to exist through the (successive) conquest of hostile powers.[27] In the Hebrew Bible, for instance, the emergence of order and creation in the context of political or natural chaos (whether at the beginning of time, during chronological time, or in the future) is pictured as an exercise in divine kingship with its attendant military engagement. Accordingly, Yahweh is pre-eminently and inseparably both king and warrior. In Jewish apocalyptic thought, which brings together multiple roots, this script is taken up into the account of final re-creation, or restoration of creation, whereby the present age will finally (and imminently) give way to the age to come in which God's imperial reign of the universe will be without rival.[28]

In Paul's writings, this grand narrative of divine imperial conquest (and victory) comes to explicit expression from time to time, but is often evident implicitly, and never far from the surface.[29] At the center of this script is a theocratic vision of total world conquest over the forces of darkness, death, and injustice—powers that oppress God's originally good creation. The conflict dualism in this millennial script is multi-layered, providing a framework for discussing Paul's warfare imagery:

(1) it is cosmic-mythic, involving the on-going battle in the present order of time between God and the rebellious cosmic powers which destabilize or oppress creation;

(2) it is historical-telic (goal-directed), involving the necessary final outcome based on God's fidelity to the created order, namely, the final conquest and triumph of God through the agency of Messiah, involving the cataclysmic transformation of the present world order and ushering in the coming age of peace and justice;

(3) it is moral-anthropological, involving the battle between Error (Sin) and Justice (Righteousness), between Flesh and Spirit, within every human being;

(4) it is ecclesial-social, involving the worldly warfare of God's people, who constitute God's alternative *ekklēsia* (citizen assembly), *polis* (city-state), and *basileia* (kingdom), and whose role in the cosmic conflict is to arm themselves and battle only with the "weapons of light" (Rom 13:12), the virtues of faith, love, hope, justice, good, and prayer;

(5) it is epistemological, involving the war between worldly wisdom and divine wisdom, and especially as exercised through apostolic authority in the assembly (1 Cor 1-2; 2 Cor 10).

To put it another way: God's cosmic war of liberation is being played out in (or, military imagery is found mainly in depictions of): (a) the final conquest of Death itself, with the first assault taking place in the resurrection of Jesus; (b) the ultimate collapse of the political-economic "structures" of this age (1 Cor 2:6-8; 7:31; 15:24-28); (c) the battle for moral virtue within human beings (Rom 6-8; Col 1-3); (d) the religio-socio-political conflict with forces hostile to Messiah and still persecuting Messiah's people; and (e) the struggle for the obedience of a particular Messianic assembly, against destabilizing teachers and trends. While God's triumph over the powers is not the only root metaphor of Paul's salvific vision, it is a crucial one, if not the foundational one, alongside the themes of participating in Messiah, making right, making holy, atoning through sacrifice, redeeming, and reconciling.[30]

Divine Warfare: Victory over the Powers

While the situational fabric of Paul's writings must be acknowledged, such that not all pieces of Paul's military imagery can be neatly integrated or systematized, some coherent themes can be identified, suggesting that behind Paul's particular expressions lies a broader narrative premise of divine warfare, drawing especially on his biblical-Judaic heritage.

In Paul's understanding, the "whole of creation" is under a "subjection to futility" and a "bondage to decay," through the power of "the one who put it under subjection" (Rom 8:20-21). The focal point of enslaving power in this world is the figure of "Satan," depicted as "the God of this age" (2 Cor 4:4), and in many ways equivalent to personified "Death" itself.[31] It is Satan/Death who (most likely) is responsible for the enslaving degradation of creation, and behind human structures and institutions when they become oppressive and enslaving.[32] Satan is at the apex of the present "age" or "regime/kingdom of darkness."[33] Closely aligned with Satan/Death is the power of Error (Sin) in the world.[34]

Paul's redemptive vision accordingly focuses on the imminent[35] and comprehensive future victory of God through the agency of Messiah in his *parousia* (Lat., *adventus*, also with military connotations), albeit inaugurated with the cross and resurrection as the initial assault on the forces of darkness. While already installed as enthroned lord of the universe through his resurrection (Rom 1:3-4; Phil 2:9), and while the reclamation work is already underway through a sort of government in exile (Phil 3:20; 1 Thess 2:12; cf. Col 1:13), the final goal of bringing

the world under complete subjection and reconciliation still lies in the future (Phil 2:10-11). In Paul's vocabulary, features of this final victory include: all things [the universe] brought under subjection to Messiah (1 Cor 15:27-28; Phil 3:20-21), that is, put under his feet (1 Cor 15:27, citing Ps 8:7); all sentient beings of the cosmos pledging allegiance to Messiah (Phil 2:10-11); all nations brought under the rule of Messiah (Rom 15:11);[36] the sudden destruction of those who proclaim "peace and security" (playing on Roman imperial propaganda, 1 Thess 5:2-3);[37] Messiah rendering ineffective[38] every rule, authority, and power (1 Cor 15:24); the rulers of this age rendered ineffective (1 Cor 2:6); the passing away of the structures of this world (1 Cor 7:31); all creation liberated (Rom 8:21); Satan crushed under the feet of the saints (Rom 16:20); Death, the final enemy, vanquished (1 Cor 15:23-26, 51-56; 1 Thess 4:13-18; Phil 3:20-21; Rom 5:12-21; 8:29-39);[39] and the final transfer of the kingdom to God, who will then be all in all, and to whom even Messiah will be ultimately subjected (1 Cor 15:27-28; that is, Messiah will not himself be a usurper, in contrast presumably to Satan and other worldly and cosmic powers).

In this world-transforming (not world-ending) cataclysm, Messiah will descend from heaven (1 Thess 4:16; Phil 3:20; Rom 11:26), will be accompanied by angelic, heavenly armies (1 Thess 3:13; 1 Cor 15:23), at the head of which will be the archangel (1 Thess 4:16, presumably Michael), will lead the battle through the trumpet call and the voice of command (1 Thess 4:16; 1 Cor 15:52),[40] and will meet his newly raised followers in the clouds and air (1 Thess 4:17), who will then escort him in triumphal procession.[41] Second Thessalonians adds the imagery of devastation by fire (2 Thess 1:7-8), retribution on the persecutors of the assembly (2 Thess 1:5-9), Messiah's slaying [ritual execution?] of the man of lawlessness "by the breath/spirit of his mouth" and defeat "at/by the manifestation/splendour of his presence" (2 Thess 2:8), and seems to assume a scenario of a procession to (or campaign against) the holy mountain Zion and the temple in order to reclaim lost territory (2 Thess 2:3-10).[42]

While the military imagery attached to this final redemption of creation is consistently evident, resulting in world-subjection to Messiah, one can also find the imagery of world-reconciliation in describing Messiah's final victory. Paul proclaims "the reconciliation of the world" (Rom 11:15); he asserts that God's plan through Messiah is to "reconcile the universe to himself, making peace by the blood of his cross," that is, not by conquering pacification (Col 1:20; cf. 2 Cor 5:18-19);[43] he explains how despite human disobedience God's mercy will ultimately conquer all disobedience, leading to the interdependent and complete salvation of

both "all Israel" and "the fullness of the nations" (Rom 11:25-32); and he proclaims that it is grace that will ultimately reign in justice, toward life for all in the age to come (Rom 5:12-21). While this reconciliation imagery could be taken as the consequence of military pacification (even the mercy of a conquering warrior), it is perhaps better to take this as an alternative, parallel paradigm for the final redemption of all creation. Indeed, there are indications that, in fact, this latter paradigm ultimately wins in Paul over the militarist version.[44]

What, then, is the role of the saints in this final drama, the final battle? In numerous Jewish apocalyptic texts the faithful participate in the final battle with force of arms against God's earthly enemies, while other Jewish apocalyptic texts leave out any role for the elect, or define their synergistic contribution as martyrdom, passive resistance, or righteous virtue alone.[45] Paul on this matter clearly sides with the latter perspective. Paul nowhere depicts the faithful as participating with force of arms in the final battle, and their battle and weaponry in the present order of time is entirely non-militarist—a warfare of love, a ministry of reconciliation (below). As far as their role in the final drama,[46] Paul presents Messiah loyalists as enjoying the spoils, sharing in the Messianic reign, and assisting in the adjudication of punishment. The elect will be given, together with Messiah, all things [the universe] from God (Rom 8:32); they will "inherit the cosmos" (Rom 4:13); they will participate in the judgment of the angels and the world (1 Cor 6:2-3); they will "overwhelmingly conquer" as a result of Messiah's agency (Rom 8:37); they will share in God's subjection of the hostile powers under their feet (Rom 16:20); and they will enjoy the status of sharing in God's glory and honour (Rom 8:17, 30). Precisely because they will ultimately be just co-regents with God and Messiah throughout all creation as was originally designed (Gen 1:26-31; cf. Rev 22:1-6),[47] all creation eagerly awaits "the revelation of the sons of God" and the "freedom" that comes through the glorious reign of the children of God (Rom 8:18-22). Just as believers await God's Messiah (1 Thess 1:10; Phil 3:20), so also all creation awaits the liberating and benevolent rule of the children of God (Rom 8:18-21).

The Battle Within: The Warfare of Cosmic Error (Sin) against the Human Being

A second major dimension of military struggle lies in Paul's description of the moral incompetence of humanity as a successful and ongoing military campaign of Error (*hamartia*) against and within the human being. Error, personified as a kind of cosmic power, mysteriously "entered the world" (Rom 5:12-13),[48] and came to "reign in Death" (Rom 5:21,

that is, somehow bringing in death and working in alliance with Death). Insofar as all humans have themselves erred (sinned; Rom 1:18-3:20; 3:23; 5:12), all humanity is "under (the power of) Error" (3:8). Error thus "reigns in the death-liable[49] body" (Rom 6:12), "rules as lord" over human beings (Rom 6:14), and "enslaves" humanity, to keep human beings from doing the good and enacting righteousness-justice (Rom 6:17, 20; 7:25). Error operates especially in the sphere of the "Flesh," a kind of power zone in battle against the power of the "Spirit" (Gal 5:16-17; Rom 7:4-6; 8:3-11). The operation of the "Flesh" is evident in a person's "passions" (Rom 6:12; 7:5, 7) and "members" (Rom 7:23).

More particularly, Error has used "the commandment" (the Law) as a "base of military operations" for attacking the human being, because of its potential for arousing the passions (Rom 7:5, 7-8, 11). In so doing, Error used and corrupted that which was designed to give life (Rom 7:10), that which is "holy, righteous and good" (Rom 7:12), thereby deceiving and killing the human being (Rom 7:11). Indeed, because of Error's work, the Law itself became an instrument that "held captive" the human (Rom 7:6; cf. 6:14-15). Error thus operated by stealth (*parakeimai*, Rom 7:21-23), using a pseudo Law to "wage a military campaign against" (*antistrateuomai*) God's Law (Rom 7:23), thus rendering human beings both captive and enslaved to the pseudo Law of Error (Rom 7:14, 23, 25). As a result, the captives cry for their deliverance (Rom 7:24). For those in Error's military service, the "rations-donatives"[50] amount to Death (Rom 6:23).

It is in the cosmic battle against Error in the world that the past effects of the victory via the cross and resurrection, and the proleptic effects of the future victory are expressly realized (Rom 6:1-8:14; Gal 1:4; cf. Col 2:9-3:10). In the argument of Romans, the captives who cry for their deliverance (Rom 7:24) find liberation in the work of God's Messiah (8:2). Since the Law was rendered impotent to truly give life and justice, God through Messiah's death ironically destroyed, by consigning to condemnation, the power of Error in human life (8:3). Insofar as the old human has been co-crucified with Christ, the body ruled by Error is rendered ineffective[51] (Rom 6:6; cf. Gal 2:20). Through the obedient agency of Messiah all the way to death, Grace instead of Error rules over those who follow Messiah's pattern of loyalty (Rom 6:14). The human being has been liberated from (the power of) Error, and becomes enslaved to God (Rom 6:22). Similarly, the human formerly held captive by the Law, is now released[52] from it (7:6). In the latter part of Romans 8, the battle extends to that of the community in a hostile world, framed in terms of the ultimate victory of God over the powers within the present order of creation (8:18-39; below). Similarly, in Galatians 1:4 Paul asserts

that through the salvific act of Messiah, the believer has already been delivered from the present evil age. Colossians extends this notion to involve the "disarming" of the rulers and authorities, "making a public spectacle" of them, and "parading them in triumph" by means of the cross, thereby cancelling the effect and power of trespass in the world (Col 2:8-15).

The hortatory claim follows the indicative declaration: Messiah loyalists must therefore not submit themselves to Error's rival reign (Rom 6:12), but instead offer their "members [limbs] as weapons of justice-righteousness" (6:13; cf. 8:5-14; Col 2:9-3:14). Indeed, since those in Messiah have experienced the crucifixion of the Flesh along with its passions, the faithful are invited to "keep in military line in the (power zone of the) Spirit" (Gal 5:24-25). Ethics is thus a kind of battle virtue (see below). A similar use of military imagery in Paul's environment is that of the struggle/battle of reason and the virtues against the passions, a motif evident in Plato, Stoic philosophy, 4 Maccabees, and Philo.[53]

Apostolic and Saintly Struggle in the World

A third arena in which Paul employs military language pertains to the conflict with earthly forces hostile to Messiah's assembly and to Paul as Messiah's envoy. The dimensions of this conflict can be labeled religious, social, and political, although for Paul the moral and the cosmic dimensions (above) would also be closely related. Paul refers to this encounter as involving a "struggle" (*agōn*, Phil 1:30; 1 Thess 2:2) and "battle" (*machē*, 2 Cor 7:5), referring to the experiences of the persecuted and suffering congregations at Philippi[54] and Thessalonica[55] at the hands of the Roman elite, and to his own detention and violent treatment by the Roman imperial authorities in Philippi,[56] Thessalonica,[57] and probably Ephesus.[58] In the wake of a recent detention and torture in Ephesus, Paul poignantly and ironically likens himself to being dragged with a group of captives in a Roman victory procession (a "triumph") on their way to ritual execution (2 Cor 2:14-16). In these contexts especially, Paul highlights the identity of Messiah's faithful as constituting (and being transferred into) God's alternative city-state (*polis*, Phil 1:27; 3:20) and kingdom (*basileia*, 1 Thess 2:12-13; Col 1:11-13), whose founding and regulating "constitution" is the gospel itself.[59]

Indeed, Paul likens the Messianic assembly in Philippi to a city-state under siege, and thus exhorted to "strive" in the battle in unified array and to avoid succumbing to any acts of terror by adversaries (Phil 1:27-30),[60] while supported by the promise of ultimate victory (1:28), by the mutual consolation, love, and compassion that comes from Christ (2:1), and by the defensive guard maintained by "the God of peace" (4:7).

And precisely in these contexts of harassment and persecution, Paul refers to those who are his "fellow-athletes in the struggle" for the gospel (Phil 1:27; 4:3) and to his "fellow-soldiers" (Phil 2:25; Phil 1:2). The latter term appears to refer pre-eminently to those who have risked their lives in the cause of Messiah and who deserve medals of honour (e.g. Phil 2:29-30).

But engagement in the battle/struggle is not just for the saintly few. In these very situations of distress, Paul invites *all* the faithful to engage in battle, and *only* by means of the virtues.[61] In 1 Thessalonians 5:8, Paul adapts the divine warrior imagery of Isaiah 59:17, and applies it to the community of the faithful: "put on the breastplate of fidelity and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation." Paul elsewhere claims to take up "the weapons of justice-righteousness, in the right hand and the left," specifically identifying the virtues of purity, knowledge, forbearance, kindness, love, and truth, operating through the Holy Spirit and the power of God (2 Cor 6:6-7). Paul exhorts all the faithful to take up "the weapons of justice-righteousness" (Rom 6:13), the "weapons of light" (Rom 13:12), while taking off the vices of the night and "clothing yourselves with the Lord Jesus Messiah" (Rom 13:14). Thus, enacting the virtues of Messiah is tantamount to "keeping in battle line" (Gal 5:25; Phil 3:16). Resisting the forces of evil, the faithful are to "conquer" through the weapons of "good" (Rom 12:21; cf. Rom 8:28, 37), specifically including measures of love, peace-making, and nonretaliation—blessing persecutors while refusing to curse (Rom 12:12-21; 1 Thess 3:12; 5:15; cf. Phil 4:5). Finally, the loyal are invited to engage the conflict by "contending" also in prayer (Rom 15:30; Col 4:12).[62]

While this imagery is drawn especially from Paul's scriptural heritage (e.g. Isaiah 59; Wisdom of Solomon 5), such that in effect Paul democratizes and pacifies the divine warrior motif,[63] a parallel can also be found in Cynic philosophy: the virtues are one's impregnable fortress, and the disreputable philosopher's clothes of rags (as exemplified by Odysseus) are the very and only weapons of virtue.[64] Crucially for Paul, the faithful participate synergistically in the struggle alongside Messiah, and not at all by force of arms. They wage warfare according to the norms of the city-state and kingdom to whose jurisdiction they have been transferred.

Apostolic Prerogative in the Assembly: Battle for God's Wisdom

Paul reserves his most elaborate use of military imagery (2 Cor 10:1-18) for his attack against the intellectual, sophistic insubordination of the Corinthian congregation, and especially their slavish submission

(2 Cor 11:4, 19-21) to rival sages and apostles, whom Paul accuses of introducing a "different gospel," "different spirit," "different Jesus" (2 Cor 11:4), and on whom he renders a damning curse (11:15). While the focus is on intellectual confrontation (10:5; 11:3, 6, 19), the text is mostly apologetic and polemical,[65] with little substantive debate apart from Paul's contention that at issue is the very heart of the gospel. As a result it is very difficult to discern what the real issues were all about, what was indeed "different" about their gospel.

The core warfare text (2 Cor 10:3-6) is embedded in a polemically charged context, and the social setting and rhetorical purposes of this text must be carefully considered. Paul's relationship with some members of the Corinthian congregation appears to have been strained from the very beginning of Paul's work in Corinth. An open conflict between Paul and some members of the Corinthian assembly had been brewing for a while, and in an earlier letter Paul had sought to shame the social and intellectual elite of the congregation for their arrogant wisdom and wealth. Paul claimed that God would destroy their worldly wisdom by God's folly, and their status and power by God's weakness (1 Cor 1:17-2:16; cf. 1:5; 3:18-20; 4:8, 18-20).[66] Also somewhere in the interlude between 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians is an apparent public shaming of Paul in Corinth, a return ultimatum from Paul, and an apparent resolution through the mediational work of Titus (2 Cor 1:23-2:11; 7:5-16).

Most recently, Paul has been accused by some detractors of being combatively "bold"[67] in his prior letters[68] when away from them, that his prior letters are excessively "weighty and powerful" (also with combative connotations), and designed "to frighten" (2 Cor 10:1-2, 9-10).[69] Meanwhile, he is charged with having a demeaning or servile bodily presence and a disdainful and unskilled oratorical speech (2 Cor 10:1, 10; 11:6-7). Moreover, he is apparently charged with overextending himself (as a sort of territorial conquest) into their "jurisdiction" (2 Cor 10:13-16; 11:12), faulted for insulting them and taking them in through deceit by refusing to accept their financial patronage (2 Cor 11:7-11; 12:13-18; cf. 1 Cor 9:1-27), and accused of desiring "to be lord over their loyalty" (2 Cor 1:24).

Paul's return argument in 2 Corinthians 10-13 can be schematized as follows, primarily as a response to charges made against him:

(1) Whereas he has a reputation as being "timid" in person, and "bold" when away (10:1). . .

- he begs that he may not be forced (by their disobedience) into being "bold in his coming" (as in warfare,[70] when he arrives soon;

10:2a). With these same themes—his ironic nothingness, like that of Christ, and the warning of his potential boldness upon his arrival (by which some might not be "spared")—Paul concludes and encloses the whole unit (12:11; 12:19-13:2; 13:10).

(2) Whereas some claim that he is "walking according to the flesh" (10:2b). . .[71]

- he admits that while he indeed "walks *in* the flesh," he certainly does not "wage war *according to* the flesh" (10:3), turning the tables on the charge.[72] He proceeds then to describe the manner of his alternative warfare which has as its goal the assembly's full submission (10:4-6). The battle imagery includes: the display of (military) courage (10:1-2), the incitement of terror (10:9), protracted campaign (10:3-4), battle readiness (10:6), siege against fortresses and raised ramparts (10:4-5), special weapons (10:4), taking of captives (10:5), demand of total surrender and submission (10:6), and punishment of rebels (10:6). The battle, he says, is not "worldly/physical" (lit., "according to the flesh," *kata sarka*),[73] but against any rationality (*logismos*) or arrogant obstacle (lit. raised rampart; *hypsoma epairomenon*), or thought (*noēma*) that is contrary to God's knowledge (*gnosis*). Moreover, the intellectual battle is against any insubordination outside submissive obedience to Christ (10:4-6). The imagery is so sharp that Paul seems to describe himself as the military field commander in the Messianic war.[74]
- he claims that the disparagement against him shows that they "see things according to the face" (that is, they see only the surface of things; 10:7a).[75]

(3) Whereas his rivals are claiming to have a special relationship to Christ (10:7b). . .

- he claims that he is no less "of Christ" (10:7c).
- he cannot be shamed (because it is with legitimate foundation) by his boast in the authority (*exousia*) given to him by the Lord to build up and not tear down the assembly (10:8; cf. 13:10).

(4) Whereas some claim that his (combatively) "weighty and forceful" letters are merely attempts to frighten, and that he is really a pushover in person (in *parousia*, 10:9-10). . .

• he warns that (this time) he will be in action upon arrival[76]
as he is in word while away (10:11).

(5) Whereas some are commending themselves by inappropriate comparisons and thus display their lack of wisdom (10:12). . .

• he refuses to be put in the same class of comparison and will not boast without foundation ("without measure," 10:12).
• he will boast in the "measure of jurisdiction" granted him from God, to "reach out as far as" them (using an image of territorial acquisition; 10:13). Quite apart from overreaching into someone else's territory (as some claim he is), he "overtook" them (as in territorial acquisition)[77] with the gospel of Christ, and so in effect has first claim on the territory (10:14). He refuses to boast excessively in work done by others (as his rivals are doing), but does hope that as their loyalty increases his jurisdiction will be enhanced among them, so that he can preach the gospel in regions even beyond them (10:15-18).

He comments further: he is jealous for them, as a father betrothing his daughter to a husband; he is fearful that they are being deceived; and he charges that they are displaying slavish submission to late-coming pretenders who preach a different gospel (11:1-4).

(6) Whereas some put on airs as "super-apostles" (11:5). . .

• he is in no way inferior to them. While he may be untrained in rhetoric, he excels in wisdom (11:6).

He digresses to admit that what he is doing (by way of self-defence) is entirely foolish, but claims ironically that they have already made him a fool anyway (11:1).

(7) Whereas some claim that Paul has debased himself by working for his own livelihood (11:7). . .

• no one in the regions of Achaia (Greece) can stop this boast of his—that he has not been a "burden" to any patron (11:8-11).[78] Indeed, he will continue this practice in order "to undercut the base of operations of those wishing a base of operations"—that in their boast they might be found to have the same claim as Paul (11:12). The rivals are then described as "disguised agents of Satan" and condemned (11:13-15).

Paul digresses again to explain that no one should take him as a fool, and that he is only engaged in this foolish boast—in a way the Lord never would—because they have put him in the role of fool (11:16-17).

(8) Whereas many are boasting "according to the flesh" (10:18a). . .

• he too will boast (10:18b), but will boast only in his weaknesses, in favour of the power that comes from Christ (10:19-12:10).

Thereupon Paul makes his final defense of his credentials and appeal for their loyalty (12:11-19), repeating his warning that they need to prepare themselves ahead of his arrival (12:20-13:9), in light of his authority given by the Lord for their upbuilding not their tearing down (13:10).

What this brief review indicates is that Paul's self-acknowledged warfare against opposing (sophistic) thought structures (1) is seen as a subset of his apostolic authority (*exousia*) as designed ultimately to build up, not to tear down (10:8; 13:10),[79] (2) is appropriate to his territorial jurisdiction in the proclamation of the gospel (10:13-16), (3) is designed to "undercut the base of operations" of his Corinthian detractors and rivals (11:12), (4) has primarily a verbal and intellectual character (10:5, 14, 16), (5) has as its aim the extension of loyalty and obedience to Lord Messiah Jesus (a theo-political claim; 10:6, 15; 13:5; cf. 1:24), and (6) has as its ultimate *modus operandi* the ironic power and victory of those who are the despised, unrefined, lowly, and weak nothings (10:1; 11:7, 21, 25-33; 12:5-10, 11; 13:3-4, 9; cf. 1 Cor 1:26-29; 4:8-13)—that is, the prototype is Messiah Jesus himself (13:3-4).[80]

The imagery of Paul's warfare rhetoric in this text comes from no particular source or tradition. (a) The overarching script of God's war of liberation in the cosmos offers the core framework. Indeed, the divine warfare framework is apparent especially in the way Paul caricatures his ecclesial adversaries as "disguised messengers of Satan," and subject to a curse of doom (2 Cor 11:12-15). Moreover, in the same letter, Paul presents Satan as the source of deceptive "thoughts" (*noēmata*; 2 Cor 2:11; 11:3),[81] that which his own ministry must also conquer (10:5).[82] Just as the divine warrior of his Hebrew Scriptures can wage war against the elect community, here too the battle is for the integrity of the assembly as Paul understands it.[83] (b) A particular text from the Septuagint has perhaps given special inspiration: "A wise man assaults fortified cities, and destroys (*katheilen*)[84] the fortification (*ochyrōma*)[85] on which the impious have confidence"[86] (Prov 21:22 LXX). (c) The imagery of siegecraft in its various aspects was commonly known in the ancient world, and easily amenable to metaphorical application. (d) Moral

philosophers had appropriated battle imagery into the ethical quest. Stoics emphasized reason and the virtues as a person's inner fortification. Philo similarly asserted that the faculty of reason must wage war against the insubordinate, sophistic assault by the passions. Cynic philosophers had adapted the notion of the soul as a fortified city and the virtues as weapons, specifically to refer to the prototypical and unflattering Odysseus whose clothes of rags (virtues) were his only weapons. While A. Malherbe argues that Paul here intends a parallel between himself and Odysseus, more explicitly Paul makes the parallel between his own contemptible weakness and that of Christ.[87] Finally, (e) Corinth was renowned for its physical fortifications, the subject of regular disdain by the Spartans.[88] Paul perhaps also plays on this tradition.

Reflections and Conclusions

How, then, do we explain the pervasive warfare vocabulary and imagery in Paul's letters? Is it inherently problematic? Does it indicate some kind of morbid fascination or dysfunctional preoccupation with martial culture itself? Quite the contrary, Paul's use of military imagery reflects first his own Scriptural heritage,[89] alongside its mediation through Jewish apocalyptic thought. But it also echoes ancient cultural conventions more generally. As observed above, military imagery is also evident in the Greek ethical rhetoric and theory of Plato, the Stoics, and Cynics.

Paul's imagery displays particular resonances with Persian Zoroastrian conceptions. Similarly to Paul, military imagery is central to Zoroastrianism in its understanding of the ongoing battles between the forces of good and evil in the present order of time, in its drama of the final victory by Ahura Mazda and the forces of good ushering in the age to come, and in the exhortation to spiritual-ethical militancy. The faithful have a responsibility to act synergistically with God to help usher in the age of good and justice.[90] And to this day, the most important Zoroastrian badge is the "kusti" girdle of three cords that an adherent wears from the time of formal initiation into the faith. It is ceremonially donned every day in a prayer ritual, symbolizing the binding of oneself with the weapons of virtue—its three cords representing the three-fold ethic of good thoughts, good words and good actions—in the hopes for the defeat of the enemies of good, and in hopes for the final end of all warfare.[91] In accordance with the theme of spiritual-ethical militancy in Zororastrianism,[92] "symbolically, the faithful are girding themselves as soldiers for Ahura Mazda."[93]

Additionally, it must simply be recognized that ancient language use in general was far more concretely metaphorical (along with most traditional/indigenous languages) than literally descriptive or

symbolically abstract, in comparison with modern Western languages.[94] Thus, for instance, while we might say "undermine the opportunity" (RSV) or "contradict the claims" (CEB), Paul says "undercut the base of operations" of rivals (2 Cor 11:12). (And most of us do not recognize that "strategy" and "polemic" in English are derived from Greek military terms.)[95] Moreover, to expect Paul to have completely eschewed any military analogy is to judge ancient speech by the standards of modern liberal polite society, to which Paul does not obviously measure up. The use of military metaphors does not make the speech nor the speaker inherently violent. Similarly, to deconstruct the command "to love our enemies" because it may insidiously invite us to have enemies would be a similar misreading. To deprive Paul of his military vocabulary would render his theology and his ethics vacuous.

This is not to say that every word, analogy, or expression in Paul is to be exonerated, and that military language is to be used plentifully or indiscriminately today. Paul's socially binary or militarily combative conquest language is most certainly amenable to misappropriation, and the pervasive military paradigms found throughout contemporary life (not simply in language) must also be carefully unveiled and evaluated. But the fault for this cannot be ascribed simply to Paul.

Paul's rhetoric in 2 Corinthians in particular is certainly disturbing and requires careful assessment, but not simply because he used military analogies for his engagement with the Corinthians (imagery which was balanced and modified by plenty of softer, inviting language). More troubling, rather, is his use of unilateral apostolic authority (as a sort of commander in Messiah's war), which could easily become a legitimating paradigm for the abuse of church leadership today. No matter how high the stakes in the perceived threat to the gospel (a frequent point of exoneration in the commentaries, a classic utilitarian argument), nor how he had been on the defence long enough and had to go on the attack, Paul's apostolic behaviour in slandering his rivals as "messengers of Satan" and as worthy of the curse of "destruction" cannot be condoned, especially when measured against his own standards of behaviour (Rom 12:14; 1 Cor 4:12-13). Even Paul himself realizes how wrong-headed the tirade was (11:1, 16-17; 12:6, 11), and his speech in Philippians 1:15-18 offers a corrective internal to the Pauline corpus.[96]

What about the apparent disjunction between peace and warfare themes in Paul's theology and persuasion? Indeed, in the rhetoric of God's cosmic warfare and of saintly struggle in the world, images of peace and images of warfare are closely intertwined.[97] But crucially in Paul, only the virtues are valid weapons of war. As A. Harnack puts it: "the military element is neutralized."[98] But equally significant, Paul only

knows of an embattled peace: the battle imagery is inseparable from and intrinsic to the vision of cosmic peace, and to the ethic of peace and nonretaliation. For Paul there seems to be no peace without justice (in its various dimensions, including the transformation of the individual to just character and virtue). It is noteworthy, then, that insofar as there is a pacifism to be found from Paul's letters, it must be an agonistic pacifism—a pacifism that is not withdrawn or passive, but thoroughly engaged in struggle.[99]

But it might be argued that the warfare imagery ultimately subverts a peace-ethic in Paul, or a Christian ethic attentive to Paul. For instance, it could be argued that it permits or encourages crusader violence, promotes inside/outside social dualisms, makes God violent, or legitimizes violence in God's name. But on the other side, it should be noted that Paul's warfare perspective, by which justice ultimately prevails, (a) provides the psychological space to "let go" as one subjected to injustice, while not fully letting go of claims to justice, and (b) expresses the judicial side to the divine character, against a domesticated God of self-actualization and niceness. Moreover, (c) the discomfort with violent images of God's requital of the unjust may simply reflect a social location of privilege and comfort.

Quite the contrary, the potentiality of Paul's rhetoric for supporting nonviolent movements of liberation must be recognized. The mythic tradition of divine warfare in Israel's sacred texts, while reaching back to roots in the Ancient Near Eastern creation mythology, is rooted in the liberation event from enslavement and oppression, and includes such permutations that include God's warfare against oppression and injustice within the nation itself, and the notion that God's warfare ultimately means the destruction of war and war machinery. And the millennial permutation (in Jewish apocalyptic) to which Paul is more directly indebted has its roots in a particular episode of foreign domination and functioned as a form of resistance. Paul's theology itself is a form of resistance to powers of domination.[100]

What about the argument that Paul's particular use of martial imagery reflects a favourable attitude toward the Roman military, or military activity in general? The first thing to say is that when Roman warfare or military is indeed referenced (directly or indirectly), in the overwhelming number of cases Messiah's community is on the receiving end, not on the benefitting side: the apostles are dragged in an imperial military parade (2 Cor 2:14-16); Messiah is crucified by the imperial rulers (1 Cor 2:6-8); Messiah's people are slaughtered by the imperial "sword" (Rom 8:35-36); the imperial system is coded as the persecuting "dogs, evil-doers, and butchery" (Phil 3:2, drawing on Ps 22:12-16). Only in one case is the

imperial sword offered as God's judicial agent (Rom 13:1-7), and in its rhetorical context, precisely (among other reasons) as a warning against seditious insurrection by those who have yet to be convinced by Messiah's warfare of love (Rom 12:9-21). On the other hand, Paul envisions that even the Roman imperium will be "rendered ineffective" when Christ's reign becomes supreme in the world (1 Cor 2:6-8), and he claims that its arrogant claims to bring "peace and security" throughout the world will be the occasion for its final destruction (1 Thess 5:2-3). And the couple of incidental allusions to military practice (1 Cor 9:7; 14:8) also do not suggest that Paul endorsed actual military operations sympathetically.

To close: Paul's cosmic conquest vision and saintly warfare rhetoric has inspired (but cannot be blamed as having caused) quite divergent responses: from (a) radical revolutionary politics for social transformation in places like the Philippines; to (b) right-wing politics in places like Canada toward the exclusion of persons on the basis of sexual orientation from the broader social contract, let alone from membership in the holy community; to (c) global imperial domination or belligerent nationalism (both past and present), wherein the best soldier is assumed to be the good Christian; but also to (d) an agonistic pacifism of active, nonviolent struggle toward a vision of restorative justice and a just peace. While in inner Christian discourse I find the last to be the most authentic reading of Paul (even among options I have not mentioned), I also find it imperative to be attentive to both the liberating and the oppressing, both the peace-promoting and the violence-promoting potential of the apostle's rhetoric.

Chapter 9

Paul's Ethic of Nonretaliation and Peace

Paul often faced the realities of conflict, abuse, and enmity, both within his communities and in relation to outsiders hostile to him and his fellow Messiah-loyalists. Such realities were so significant that references to proper behaviour among Jesus-loyalists in response to injury or persecution appear in nearly all his extant letters and in a variety of genres.

First, in hortatory (paraenetic) contexts we find explicit exhortations on this topic. Within the unit of Romans 12:9-21 we find the longest treatment of this theme, which addresses dynamics both within the community and (especially) in relation to hostile opponents:

> Love [is] non-pretentious;[1] abhorring the evil, clinging to the good. (v. 9)
> Bless those who persecute [you];[2] bless and do not curse. (v. 14)
> Repaying no one evil for evil, but taking forethought for noble conduct in the sight of all people. If possible, so far as it depends on you, living peaceably with all people. Not avenging yourselves, beloved, but leave room for wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I myself will repay, says the Lord."
> But, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him drink; for by doing so you will heap coals of fire upon his head."
> Do not be conquered by evil, but conquer evil with good.
> (vv. 17-21)

The exhortation of 1 Thessalonians 5:13b-15 is similarly addressed initially to internal conflict but is extended to refer to relations with all people, including the persecutors of the community (1:6-7; 2:14-16; 3:1-5):

> Be at peace among yourselves.
> And we exhort you, . . . admonish the disorderly, encourage the fainthearted,
> hold onto the weak, be long-tempered[3] toward all.
> See that nobody repays evil for evil,
> but always pursue good toward one another and toward all.

In Philippians 4:5 Paul also exhorts nonretaliatory conduct in relation to all persons. The context (1:27-30) makes it clear that Paul especially means to include adversaries of the community:

> Let your clemency be known to all people. The Lord is at hand.

Colossians 3:12-15a addresses relations within the assembly:

> Put on, then, . . . merciful compassion, kindness, low-mindedness, meekness, long-temper, enduring one another and showing favour/grace to one another if someone has a complaint against another, just as the Lord has forgiven you, so also you must forgive.
> And upon all of these put on love, which is the bond of perfection.
> And let the peace of Christ be the arbiter among your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body.

Second, nonretaliatory themes appear in catalogues of hardships describing Paul's behavioural credentials as an apostle. First Corinthians 4:12-13a describes Paul's response to persecutors:

> When reviled we bless, when persecuted we endure, when slandered we conciliate.

In the catalogue of 2 Corinthians 6:3-10, Paul commends his "great endurance" (*hypomonē pollē*) in afflictions (2 Cor 6:4), his "long-temper" (*makrothymia*), and his "genuine love" (*agapē anypokritos*, 2 Cor 6:6).

Third, in the virtue and vice lists of Galatians 5:16-24, the vices of enmity, strife, and jealousy (*echthrai*, *eris*, *zēlos*, Gal 5:20) are countered by the virtues of love, peace, and long-temper (*agapē*, *eirēnē*, *makrothymia*, Gal 5:22).

Fourth, the nonretaliatory acceptance of abuse is promoted in the ad hoc exhortation of 1 Corinthians 6:1-8. Paul exhorts his readers not to take their disputes to the pagan courts but either to find a Messiah-loyalist mediator or, better, to endure injustice instead of pursuing judicial vindication:

> Actually, it is already a defeat for you that you have lawsuits with one another. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded? (1 Cor 6:7)

Fifth, the hymn to love in 1 Corinthians 13, which in its context addresses relations within the community of loyalists, includes the following nonretaliatory themes:

> Love is forbearing. . . . (13:4)
> It does not reckon evil. . . . (13:5)
> It bears all things. . . , endures all things. (13:7)

Finally, in the fool's speech of 2 Corinthians 11:1-12:13, Paul parodies the ideal conduct of slaves in response to abuse:

> You endure it if someone enslaves you, if someone devours you, if someone takes advantage of you, if someone acts presumptuously, if someone strikes you in the face. (2 Cor 11:20)

While ironically ridiculing the community for taking upon themselves a servile position in relation to the enslaving false teachers, Paul implies that endurance is the proper behaviour of a slave in the context of abuse (cf. *kalōs anechesthe*, 2 Cor 11:4; *hēdeōs anechesthe*, 2 Cor 11:19). What Paul derides is their acceptance of a servile position in relation to the false teachers. Colossians 3:22-25 expresses the same ideal for slaves, based on deferring justice to God:

> Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything. . . For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong committed, and there is no partiality. (Col 3:22a, 25)[4]

To summarize, we find the following themes included in the field of proper responses to injury or persecution. Passive responses include:

1. "Not repaying evil for evil" (*mē apodidonai kakon anti kakou*, 1 Thess 5:15a; Rom 12:17a)
2. "Not taking vengeance for oneself" (*mē heautous ekdikountes*, Rom 12:19a)
3. "Not cursing" (*mē katarēsthai*, Rom 12:14)

4. "Clemency" and "long-temper" (*epieikes*, Phil 4:5; *makrothymia*, 1 Thess 5:14; 1 Cor 13:4; Gal 5:22; 2 Cor 6:6)

5. "Endurance" (*anechesthai*, lit. "holding up, holding back,"[5] 1 Cor 4:12; 2 Cor 11:20; cf. Col 3:13; 2 Thess 1:4; *hypomenein*, Rom 12:12; 2 Cor 6:4; 1 Cor 13:7; cf. Rom 5:3-4; 2 Cor 1:6)

6. "Not litigating" (1 Cor 6:1-8)

7. "Not reckoning evil" (*mē logizesthai*, 1 Cor 13:5; cf. 2 Cor 5:19)

Active responses include:

8. "Responding with good/kind deeds" (1 Thess 5:15b; Rom 12:17b, 20-21)

9. "Blessing" (*eulogein*, Rom 12:14; 1 Cor 4:12)

10. "Conciliating" (*parakalein*, 1 Cor 4:13)[6]

11. "Being at peace" (*eirēneuein*, 1 Thess 5:13; Rom 12:18; cf. Gal 5:20, 22)[7]

12. "Showing favour/grace" (*charizesthai*, 2 Cor 2:7-10; Col 3:13)[8]

13. "Loving" (1 Cor 13:47; cf. 2 Cor 6:6; Rom 12:9; 1 Thess 3:12)

The purpose of this essay is to identify the coherence fundamental to these exhortations and themes, particularly as regards their various explications, implicit or explicit warrants, motivations/goals, and social applications. For the sake of this essay, we will term this coherence Paul's "ethic of nonretaliation and peace."[9] Such a treatment of these exhortations and themes is necessary, since the terminology of "vengeance" ("vindication") or "retaliation" in antiquity has multiple lexical meanings[10] and since nearly identical formulations on the topic of nonretaliation in antiquity can range so markedly in social setting, meaning, and function as to be hardly comparable.[11] We must, then, necessarily ask the following questions. (1) What kind of "vengeance" does Paul prohibit in different cases? (2) Do the exhortations apply equally to different types of abuse and abusers? Are the abusers viewed as friends, fellow assembly members, personal adversaries, or as sinners and the enemies of God? Is it significant that in the previous survey of texts "love" and "forgiving" are not explicitly exhorted in relation to hostile outsiders (cf. Matt 5:44)? (3) What motivations or warrants characterize or ground the exhortations, and do they differ in accordance with different social settings? What hopes are expressed as to the eventual fate of the opponents: their reconciliation with the injured party, or their punishment or demise? If the latter, how is the agency of divine vengeance anticipated?

We will investigate these issues by focusing on Romans 12:14-21, since this is Paul's most extensive treatment on the proper response to injury and conflict and since this text is the subject of considerable

scholarly debate. But in order to place the discussion in the context of Paul's thought as a whole, particularly since Paul's ethical vision is fundamentally related to his redemptive vision, we will begin with a summary of Paul's vision of cosmic peace.

Paul's Vision of Cosmic Peace

At the core of Paul's gospel is his vision of cosmic restoration—the eschatological redemption of the entire created order. This coming order of peace and righteousness (a) will be fully realized by the final triumph of God over the hostile and destructive powers of this age,[12] which includes judgment and wrath against all unrighteousness and opposition to God,[13] (b) has been proleptically inaugurated by God in Christ through the resurrection, and (c) is realized provisionally in the life of the loyal believer and the community where Messiah already reigns as Lord.[14]

Peace, along with justice, is one of the essential characteristics of this coming order of salvation. While the language of peace in Paul sometimes refers to eschatological salvation as a whole,[15] terms such as "the reconciliation of the cosmos/all things"[16] and "the subjection of all things" to Christ and God[17] also express the vision of cosmic peace. The numerous texts in which Paul characterizes God as "the God of peace"[18] also indicate that "peace" is a central attribute of God's salvation.

For Paul, then, peace refers fundamentally to the eschatological salvation of the whole person, all humanity,[19] and the entire universe. It refers to the normal state of all things—the order of God's creative and redeeming action versus the disorder of the chaotic powers of Satan.[20]

The many other specific uses of peace in Paul appear to be founded on this basic notion: peace with God,[21] peace of soul (Rom 15:13), peace as a fruit of the Spirit in the believer (Gal 5:22), peace among people, especially in the church,[22] and peace as divinely wrought well-being and wholeness.[23]

Against the backdrop of this vision of cosmic peace, then, we proceed to discuss Paul's ethic of nonretaliation and peace, as expressed especially in Romans 12:14-21.

The Debate Regarding Romans 12:14-21

Structurally, the exhortations on responding to abuse, hostility, and injustice in Romans 12:14-21 consist of a series of paired contrasts, comprised of negative prohibitions balanced by positive prescriptions:

Bless persecutors/Do not curse. (12:14)

Do not retaliate/Maintain noble conduct and live in peace. (12:17-18)

Do not avenge for yourselves/Give food and drink to the enemy. (12:19-20)

Do not be conquered by evil/Conquer evil with good. (12:21)

The exhortations of verses 19 and 20 are grounded by parallel motivational clauses:

for God will avenge/

for doing good will heap coals of fire upon the opponent's head.

One of the critical issues of scholarly debate on this text focuses on the character and motivational structure of the exhortation. Is Paul's exhortation best characterized as an ethic of nonretaliation understood as an apocalyptic restraint in deference to God's impending wrath against persecutors or as an ethic of love aimed at reconciliation with opponents? Are kind deeds to adversaries of the assembly (vv. 20-21) to be interpreted as contributing to the repentance and reconciliation of opponents, or as the means to appease the community's abusers while contributing to the punishment stored against them in the day of wrath?

Approaches to this question can be grouped into three types, despite variations in regard to details. These can be termed the "standard," "apocalyptic," and "mediating" approaches.[24]

The standard interpretation holds that Romans 12:14-21 expresses an ethic of "love" (12:9) toward one's enemies, the goal of which is the conversion and reconciliation of the opponent. Unconditional love toward the other is not only the content of behaviour enjoined but also its grounding motivation. On this interpretation, "heaping coals of fire" in verse 20c refers either (1) to the pangs of shame and remorse, which either lead to conversion and reconciliation or leave the opponent with a bad conscience or (2) to the simple resolve of the adversary to pursue reconciliation. Verse 21b ("but conquer evil with good," *alla nika en tō agathō to kakon*) is thus taken as a reference to the power of love to influence evil and to effect conversion and reconciliation. The theme of leaving wrath and vengeance in God's hands (v. 19bc), which is often downplayed, means that Christians ought not to be occupied in any way with God's vengeance and the last judgment. The call is simply to trust in God's sovereignty or to hope that God's educative wrath will lead adversaries to repentance.

By contrast, the apocalyptic interpretation, as articulated especially by Krister Stendahl,[25] reads this text in the context of persecution. Nonretaliation and good deeds are simply the right responses in times of trouble, when enmity is inevitable and insurmountable. "Heaping coals of fire" is understood as a reference to eschatological judgment, which the enemies of the assembly are storing up against themselves. Good deeds

are not to be understood as a type of love and not intended necessarily to have any reconciling effect; rather, they actually contribute to the culpability of the enemies on the day of wrath. Nonretaliation, then, is essentially an apocalyptic restraint, motivated primarily out of deference to God's judgment. It is not only the conviction that God is the rightful arbiter of justice but also the conviction of the imminent realization of the age to come which motivates or permits nonretaliation.[26] Verse 21b ("but conquer evil with good") does not refer to the power of love to influence evil but to the assured eschatological victory over evil; doing good while deferring to God is the way ultimately to defeat evil. Some scholars see here a distinct desire for revenge against opponents. But others focus rather on the notion of deferment as primarily offering an eschatological hope and a theodicy of evil.

A mediating position, as articulated recently by John Piper, stands between the standard and apocalyptic interpretations.[27] With the apocalyptic interpretation, Piper argues that both verse 19c and verse 20c refer to eschatological judgment. "Heaping up coals of fire" is essentially the same as "storing up wrath" against impenitent unbelievers (Rom 2:4-5). Nevertheless Piper still seeks to understand the exhortation as a "love command." First, the call to bless the persecutor in Romans 12:14 governs the thought of the entire passage and rules out the possibility that the exhortation entails any desire for one's neighbours's destruction; there is no revenge motif here. Second, verse 20 implies the condition of *persistent* disobedience and enmity in the face of good deeds. Third, Piper argues that "enemy love" *requires* complete confidence in the future wrath against the enemies of the Messianic assembly:

> The two *gar* ["for"] clauses (Rom 12:19c, 20c) are intended to give assurance that God is not unrighteous: "God will render to every man according to his works" (Rom 2:6). Romans 12:20c does not present the conscious aim of the believer, but states the framework of justice in which enemy love becomes possible and good—a framework founded on God's own righteousness (Rom 2:4, 5). To be aware of this framework will motivate him to genuine enemy love just as much as God's consciousness of his own righteousness moves him to kindness.[28]

Piper, then, differs from the "apocalyptic" interpretation and sides with the standard interpretation in the following ways. (1) Paul's exhortation is indeed a command of enemy love in content and motivation. (2) The exhortation does not forgo hope for the enemy's conversion and reconciliation. (3) The motivation of deferring to God's righteous

judgment "is subordinate to, but not inconsistent with, the overarching ground of enemy love which is expressed in Romans 12:1—'the mercies of God.'"

In what follows, then, we will clarify the character of Paul's ethic of nonretaliation in Romans 12:14-21 by observing the implications of the literary context for interpreting this text and then by discussing the social setting and application of the exhortation, the substantive meaning of the individual exhortations, and the warrants for the exhortation.

Implications of the Literary Context of Romans 12:14, 17-21

When the nonretaliatory exhortations of Romans 12:14, 17-21 are seen within the literary context of the two larger units of which it is a part (Rom 12:9-21; 12:1–13:14), two things become apparent: the exhortation (1) is related to the theme of love and (2) is set within the framework of the apocalyptic struggle and choice between the two aeons, the cosmic powers of good and evil. In contrast to Romans 14:1–15:13, a sustained argument on a specific topic, Romans 12:1–13:14 is comprised of a series of independent thematic units. While the unit seems to be without logical structure or thematic development, 12:1–13:14 is tied together by catchwords, by recurring themes, and by two units (12:1-2; 13:11-14) which bracket the entire exhortation and place it in the context of the conflict and choice between two aeons (the present age and the age to come).

Romans 12:9-21 can be distinguished as a unit by thematic inclusion (good/evil, vv. 9bc, 21), by the use of terse parallel statements, including doublets (vv. 10-13) and paired contrasts (vv. 9bc, 14-21), and using imperatival participles, adjectives, and infinitives. Three recurring topics within the unit are harmonious relations within the community, without competitive rivalry and social hierarchy (vv. 10, 13, 15-16), steadfastness in devotion and piety (vv. 11-12), and relations with abusers (vv. 14, 17-21). Some exhortations are coordinated by a similar presumed occasion: adversity and suffering (vv. 14-15). "Regard for the other" in general, whether within or outside the community, seems to be the most persistent theme (vv. 9a-10, 13-21). Both verse 9a ("love [is] non-pretentious," *hē agapē anypokritos*) and verse 9bc ("abhoring the evil, clinging to the good") function to introduce the unit, formally and thematically.[29]

Verse 9a functions partially as a bridge between 12:3-8 and 12:9-21, two units that cannot be sharply separated. Nevertheless, verse 9a also functions as a heading for 12:9-21. (1) While love cannot account for all the contents of 12:9-21 (cf. 12:9bc, 11-12), a good portion of

12:9-21 deals with the topic of harmonious relations among all people, which naturally falls under the category of love. (2) While "love" in Paul and in the present context is articulated especially in terms of relations within the Christian community (12:10; 13:8-10), 1 Thessalonians 3:12 confirms that, for Paul, love also extends to outsiders:

> And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all (*eis allēlous kai eis pantas)*.

The fact that Paul's only other use of the phrase "toward one another and toward all" (*eis allēlous kai eis pantas*) clarifies the horizon of nonretaliation and goodness later in 1 Thess 5:15 suggests that nonretaliation and goodness conform to the category of love. (3) In 2 Corinthians 6:6, the only other occurrence of this phrase in Paul, "non-pretentious love" (*agapē anypokritos*) is a key theme alongside other key virtues, expressing the commendable character of Paul's ministry. While *agapē anypokritos* is not explicitly related to nonretaliatory conduct in this passage (2 Cor 6:3-10), the fact that Paul's catalogue of virtues arises in the context of persecution (2 Cor 6:4-5) and includes "forbearance" and "long-temper" (*en hypomonē pollē*, *en makrothymia*, 2 Cor 6:4, 6) suggests that *agapē anypokritos* includes the nonretaliatory conduct that he describes. (4) Paul's panegyric to love in 1 Corinthians 13 includes nonretaliatory themes (13:4, 5, 7), and love is one of the key "weapons" for battle with evil (1 Thess 5:8). (5) The parallel correlation of the commands to "love neighbour" and to desist from taking vengeance in Leviticus 19:18, a text cited in Romans 12:18 and in 13:8-10, suggests that Paul understands nonretaliation is to be closely aligned with the fundamental directive of love. In Paul's vocabulary, then, *agapē anypokritos* is appropriate as a heading for proper human conduct in general and for nonretaliatory conduct in particular (Rom 12:14, 17-21).

Romans 12:9bc also functions as an introductory heading for 12:9-21. It has a general character, it introduces the forms of the imperatival participle and the paired contrast, and with verse 21 encloses the unit:

> Abhoring the evil (*to ponēron*), clinging to the good (*tō agathō*). (12:9bc)
> Do not be conquered by evil (*tou kakou*), but conquer evil with good (*tō agathō*). (12:21)

Moreover, the theme of the struggle between good and evil here is a component of the theme that encloses and grounds the entire segment of Romans 12:1–13:14, the apocalyptic conflict and choice between the two aeons (12:1-2; 13:11-14). Accordingly, the exhortations of 12:14, 17-21

are also grounded in "the mercies of God" (12:1), which mark the victory of the coming age over the present age through Christ (cf. 5:1-11; 8:31-39). The apocalyptic framework of the choice between good and evil is expressed also at the close of the letter:

> For I wish that you be wise as to the good, but innocent as to the evil;
> and then the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.
> (16: 19b-20a)

The literary context of Romans 12:14 and 12:17-21, then, indicates that the exhortation must be interpreted both within the context of the theme of love and within the context of the apocalyptic conflict between the aeons of good and evil.

The Social Setting and Application of Romans 12:14-21

A judgment regarding the social setting and application of the exhortations in Romans 12:14, 17-21 is also critical for their interpretation. It is necessary, first, to clarify the nature of the abuse to which these verses are addressed.

The following factors indicate that Romans 12:14, 17-21 is addressed to relations especially with outsiders, particularly those hostile to the community.[30] (1) Verse 14 is directed specifically to the situation of persecution. *Diōkein* in the sense of "persecute" elsewhere in Paul and the New Testament refers only to hostility from outsiders, never from insiders.[31] (2) In verses 17-21, which pick up the theme of verse 14, the exhortation is emphatically directed to relations with "all humans" (*enōpion pantōn anthrōpōn*, v. 17b; *meta pantōn anthrōpōn*, v. 18; cf. Phil 4:5), not the more ambiguous "all" (1 Thess 3:12; 5:15). While Paul sometimes uses "all" to refer to those within the community (though not in 1 Thess 3:12; 5:15), his use of phrases with "all humans" (or simply the term "humans") is never limited only to those within the assembly.[32] Moreover, verse 18b, "be at peace with all people," is set in direct contrast to the internal focus of verse 18a, "if possible, so far as it depends on you" (*ei dynaton to ex hymōn*). The implication is that the conflict with outsiders is so serious that it may not be resolved. (3) The battle imagery of verse 21 implies serious conflict, particularly the apocalyptic conflict between the two ages. Besides picking up the theme of the struggle between good and evil in 12:1-2, 12:9, and 13:11-14, the verse also continues the theme of apocalyptic conflict and victory against powers

hostile to the assembly in 8:31-39. (4) The grounding theme of deferring vengeance to God is especially appropriate for nonretaliatory conduct in relation to outsiders. As we shall see, in Paul's view, adherents to Messiah must make justice a reality in their own midst but leave the judgment of outsiders to God (1 Cor 5:9-13). (5) In the broader context of Romans, Paul is distinctly preoccupied with the problem of hostility, persecution, and thus suffering from those outside the assembly (Rom 8:31-39; cf. 8:17-28; 5:1-5). Finally (6) the exhortation to nonretaliation and good deeds in relation to hostile outsiders (Rom 12:14, 17-21) complements the exhortation to submission in relation to ruling authorities (Rom 13:1-7). The two passages are linked thematically, both addressing the question of responding to and minimizing conflict with the surrounding worId. Indeed, Romans 13:1-7 cannot be properly comprehended without appreciating the immediately prior exhortation in 12:17-21.[33]

The question that now emerges is whether or not the exhortations in Romans 12:14, 17-21 presuppose a particular setting, either one in Paul's experience or one in Rome to which the exhortation is addressed.

Paul is apparently preoccupied with the problem of suffering and persecution when writing Romans. This is indicated by the centrality of the themes of persecution, suffering, endurance, and the eschatological victory over evil earlier in the letter. This topic is introduced in Romans 5:1-11. By virtue of God's act of salvation in Jesus Christ, Jesus-loyalists can "boast in our hope of sharing in the glory of God" (5:2). But,

> more than that, we boast in our sufferings (*thlipsesin*), knowing that suffering produces endurance (*hē thipsis hypomonēn katergazetai*), and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us. (5:3-5)

It is not until Romans 8:17-39, however, that Paul can elaborate on these themes. Indeed, Romans 8:17-39 demonstrates that suffering and persecution are critical issues in both Paul's life and thought.[34]

Romans 8:17-39 explicates the necessary but temporary and surmountable experience of suffering on the road to glory. The climax comes in 8:31-39, the confession of ultimate victory over the powers of evil through Christ. The passage is focused by four rhetorical questions: (1) Who is against us? (v. 31) (2) Who will bring a charge against the elect of God? (v. 33) (3) Who is to condemn? (v. 34) (4) Who will separate us from the love of Christ? (v. 35) These questions are indeed rhetorical, but they are not hypothetical. They express the crises faced

recently by Paul and communities loyal to Messiah: (1) there are indeed many adversaries; (2) there are many who bring formal, legal charges; (3) there are some who condemn. The point is that none of this opposition will ultimately prevail. Even the last question (4) is elaborated by trials that come directly out of Paul's recent experience: "tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" (8:35). Paul has used each of these terms, except for "sword" (*machaira*), in his account of recent troubles.[35] Romans 8:31-39, then, is a personal confession, not just a theological and hypothetical confession. No one can gain victory over and destroy loyalists. Rather, "in all these things [the crises listed] we overwhelmingly conquer (*hypernikōmen*) through him who loved us" (8:37).

This confession seems to have both a backward and a forward look. Facing backward, Paul sees his recent survival of a most serious persecution in Asia (Ephesus, the probable setting of Philippians), and the recent persecution of Messianic assemblies in Macedonia, which he recounts in 2 Corinthians.[36] The parallels between the accounts in 2 Corinthians and Romans 8:35 confirm that the issue of persecution preoccupies Paul's current reflection. But facing ahead, Paul also sees the prospect of opposition to himself and his gospel. He thus asks the Romans "to strive together with me in your prayers to God on my behalf, that I may be delivered from the unpersuaded in Judea" (Rom 15:30-31). It is quite clear, then, that part of the social setting behind Paul's exhortation in Romans 12:14, 17-21 is the experience of persecution facing Paul and his communities in general.

Is Romans 12:14, 17-21 also intended to address a particular current or imminent crisis facing the various Roman household assemblies?[37] The following arguments can be made in favour of this possibility. (1) The "convergence of motivations"[38] that occasioned the letter to Rome included an interest in speaking to specific problems in the Roman assemblies. (2) Other pieces of the exhortation in Romans 12:1–13:14 were chosen because of their special relevance to the situation of the Roman assemblies.[39] (3) Explicit exhortations to nonretaliation in other Pauline letters were directed to the situation of persecution facing those communities (1 Thess 5:14-15; Phil 4:5). (4) The expulsion of the Jews from Rome in 49 CE[40] also affected those adhering to Messiah Jesus (Acts 18:1-4), indicating that Jesus Messianists were susceptible to the same anti-Semitism that Jews in general encountered in Rome during this time. (5) The seeds of the popular alienation, which gave Nero the occasion to make "Christians" scapegoats of Rome's destructive fire ten years later in 64 CE,[41] were quite possibly already developing.

This evidence, however, is largely circumstantial. Particularly problematic for the assumption of widespread persecution facing the assemblies in Rome at the time of Paul's writing is the lack of any explicit reference to such a crisis elsewhere in his letter (cf. 1 Thess 3:1-5; Phil 1:27-30). The more probable scenario is that Paul, preoccupied with the recent opposition that he and the Messianic assemblies in the provinces of Asia and Macedonia had been experiencing, especially at the hands of the Roman imperial authority and the elite of Roman society, sees the prospect of persecution in Rome also as a very real possibility.[42] Thus Paul seeks to prepare his readers, so that they might respond properly if hostile opposition from outsiders should arise.

Features of the text itself indicate that the question of responding to hostile opposition is particularly urgent and important for Paul. (1) He recapitulates his exhortation (12:14) not just once (12:17-18) but twice (12:19-21). (2) His exhortation on this topic is more extensive here than in any other passage. (3) The exhortation is carefully grounded and articulated through explicit appeals and allusions to the scriptures. (4) Paul recapitulates the exhortation in 12:19 with the address "beloved," which signifies its importance.[43]

The exhortations in Romans 12:14, 17-21, then, are not only addressed especially to the immediate problem of responding to abuse from outsiders in Rome, but also reflect Paul's own preoccupation with increasing opposition that he and his communities elsewhere were beginningto face. Paul sees the prospect of increased persecution also in Rome as a real possibility and thus seeks to prepare his readers for that eventuality.

The Substance of the Exhortation

Having clarified the literary and social contexts of Romans 12:14, 17-21, we turn to examine the substance and warrants of the exhortation.

Verse 14. The question in regard to this verse is what precisely the command "bless" (*eulogeite*) means here. It might imply "simply a friendly disposition towards the enemy."[44] In this case, "blessing" would entail the same sort of response as to "do good" to one's abuser (1 Thess 5:15; Rom 12:20a; cf. 1 Peter 3:10-11). But with most commentators, it is better to hold that blessing here has its full biblical sense, namely, to call down God's gracious power on someone. In favour of this interpretation are (1) the consistent use of *eulogeō* in the Septuagint with this meaning and (2) the parallels in Matt. 5:44b and Luke 6:28b, which tie the command to bless to the command to pray on behalf of persecutors. Parallels to v. 14 in early Jewish texts indicate that "blessing" may have included prayer

for leniency or forgiveness from God, for their repentance, or for their salvation.[45]

Verse 17a. As the heading of verses 17-21, "To no one repay evil for evil" (*mēdeni kakon anti kakou apodidontes*) presents the fundamental nonretaliatory principle. Its basic meaning is clear, though its precise application remains unspecified. Does it prohibit judicial vindication in addition to vindication by self-help?[46] We will return to this question with the parallel injunction in verse 19a.

Verse 17b. This saying, which is based on the Septuagint text of Proverbs 3:4, is best rendered: "Take forethought for [doing] good in the sight of all people" (*pronooumenoi kala enōpion pantōn anthrōpōn*). The point is not that his hearers should take into consideration what the general population considers to be good,[47] nor that they are to act with good conduct *toward* all people.[48] Rather, the text emphasizes their mental readiness, preparedness, and resolve to act with good conduct in the sight of all people, in the context of the watching world. A similar use of Proverbs 3:4 (LXX) in 2 Corinthians 8:21 clarifies the meaning of v. 17b: ("for we intend to do what is right not only in the Lord's sight but also in the sight of others" [NRSV], *pronooumen gar kala ou mōnon enōpion kyriou alla kai enōpion anthrōpōn*). Paul's concern in 2 Corinthians 8:20-22 is to preclude suspicion, reproach, or opposition that may arise in connection with the offering he is collecting for Jerusalem. The citation of Proverbs 3:4 establishes his interest in ensuring that the collection is evident as honourable in the sight of God and people. Similarly, in verse 17b Paul counsels his readers to take "forethought" (*pronoeomai*) for good behaviour before all people. Messiah-loyalists should avoid any occasion for slander and hostility by exhibiting noble behaviour. This interpretation is confirmed by other texts of Paul that exhort loyalists to display good behaviour in front of outsiders to forestall any negative reactions.[49]

Verse 18 extends the theme of verse 17b with the call to "live in peace with all" (*meta pantōn anthrōpōn eirēneuontes*). The exhortation is, however, introduced with a proviso, *ei dynaton to ex hymōn*, which is best translated, "if possible, so far as it depends on you." What we have here is a realistic acknowledgement that hostility from the opponent may preclude the establishment of true peace. Nevertheless, the proviso implies a unilateral readiness to be at or to pursue peace with all: from your side, do what you can to be at peace. First Corinthians 7:15, the only other text in which Paul refers directly to "peace" with outsiders, also implies this unilateral readiness. For life in the Messianic assembly, however, where peace and righteousness are to be present realities under Christ's lordship, the exhortations to peace are modified by no such proviso. What this indicates is that Paul's ethic of "peace" is closely tied to his redemptive vision and his

ecclesiology. In summary, then, verses 17b-18 stress, as a counterpart to verse 17a, that loyalists must take care to prevent and to minimize conflict by exemplary and conciliatory behaviour in relation to abusers outside the assembly.

Verse 19a, "Do not avenge/vindicate [by/for] yourselves" (*mē heautous ekdikountes*), recapitulates verse 17a, recasting the Septuagint text of Leviticus 19:18a. Since *ekdikeō* can have a range of meanings—from personal self-redress ["vengeance"], to judicial vindication, to executive vindication by a sovereign (see below)—some attention to its particular force here is necessary. At minimum, this command prohibits one from "avenging" injury through personal self-help, self-redress (loosely, "do not vindicate yourselves with your own hands"). The reflexive *heautous* ("yourselves") indicates that this prohibition focuses primarily on personal vengeance.[50] The question further is whether the injunction goes beyond this focus to prohibit the pursuit of judicial vindication. The fact that the counterpart to the prohibition is the command to defer vindication to God suggests either (a) that judicial vindication is included in the prohibition or (b) that judicial vindication is not a realistic option for the alienated victim.

In order to answer this question, it is appropriate to examine another text in Paul that refers to the pursuit of judicial right. In 1 Corinthians 6:1-8, Paul exhorts his readers not to take their legal disputes to the civic courts. Rather, they should either solve their disputes through judicial procedures inside the community of loyalists (vv. 1-6) or endure abuse instead of pursuing judicial vindication (vv. 7-8). Paul favours the latter option of desisting from the pursuit of legal right, though this does not mean the renunciation of all rights as a general rule.[51]

The likelihood that Paul would also have rejected litigation against the unpersuaded, were they in a position to undertake it, is suggested by his beliefs (a) that civic courts are unjust (*adikoi*, 1 Cor 6:1), (b) that the better way is to endure than to litigate (6:7), (c) that the judgment of outsiders is to be left to God (5:12-13), and (d) that Messiah-loyalists will ultimately judge the world (6:2-3). Moreover, the basic similarity in the substance of conduct as applied to relationships within and outside the assembly would also point in this direction. If this is so, it would follow that Romans 12:19a means not only that one ought not to take the law into one's own hands but also that one ought not to pursue legal action against outside abusers in court. In both cases, judgment must be left to God. In other words, if renunciation of legal right is preferable even in the Messianic community where justice is achievable (cf. 1 Cor 5:12-13), how much more in relation to hostile outsiders, a situation in which justice is even more elusive.

Another situation in Paul's life, however, might stand in tension with Paul's command to desist from vengeance. As can be inferred from 2 Cor 2:1-11 and 7:8-11, Paul was apparently offended by a member of the congregation, most likely in the form of slander, during a painful and abortive visit to Corinth. Instead of ignoring or passively accepting the insult, Paul wrote a "painful letter" to the congregation, commanding them to punish the offender and in so doing to show their loyalty to Paul. Now, following the obedient response of the majority in punishing the offender (*epitimia*, 2:6, *ekdikēsis*, 7:11), Paul is encouraged by their renewed loyalty. He exhorts the congregation to forgive (*charizesthai*) and to conciliate (*parakalein*) the offender, and to reaffirm their love for him (2 Cor 2:6-11). The question that arises is: why does Paul not take a forgiving stance, refusing to pursue vengeance, but instead pursues justice against the offender? How can Paul, on the one hand, exhort his readers "not to avenge themselves" (*mē heautous ekdikountes*, Rom 12:19a) and, on the other hand, still claim that it is his role in the assembly "to be ready to avenge every disobedience" (*en hetoimō echontes ekdikēsai pasan parakoēn*, 2 Cor 10:6)?

The answer lies in Paul's understanding of his apostolic role and in distinguishing types of "vengeance" (*ekdikēsis*). Most likely, the slander suffered by Paul was directed at his apostolicity; and for that reason Paul argues that the injustice was not simply against himself but against the entire congregation (2 Cor 2:5). Moreover, it is the apostle's legitimate role to execute justice in the assembly in the name of the Lord Jesus for matters pertaining to internal relations and conduct (2 Cor 10:5; 1 Cor 5:3; cf. 5:12-13).

In Paul, then, we must distinguish various meanings of *ekdikēsis*. First, vengeance (bringing justice) through self-redress is prohibited (Rom 12:19). Second, judicial vindication for injury suffered is discouraged, though not categorically prohibited (1 Cor 6:1-8; Philemon 18-19). Such a pursuit of justice, however, may take place only in the case of conflict between fellow members and must be adjudicated by court procedures within the assembly (1 Cor 6:1-6). For general unrighteousness within the assembly, it is the responsibility of the congregation to mete out justice through judicial procedure (1 Cor 5:12; 2 Cor 13:1). Judicial vindication is probably not an option in the case of injury suffered from hostile outsiders, due to the limited jurisdiction of court proceedings within the community. Third, executive vindication is realized (a) through the deferment of justice to God in the case of injuries suffered from outsiders (Rom 12:19; Phil 4:5; cf. 1 Cor 5:12-13) and in the case of slaves who have no other recourse (Col 3:22-25) and (b) through the agency of apostolic leaders in the case

of unrighteousness or a contrary gospel within the community (1 Cor 5:3-4, 9-13; 2 Cor 10:5, 8; 11:15; 13:10; Gal 1:8-9; 5:10; Rom 3:8).

Verse 20ab ("but 'if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him drink'") is cited from Proverbs 25:21 and requires little explanation. The citation is designed as an illustrative example of the general exhortation to do "good" specifically to one's abuser (cf. Rom 12:17b, 21b; 1 Thess 5:15b).

Verse 21 brings verses 17-21 to a close with economy of word: "Do not be conquered by evil, but conquer evil with good" (*mē nikō hypo tou kakou alla nika en tō agathō to kakon*). The brevity of this verse creates some difficulties for determining its meaning. What does it mean to "be conquered by evil"? What is the force of *nika* ("conquer," "gain victory") in verse 21b? Does verse 21b imply the influencing of evil toward the good; that is, does it mean achieving the abuser's repentance and reconciliation? Or does it imply the ultimate mastery of good over the evil power of the present age?

The imagery of the verse is that of the believer standing in the middle of a battle with "evil." The neuter *to kakon* in verse 21b indicates that the reference is not to an evil person. Rather, "evil" here is the evil power of the present age manifested both in immorality and in the injurious hostility toward Messiah's community. This meaning is evident from the context. First, as we observed earlier, the theme of good versus evil in verse 21 connects with the theme of the conflict and choice between the ages which brackets 12:1–13:14 (12:1-2; 13:11-14; cf. 12:9bc; 16:20). Second, the theme of victory in verse 21 is related to the theme of overwhelming victory over the powers of this age through Christ's love (8:31-39; cf. 1 Cor 15:24-26). Third, the conflict imagery of 12:21 links both literarily and conceptually with the theme of "weapons" appropriate for the battle between light and darkness (13:11-14). As other "armament" texts demonstrate, for Paul it is only the spiritual weapons of the new age that have power to gain victory in the eschatological battle already invading the present (2 Cor 10:2-4; 6:7; 1 Thess 5:5-8). These "weapons," as described in texts addressed to the situation of hardship, are the new stance and conduct ("works," *erga*, Rom 13:12) of the believer: faith, love, hope (1 Thess 5:8), and righteousness (2 Cor 6:7; Rom 6:13). Similarly, then, in Romans 12:21 the chief weapon in the conflict with the powers of evil is "good," implicitly not physical, retaliatory, or destructive force. Whereas loyalists are invited to be passive in regard to their claims against injury suffered, deferring vindication to divine agency (v. 19), here, on the other hand, is the active agency of the assembly in the struggle toward peace and justice (v. 21).

The counter-resonances of Paul's language here with Roman imperial propaganda of Pax (Peace) and Victoria (Victory; Gk. *Nike*) would have been patently evident to Paul's first readers. The celebration of the goddess and the virtue of Victoria as the supernatural power that would bring peace and benefit to her devotees was ubiquitous, broadcasted in monuments, coins, public inscriptions, triumphal parades, public games, and other media throughout the Roman world. Victoria was the guarantor of the Roman world order, held together by the power of the sword—a world order founded on violence but proclaimed as an order of Peace.[52]

"To be conquered by evil" in verse 21a might be understood in a general sense, namely, to grow weary and faithless in the context of the struggle between the powers of the two ages. But the immediate context, particularly the series of paired contrasts in 12:14, 17-21 and the contrast with verse 21b, suggests that "to be conquered" has the more focused meaning of capitulating to the normal means of battle by retaliating and seeking vengeance. Verse 21a can thus be paraphrased: "Do not become faithless in the struggle with evil by resorting to retaliatory measures."

Verse 21b, on the other hand, calls the believer to conquer the evil of the present age with the power of good. This final call is not focused on the goal of the abuser's conversion or reconciliation. Nor is it a matter of mastery over one's abuser. The emphasis is simply on the proper conduct with which one battles evil, the method by which loyalists gain ultimate victory. "Conquering evil with good" might, but will not necessarily, effect a change in the abuser.

The victory in verse 21, then, has both a present and an eschatological aspect, just as the affirmation of victory in 8:37-39 does. For Paul, the present struggle has an eschatological character (13:11-14), and ultimate victory will arrive imminently (cf. 16:20a). But the victory implied in verse 21b also has a present focus, especially since the call of verse 21a, to which verse 21b is contrasted, is oriented to the present situation. This present aspect is founded on Paul's belief that the powers of the coming age have already invaded the present age.

The Warrants of the Exhortation

The previous few paragraphs have raised the question of the aims or goals of the exhortation. We turn now to examine more closely the warrants of the exhortation. In particular, we will focus on the meaning of "heaping coals of fire" in verse 20c, since this is a crux.

As we noted earlier, verses 19 and 20 are parallel exhortations, presenting the proper passive behaviour (v. 19) and active behaviour (v.

20) in response to hostility. Both exhortations contain supporting reason clauses introduced with *gar* ("for"):

> Do not avenge yourselves, beloved,
> but leave room for wrath,
> for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I myself will repay, says the Lord."
> But "if your enemy is hungry, feed him,
> if he is thirsty give him drink,
> for by doing so you will heap coals of fire upon his head."

The following exegetical questions arise. Does verse 20c have a parallel significance to verse 19c and refer to eschatological punishment stored against the enemies for the day of vengeance? If so, are both nonretaliation and kind deeds to persecutors grounded in an ulterior motive which really anticipates the punishment of the enemies of the Messianic assembly? Or does verse 20c, as in the standard interpretation, refer either (1) to the pangs of shame and remorse, which either lead to conversion and reconciliation or leave the opponent with a bad conscience, or (2) to the resolve of the adversary to pursue reconciliation?[53]

The standard interpretation is based on four arguments. First, the main argument is that the interpretation of "coals of fire" as eschatological punishment, which supposedly implies the pursuit of revenge, is incompatible with the positive exhortations in the context which promote love, peace, doing good, and blessing toward the abuser. Incompatibility with an eschatological interpretation is further argued on the grounds that the exhortation is based on the teachings of Jesus and breathes the spirit of the Sermon on the Mount.

The following points, however, mitigate the decisiveness of this argument. (1) A tension, though not necessarily an incompatibility, already exists between the positive exhortations and the motif of retribution in verse 19c. (2) "Heaping coals of fire" as denoting punishment does not necessarily imply a desire for revenge. Verse 20c need not mean anything more than verse 19c in expressing the reality of God's justice in the cosmos, not necessarily the hope for the abuser's punishment. Moreover, as we shall see, the prospect of punishment noted here probably implies the condition of unrepentant hostility, persistent disbelief. (3) The presence of a tension between positive exhortations for the abuser's well-being and the affirmation of God's punishment of the abuser, in spite of its harshness from a modem point of view, must be seen at least as a possible interpretation, since such a tension occurs elsewhere in Early Judaism and early Christianity. (4) The appeal to the Jesus tradition is

inconclusive, since (a) dependence does not rule out accommodation, and (b) the Jesus tradition also exhibits a tension between non-retaliatory exhortations, including blessing, and proclamations of judgment upon abusers.

A second argument in favor of the standard interpretation is the presence of a rabbinic interpretation of Proverbs 25:22, in which the last phrase *yeshallem lak* ("and he [God] will reward you") is read as *yashlimennu lak* ("and he will make him [the adversary] to be at peace with you," or "and he will surrender him to you"). It is argued that this reading indicates that "heaping coals of fire" symbolizes the hope for reconciliation. The presence of this reading in the Targum is sometimes used to argue for its antiquity and availability to Paul. This rabbinic interpretation, however, is of dubious value for interpreting Romans 12:20. (1) It is not certain that the Targums follow this reading. (2) There is no evidence that this reading was current before the second century CE. (3) Retributive interpretations of Proverbs 25:21-22 were also extant. (4) The rabbinic interpretation, as allegorically applied to conflict with the evil impulse, emphasizes the notion of the *mastery* of the good impulse over the evil impulse, not simply reconciliation. (5) If Paul was aware of the alternative reading of Proverbs 25:22b, and considered it decisive for the interpretation of 25:21-22, he could have emphasized it in the citation to remove any ambiguity.

Third, appeal is made to an Egyptian penitential ritual from the third century BCE involving a forced change of mind. The injurer is required to come back to the injured party carrying a staff in his hand and a tray of burning coals on his head.[54] Some scholars claim that this text provides the background and interpretive clue to the original image of "heaping coals of fire" in Proverbs 25:21-22. Others go so far as to assert that this parallel also controls the meaning of the image in Romans 12:20, symbolizing either the humiliation and remorse of the injurer,' or simply his change of mind and desire for reconciliation.

This argument is also not conclusive. This ritual may help to elucidate the original meaning of Proverbs 25:22. But there is no evidence that Paul was acquainted with this Egyptian practice, as many interpreters favouring the standard interpretation concede. If this parallel is used as an interpretive clue for Romans 12:20, it must be acknowledged that the ritual entails (a) the forced repentance of the injurer, (b) the moral victory and satisfaction of the injured, and (c) the public humiliation and penance of the injurer. The parallel thus rules out the interpretation of "heaping coals of fire" as symbolizing simply the realization of reconciliation and actually suggests an interpretation of v. 20c as "and so you will put your opponent to public shame." Finally, Paul's understanding of this image

is much more likely shaped by its usage in the Hebrew Bible, which we will examine shortly.

The fourth argument is that Paul's deletion of Proverbs 25:22b ("and the Lord will repay you with good," *ho de kyrios antapodōsei soi agatha*) from the citation is read as a rejection of the notion of revenge and private advantage seeking. But an argument about the meaning of any passage on the basis of what is omitted is not very weighty. Even if Paul omitted Proverbs 25:22b from the citation because it might foster a faulty attitude, one can say no more than that Paul sought to avoid any notion of personal reward or private advantage for particular deeds of goodness. This does not mean that Paul meant to preclude a general affirmation of vindication and punishment.

The arguments in favour of the standard interpretation, then, appear to be inconclusive. On the other hand, there are conclusive arguments in favor of the interpretation of "coals of fire" as referring to divine punishment. Four main arguments can be adduced: (1) the background of the image of "coals of fire" in the Hebrew Bible; (2) the usage of "fire" elsewhere in Paul; (3) the parallel structure of verses 19 and 20; and (4) Paul's attitude regarding the fate of enemies of the gospel.

1. In the Hebrew Bible, "coals" and "coals of fire" symbolize divine anger and vengeance, divine punishment on the wicked, a medium for destruction, or an evil passion. Moreover, retribution and culpability are often spoken of as coming upon or being on someone's head. "Heaping coals of fire" nowhere in the Old Testament symbolizes the pain of shame leading to repentance. Since Paul's understanding of this image was likely shaped more than anything else by the usage of this image in the Old Testament, these observations are weighty.

2. The other uses of *pyr* (fire) in Paul's letters all refer to eschatological punishment (1 Cor 3:13, 15; cf. 2 Thess 1:8). While this evidence is somewhat equivocal because of the infrequency of occurrence, its import must not be dismissed.

3. As we have already observed, verses 19 and 20, and particularly the motivational clauses in verses 19c and 20c, display a parallel structure. This structuring, when taken together with the meaning of "coals of fire" in the Old Testament, suggests that "heaping coals of fire" in verse 20 refers to the same prospect of judgment as that expressed in verse 19.

At this point, however, we must clarify the meaning of verse 19bc. Complementing the prohibition "do not avenge yourselves" (v. 19a) is the command *dote topon tē orgē*, "give place to wrath," that is, "give the wrath (of God) an opportunity to work out its purpose" (v. 19b). Here we have an affirmation of God's wrath against the enemies of God, which has primarily an eschatological focus, but probably also a temporal aspect

within history (cf. Rom 1:18-32). That the reference is to God's wrath in particular, as opposed to some mediating instrument of justice, such as the Roman imperium (cf. Rom 13:4-5), is indicated by the clarifying citation of Deuteronomy 32:35 that follows: "For it is written, 'Vindication is mine, I myself will repay, says the Lord'" (*gegraptai gar, emoi ekdikēsis, egō antapodōsō, legei kyrios*). This citation emphasizes the Lord's prerogative for vengeance (*emoi*, *egō*), and the added "says the Lord" reinforces its authoritative character in the manner of prophetic pronouncements. Here we have a specific promise of retribution (*antapodōsō*), not a simple appeal to God's sovereignty to judge as God pleases. There is also here no intimation that wrath is to be understood in terms of a disciplinary effect that leads to repentance.

Verse 19, then, already grounds nonretaliation and good deeds in an eschatological framework that affirms the potential punishment of the enemies. The expectation of eschatological "coals of fire" is not essentially different from the expectation of "wrath" and "repayment."

4. The expressions of judgment upon the adversaries of the assembly elsewhere in Paul's letters confirm and clarify the meaning of "coals of fire" as eschatological punishment.

a. Philippians 4:5; 3:18-21. Philippians 4:5 provides an important parallel to Romans 12:17-21: "Let your clemency (*to epieikes*) be known to all people. The Lord is at hand." This text speaks to the problem of hostility from opponents of the community, exhorts the response of nonretaliation or endurance, and grounds this response with a reference to the imminence of the Lord's return. With the same profile of adversaries in view, Philippians 3:18-21 says of "many. . .who live as enemies (*echthrous*) of the cross of Christ," and "whose God is the belly and whose glory is in their shame, and who set minds on earthly things" that "their end is destruction" (*hōn to telos apōleia*). By contrast, true believers ("we") can anticipate the deliverance from the Saviour from heaven (3:20). For Paul, the rightful end of any "enemy of the cross" is "destruction."[55]

b. Romans 2:5 also illustrates Paul's thinking on the fate of those who display persistent enmity against God:

> But by your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. (NRSV)

Paul is arguing here against those who pass judgment upon another but are impenitent for their own sins (Rom 2:1-4). There is some uncertainty as to whom Paul has in mind in this passage. In any event, a fundamental principle is expressed that helps elucidate Romans 12:19-20: while God's

kindness and forbearance aim at repentance (2:4), continued impenitence stores wrath against a person for the day of judgment. Both Romans 2:5 and 12:19-20 express the themes of "wrath" and the "storing up" of punishment against the impenitent.

c. Paul's statements about "false teachers" also express the expectation of judgment upon these opponents. Similarly to Philippians 3:18-19, Paul says of the "false apostles" against whom he must defend himself in 2 Corinthians 10–13 and whom he describes as "servants of Satan": "Their end will correspond to their deeds" (*hōn to telos estai kata ta erga autōn*, 2 Cor 11:15). Of those who charge Paul of antinomianism, Paul says: "Their condemnation is just" (*hōn to krima ekdikon estin*, Rom 3:8). Of the anonymous instigator of the Galatian heresy Paul says, "and he who is troubling you will bear his judgment" (*krima*, Gal 5:10; cf. 1:8, 9, "let him be cursed," *anathema estō*). As for his own justification and vindication in the face of attempts to undermine his apostolic authority, he defers his case ultimately to God and the final judgment (1 Cor 3:12-15; 4:1-5; 2 Cor 10:18; cf. Rom 14:10-13).

It is clear, then, that Paul expects destruction upon the opponents and persecutors of the community of loyalits. Sometimes this expectation appears as a wish or judicial pronouncement (Phil 3:18-19; 2 Cor 11:15; Rom 3:8; Gal 5:10-12; 1:8, 9). In some cases, it functions primarily to offer the readers a theodicy to help them understand their suffering and the need to act with forbearance (cf. 2 Thess 1:4-10). This expectation accords with Paul's conception of outsiders as being on the road to destruction (*apollymenoi*, 1 Cor 1:18; 2 Cor 2:15; 4:3; cf. 2 Thess 2:10). In particular, the sins of the impenitent, including persecutors, are mounting up and being stored against them for the day of vengeance (Rom 2:5).[56]

This perspective confirms and clarifies the meaning of "coals of fire" as eschatological judgment upon persecutors of the assembly. Faithful conduct in persecution, including nonretaliation and good deeds, is part of the "signal" of judgment upon the persecutor. In this sense, continued impenitence in the face of good deeds increases the persecutor's culpability. This notion does not, however, express the conscious intention of the believer's response of good deeds toward persecutors. It is not that good deeds directly increase the opponent's punishment. Rather, the affirmation of the persecutor's punishment functions as a theodicy to encourage faithfulness and the nonretaliatory conduct. Verse 20, then, like verse 19, grounds nonretaliatory behaviour in the prerogative of God for justice.

One final text helps to clarify Paul's notion of deferring vengeance to God. First Corinthians 5:9–6:6, though not referring specifically to the problem of hostile outsiders, presents two ideas relevant to the present

topic. First, judgment upon outsiders must be deferred to God, while judgment upon insiders is the responsibility of the assembly. This notion appears in 1 Cor 5:9-13, which clarifies Paul's call not to associate with immoral insiders (vv. 9-10) and stresses the need to maintain discipline within the community (cf. 5:1-8):

> For what have I to do with judging those outside? Is it not those who are inside that you are to judge? God will judge those outside. "Drive out the wicked person from among you." (1 Cor 5:12-13, NRSV)

This text emphasizes the need to judge insiders, apparently on the assumption that righteousness can be achieved within the Messiah-confessing community (cf. 5:6-8, 6:9-11). In this case, the judicial procedures of the assembly are an instrument of God's justice. On the other hand, the community desists from judging outsiders since it is God's prerogative and role to do so.

A second notion in 1 Cor 6:1-6 is that loyalists will participate in the eschatological judgment of the unpersuaded world (*kosmos*). While this notion is used to support the main point that Christians should mediate their own disputes and not go to the unjust civic judges, its basic validity for Paul can be seen in the way he introduces it twice: "Do you not know…" (vv. 2, 3). Although this notion appears nowhere else in Paul, it is a common theme in apocalyptic thought and apparently one that was shared by Paul. Thus, while loyalists must defer the judgment of outsiders to God at least for the present (5:9-13), they will eventually participate in the eschatological judgment of outsiders. This judgment would supposedly include the judgment of persecutors, though such a specific notion does not appear in Paul. When Paul refers to the judgment of persecutors, he emphasizes God's role in judgment (Rom 12:19-20; cf. Phil 1:27-30; 4:5; 1 Thess 2:16).

To conclude, both verses 19c and 20c ground the exhortation to nonretaliation and good deeds in Romans 12:17-21 with the notion of God's retribution of the abusers. It is God's prerogative to bring justice (avenge), especially in the case of those outside the community of faith. God will indeed repay evil (v. 19c), and continued impenitence in the face of good deeds increases the opponents' culpability (v. 20c). Thus adherents of Messiah must trustingly defer their cases to God (v. 19b), while responding with nonretaliation and good deeds.

The question that emerges, however, is how one is to understand the tension between the affirmation of God's punishment of the abusers (vv. 19-20) and the call to bless the persecutor, that is, to call down

God's gracious power upon them (v. 14). How can the call to bless be anything but insincere when an affirmation of the abuser's punishment is maintained? This tension might be explained in terms of Paul's citation of different traditions, namely, the Jesus tradition (v. 14) and a separate paraenetic tradition (vv. 17-21). But this explanation is inadequate. Paul presents both notions apparently without seeing any contradiction. Moreover, a similar tension appears elsewhere in the New Testament. In 1 Peter 3:9-12, the call to nonretaliation and to blessing is grounded eschatologically in both the vindication of the elect and the punishment of the persecutors. And at the early layers of the gospel tradition (source "Q"), the call to bless abusers is countered by the proclamation of judgment upon the enemies of the community.[57]

Ultimately, this tension represents a fundamental theological tension between God's mercy and justice (Rom 2:1-11; 11:22). On the one hand, the believer calls upon God's gracious power on behalf of the abuser, a blessing that aims ultimately at the abuser's repentance and salvation. At the same time, Paul affirms God's righteous rule of the universe, in which wrongs will ultimately be righted and good will prevail. This affirmation provides the framework of justice, a theodicy, in which nonretaliatory conduct can be grounded. The believer prays for the best possible fate of the abuser but leaves the final realization of justice to God. The notion of deferment (v. 19b) provides the key to the tension, even though it does not completely resolve it.

It is noteworthy to observe what possible warrants are lacking here. First, there is no intimation that nonretaliation and good deeds are intended to effect, or will necessarily effect, the conversion and reconciliation of the opponents (cf. *Didache* 1:3). A pragmatic motive of reducing tensions through the display of noble conduct emerges only slightly (vv. 17b-18). Second, Paul does not ground his exhortation by appealing to the authoritative commandments of "the Lord." Paul probably does not know (or regard) the commands on nonretaliation and good deeds as specifically dominical sayings. Indeed, the substance of the exhortations and their warrants derive from Paul's Judean-Jewish ethical heritage prior to his commitment to Jesus as Messiah.[58] Third, and more surprising, there is no christological grounding through a reference to Christ's paradigmatic model of endurance, his path from suffering to glory. We must look at this last point more closely.

The Christological Ground of Nonretaliation

Despite the lack of any direct connections between nonretaliation and christology as there are in 1 Peter 2:21-25, should one suppose a

fundamental connection in Paul's thought? An examination of Paul's theology of suffering seems to point in this direction.

For Paul, suffering is an experience that the Messiah-loyalist essentially shares with Messiah,[59] just as loyalists participate salvifically and sacramentally in Messiah's death.[60] This participation extends to Christ's entire passion, so that adherents also experience this passion in life. Paul interprets his own hardships as an experience of Christ's passion.[61] Moreover, Paul's suffering, like Christ's, has a vicarious effect upon his converts.[62] As for Messiah, so for the Messiah-loyalist, suffering is the necessary prelude to glory; indeed, tribulation produces for loyalists an eternal weight of glory.[63]

The way of Christ's passion, then, is by necessity the way for the Christ-confessor.[64] But more than this, it constitutes a model that one ought to follow. For instance, Christ's pattern of humiliation and exaltation is held up as the model for relationships within the community in Philippians 2:3-11. In "receiving the word in much affliction with joy from the Holy Spirit," the Thessalonians "became imitators (*mimētai*) of us and of the Lord" (1 Thess 1:6). In 2 Corinthians 8:9, Christ's way of becoming poor, even though rich, for the sake of all people is presented as a model to follow in contributing to those in need. Paul describes his own hardships in the same way: "as poor, yet making many rich" (2 Cor 6:10).

Given this prototypical and exemplary role of Messiah in suffering, it is curious that Paul does not appeal to it explicitly in the context of Romans 12:14-21. Since the problem of responding to hostility is so critical from Paul's perspective, a christological reference could have provided the clinching argument. Perhaps the best explanation is that the traditional materials on which Paul was dependent here lacked a specific appeal to Christ's teaching or prototypical role.

Nevertheless one must assume a fundamental connection between nonretaliation and christology in Paul's thought. We have already observed the role of christology for Paul's understanding of tribulation. In addition, christology connects with nonretaliation as the theoretical ground for the loyalist's new life (Rom 12:1-2; 6:1–7:6; 8:1-13). If good instead of retaliation is the means to ultimate victory (v. 21), this victory is founded on the "mercies of God" (12:1-2), specifically on Christ's love (8:31-39) and God's love in Christ (5:1-11). Moreover, in the battle against evil, the weapon of "good" (v. 21) comes from "clothing oneself with the Lord Jesus Christ" (13:12-14). Paul's christology, then, provides Paul not only a theoretical ground for his ethic of nonretaliation but also a material ground, insofar as Christ is the prototype and exemplar in suffering.

Conclusion

In the various references to the issue of responding to abuse in Paul's writings a fundamental continuity in the conduct enjoined is evident. Whether the problem concerns conflict within the Messianic assembly or hostility from outsiders, Paul exhorts (a) nonretaliation, including the stance of endurance and the refusal to litigate, (b) kind actions, including the pursuit of peace, and (c) kind words, including blessing and conciliating. But a distinction in exhortations directed to these two situations can be observed in the grounding motivation, a distinction based on Paul's understanding of the apocalyptic character of persecution and his redemptive vision. On the one hand, Paul assumes that righteousness, reconciliation, and peace can be realized, at least provisionally, within the context of the new community; for this context the exhortations to nonretaliation and peace stand unqualified, extending to the call "to forgive." On the other hand, Paul realizes that some hostility toward the assembly will continue until the arrival of the age to come (the *telos*), when universal peace and justice will finally be achieved; for this context, the calls to nonretaliation and peace are grounded especially in the notion of deferment to God's judgment (Phil 4:5; Rom 12:17-21). It is perhaps not accidental that the responses enjoined for this situation do not include calls "to forgive," which is ultimately God's prerogative, although the call to "bless" may likely include prayers for the persecutors' forgiveness from God.

Romans 12:14, 17-21, the lengthiest expression of Paul's ethic of nonretaliation and peace, represents the latter category of exhortations. This passage is addressed especially to the problem of responding to persecutors of Messiah's community. It is apparent from other passages in Romans and Paul's recent letters, especially 2 Corinthians, that the problem of hostility against Paul and his congregations is becoming acute. The formulation and inclusion of 12:14, 17-21 in Romans seems to reflect Paul's own preoccupation with this issue. At the same time, Paul sees the prospect of persecution in Rome as a definite possibility and seeks to prepare his Roman readers for such a situation. Ten years later under Nero, this very crisis would be realized.

The question we have addressed is whether Romans 12:14-21 expresses a nonretaliatory ethic of apocalyptically motivated restraint, as argued especially by Stendahl, or a reconciling ethic of love, as argued by a majority of interpreters. The answer to this question is a qualified both.

On the one hand, the exhortation has a definite apocalyptic character, though not as a mere restraint in the face of God's impending judgment. The warrants in verses 19-20 emphasize the certainty of God's righteous

judgment. Verse 19 grounds the prohibition against vengeance in the deferment of wrath to God, based on God's prerogative for retribution. Verse 20 grounds the call to good deeds in the notion that the sins of the impenitent are being stored against them for the day of wrath (cf. 2:5). In addition, verse 21 frames the call to do good within the context of the eschatological battle of the power of good versus the power of evil. Assured and imminent victory will come through the weapons of good and through God's love in Christ (cf. Rom 5:1-11; 8:31-39; 13:11-14; 16:19-20). The christological pattern of weakness as the means of power and victory is fundamental here.

On the other hand, the exhortation is related to the theme of love (12:9a; 13:8-10). In relation to abusers, Jesus-loyalists are called not simply to desist from retaliation but to bless, to do good, to be at peace, and to take forethought for noble conduct. Indeed, they are called to the unilateral pursuit of peace. The preoccupation of Paul is not with the retribution of the abusers, which is to be deferred to God, but with the proper stance and conduct within the eschatological conflict. Although the exhortation is not aimed primarily at the conversion and reconciliation of the abusers, Paul does not relinquish this hope (v. 18a).

These two aspects, however, stand in tension. On the one hand, Paul calls his readers to bless their persecutors, to call down God's gracious power upon them. On the other hand, Paul affirms God's righteous rule of the universe wherein unrepentant persecutors will ultimately be punished. This affirmation functions mainly as a theodicy that provides the framework for the call to nonretaliatory conduct. Personal vengeance and the pursuit of judicial vengeance in pagan courts are prohibited. The pursuit of judicial vengeance for offenses suffered by fellow loyalists is discouraged and can take place only in the court procedures established within the Messianic community. In all cases, vengeance is properly deferred to the executive vindication of God, whose prerogative it is as ruler of the universe. Some role for adherents in the final judgment is hinted at (1 Cor 6:2-3), in continuity with Jewish apocalyptic beliefs, but never defined or emphasized. In other words, Paul never diminishes his belief in justice. Rather, the issue is one of agency. Vindication and vengeance belong to God.

Chapter 10

"Be(a)ware of the Dogs, Evildoers, and Butchery": Text and Theory in the Discourse on Peace and Violence in Paul

We have this treasure in earthen jars. (2 Cor 4:7)[1]

Some time ago, when engaged in a conversation with my colleague Gordon Matties, who was then in the midst of writing his commentary on Joshua and agonizing over how abiding theological value might be found in that book,[2] I teasingly quipped: Just call it genocidal and be done with it. It might have seemed like I was saying this from the safe haven of the peace-loving, violence-free New Testament. But I have come to realize that the challenge that both Gordons (representing both testaments) have is one that differs in degree, not in kind. In fact, the problem of violence and war in the New Testament is in some respects more profoundly challenging, since that part of our Bibles is supposed to represent the authoritatively final and pure form of divine revelation, even if we don't chop off the Old Testament.

Shifting Contexts, Changing Audiences, Varying Theory

There was once a time when biblical (including Mennonite) discourse on violence and peace, at least in North America, operated within a setting

of relative cultural coherence (late Christendom), where partisans played by largely agreed upon rules of the game. The protagonists mainly played out the options of Christian pacifism in response to Christian just war, or just revolution theory, and violence was commonly understood to pertain to some form of overt physical harm. The significant contribution of Perry Yoder was to put the social and political justice question squarely into the center of biblical peace discussion,[3] even though it was not entirely absent in earlier studies, including that of Willard Swartley.[4]

In recent discourse, however, not only has the definition of violence been exploded,[5] but so also the rules (theory, premises, methods) by which biblical scholars interpret texts in the context of their chosen communities or audiences have multiplied.[6] In accordance with a growing trend that finds religion in general as complicit in violence, a significant contributing factor to violence, or inherently violent,[7] recent biblical scholarship has been finding violence to be endemic also to Scripture, including the New Testament and Paul.[8] As the scope and understanding of violence has expanded, so it has become more manifest even within the Bible. Accordingly, many studies aligned with some sort of nonviolence theory may well find the New Testament to be deficient in a variety of ways precisely on this question.

As a result, biblical peace scholarship, especially as allied with nonviolent theory in some form,[9] now operates on many fronts (or, with various dialogue partners), complicating its discourse and making it more challenging. My own view is that biblical peace scholarship will need to use rhetorical flexibility (of the sort perhaps also demonstrated by Paul himself, "for the sake of the gospel") in varied contexts to remain viable and relevant.[10] A natural difficulty will inevitably come, however, when one audience overhears what is said to another audience (something that also put Paul into very tricky situations), resulting in charges of inconsistency. Worse, however, will be the prospect of retreating to sequestered and safe intellectual havens, as is happening to some extent in the Society of Biblical Literature or in confessional-denominational (sub)groupings. The challenge for those committed to biblical peace will be to avoid merely putting up defensive bulwarks, but to forthrightly engage in the discussion of violent dimensions of Paul's texts, while still holding Paul (and the rest of the NT) to be a resource in the nonviolent trajectory of the biblical drama toward peace and justice.

I proceed, then, by giving attention to a particular text as a way to situate the discussion of violence in Paul's writings and to raise problems pertaining to that issue. This will lead to a review of texts and texture where Paul's writings more generally are considered in recent discussion to be violent, dangerous, or deficient in some respect. And I will close

by returning to the problem of theoretical variation and broader cultural (and theoretical) multiplicity as crucial aspects and contexts of future biblical peace discourse.

The Case of Philippians 3:2 – Slanderous Anti-Judaic Invective or Rebellious Assault on Empire?

Following a brief pause, formally a hesitation formula (Phil 3:1b), Paul unloads with a sharp rhetorical flourish of paronomasia, exhibiting what some recent scholars suggest is a good bit of violence:[11]

Be(a)ware[12] of the dogs. (*blepete tous kynas*)
Be(a)ware of the evil workers. (*blepete tous kakous ergatas*)
Be(a)ware of the butchery [the cutting up]. (*blepete tēn katatomēn*)
For we are the circumcision [the cutting around] (*hēmeis gar esmen hē peritomē*):
those who serve God by/in the Spirit,
and who boast in Messiah Jesus,
and who put no confidence in the flesh.

If this is indeed a violent text, we must immediately inquire, in what sense violent? (a) Is it violent simply because Paul uses a word that can denote physical injury (*katatomē*), and a word that is socially derogatory (dogs)? That is, is the violence simply in the texture and imagery that Paul employs? (b) Is it violent in intent? That is, does Paul intend to harm in some specific sense? Is it violent because it engages in slanderous, or retaliatory invective against some kind of adversary or rival, even though these adversaries are not directly addressed? (c) Or is it violent in its potential or in its effect? That is, does it have either the potentiality or the inevitable effect of inciting social binaries that are exclusive, and thus of promoting or facilitating identitarian conflict and violence? (d) Does it manifest a "violent personality,"[13] or does it display endemic and patterned cultural violence, and not the idiosyncrasy of an individual? (e) Does it matter what group is being referenced (with the "dogs, evil-doers, and butchery"), whether an (imperial) oppressor or a similarly marginalized socio-religious rival (below)? That is, does the text read differently if Paul is engaging in an act of resistance and naming imperial violence as opposed to slanderously attacking sibling rivals? Do differing assumed referents of the verbal invective make the text more or less violent, whether in intent, potential, or effect? (f) Does it matter if the referents actually engaged in physical and/or socio-psychological violence?[14] (g) Does it matter that the verbal outburst comes from someone experiencing physical and psychological torture and abuse, as is likely? (h) Does the text's canonical status give the text a greater moral

burden to bear (on the side of espousing or facilitating nonviolence), or make it more susceptible to facilitating physical and/or social violence? (i) Is the text more or less violent (in character and/or effect) when interpreted or claimed from a location of marginality, or from a position of power?

All this is to suggest at the outset that flat, simplistic depictions of the text as "violent" (or even as not violent) can't quite explain its complexity and multi-valent character and potentiality.

When it comes to interpreting this text according to the traditional rules of historical interpretation, a good case can be made that the referent of Paul's verbal outburst and warning is the (actually violent) Roman imperium and elite Roman culture in general, not "judaizing" nor "Judaic" rivals. Space does not permit a full discussion of this reading here,[15] but the main lines of evidence and argument are as follows: (a) *Katatomē* does not lexically signify "mutilation" in particular (though that translation has become the unquestioned rendering in the last hundred years), but more generally denotes "cutting down/against," "cutting in two," or "intensively cutting," and can apply to (i) the cutting or chopping of flesh, whether in the butcher shop, medicine, personal assault, or war, (ii) leather-working, or (iii) earthen excavation or rock inscriptions. This same range of meaning is more or less characteristic of the Latin translation, *concisio*. (b) The three-fold imagistic combination of "dogs," "evil-doers," and "cutting" derives from the lament Psalm 22:16 (following the textual tradition of the DSS and LXX, "gouging hands and feet"),[16] where the combined referent is unmistakably to oppressors and persecutors. Paul's language in Philippians 1:18-20 makes it clear that he is indeed recalling and resonating with lament psalms during his ordeal, both in terms of the imagery of persecution and suffering, but also in terms of the ultimate deliverance and universal supremacy that comes through Messiah. (c) The function of Philippians 3:2 within the evident circumstance, main argument, and rhetorical agenda of Philippians 3:2–4:1, and the entire letter more generally,[17] specifically suggests that it is a coded reference to the Roman imperium and its powerful allies. For instance, the adversaries referenced throughout Philippians, directly and indirectly, are those representing the persecuting elite of Philippi and the Roman imperial authorities holding Paul (probably in Ephesus). Meanwhile, Paul positively appropriates his Judaic citizenship markers,[18] while also contextualizing them in reference to Messiah (3:2-11), as a way to set up his prime target—the preoccupation with the status, the questing for, or the practice of Roman citizenship and its values (3:17-21).[19] (d) Recent scholarship has increasingly recognized that there are no "judaizing" elements in the vicinity of Philippi,[20] and that 3:2-11 is

hortatory and paradigmatic, not polemical or apologetic.[21] (e) Later texts show Paul's retrospective reflection on terror, torture, and suffering at the hands of the Roman authorities, conjuring up his ordeal in Ephesus from which he writes Philippians.[22] (f) The history of interpretation shows that the "judaizing" interpretation is not attested until the anti-Judaic rhetoric of Augustine and John Chrysostom[23] in the emerging Christian imperial situation, when attacks on the synagogue from the church were mounting.[24] Moreover, the traditional rendering assumes Galatians as the paradigmatic Paul, importing that agenda and context into the reading of Philippians, and thereby assumes that if there was opposition to Paul (and warning from him) it must have been primarily from a Jewish (or "judaizing") source. Within the context of Christendom, it becomes unimaginable that Paul would have attacked the Roman imperium so directly, and have embraced so unequivocally his Judaic heritage. (g) Even the first translations of Philippians 3:2 into English indicate that the text is understood to refer to schismatics in general (Wycliffe, dyuysioun [division]; Tyndale, Coverdale, dissencion; based on the possible sense of *katatomē* as "cutting in two"), in accordance with the pre-Christendom interpretive tradition, not "judaizers" in particular (the latter reading made explicit in the KJV's heading of Philippians 3,[25] and following the translation "concision" of the Geneva and Bishops' Bibles).

On the other hand, what is astonishing is the glee with which the anti-Judaic or anti-judaizing interpretation is often propounded in mainstream Christian commentaries, with hardly a nod as to how this might affect contemporary social dynamics, and no thought as to what kind of apologizing might be appropriate as a result of this and other outbursts, in terms of their eventual effects.[26] Commonly and uncritically repeated is the notion that Paul is simply throwing back the cursing invective of "dogs" from its (supposed Judaic) source,[27] thereby somehow exonerating it, but not admitting that this very retaliatory verbal assault would not measure up against Paul's own ethical standards (Rom 12:14; 1 Cor 4:13).

But what about the counter-imperial reading? (1) Does it make this text any less violent in its presumed original setting? (2) Does it mitigate the violent potential or effect of this text in particular? (3) Does it make Paul's perspective any less violent in character or potential? (3) Might this historical reading be articulated with the interest of making Paul less violent (a case of special pleading)? (4) Did it or might it perhaps facilitate (either then or now) some form of "seditious resistance?"[28]

While this last query must be taken seriously, it seems to me crucial that the potential for a theory of resistance also be recognized in Paul,[29] not just a theory of nonretaliation (or nonviolence), in accordance with

Paul's interest in the justice question, expressed in various ways. Peace and justice are a biblical hendiadys, in Paul and elsewhere.[30] At the same time, this is not to say that Paul can be easily exonerated of all forms of violence or violent potential, and to this issue we must now turn.

Presumed Violence and Ethical-Theological Deficiencies in Paul

Violent elements can be (or have been) found in (1) Paul's direct ethical-social teaching, (2) his exercise of power and authority in his assemblies, (3) his ecclesial social construction, (4) his language and thought structure, and (5) in his personality. We will look at each of these areas in turn, acknowledging that these are overlapping areas, and are used here only for analytical purposes.

(1) Nonretaliation and peace, along with justice, are certainly central features of Paul's direct ethical teaching and theological vision.[31] While interpreters generally agree that Paul did not endorse overt physical or lethal violence of any sort (including against the Roman empire),[32] questions have been raised about the character of his very ethic of nonretaliation, peace-making, and love. Kent Yinger, for instance, has argued that this ethic applies only to relations within the assembly, and not also to persecuting outsiders or outsiders in general.[33] This reading could presumably be spun in more than one way: nonretaliation and love is wrongly restricted only to the elect, or absolute pacifism is properly not within Paul's purview. Another question pertains to the obviously apocalyptic framework in which this ethic is propounded, as a deference to God's exclusive prerogative for executive vindication ("wrath").[34] While some interpreters continue to minimize this aspect of Paul's ethic, others point to its deficiency (it is motivated by eschatological revenge, or enhances a view of God as ultimately violent), and still others highlight that it can only be properly understood in reference to the final justice question. Nonretaliation, peace, and love operate within a scheme that also embraces the matter of justice (whether retributive justice or restorative justice), and forgiveness and reconciliation are never blind to the necessities of accountability and consequences (thus the complementarity of "kindness" and "severity" even in the divine character, e.g. Rom 11:22-24). A God devoid of concerns of justice makes for an anemic God who merely assists in self-actualization or adapts to the status quo.

Violence or the potential for violence has also be found in (or experienced through!) Paul's teaching or pronouncements in the dynamics of a presumed hierarchy of being,[35] in which one party naturally submits

or is subordinate to the other (masters and slaves, rulers and subjects, men and women). While a good bit of ambiguity rests within these very texts, it cannot be doubted that for the greater part of Christian history these texts were interpreted "sympathetically" (at the literal level), favouring men over women,[36] masters over slaves, and rulers over subjects.[37] In recent years, however, as social mores and ideological premises have shifted, these texts have received a critical look, either explained as categorically irreparable and dangerous (so flawed that they can only be deconstructed or else avoided), or explained (relative to their inherent ambiguity or ambivalence) as not quite as bad as they seem, or indeed as offering an emancipatory ethic.[38] And more recently, the obviously less ambiguous texts of heterosexism have become the subject of scrutiny,[39] as their complicity in the ongoing violence against homosexuality has become patently clear.

(2) In recent years, Paul has also been found to be deficient (or violent) in his exercise of apostolic power and authority within his assemblies. Some interpreters explain this strictly and negatively as "power over," and as a pressure towards "sameness" that rejects "difference."[40] Others explain this matter with greater nuance, while not blind to the negative potentiality of Paul's texts.[41] It is certainly to be noted that the more authoritarian or threatening side of Paul emerges in the Corinthian and Galatian correspondence, and some sense of those particular dynamics must certainly be entertained in the assessment of these texts. In the Corinthian case, Paul warns that his coming may be either "with a rod" or "in love in a spirit of gentleness," depending on their response (1 Cor 4:21); and later he admits that he is angrily "on fire" (2 Cor 11:29), cautioning that he may need to be "courageous" (as if in a battle, 2 Cor 10:1-8), "severe" (2 Cor 13:10), and ready "to punish" residual disobedience (10:8). Still, Paul claims that his apostolic authority is ultimately for the "building up" of the community, not its "tearing down" (2 Cor 10:8; 13:10), even as his work may involve the demolishing of intellectual "strongholds" (2 Cor 10:3-8). At the very least, Paul's exercise of authority and power needs to be entertained in the context of ancient conventions,[42] but also in relation to the exigencies of discipline and leadership in radical movements more generally.[43]

Paul believes that the judgment of (legal action against) outsiders should be left to God, whereas the community, under the direction of its apostolic leader, is to engage in judgment within its own midst (1 Cor 5:12-13; within a set of judicial rules and procedures, 2 Cor 13:1-2). Accordingly, Paul pronounces judgment and utters curses on some of his theological rivals, for the sake of the gospel (against a "different gospel," Gal 1:6, 8; 2 Cor 11:4). He does this despite (or in contrast to) an irenic

disposition toward rival apostles elsewhere, where judgment is left to God (1 Cor 3–4; Phil 1).[44] In Galatians, for instance, Paul offers an explicit "curse" on anyone promoting a "different gospel" (Gal 1:8-9), pronounces that the troublemaker "will bear his judgment" (Gal 5:10), and expresses this as a wish for the castration of those unsettling the community (Gal 5:12). His attack on Peter is somewhat subdued by comparison: he is "self-condemned" (Gal 2:11; even though it would appear that Peter seemed more keen to preserve the overall global unity of the church, not wanting to alienate his side of the emerging movement). In Romans 3 Paul notes that some theological rivals are making "slanderous charges" against him, and he responds with a reciprocal derogation, "their judgment is just" (Rom 3:8). In 2 Corinthians, Paul also engages in retaliatory invective, painting his fellow Messianist rivals as "ministers of Satan" and "doers of evil," and pronouncing that "their judgment is sure" (11:12-15; cf. 10:12-18; 11:4-6, 22-23; 12:11). While most interpreters avoid the evident tension between this invective and Paul's own promoted ethic of nonretaliation (even in cursing), George Shillington has faced this problem head on, even though his explanation may not be fully satisfying.[45] In connection with this, we can also note Paul's pronouncement of judgment and expulsion ("handing over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh") of someone engaged in gross sexual violation (1 Cor 5:1-7), by virtue of apostolic prerogative (1 Cor 4:15).

(3) A third general area in which Paul has been found to be deficient is in his "violently dualistic" social and ecclesial construction, with "violently enforced boundaries." Paul, according to Joseph Marchal, engages in a thoroughgoing in/out, we/they, right/wrong, saved/perishing binary construction that is absolutist, exclusive, and inherently violent, even in the apparently harmless letter to the Philippians. Paul's attitude fosters a position that is diametrically opposed to the (ultimate) virtues of "dialogue and interdependence."[46] Whether the label of violence is the most apt here could be challenged, but Paul's categorical reference to all outsiders as the "perishing" (1 Cor 1:18; 2 Cor 2:15; 4:3; cf. 2 Thess 2:10) and as facing the prospect of "wrath, anger, trouble, and distress" (Rom 2:8-9) does need to be faced, albeit placed alongside the contrary direction of the universal inclusion and reconciliation of all humanity and creation in the final drama, a drama in which for Paul even the binary of "believer" and "unbeliever" will be overcome (e.g. Rom 11:11-36).[47] Still, whether this latter is necessarily a coercive universalism, or an embrace of diversity and the overcoming of dividing binaries needs to be vigorously addressed.

(4) Closely related to this ecclesial construction is the matter of violence in Paul's language and thought structure. Some interpreters have found Paul's use of military imagery to be violent in and of itself, insofar

as it might promote the faithful taking a posture of engagement in a cosmic battle or in a literal one in their immediate social surrounding.[48] Alternatively, it is suggested that the use of military imagery shows that Paul was quite supportive of the military in general, and the Roman military in particular as mediating the will of God in the world.[49] More likely, Paul employs military and soldiering imagery ultimately to subvert worldly combat.[50]

The assessment of Paul's overall thought structure as "kyriarchic" (from the term *kyrios*, "lord," of which, for instance, patriarchy can also be included), in connection with Paul's underlying apocalyptic-millenarian framework,[51] is also open to multiple readings. Admittedly, in Paul's eschatological drama, God out-empires empire (1 Cor 2:6; 15:24-28; Rom 8:31-39), whether imaged as world-subjection[52] or as world-reconciliation,[53] and to that extent never fully transcends that imperial conceptuality (except perhaps in the sense of God being "all in all," 1 Cor 15:28; cf. Rom 11:36; Col 3:11; Eph 1:10; 4:6). In connection with this we should also locate Paul's pronouncements of doom on the present world order, including that of Rome and its allies (1 Cor 2:6; 1 Thess 5:3; Phil 3:19-21).[54] This does indeed put God into the role of being a military actor (replete with divine warfare imagery),[55] and to that extent a violent actor (since it would be inconsistent to label all human military activity as inherently violent, and not also divine military activity).[56] On the positive side, this imagery can be appropriated as offering a theory of resistance,[57] even if it comes with a deficient theory of ecclesial agency.[58] Moreover, its function to pacify and democratize the divine warrior tradition needs to be recognized.[59] Others, however, suppose that it may foster "seditious resistance,"[60] or emanate from a revengeful resentment.[61] But there is no question that in Paul final cosmic peace is always an embattled peace, even as, arguably, justice in Paul is ultimately a form of restorative justice.[62]

(5) Paul's "violent Christology of the cross" has also been targeted for special criticism. Gager and Gibson, for instance, propose that Paul's use of the cross as central saving symbol, along with solidarity with suffering as a pattern for Messiah, himself, and the adhering community,[63] represents a personal "predilection" for violence.[64] Paul is not to be understood "as a typical Jew, but rather, in his own words, as eccentric precisely in his attraction to violence."[65] Even within the early Jesus movement, "Paul's commitment to the crucified Christ was highly eccentric. . .both before and after his time."[66] Indeed, admittedly analyzing "like good amateur psychologists," Gager and Gibson suggest that Paul's persecution of early Jesus followers and his later embrace of the crucified Christ are of one piece, best explained in terms of Paul's persistent "violent personality,"

his "excessive zeal." This rendering of Paul as suffering from a particular violent psychological malady is indeed amateurish,[67] and seems unable to appreciate the liberating power of remembering martyrs in their labours for justice.[68] Michael Gorman has offered a helpful rejoinder.[69]

Theory in the Engagement with Texts

Textual interpretation is inevitably bound up in some theory, and so it is appropriate to review some basic postures in the discourse on peace and violence in Paul. Here is one possible typology (or continuum) of approaches.[70]

(1) One approach operates on the premise of a singular, authoritative, and normative voice of Paul (and other NT texts), and seeks to minimize diversity, ambiguity, multi-valence, and multi-potential in Paul's texts (decrying this as a concession to interpretive license, in which meaning is to be found simply in the transaction between reader and text, with priority given to the reader). While this approach usually denies any reliance on (pre-suppositional) "theory," it practically operates according to the theory of a confessional stance[71] and takes up some modest use of historical-critical methods. Troublesome texts are either exonerated or rescued, or their violent potential is minimized, and violent use explained as stemming from misreading.

(2) On the other side of the spectrum, some interpreters are convinced that Paul's personality and texts are so flawed that they are inherently dangerous, not merely potentially so. The canonical status of these texts is often given as a further occasion for their violent potential, and thus the necessity of emphasizing their violent dimensions and of undermining their status, privilege, or canonical authority. An additional charge, as with any religious texts, is that the aura of certitude itself that surrounds the reading of the texts is dangerous and potentially violent. In these circumstances, the interpretive posture is usually (but not always) admitted up front, often with the designations feminist, postcolonial, or queer.[72]

(3) Somewhere in a middle[73] position are those who are unwilling to relinquish the voice of Paul for constructive theo-political inquiry, while acknowledging the ambiguous potential and multi-valent character of Paul's texts, and their violent effects in various settings. This general stance of sympathetic appropriation may be characteristic, on the one hand, of those who seek to be robustly Christian (for normative articulation for "faith and life"), or, on the other hand, of those who seek to be informed by Paul's theory apart from any specific commitment to Christian practice or belief.[74] In both cases, it is assumed that the

positive core and potentiality of Paul's texts are not entirely negated by the deficient, dangerous, or violent aspects of his rhetoric. In effect, this approach allows the reader to read Paul as he read his own sacred texts: from the perspective of their emancipatory, inclusive center and direction.[75]

A Closed Canon with an Open Trajectory

This last position may well be a difficult one for those standing in the Anabaptist-Mennonite stream, with its embrace of biblical (biblicist) restorationism and (formal) suspicion of ongoing tradition. On the other hand, it may not be readily appreciated by those who have a greater suspicion of religious faith and sacred texts. One might argue, in this connection, that the problem with Marcion was not his obvious commitment to the way of nonviolence and a God of peace, nor was it strictly his dualism, as the occasion for his reduced canon. Rather, it was his literalism that required all of his sacred texts to come out just right, alongside the willingness to jettison the past in favour of the new. Ultimately, it was only a literalism combined with a figural textual sense (with both a carnal and spiritual dimension) that could keep the entire Bible as the sacred text, precluding the living community from perpetually having to make canonical only the recently novel. Peace, nonviolence, and justice are vectors that give the Bible directional meaning (and normative boundaries) through the dynamic guidance of the living Word. The Christian canon is not static or spatial, but dynamic and directional.

Aufhebung

"Paul created the conditions for the undermining of his own texts." These words (or something very near to them) were uttered by Slavoj Žižek, during a panel discussion at the 2005 conference at Syracuse University, "Saint Paul among the Philosophers."[76] Žižek was responding to a rejoinder to the effect that surely Paul could never be a friend to feminism, that his texts were irredeemably oppressive. In effect, Žižek's response was: Hey, give Paul a break, at least give him his due within the unfolding process of theo-political thought. Moreover, as evident in his further explanation, Žižek was using "undermine" in the sense of *Aufhebung*: at one and the same time an undermining and a fulfillment into a new mode, without thereby adopting interpretive license. In other words, one must take up Paul also in terms of the directionality of his thought, not simply in respect to his static location

in antiquity.[77] Despite the evident deficiencies (relative to modern sensibilities) or moments of violent rhetoric, Paul's overall message of peace and justice is a crucial resource for continued reflection on the challenges facing our own future.

Part Four

Affinities

Chapter 11

Paul on the Human Being as a "Psychic Body": Neither Dualist nor Monist

> It is sown a psychic body (*sōma psychikon*), it is raised a pneumatic body (*sōma pneumatikon*). If there is a psychic body, there is also a pneumatic body. (1 Cor 15:44)

Continuing developments in the fields of physics, evolutionary biology, genetics, and neuroscience have created significant ripple effects among theologians and philosophers on fundamental questions about human nature.[1] While Augustine could chide his Christian contemporaries for making obscurantist pronouncements in the fields of science on the basis of literalist readings of biblical texts (particularly regarding the external, physical world), since what the gospel was really all about was the activity and destiny of the soul,[2] now the stakes are much higher, with the depths of matter-energy activity in the human psyche itself being plumbed to new nanometric limits. The disenchantment of the universe is now apparently absorbing even the last mysterious being—the human. But there is perhaps some consolation: in recent physics the very character of and boundaries between matter and energy, something and emptiness, and space and time are increasingly being made fuzzy.[3]

As a result of these developments, old questions are being asked of the biblical witness with a new urgency. While most scholars now argue for some form of holism or monism in Paul's thought as a result of a

crucial transition in the last one hundred years or so,[4] many evangelical scholars have continued to argue that the biblical witness requires some form of anthropological dualism, for a soul that is distinct and separable from the body, even if joined in a functional whole.[5] (Certainly in popular Christian consciousness, there continues to be an assumption of anthropological duality, such that the prime narrative of salvation is of the soul's departure from the earth to eternal bliss in heaven.)[6] On the other hand, philosopher-theologian Nancey Murphy, in making the case for "non-reductive physicalism," has argued that the biblical witness is varied and ambiguous, permitting a fair degree of latitude within certain boundaries,[7] while New Testament scholar Joel Green has gone even further to argue that the biblical witness is suggestive of (and more consistent with) some form of non-reductive anthropological monism.[8] Both of these authors continue to be worried about some crucial ethical and missional dangers in a dualist approach to understanding the human being.

The question that is being imposed on Paul, then, is: What is the ontological (essential) status of mind-soul relative to the body? Are they distinct and separable, with the soul being immortal and surviving on its own without the body after death? Or is the mind-soul an attribute of physicality? As Green puts it: "Are the soul and body indivisible (even if conceptually or rhetorically distinguishable) or divisible (even if functionally or ideologically inseparable)."[9]

This is not a new question, and biblical scholarship pertaining to some aspect of this question is by now enormous.[10] And while this may not be the most obvious or crucial issue pertaining to the human being that would arise from an interrogation that begins with the reading of Paul's writings first, nor a question that entertained Paul to any significant degree, it is still an important question that requires some answer.

Paul's Anthropological Vocabulary

Paul's understanding of the human being cannot be fully answered by reference to the terminology that he uses. Yet, such an analysis is still an appropriate place to start. While a survey of the nouns that Paul uses in reference to human faculties is the most common way to approach this, and will be pursued in what follows, a fuller treatment would give equal time to the verbal ideas associated with human behaviour, action, volition, cognition, feeling, perception, memory, and social and God-ward interaction.

Paul does distinguish between the "inner" and "outer" aspects of the human being and its interactions (Rom 7:22; 2 Cor 4:16; cf. 2 Cor 7:4;

Eph 3:16). Associated with the inner aspects of the person are various faculties/organs or dimensions of perception, revelation, understanding, feeling, willing, cognition, or memory: *nous* (mind), *noēma* (thought, mind), *psychē* (vital self, life force, life), *syneidēsis* (consciousness, conscience), *pneuma* (breath, spirit, life force). These, in turn, are closely associated physiologically with the "heart" (*kardia*) and the "innards" (*splanchna*). These crucial inner aspects are significantly physiological in more than a merely metaphorical or figurative sense; the inner aspects are certainly not to be understood as purely immaterial, or somehow completely separable from their physiological form. That is, Paul also works with a kind of physicalism, although different from the one postulated today. As for the more "outer" aspects Paul uses terms such as: *sōma* (body), *sarx* (flesh), *melē* (members, limbs, organs), *kephalē* (head), and *prosōpon* (face). But one must be cautious about positing too sharp a line between the inner and the outer in Paul's thinking: an "outer" aspect can stand for the whole person (face, body), as can an "inner" aspect (*psychē*, innards, heart). Moreover, both inner and outer aspects can be attributed corporately to the single social reality of the church: body, spirit, or *psychē*.

Paul seems to use none of these terms with any narrow semantic precision, often using some interchangeably, where they overlap in meaning or reference (e.g. mind and spirit; body and flesh; heart and mind;[11] innards, heart, and breath-spirit[12]). Paul can use these terms quite colloquially at times, but can also employ them more "technically" for significant theological or hortatory argumentation (flesh, spirit; psychic, fleshly; body). Some of these terms Paul uses in accordance with the usage of their Hebrew counterparts (heart, face, *psychē*, flesh), while some of these terms have no direct Hebrew counterpart (mind, conscience, body). Many of the activities of these aspects or organs can be attributed to the whole person, and vice versa, activities of the whole person can be expressed through one of the aspects.[13]

A crucial feature of Paul's vocabulary is that, like most ancient languages, it was especially concrete, with extensive metaphorical, metonymic, and figurative meanings, compared to our more abstract use of words. Thus, to have compassion is "to have innards" (like our "have heart"); to have reputation is to "have face." A quick review of some of the more crucial terms bears this out.

Crucial Terms

The "heart" is perhaps the most fundamental word to denote the essential self (in full accordance with the Judaic-Hebrew tradition, yet correlated with Hellenistic categories),[14] referring to the person as a whole from the

aspect of intentionality. It is the central organ of the person as the faculty of will, emotion, thoughts, desires, loyalty-belief, and affections,[15] and as the location of divine inspiration and spirit endowment (Gal 4:6; Rom 5:5; 1 Cor 6:19).

Paul's use of the word for "innards" is based on the Hebrew *rakhamim* (etymologically, "things pertaining to the womb," *rekhem*), and is used beyond the physical sense to denote (a) the seat of feeling, especially compassion and love (overlapping with and sometimes standing for "heart"; 2 Cor 6:12; 7:15; Phil 1:8; Phlm 7, 12, 20), and (b) the feeling or virtue of compassion itself (Phil 2:1; Col 3:12).

The word for "head" is used, beyond the physical sense, to refer to rule, superior rank, origin, or source (to be the "head" of something; e.g. 1 Cor 11:3; Col 1:18; 2:10, 19; Eph 1:22; 4:15; 5:23). Paul does not use "head" to refer to any aspect of human functioning. Its conventional use to denote superior status is not because it is understood as the cybernetic headquarters (as today), but because the head is the highest and most "noble" feature of the human being.

The word for "face" is used beyond the physical sense to denote (a) a faculty of seeing and perceiving (1 Cor 12:12; 2 Cor 3:18; 10:7), (b) external appearance, physical or expressive manifestation, and thus social status and honour (2 Cor 5:12; 8:24), (c) an interface of relationality and social interaction and presence (2 Cor 2:10; 10:1; Gal 2:11; 1 Thess 2:17), and (d) the person as a whole (though especially in its expressive aspect, 2 Cor 1:11).

The word for "flesh" is a most problematic and difficult term in Paul's vocabulary. Beyond reference to merely human existence or physicality (in positive or neutral sense), it can also denote the obvious weakness of physical existence (e.g. Rom 6:19), but also that aspect of the human that is most easily corrupted by or manipulated by the power Error (*hamartia*, Sin), designating a belonging to the present state of the corrupted cosmos, and indeed can signify a kind of force or realm hostile to God.[16]

Soma

The Greek word *sōma* ("body") does not have a direct Hebrew counterpart. But significantly, Paul does not use it in its basic Greek use as referring to a dead corpse. Still, Paul employs "body" with quite a spectrum of usage and meaning.[17] While Paul can use the word to denote the physical aspect of the human (or the human in its physical aspect), most importantly Paul can also use the body to denote the whole person.[18] On the other side, Paul nowhere uses the term in a way to imply that the body is a kind of external shell that outwardly clings to

or is stamped on a person's real inner self; the body belongs inseparably and constitutively to the very essence of the person.[19] Moreover, Paul can use the term to denote the manifested "spiritual" union between the believer and Christ ("the body. . . is meant for the Lord and the Lord for the body"; "your bodies are members of Christ," so that "the one united with the Lord becomes one spirit [with him]," and "your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you," 1 Cor 6:13, 15, 17, 19) and to denote the very sacramental-spiritual-social being of the church ("you are the body of Christ and individually members of it," 1 Cor 12:27; "the body is one," 1 Cor 12:12, 13; cf. 10:16-17; 1 Cor 11:24-29). In other words, Paul uses *sōma* also to denote relational aspects of the human being.

Pneuma

Even the usage of the word *pneuma*, usually translated "spirit," represents a use of concrete language in that it is based on the phenomenal reality of "breath." The difficulty with Paul's anthropological use of the term is that when Paul refers to a "breath-spirit" associated with a person or with a church, it is unclear whether Paul is thinking of that which is apportioned by God from the Holy Spirit and bestowed upon a person or a church, or of something that is distinctly a person's own human spirit.[20] In the only unambiguous case where Paul refers to "the spirit of a human," it is identified in reference to the "spirit of the cosmos" and quite distinct and different from (even opposed to) the "spirit of God" (1 Cor 2:11). As Dunn puts it, "Paul nowhere expresses a notion of an innate spirituality [possessed as one's own] awaiting release." Rather, Paul's emphasis is on "the divine Spirit acting upon and in a person from without."[21] Whether distinctly a person's own or endowed (apportioned from the divine Spirit), the "breath-spirit" of a person is that faculty or capacity through which a person receives revelation and understanding, engages in cognition, expresses emotion, or relates quite directly to God. In some cases the word overlaps in meaning with "mind," at other times with "heart."

Psyche

Paul uses *psychē* in accordance with the Hebrew notion of *nephesh*, as the whole person, and especially the vitality or life-force that makes a living being, or a being living. It is a word for which a rough English counterpart is not available, referring in Paul to the individual person as a whole, one's earthly life as it is publically observable in behaviour, or one's earthly life which can be lost in death.[22] Significantly, nowhere does Paul attach to this word the idea of an "immortal soul" temporarily resident in a body

as its essential core, as developed in the Greek intellectual tradition. This apparent avoidance[23] makes Paul's letters quite remarkably different from other Jewish writings imbued with a Greek philosophical standpoint[24] and from later Christian writings.[25] Paul goes beyond the Hebraic sense in only two contexts: in Philippians, when expressing the "common life/vitality" [mentality, disposition] of the community (stand as "one *psychē*," 1:27, parallel to "one *pneuma*"; "united in soul, co-souled," *sympsychos*, 2:2) and the human aspect of emotion, desire, and affections ("same-souled," *isopsychos*, 2:20; "to be well-souled, cheered," *eupsychō*, 2:19); and in Corinthians, when he uses the adjective *psychikos* (psychic, soulish) to denote the merely mortal life vitality or realm (1 Cor 15:44, 46; and identified with *sarkikos*, "fleshly," in 1 Cor 2:14, in both cases deliberately turning gnostic-type thinking and vocabulary on their heads).[26]

For the "inner" person, Paul also uses Hellenistic anthropological terms, such as "mind" or "conscience/consciousness" that don't have a Hebrew counterpart, but only have a function on the foundation of the Hebraic (OT) anthropological framework of "heart" and "*nephesh/psychē*."[27]

It is most crucial to note, finally, that distinguishing various aspects, organs/faculties, endowed capacities, or inner/outer dimensions of the human being does not necessarily indicate any fundamental essential dualism. To solve that question, one must look at passages where Paul discusses topics that relate closely to the matter of a basic human make-up or functioning.

Modalities of Living in the Present

In general terms, Paul appears to be much less interested in an exposition of the human *being* in an "essentialist" or "ontological" sense, than in expounding on the modalities of human *living*, particularly living in its intra-personal, God-ward, socio-political, and ethical dimensions. That is, some hints as to some possibly implicit assumptions in the former area only come into play when he is addressing the latter. Of the various modalities crucial to Paul (e.g. imperatives for justice and peace in social human life,[28] or for loyalty-faith in relation to God), let me identify two. (a) Human beings in the present are in the process of "groaning," as a result of the inherent weakness, perishability, and suffering characteristic of life in the present age (Rom 8:22-23; 26-28; 2 Cor 4:17; 5:2-4)—and it is important to observe that it is especially the whole person that groans, not just the body (for the internal groaning, e.g. Rom 8:26-28; 2 Cor 2:13, "my spirit could not rest"). And further to this in particular, (b) human beings are marked by an existential (phenomenologically

experienced) tension between "willing" and "doing," such that the latter is constrained or rebellious relative to the former—that is, humans are beset especially by an ethical inability and imperative.

It is especially in addressing both of these modalities that Paul's assumptions of some sort of "essential" or "aspective" humanness come to the fore. In the first case, this appears in Paul's discourse on bodily resurrection or on the dynamism of resurrection life already working in the present (e.g. 1 Cor 15; 2 Cor 4–5; Rom 8; Phil 1, 3). In the second case, that of human ethical competence (Rom 7; Gal 5), what Paul actually stresses, in accordance with his fundamental apocalyptic premises of the nature of the cosmos, is that the problem has little to do with purely intra-psychic dimensions, but rather with the way in which the cosmic powers, "Error" (Rom 7:13–8:13) and "Flesh" (Gal 5:17), have caused a corruption in the inner integrity and competence of the human being. No ontological dualism of separable inner and outer "parts" of the human is posited. And the answer toward full ethical integrity is in what God has provided through Messiah from without (Rom 7:4-6; 8:4).

Resurrection of the Body

It is especially in Paul's discussion of the resurrection of the body (in the context of his assessment of the weakness, suffering, and perishability of human existence) that Paul's holistic conception of the human being becomes most apparent. Paul's discussion of the resurrection of the body makes it most clearly evident that Paul considers the *sōma* to belong constitutively and inseparably to human being-and-living, both now and in the *telos* (goal, end).[29]

In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul identifies human being-living as experienced through a "psychic body" (*sōma psychikon*) or a "spiritual body" (*sōma pneumatikon*; 1 Cor 15:44-45). English translations have consistently mistranslated 1 Cor 15:44, making a contrast between a "physical" body and a "spiritual" body, importing a physical-spiritual dualism that is not Paul's. In this text Paul contrasts two forms of bodily animation, one "psychic" (*psychikon*) and the other "pneumatic" (*pneumatikon*), as a way to strike a midpoint between the Hellenistic body-soul dualism of his audience (which rejected bodily resurrection, period) and a naïve physical resuscitation model of resurrection. The bottom line for Paul is that human existence in either condition—whether in the present age or the age to come—must be bodily ("embodied" sounds too dualistic), whatever the precise animation and whatever the precise "physical" character. That *psychikon* here does not refer especially to the "physical" feature of the current body is indicated by Paul's supportive scriptural citation of

Genesis 2:7 in 15:45, which draws attention to the first human as being made bodily into a *psychē zōsa*, translating the Hebrew, *nephesh chayyah*, "living being." Even the subsequent distinction between the "earthly" body and the "heavenly" body (vv. 47-49) is not one of physical versus spiritual (or material versus immaterial), since for Paul the heavenly is a kind of substance or form (e.g. 1 Cor 15:39-41).[30] Both kinds of bodily material require animation—and vice versa, both animations require bodily form—for there to be life. The only mode or form of human existence that there is, in either dimension, is bodily existence.

Paul's exposition of the character of and transition between these two modes is also instructive. The two modes are characterized elsewhere as "body of humiliation" as opposed to a "body co-formed to the body of [Christ's] glory" (Phil 3:21), or as "bearing the image of the human of dust" compared to "bearing the image of the human of heaven" (the second Adam, 1 Cor 15:47-49). The most crucial language of resurrection, then, is trans-formational language, emphasizing continuing within discontinuity. Paul says "we shall all be changed" (1 Cor 15:51, 52) and that our body will be "transformed" (*metaschēmatizō*; Phil 3:21), such that it will be "co-formed" to that of the "image of God's son" (*symphytos*, Rom 6:5; *symmorphos*, Rom 8:29; Phil 3:21). Further, this is described as the "redemption of our body," linked inseparably with the liberation of all creation (Rom 8:18-25; Phil 3:21; 1 Cor 15:24-28). And so Paul can speak of this as a "glorification" (Rom 8:17, 30; cf. 2 Cor 4:17). Just as Paul does not speak of the replacement of all creation but of its transformation, Paul also speaks not of an exchange of bodies, even less an escape from bodies, but of the transformation of bodily life. And in continuity with Jewish resurrection hope, Paul understood resurrection not just as bodily but also as involving the restoration of a people within a transformed creation.[31]

The difficulty, however, is that Paul also uses rich metaphorical imagery to describe this in varied rhetorical contexts. For instance, it is expressed as the "swallowing up of death" (1 Cor 15:54; 2 Cor 5:4; cf. Isa 25:8). In particular he uses relational imagery: living as a "spiritual body" is to be "with Jesus" (1 Thes. 4:17; 2 Cor 4:14), it is to experience final "adoption as children" (Rom 8:23), and it is to "be at home with Jesus" (2 Cor 5:6-9).[32] Paul also uses as an image of the transformation from present "psychic" to future "pneumatic" embodiment, the movement from "sowing" to "emerging [raising]" (1 Cor 15:36-44), without ever suggesting that there is any separable "seed," that is, a distinct, immortal "soul." Finally, Paul uses dwelling and clothing imagery, language that is wrongly thought to confirm the notion of bodies as an external shell on the inner, essential self (soul). Resurrection life is to "have a dwelling from

God, a house not made with hands and [reserved] eternal in the heavens," instead of a dwelling that is merely "tent-like" (2 Cor 5:1-2).[33] As for the clothing metaphor, Paul says in one place that "the perishable will be clothed with the imperishable" (1 Cor 15:53-54), quite in continuity with his fundamental transformational exposition, and in another place that his hope is to be "fully or completely clothed" (*ependysasthai*; as opposed to partially, or inadequately clothed; 2 Cor 5:2, 4), in contrast to any worry about being found "naked."[34] Far from suggesting that "being naked" is to be in one's essential self as a disembodied soul, for Paul the prospect of "nakedness" is one to be avoided at all cost (2 Cor 5:3), using and rebutting the dualistic language of the Corinthian loyalists of a gnostic persuasion.[35]

Images of Transformation in the Present

What is also decisive is that Paul understands this resurrection power to be operating already in the present order, in the midst of the very weakness, suffering, and perishability that are characteristic of present human being-and-living. Paul can thus use imagery otherwise reserved for resurrection proper, such as, "Messiah being formed in you" (Gal 4:19), "[your] spirit [is] life because of righteousness" (Rom 8:11), "making alive your mortal bodies" (Rom 8:12), mostly in connection with the ethical imperative of living in loyalty to Messiah (cf. Rom 6:1-14; Gal 2:19-20; Col 2:20–3:14). But Paul's stress on the regular, ongoing renewal of life through resurrection power also occurs in the context of maintaining hope and resolve despite constant suffering (2 Cor 3:18; 4:10-12, 16; 13:4). The point here is that resurrection power is what impinges on bodily life, not simply disembodied life (cf. the imagery of "new creation," 2 Cor 5:17-18). The sphere and goal of God's redemptive work is the cosmos (Col 1:20; Phil 3:21; 1 Cor 15:24-28; Rom 11:36), the creation (Rom 8:18-25), and the body. In this sense, Paul prays for the entire person in its various dimensions (*sōma*, *psychē*, *pneuma*) to be preserved "whole" (*holoklēron*) unto the day of Christ (1 Thess 5:23), when all things are transformed into newness.[36]

In Death, No Separation

But what about that "time" between death and *parousia*? Does not Paul teach an intermediate state of consciousness, in which the dead in Christ enjoy communion with Jesus already (as explicitly propounded apparently first by Irenaeus, late second century), and does this not prove the separate, disembodied existence of a soul? It is indeed the case that

many Jewish writings from around this time express some hope for a reality of existence between death and the final arrival of the reign of God.[37] What is interesting, by contrast, is Paul's significant reserve in this area. What Paul emphasizes is that God's redeeming power is so comprehensive (Rom 8:17-34) that nothing, not even death, can ever constitute a "separation" from the love of Christ (Rom 8:35-39). In 1 Thessalonians and 1 Corinthians, where one might expect Paul to expound on this matter, all he says is that those "dead/sleeping in Christ" will surely be included in the final resurrection of the dead when the age to come finally arrives (1 Thess 4:13-18; 1 Cor 15:18, 23). Elsewhere, all Paul says is that death means being "with Christ," and thus never to be feared (Phil 1:23; 2 Cor 5:6-8). Paul is so committed to absolutely no compromise on the primacy of the ultimate resurrection of the dead—apparently especially in controversy with those who sought to emphasize either a spiritual resurrection already in the present or the immortal existence of a disembodied soul as all that mattered—that he refuses further speculation. Indeed, he hints that those believers now dead have no existence apart from the resurrection—apart from resurrection they will have "perished" (1 Cor 15:18)—suggesting that Paul refused to grant the existence of bodiless immortality. In a similar way, while he grants that to die and thus "be with the Lord" in anticipation of resurrection is to be preferred (2 Cor 5:8; cf. Phil 1:23), he rejects the notion of any form of soulish "nakedness" (2 Cor 5:3).[38] Thus it cannot be said that Paul explicitly teaches an intermediate state of consciousness, from which can be translated a doctrine of the soul's immortality.[39] In death one moves out of historical time and into transcendent time, and the continued existence of a person after death can only be posited on the basis of the reality of future resurrection, not on the basis of the soul's immortality. As Dunn puts it: for Paul everything short of final redemption is incompleteness, whether in an interim state, or in the proleptic experience of the benefits of salvation in the present.[40]

Paul's Apocalyptic Dualism

While Paul cannot be said to teach some version of essentialist anthropological dualism, his writings also do not permit a monist understanding, with the human being at the mercy of the capricious or determined necessities and cycles of "nature." Paul is certainly a dualist, although of a certain kind—an apocalyptic dualist, as rightly understood by K. Barth and others.[41] The human being cannot be properly or fully comprehended in immanentist or essentialist terms.[42] For Paul the human being is faced with imperatives (modalities of living) that are God-ward (theological-spiritual), ethical (behavioural), and socio-

political (having to do with allegiance, dominions, and identity). Paul's dualism has multiple dimensions. It is cosmic, that is, having to do with a cosmic battle between God and Satan and their respective forces; but crucially this aspect of the dualism is not perpetual: there is a *telos* (goal) in which God's victory in Christ will dramatically bring the age to come. In this sense his dualism is temporal: the present age will cataclysmically give way imminently and ultimately to the age to come. The dualism is epistemological, contrasting the wisdom of mastery operating in the present age versus the wisdom of weakness characteristic of God's messianic revelation (apocalypse).[43] The dualism is certainly also ethical (the choice between justice and injustice, life and death) and salvific: salvation is not possible via immanentist progressivism, but through transcendent intervention from without. Paul's apocalyptic dualism is chiefly revelatory, world-transforming (not world-ending or world-denying), and salvific (not in terms of a vertical departure to heaven, but in terms of a participation in the eventual merging of heaven and earth in the reign of God, the new creation). But the dualism also has an anthropological dimension, though not in any essentialist sense, but in the sense that the cosmic forces are in a battle within the human (Rom 6–8; Gal 5) and confronting the human being with fundamental alternatives, in particular ones of allegiance, of loyalty-belief and its accompanying obedience. Moreover, it is through the dynamic infusion of a new power sphere (Grace, Spirit), that the inner anthropological corruption plaguing the human can be resolved (Rom 5–8). Finally, in the sense that Paul's gospel calls to an alternative dominion and lordship, his apocalyptic dualism is also specifically socio-political (e.g. Phil 1–3). Here Murphy is in large measure correct:

> . . . [T]he adoption of a dualist anthropology in the early centuries of the church was largely responsible for changing Christians' conception of what Christianity is basically all about. I am suggesting that original Christianity is better understood in socio-political terms than in terms of what is currently thought of as religious or metaphysical. The adoption of a dualist anthropology provided something different—different from socio-political and ethical concerns—with which Christians became primarily concerned.[44]

Conclusion: On the Interface between the Biblical Witness (Theology) and Science

In conclusion, it cannot be said that Paul teaches a dualist anthropology with a distinct and separable "soul." Paul works within the framework of

a sort of physicalism, albeit of a different sort than proposed today. But even so, more crucial is an acknowledgement of Paul's broader dualist apocalyptic perspective that puts the stress on human living, not human being.

This essay has been prompted by questions that recent science has imposed upon thoughtful readers of scripture, in the hopes (by those such as Murphy) that the biblical-theological and scientific perspectives could somehow be integrated, if not reconciled.[45] My own view is that the vocabulary and constructs of each pursuit (domain?) cannot be fully "integrated," and that the attempt to force the integration would mean that either the biblical witness has to constrain (trump) science, or that science must overtake the biblical witness. Certainly science and theology must be in close dialogue (with neither ignorant of the other), but yet their differing and complementary imperatives and thus perspectives must be respected. While I am fully sympathetic with the scientific imperative to understand and to explain, I am also fearful that this can sometimes overwhelm the theological-ethical-political imperatives. This does not mean isolating ourselves in our own closets, but it does mean a resistance to forcing one into the modality of the other. Truth is not always found in an absolute distinction and choice between an either/or.

Chapter 12

On the Exigency of a Messianic Ecclesia: An Engagement with Philosophical Readers of Paul

Theodore Jennings, Jr., in an essay titled "Paul and Sons," a title that plays on Jacques Derrida's reflections on proprietary rights to Marx, suggests that there is currently a battle being waged over inheritance rights to Paul.[1] This continues his repeated claim in his earlier book *Reading Derrida / Thinking Paul* (2006), that Paul must be liberated from the imprisoning clutches of his ecclesiastical, theological, and exegetical readers, Paul's so-called "friends."[2]

To be sure, we have the recent claim of Giorgio Agamben that Walter Benjamin has effected the *Aufhebung* of Paul, fulfilled and thereby nullified in a moment of *tornada*, recapitulation—taken out of, even away from, his original context. Agamben's *The Time That Remains* "originates in the conviction that there is a kind of secret link, which we should not miss at any price, between Paul's letters and our epoch. From this perspective, one of the most often read and commented texts of our entire cultural tradition undoubtedly acquires a new readability which displaces and reorients the canons of his interpretation."[3]

For his part, Slavoj Žižek concludes his *The Puppet and the Dwarf* with this claim:

> In what is perhaps the highest example of Hegelian *Aufhebung*, it is possible today to redeem this [subversive, emancipatory] core of Christianity only in the gesture of abandoning the shell

> of its institutional organization (and, even more so, of its specific religious experience). The gap here is irreducible: either one drops the religious form, or one maintains the form, but loses the essence. That is the ultimate heroic gesture that awaits Christianity: in order to save its treasure, it has to sacrifice itself—like Christ, who had to die so that Christianity could emerge.[4]

At the beginning of the book he asserts: "my claim is not that the subversive kernel of Christianity is accessible also to a materialist approach; my thesis is much stronger: this kernel is accessible *only* to a materialist approach—and vice versa: to become a true dialectical materialist, one should go through the Christian experience." The first thesis of Benjamin is turned around: the puppet called theology can win all the time, if it enlists the service of historical materialism, which today has to stay underground.[5]

Žižek and Agamben, along with Alain Badiou and Jacob Taubes,[6] are examples of recent thinkers who have appropriated Paul into their theoretical undertaking, none on specifically Christian grounds. But their contributions are not just interesting or provocative. They in fact provide considerable potential for Christian theological reflection, offering numerous points of insight, illustration, and even inspiration. That is, Christian readers of Paul need not make any counter territorial claims on Paul. Indeed, the more substantial divide among readers of Paul is one between historicist readers of Paul, who would like Paul imprisoned within the first century, and all those readers who wish to place Paul in the midst of contemporary political and theological discourse, whether interested ecclesially-theologically and/or theoretically-philosophically (even non-theistically).[7]

What makes dialogue with these four post-Marxist thinkers particularly interesting is that they share with post-Christendom Christian theology some crucial points of fundamental convergence: (a) a radical critique of the present world order, including some form of resistance and dissent, and (b) some notion of the strongly utopian and interruptive, yet non-progressivist hope at the root of the tradition. In this essay my focus will be on just one aspect of their thought, namely, ecclesial theory. I will be treating the notion of an ecclesial community not so much as a midpoint between individual subjectivity and society in general, even less as an aggregate of those caught up in a new messianic subjectivity. Rather, it is the question of some midpoint existing in the tensive polarity between what now exists in the wake of the new revelation and what will or must obtain in the eschatological utopia to which the revelation witnesses.[8] What, then, is the exigent necessity

of the notion of an ecclesial community, whether founded on a new subjectivity of radical unplugging (Žižek), a truth procedure toward a universal singularity evident in the militant figure (Badiou), a vision for the coming community, a community of messianic callings, a messianic form of life (Agamben), or a messianic community that is "free of rule," with which all oppressed groups can identify (Taubes)? Given this limited scope, I will be reading these theoreticians as they read Paul, and as Paul reads his own sacred texts: schematically, selectively, typologically, and without complete contextual and genealogical regard.

To anticipate our results, the ecclesial thinking of these theorists can be placed into a three-fold typology, representing options which continue to entertain radical Christian ecclesial theorists. (1) For Agamben the messianic community is primarily an abstract aggregate of messianic callings, a somewhat serendipitous and certainly non-institutional, or non-boundable reality, a remnant that through auto-suppression only knows itself as the not-all, conscious of existing only to lose itself in the fullness (redemption) of the all. (2) In Taubes we find a messianic ecclesia which, as an apparently socially identifiable entity, has primarily a representational function, alongside its fundamental task of counter-imperial delegitimation. (3) In Žižek and Badiou the messianic movement or impulse has a more transformational vocation relative to the whole of society, even as it refuses to be characterized by bounded markings other than fundamental fidelity, and even as it seeks to resist both institutionalizing, self-preoccupied, dogmatic or undemocratic betrayals and faulty utopian dreams, while still nourished by utopian notions.

Agamben on the Messianic Community: The Anarchic-Nihilistic Messianic Calling

Agamben's *The Time that Remans* is an erudite discourse on numerous themes in Paul's writings, especially in the treatment of the analogous (or homologous) afterlife of these themes in later political-philosophical writers. But while displaying considerable sensitivity to the particularity of Paul's thought itself, the book ultimately paints a Paul assimilated to the thought of Walter Benjamin. As the conclusion to the book makes clear, in Benjamin Paul's messianism has found its "canonic moment," its truest "time of legibility" (pp. 144-45)—Paul is the actual invisible (and un-cited) hunchback for Benjamin's historical materialist puppet (pp. 138-39).[9]

Agamben's ecclesial thinking in *The Time That Remains* continues his earlier treatment of "the coming community," his glad tidings that

provide a counterpart to his more pessimistic analysis of the current state of biopolitics, with its foundational violence that separates "naked life" from "form of life" and operates in a perpetual state of exception. "Naked life" must become "form of life" (the good life, the happy life, *eudaimonia*) in "the coming community," the coming politics. Crucial elements of this vision include: (a) an emancipation from the division between naked life and form of life, (b) an "irrevocable exodus from any sovereignty," (c) "pure mediality [means] as the field of human action and of human thought," (d) release from the "figure of the law" as the sole orientation of politics, and (e) a conception of community that does not presuppose commonality, common property or identity as a condition of belonging, but rather allows for the "co-belonging" of "whatever singularities." The "coming community" cannot be a retreat to mystical communion, nor does it entail a nostalgic return to some location of *Gemeinschaft* (community). Rather "form of life" emerges in the very process of exclusion and inclusion that constitutes the biopolitical exception (e.g. enclosures like the detention camp), and designates an exemplary life through "the impotent omnivalence of whatever beings." It will emerge not in the struggle between states, but in the struggle between the state and humanity as such, heralded by events of "whatever singularity" such as Tiananmen.[10] *The Time That Remains*, then, represents an articulation of "form of life" in "the coming community" specifically on messianic terms.[11] The messianic life, life in Messiah, is the answer to the naked life of biopolitics.

Special interest in the notion of a messianic community appears explicitly from the opening pages of *The Time That Remains*. Seeking to restore Paul as a fundamental messianic text for the Western tradition, he charges that "anti-messianic tendencies were doubtlessly operating within the Church as well as the Synagogue" (p. 1). Both have had an interest in expunging or muting Paul's Jewish messianic thought. He observes: "a messianic institution—or, rather, a messianic community that wants to present itself as an institution—faces a paradoxical task" (p. 1): to have Messiah either perennially ahead of you, or always behind you, is equally discomforting. The question that is raised, then, is whether or not a messianic community can take on concrete, institutional form without betraying its messianic character and vocation.

Agamben identifies the following problematic features that beset "a messianic community that wants to present itself as an institution":[12]

(1) as an institution, a messianic community becomes preoccupied with a new identity for messianic life, seeking a replacement, not a fundamental transformation (re-vocation), of all worldly vocations, estates, and identity;

(2) it begins to claim rights and prerogatives for itself, as the thing in itself;

(3) it organizes itself around codified systems of laws, creating a new law; as such it merely replaces or emulates existing institutions of power;

(4) it is disciplined around systems of right doctrine, exclusively denotative systems of thought for what it believes, hopes, and loves, losing the performative immediacy of these;

(5) it loses its character of auto-suppression and its true vocation of mere instrumentality (pure means, use) for the sake of the all, ultimately betraying its mission on behalf of the all.

Agamben applies this critique in two directions: on the one hand to the Church, but also to the Party, its secularized double. As for the church: this is what happens when Messiah is entirely seen in the past, as founder, and not as a critical principle that shatters boundaries in a new constellation (the "Bild" of Benjamin). As he puts it in *Means without End*:[13] "The church has frozen the messianic event, thereby handing the world over to the power of judgment." That is, by losing its true vocation for the all, it has damned the rest of the world. A serious indictment indeed.

The related question is whether or not a political theology can only be negative, negating both a statist political theology (against Carl Schmitt) and its double, an institutionally constituted positive revolutionary political agency or program. Is there any room for a (socially) identifiable, not merely abstract ecclesia under that negation? Is the answer only in a purely "anarchic-nihilistic" messianism, the form of messianism which Agamben articulates?

Messianic Time

For Agamben the crucial framework for conceptualizing a messianic community is in "the very structure of messianic time and the particular conjunction of memory and hope, past and present, plenitude and lack, origin and end that this [messianic time] implies" (pp. 1-2). Only after Paul's understanding of messianic time has been appreciated "can we raise the question of how something like a messianic community is in fact possible" (p. 2). Distinguishing sharply between messianism and apocalypse, then, Agamben argues that Pauline messianic time is not the end of time, but the time of the end.

What interests the apostle is not the last day. . .but the time that contracts itself and begins to end (1 Cor. 7:29), or if you prefer, the time that remains between time and its end. . . . Messianic time, the time in which the apostle lives, the only time that concerns him, is. . .neither

chronological time nor the apocalyptic *eschaton*. . . . [It is] the time that remains between these two times, when the division of time is itself divided (p. 62).

A key feature of this time is its form as "recapitulation": "the messianic.…is a caesura that divides the division between times and introduces a remnant, a zone of undecidability, in which the past is dislocated into the present and the present is extended into the past" (p. 74). Thus it is less oriented to the future, as to the "contraction of past and present," to "the present as the exigency of fulfillment" (pp. 76-78).

Features of the Messianic Community

Within this understanding of messianic time, what then are the specific features of the messianic community, the messianic "form of life?" Three critical aspects can be identified.

First, taking his cue from the linguistic correspondence between *klēsis* ("calling," thus "vocation") and *ekklēsia* ("assembly," that which is "called out"), Agamben argues that the Pauline ecclesia "is a community of messianic vocations," with an emphasis on the multiplicity of individual messianic subjectivities (31-33). The crucial text for Agamben is 1 Cor 7:17-22, 29-33a, which brings together the notions of *klēsis* ("calling," thus "vocation"), living *hōs mē* ("as not"), "remaining in a calling," and *mallon chrēsai* ("rather make use"). The messianic "as not" constitutes a revocation (in a double sense) and transformation of all juridical and social conditions (identities, estates, vocations, etc.), by undermining them and hollowing them out without altering their form, expropriating them under the form of "usage" and "pure praxis" without possession and ownership (22-42). "The messianic vocation is not a right, nor does it furnish an identity; rather, it is a generic potentiality that can be used without ever being owned" (26). The paradigmatic case is Onesimus, who, while remaining a slave, is *hyper doulon* ("more than a slave"), for Agamben a "super slave" (Phlm 16; pp. 13, 29).

Furthermore, aware of the arbitrariness and gratuitousness of one's condition (p. 31), the subject (and thus the messianic community) lives by auto-suppression, in that the subject's complete redemption coincides with his/her complete loss (Rom 6:6; 8:11; p. 31). The entire subject is both dislocated and nullified in the messianic vocation (Gal 2:20; p. 41). In connection with this notion, and in response to the possible charge that his conception of the messianic calling may imply nothing more than a "mental reserve," a "Marranism,"[14] Agamben (following Benjamin) emphasizes that the prime modality of the messianic vocation is "exigency," in particular the exigency of the lost, oppressed,

and defeated (pp. 39-42). This "weak" messianic modality involves an "assimilation to what has been lost and forgotten" (1 Cor 1:26-28; 4:13) "on both the collective and individual levels," and is expressed as a "groaning" along with the caducity (*mataitēs*) of all creation (Rom 8:20-22, 28; pp. 40-41): "the capacity to remain faithful to that which having perpetually been forgotten, must remain unforgettable" (p. 39). Insofar as this especially backward-looking assimilation is absolute, the question of "presumed identities and ensuring properties" is finally settled. Indeed, any move to organize or institutionalize a messianic community, even (and especially) for purposes of constituting a vanguard, is to create something "distinct" from the real "community of messianic vocations" (even though pretending to coincide with it) and constitutes one of its most serious betrayals (p. 33).[15]

Second, the messianic community is marked by a separation that fundamentally negates other separations, including its own, through the notion of the remnant, which is ever situated as a "not-all."[16] Applying this to the concepts of a people, democracy, and the proletariat (pp. 57-58), and sharply critical of Badiou's universalism,[17] Agamben emphasizes that the remnant is in constant tension with the all:

> [T]he remnant is closer to being a consistency or figure that Israel assumes in relation to election or to the messianic event. It is therefore neither the all, nor a part of the all, but the impossibility for the part and the all to coincide with themselves or with each other. *At a decisive instant, the elected people, every people, will necessarily situate itself as a remnant, as not-all* (p. 55, emphasis original).

Drawing especially on Romans 11, Agamben asserts that the remnant is "not any kind of numeric portion or substantial positive residue;" it is rather a division "without ever reaching any final ground" (pp. 50-52). Moreover, the remnant "functions as a very peculiar kind of soteriological machine. . . , not so much the object of salvation as its instrument." It "is precisely what prevents divisions from being exhaustive and excludes the parts and the all from the possibility of coinciding with themselves." Nevertheless, the remnant "only concerns messianic time and only exists therein. In the *telos*, when God will be 'all in all' (Rom 11:36; 1 Cor 15:28), the messianic remnant will not harbour any particular privilege and will have exhausted its meaning in losing itself in the *plērōma* [fullness]" (p. 56).

Third, the messianic life and vocation, and thereby the messianic community, is marked by the de-activation (*katargēsis*, *Aufhebung*)

of *nomos*. The messianic "state of exception" is never an occasion for assimilation to state power (pp. 107-09), and is instead characterized by a "tendentious lawlessness" (p. 111). The messianic state of exception returns to the conditions of pre-law, and entails (a) a contraction of the law, marked by an indeterminacy between inside and outside, an unobservability, and an unformulability; (b) a recapitulation in the figure of love (p. 108); (c) an orientation toward gratuity, with fidelity as the instance of the justice of the law; and (d) a "form of life," a community, not a new text with dogma, as the instantiation of the new covenant (2 Cor 3:2; p. 122). Taking an analogy from Franciscan thought, Agamben observes that what mattered was "to create a space that escaped the grasp of power and its laws, without entering into conflict with them yet rendering them inoperative. . . . They implicitly put forth the idea of a *forma vivendi* that was entirely subtracted from the sphere of the law" (p. 27).

As a counterpart to the *Aufhebung* of law, the messianic community is marked by a recovery of "faith" in its performative, not denotative functions (pp. 113-37). This means a rejection of "codified systems of norms and articles of faith," and of the "juridicizing of all human relations," whether in law or in religion (p. 135). It is in the performative dimension of what we may believe, hope and love that "language suspends its own denotation" (p. 133). In the experience of the "nearness of the word," a divided faith is re-established, restored (p. 135). Just as importantly, in the experience of "pure word" we have (through revocation and usage) "the act of a potentiality that fulfills itself in weakness." As oriented to the pure power of saying, "messianic power finds its *telos* in weakness" (2 Cor 12:9-10; 1 Cor 1:27), against all formulation of dogma, accumulation of knowledge, denotative propositions, and desire for efficacy (pp. 136-37).

Assessment

Agamben's construction of Paul is particularly insightful for Christian ecclesial reflection in the caution against betrayals implicit in "institutionalizing," the emphasis on messianic weakness evident in the assimilation to the lost and forgotten (in both an intellection and socio-political sense), and the notion of the ecclesia primarily as a remnant aware of itself only as "not-all" and as mere instrument for the redemption of the all through which it ultimately loses itself (in the same manner as for Christian reflection the church is ultimately absorbed into the reign of God).

But one should also identify some significant demurrers, beginning with Agamben's notion of messianic time, which is crucial for his

understanding of the ecclesial calling and community. It is quite true that contracted time is the time in which the apostle claims to live: to use terms of J. Christiaan Beker, it is the proleptic realization of the telic triumph of God inaugurated in the resurrection.[18] But it is certainly mistaken to suggest that this is the only time that "concerns" or "interests" him. There remains in Paul an undeniable eschatological passion, for the imminent, inexorable, and universal arrival of the reign of God, as discomforting as that may be. There is a polarity in Paul which precludes a favouring of the contraction of time between resurrection and *parousia* over against the vision of the arrival of the *telos* itself. The notion of the *telos* (end/goal) itself is crucial to Paul's messianism and apocalypticism in general. And as J. Taubes puts it, "apocalypticism is revolutionary because it beholds the turning point not in some indeterminate future but entirely proximate."[19]

Clearly what is at stake for Agamben, and many others since the big non-event of the *parousia* (or the communist utopia), is that any focus on the final *eschaton* immediately signals a perpetual deferment of the messianic, "in which nothing can be achieved" (p. 69, citing G. Scholem's disenchantment with utopian messianism).[20] The inevitable and implicit delay in any future-oriented eschatological hope "renders unreachable the end that it supposedly produces" (p. 70).

This matter of coming to terms with Paul's eschatological vision continues to cause stumbling. As many before him, Agamben is forced to come up with a form of iteratively realized eschatology, via Benjamin. He embarks on a significant reinterpretation of *parousia* as messianic "presence," against any implicit deferment: messianic time is "operational time pressing within the chronological time," a time that "may even interrupt secular time here and now" (p. 73). Thus the *parousia* simply becomes "each instant" when Messiah might pass through the door, an assimilation to the last thesis of Benjamin.[21]

Certainly the notion of the realization of an eschatological moment should be harnessed, as should the notion that the reign of God appears in moments little recognized, outside the social or temporal boundaries of what is supposed to be, or supposed to happen. Yet, to lose hold of a firm grasp toward the final, exigent vision of cosmic re-creation is also troubling. But there is a crucial nub here: Agamben is not the only one who hesitates in the face of the millennial utopian anticipation. Indeed, the true scandal of Paul's thought for us is not just its cruciform character, but the unrealized and apparently unrealizable *eschaton* (at least for Western thought, whether Christian or Marxist).[22]

To anticipate remarks below, in contrast to Agamben, J. Taubes maintains a more robust consistent apocalyptic eschatology as the framework for his delegitimation of sovereignty and law and his world-

nihilism,[23] and Žižek resists the collapsing of the "not yet" into the "actualizable" (claiming to favour a Christian eschatological version compared to the Judaic); and even Badiou maintains a more positive attitude toward Paul's thoroughgoing eschatological comportment. Meanwhile, among Christian theologians, J. Christiaan Beker proposes that Paul's thoroughgoing apocalyptic must be embraced in the midst of its mythological and apparently obscurantist character, resisting a collapsing of eschatology into Christology, via spiritualization and/or by institutionalization (and salvation-history solutions).[24]

Furthermore, by privileging 1 Corinthians 7:29-32 as Paul's "most rigorous definition of the messianic life" (p. 23), an assertion which surely can be contested, Agamben is able to sustain the argument that the messianic vocation can never constitute a new identity, but instead only hollows out existing ones (by both destroying and using them). Thus in Agamben, not only does the messianic absorb eschatology, but in addition the notion of the messianic vocation absorbs any notion of an ecclesia with any concrete shape. Even the discussion on justice as a prime marker of the ecclesia is very much muted (pp. 107, 120). Not surprisingly, Žižek complains that in Agamben's Pauline theory we have little more than formalism.[25]

For Agamben, the messianic calling does not have its own positive content, but is what happens in the revocation of all worldly, secular conditions, especially those determined juridically. Agamben emphasizes that the messianic vocation can never constitute any new identity (other than a nullification of existing ones), because otherwise one immediately goes down the path of the pursuit of privilege, prerogatives, and rights. But as a result of the privileging of the messianic primarily as a form of negation, and by limiting himself to 1 Corinthians 7, not only does the messianic vocation have no specific positive content. In addition, there is no vocation for the messianic community as a corporate body, apart from being in general an "instrument of salvation." Agamben does not know of the Pauline "calling" to be a consecrated and distinct people of character ("holy": Rom 1:7; 1 Cor 1:12; cf. 1 Thess 4:7), the "calling" to an alternative dominion (1 Thess 2:12; Phil 3:14; cf. 1 Cor 1:9) and a mental transformation toward its imperatives (Rom 8:28; Rom 12:1-2) and toward the animation of justice (Rom 6:13, 15-23), the "calling" to express the realities of freedom and peace (Gal 5:13; 1 Cor 7:15), the "calling" to be in one body (Col 3:15), nor finally the "calling" that involves being known (identified) by attachment to Messiah Jesus in particular (1 Cor 1:7, 9; cf. Rom 9:24-26).

It should also be observed that Agamben's use of the Onesimus paradigm does not correspond with Paul's own imperative to Philemon

in regard to Onesimus. Onesimus is not a model of the one who is to "remain" in a hollowed out juridical condition as a "super slave." Paul actually uses the phrase "more than a slave" (*hyper doulon*) to describe how Onesimus will be valuable to his present owner in his new status "no longer as a slave," precisely "in the flesh" (Phlm 16), that is, as a consequence of his manumission, which Paul clearly advises while not saying so directly in the letter. The letter to Philemon thus stands in a certain tension with 1 Corinthians 7, not as providing its paradigmatic case.

It is certainly a significant corrective to 2,000 years of Christian history and identity formation to emphasize that Paul promotes the displacement of all identity privileging through the messianic. But what is missing is at least a counterpart acknowledgement that in Paul the messianic vocation fundamentally involves a loyalty that necessarily involves some form of positive corporate politics. For instance, Paul's thesis in Philippians is this: "collectively practice your citizenship, practice your politics, singularly according to the glad announcement [*euangelion*] of Messiah" (Phil 1:27). This thesis is then unpacked decisively in terms of the corporate life of the assembly, both in its kenotic-cruciform aspects (1:27–2:9; 3:2-10) but also in its corresponding universal-cosmic dimensions (2:9-11; 3:11-21). The Messianic fidelity is thus oriented to a "dominion in heaven" (3:20), which undermines identity formation both via ethnic particularities (3:2-14) and via a consumerist, ascendant, triumphalist, coercive, and statist universalism (3:18-21), since the orientation of a heavenly dominion means immediately that the one loyal to the messianic announcement is a global, cosmic citizen (3:21-21; 2:9-11). Fidelity is not simply hollowed out of identity, but redirected in God's love story of reclaiming a creation toward the establishment of full justice, peace, and *eudaimonia*,[26] that is, toward the good life, as embodied proleptically in a community of those whose fidelity is founded gratuitously on the fidelity of Messiah himself (with messianic fidelity being the prototype of all subsequent fidelity).[27]

Jacob Taubes: A Representational Ecclesia

While Agamben claims Taubes as the prime exemplar of his "anarchic-nihilistic" appropriation of Paul's messianism, some elaboration of Taubes's own views is appropriate to nuance this matter. While Taubes rightly rejects the sovereignty of the historical reading of a text, the legacy of Spinoza, his own reading of Paul as expressed in his 1987 Heidelberg lectures, now published as *The Political Theology of Paul*, but also in his earlier work,[28] is certainly the most historically sympathetic and plausible among the so-called philosophical readings of Paul. He quite naturally

understands Paul both within his Judaic context, and in the context of the legacy of imperial assault on that community. In other words, he naturally thinks from below, worried more about any chaos from above than chaos from below (p. 142).[29]

There are two distinct aspects to Paul's political theology according to Taubes: on the one hand, what can be described as a "negative political theology,"[30] and on the other, a positive form, focused on an alternative community formation. Taubes specifically reads Romans "politically" as opposed to "existentially," as evident from the syllabus title for a course on Romans: "On the Political Theology of Paul: From Polis to Ecclesia." He interprets Romans "as the legitimation and formation of a new social union-covenant [*Ver-Bund*], of the developing ecclesia against the Roman Empire, on the one hand, and on the other hand, of [against] the ethnic unity of the Jewish people" (p. 117).

Thus Taubes does not reject political theology as such, only a positive political theology (along with K. Barth, against C. Schmitt). According to M. Terpstra and T. de Wit, Taubes recognizes that Paul seeks a more radical intervention than either establishing a sound political system or attempting to replace one through revolution. Rather, Paul seeks "a theological *delegitimation* of all political power [including that of the church] as a *political* attitude."[31] In *The Political Theology of Paul*, Taubes argues that Romans opens and closes with a messianic declaration of war on Caesar (pp. 13-16), and that Paul's attack on the law is not anti-Judaic polemic, but part of his assault on the use of law as ordering power in any sovereignty, whether political, churchly, or natural (23). According to W-D. Hartwich, A. Assmann, and J. Assmann (the editors of his lectures on Paul), Taubes understands that because Paul's political theology has no positive form as such, it can be claimed and identified with by all oppressed groups.[32]

At the same time, a crucial issue for Paul is "the establishment and legitimation of a new people of God" (pp. 28, 40). Paul's apocalyptic anarchism is of a particular sort: messianic sovereignty can only be represented in a people, and a crucial mark of the alternative community is that it must be "free of rule" (*Herrshaftsfrei*), oriented sociologically as opposed to cratologically.[33] Taubes rejects both a privatization of the messianic, and a supposed Pauline quietism that endorses the prevailing political order. Romans 13 has a purely pragmatic occasion—that of mere survival; its apparent acquiescence is a function of an apocalyptic nihilism that refuses to engage in open warfare but also refuses to grant legitimacy and ultimate obedience to any political regime (p. 54).[34] The ecclesia is thus a third type of community formation alongside and in

opposition to both the ethnic community and the Roman imperial order. He calls this a "new union," a "new intimacy" (p. 52), a "community of solidarity" (*Solidaritätsgemeinschaft*), or a "kinship of the promise" (p. 28). An alternative conception of universalism emerges with the messianic, one that signifies "the election of Israel," but nevertheless an Israel "transfigured" as an inclusive "all Israel" that is open to all who obey the commandment to love the neighbour (pp. 24-25, 41, 52-53). This universalist orientation for a transfigured "all Israel" is based on fidelity to and "faith in" Messiah, a paradoxical faith that is contradicted by the evidence and yet brings "a total and monstrous inversion of the values of Roman and Jewish thought" (pp. 6-10).

The two primary constituting principles of the ecclesia are *pneuma* and *agapē*, in both its forms as love of neighbour (Rom 13:8-10) and as love of the enemy (Rom 11:28-32; pp. 25, 41-49).[35] *Pneuma* is completely contrary to Hegel's notion of the immanent *Geist* (pp. 38-43), but is instead "a force that transforms a people and that transforms the text" (p. 45). And, as Taubes's editors put it, *Geist* represents a logic that goes beyond the natural order of the given and is "the decisive category for transcending the continuity and the normative claim of the tradition and the ethnic limits of the people of God."[36]

J. Gold observes that these themes are already evident in Taubes's *Occidental Eschatology* (*Abendländische Eschatologie*), his doctoral dissertation of 1947. In that work Taubes claims that Paul envisions a collective whose members "have severed all of their natural, organic allegiances to nature, art, worship, and the state, and thus their feelings of emptiness and alienation from the world and separation with secularism have reached fever pitch."[37] Paul sees a hitherto unknown spiritual nation coming into existence, one based on "the *pneumatic We*," a community that rejects all legal-political determinations of identity (state, law, etc.). "In contrast to the old, organic allegiances, the Christian community (*Gemeinde*) is an inorganic, subsequent togetherness (*Zusammensein*) of individuals based on 'pneuma'."[38]

In general terms, one might observe that in contrast to Agamben (and Benjamin) Taubes admits to Paul's consistent, thoroughgoing eschatology, and does not seek to absorb it completely into the messianic;[39] nor does he collapse the messianic community completely into the aggregate of messianic callings. Taubes's ecclesia in fact looks much like that of John Howard Yoder, in its primarily representational function and in the refusal to grant it much of a transformational role (relative to society's public politics) other than that of "witness" (cf. the primacy of delegitimation of all rule in Taubes).[40]

Slavoj Žižek and Alain Badiou: A (Cautiously) Vanguard Ecclesia

Similar to Taubes, and also in contrast to those who read the Pauline "not yet" as denoting eschatological "indifference" to the world, there are those who not only emphasize the apocalyptic-eschatological component in Paul's thought, but also refuse to understand this as resulting necessarily in a passivity that pre-empts some form of political presence in the world. Indeed, it is proposed that active working is sustained precisely by this very eschatological passion. Žižek and Badiou (for different reasons) represent such a view, analogously very close to the ecclesial reading of Paul by Pauline scholar J. Christiaan Beker, who likens the Pauline ecclesia to the "avant-garde" in service of (and modelling) the "reign of God."[41] Thus in contrast to the "anarchic-nihilistic" appropriation that appears to be Agamben's own, and to the more purely representational notion of an ecclesia in Taubes, the ecclesial theory of these interpreters comes closer to the Marxian notion of the coincidence of the political and the subjective, and its consequential vanguardism. That is, they display a much more optimistic view of the transformative role and power of the messianic community relative to the all or the utopia. Not surprisingly, then, both Žižek and Badiou are quite comfortable with the Paul-Lenin analogy.[42] At the same time, however, they observe grave dangers when any vanguard ceases to see itself as provisional and contingent.

I will not seek to contextualize fully Žižek's ecclesial thinking, except to say he is certainly interested in making radical Christianity and historical materialism allies on the same side of the barricade. Against Badiou's formalism, he wishes any historical materialist also to go through the "Christian experience," that is, to reckon with its substantive logic. He similarly finds Agamben's messianism not sufficiently engaged with the substance of Christian (Pauline) thought, and leaning toward a formalism.[43] And while he invites Christianity to heroically lose itself in order to save its treasure, he does appear to offer some positive role for certain forms of Christianity.[44] It is in the subversive form of Christian thought and practice that he has some hope, and he finds considerable homology between Christian messianic thought and revolutionary process.[45]

In further contrast to Agamben, Žižek emphasizes the more activist strain of Christian apocalyptic messianism: the arrival of Messiah implies "the urge to act"; messianic "arrival functions as a signal which triggers activity," in accordance with the conclusion, "we must help God."[46] As such Christian messianism is to be distinguished, in his view, from passive

forms in Judaism (echoing Scholem's admission that in Judaism, forms of messianism tend toward the passive variety). Moreover, he appears unsatisfied with the anarchic-nihilistic version of politics, especially with any posture that does not exhibit a clear positive political project.[47] Indeed, Žižek appears to accept some notion of vanguardism more readily than Agamben, although the true revolutionary needs equally to be concerned about the cure of the soul through Lacanian psychoanalysis.[48]

The Community of the "Holy Spirit"

Žižek's ecclesial thinking is expressed succinctly at the conclusion of *The Fragile Absolute*. In opposition to both the "ghost of the past" (whether fundamentalisms, traditionalist religion, or communitarianism, all metaphored by the Balkans) and to the "spectral ghost of the capitalist present" there still comes

> the brief apparition of a future utopian Otherness to which every authentic revolutionary stance should cling. . . . the third modality of ghosts is none other than the Holy Ghost itself, the community of believers *qua* 'uncoupled' outcasts from the social order – with, ideally, authentic psychoanalytic and revolutionary political collectives as its two main forms.[49]

Crucial to Žižek's ecclesiology, then, is the Lacanian notion of the Holy Spirit.[50] For Žižek, the Holy Spirit replaces God as the transcendent big Other. Through divine self-limitation God in effect assures the reality of the Holy Spirit as the symbolic community immanent in the world. "The 'Holy Spirit' is the community deprived of its support in the big Other."[51] This means that the subject is deprived of all structures of social legitimation or support, including overtly theological ones. For Christianity, this includes the repudiation of its "institutional organization": in order to save its treasure, it has to sacrifice itself.[52]

The Gesture of Separation: Uncoupling

Christian logic as exemplified by Paul, then, calls for the emergence of an "alternative community": a subjectivity and a collectivity "unplugged" and "uncoupled" from the social order, from the balance of the All, from the organic community, from the domain of established social mores, and from the social structure of our being.[53] And this unplugging assumes a radical subjective conversion: this unplugging involves the freeing of subjects from superego, libidinal, and spectral-ideological domination, and thus from the commodity-fetishism associated with the political

and economic order. The unplugging can never be reduced to an "inner contemplative stance" which nonetheless supports participation in the social game. The uncoupling from the hierarchy of the social order means that it will be treated as fundamentally irrelevant; indeed, it moves the subject in an Other space, but is nevertheless not escapist.[54] Žižek certainly sides with Agamben in asserting that 1 Corinthians 7 is by no means a "legitimation of the existing power conditions"; rather, it represents an ignoring of distinctions not relevant to the struggle, as characteristic of any "thoroughly engaged fighter."[55]

In particular, it is the "the active *work* of love which necessarily leads to the creation of an *alternative* community."[56] It is love that enjoins the gesture of separation, calling us to "unplug from the organic community into which we were born."[57] The alternative community is founded on the prototypical act of love in the event of Jesus, through its primordial and disruptive violence. Yet, this uncoupling contrasts with a Fascist carnivalesque unplugging from the established symbolic rules: "*the proper Christian uncoupling suspends not so much the explicit laws but, rather, their implicit spectral obscene supplement*."[58]

The All and the Part

This alternative community (the part) has a complex relationship with the all: the alternative community exists only for the all, the whole that it longs for. Hence crucial to the separation is also the gesture of recognizing the insignificance of the part relative to the whole. While this may sound similar to Agamben's criticism of vanguardism, Žižek is not entirely comfortable with Agamben's notion of dividing the division. He queries in response to Agamben: "What if the only way to invest a new universality is precisely through overcoming the old divisions with a new, more radical division which introduces an indivisible remainder into the social body?"[59] Taking up the notion of the "remnant," he promotes the motto of the proletarian revolution: "We were nothing, we want to become All." From the perspective of Redemption, the remnant counts as nothing within the established order: "it is irrevocably lost, thrown into nothingness." Yet "the remainder of this order, its part of no part, will become All."[60]

Eschatological Passion: "the brief apparition of a future utopian Otherness"

Žižek argues further, in homology with Christian messianic apocalypticism, that the revolutionary (ecclesial) process must retain an

eschatological passion. True eschatological messianism has an activist strain. He cites Rosenzweig approvingly: "The future is no future without this anticipation and the inner compulsion for it, without this 'wish to bring about Messiah before his time' and the temptation to 'coerce the kingdom of God into being'; without these, it is only a past distended endlessly and projected forward."[61] Moreover, this action cannot wait for the "right moment," but involves constant risk-taking on its behalf. Revolutionary time proper cannot be translated into objective historical time, with clearly identified phases and transitions between phases. It is only through premature attempts that the subjective conditions for the right moment might come. As a result, "in an authentic revolution, predestination overlaps with radical responsibility"; the real, earnest work begins after the initial eschatological event.[62]

Alain Badiou: eventaL truth of universal singularity and Paul the militant figure

In contrast to the three previous authors, Badiou's *Saint Paul: The Foundation of Universalism* displays no overt interest in ecclesial theory. What interests Badiou is Paul as the exemplar of his theory of universalism, and the subjective figure of the true militant. Paul is the prime and foundational illustration of a "truth procedure" toward universality in an "evental site" (p. 22).[63] Nevertheless, he still offers some explicitly ecclesial comments, and moreover, as I will argue, there is an ecclesiology implied in his presentation of modes of discourse and subjective positions appropriate to them (albeit, certainly a purely formal one, as is his figure of the militant individual).

The Foundation of Cells: Admiration for Paul's Activist-Organizational work

Badiou emphasizes with considerable admiration that the founding of communities, groups, cells, was the focus of Paul's life's work (pp. 20-21, 95). His letters, while displaying the agility of a superlative theoretician, are nevertheless "interventions. . .possessed of all the political passion proper to such [political] interventions." His letters point to the fundamental "concerns and passions of collective intervention." Badiou thus praises Paul's impressive Lenin-like combination of theoretician and activist-community organizer (pp. 20-21, 31-33).

According to Badiou, these cell groups were "envisioned in terms of a small group of militants"; they represented a "small core of the constituted faithful," "enclaves of the faithful." Members addressed each

other as "brothers [and sisters]," "an archaic form of our 'comrades'" (p. 20). Playing midwife to these cells, Paul ascribed to them the special status of "the real" proper to any location (in the way he addressed them as Corinthians, Philippians, or Galatians). But by favoring interruption over preservation, and pure fidelity over the stabilization of external or secondary "markings" of fidelity, Paul displays a "universal and de-centered vision of the construction of Christian enclaves" (p. 34).

"Co-workers" and "Son-subjects": Shared Egalitarianism

Badiou goes further than this, emphasizing that the correlate of Paul's theoretical universality is practical "equality"—the occasion for naming all fellow militants as "co-workers." Furthermore, he explains that the "evental declaration filiates the declarant," just as the "resurrected Son filiates all humanity" (p. 59). Paul, according to Badiou, thus rejects "filiation" via the "disciple-subject" (which implies mastery) and instead embraces filiation via the "son-subject." "All post-evental universality equalizes sons through the dissipation of the particularity of the fathers" (p. 59), which would be otherwise impossible through disciple-subjects and consequential structures of mastery. Thus "all equality is that of belonging together to a work" and "those participating in a truth procedure are co-workers in its becoming." The figure of the law too is relieved for the sake of a "shared egalitarian endeavour" (p. 60).

Eschatological Universality Mediates Identity: Local Victories as Universal

Badiou defines the messianic community in Paul as one that embraces the modalities of fidelity, agape and hope. Badiou gives the last a special emphasis. Paul's apocalyptic universalism is not, however, one that is preoccupied with some "satisfaction that feeds on the punishment of the wicked." Rather, it is hope as the subjective modality toward the victory of a universal by which Paul can say, "all Israel will be saved" (Rom 11:25-26). "Each victory won, however localized, is universal." And the economy of salvation is truly universal: Paul knows that he himself is justified only insofar as everyone is: "I identify myself in my singularity as subject of the economy of salvation only insofar as this economy is universal" (p. 96).

Hence "for Paul, universality mediates identity. It is the 'for all' that allows me to be counted as one. Wherein we rediscover a major Pauline principle: the One is inaccessible without the 'for all'." From this perspective, hope does not simply have to do with the future:

"It is a figure of the present subject, who is affected in return by the universality for which he works" (p. 97).

This apocalyptic universalism in the mode of hope also means, therefore, that there can never be a contentment with any (historical) realization of that hope, nor with any preoccupation in a new identity apart from the hope for the universal. Paul's "clearest conviction is that the evental figure of the Resurrection exceeds its real, contingent site, which is the community of believers such as it exists at the moment. The work of love is still before us; the empire is vast. . . . Paul's universalism will not allow the content of hope to be a privilege accorded to the faithful who happen to be living now. It is inappropriate to make distributive justice [which focuses on the punishment of the wicked] the referent of hope" (p. 95).

A Community of Weakness? Badiou and the Path of the Cross

One might also say that Badiou's figure of the militant implies or demands the formal figure of a militant community that can lead what he calls for, namely a new "cultural revolution" between the polarity of "abstract homogeneity of capital" and "identitarian protest." His notion of the "diagonal cut" would appear to imply a militant community founded on that very subjectivity.[64] Badiou does in fact correlate the diagonal cut ecclesially in connection with the notion of separation and remnant. One would expect further that this remnant community would be of the same order as the messianic mode of discourse that he presents, and the new subjectivity appropriate to it. That is, his argument would appear to imply a form of militant community marked by folly, scandal, weakness, and humiliation in contrast to that of mastery, power, glorification, or worldly status.

But here Badiou stops short. Badiou cannot fully embrace the close interrelationship of cross and resurrection in Paul, appearing especially worried about the spectre of some Nietzschean resentment, hatred of life, as a driving force in Paul's life and thought.[65] For Badiou, evental truth declaration in the modality of weakness does not correspond to one of lived weakness. At that point, only the triumphant path of resurrection holds. Unlike Taubes, he cannot appreciate Paul's emphasis on true solidarity with the world's outcasts as the prime mode of messianic existence. Badiou cannot distinguish between, on the one hand, the embrace of the path of the cross as a mode of messianic being, and on the other hand, a masochistic embrace of suffering, which extols the virtues of suffering in and of themselves or ascribes to suffering an intrinsically redemptive function. The cross can be the focal point and feature of a

mode of discourse, but not a true subjective path, never mind an ecclesial one (p. 73); death is merely a mode that helps to define the divided subject. Death is only on the side of flesh and law, and "cannot be the operation of salvation" (pp. 66-68). At this point, Badiou has seriously misunderstood Paul.

Concluding Reflections

In 1902 Alfred Loisy propounded his famous dictum: "Jesus announced the kingdom, and what arrived was the church."[66] Despite his conflict with the Roman Catholic hierarchy (while also rejecting the solutions of liberal Protestantism), he truly believed that Jesus did intend to form some kind of society or community; it was the aping of civil government in its institutionalization that he doubted Jesus intended.[67] Around the same time, Vladimir Lenin published his classic pamphlet *What is to be done?* (1901-02), promoting organizational vanguardism as a way to assure the necessary arrival of the communist utopia.[68]

But the project of the vanguard has not brought the dream to realization. Christianity and Marxism have had to confront a similar ghost: the non-arrival of the *telos*. Christianity survived by reorienting its foundational messianism, by spiritualizing messianic glad tidings and by institutionalizing itself. For a while, it looked like Marxism might also survive in institutional, statist forms that, while claiming a heritage in Marx, were for many a betrayal of the vision. But now it would appear that, in contrast to Christianity, it no longer has significant institutional form in its classic statist realizations (Russia, China), and in the North it is only represented by small conventicles of thinkers and activists seeking to arouse the faithful.[69] It may be that Christianity will also have to return to its foundational messianic form and messianic fidelity in the coming generations, and may also only exist among small, outcasted conventicles of the faithful.

In the meantime, there is much that Christians can take from these politico-philosophically oriented interpreters of Paul. Proponents of radical messianic fidelity in Christian terms will continue to wrestle with the relative merits of the three forms of ecclesiology articulated by these philosophers: the anarchist-ethical version (Agamben), the primarily representational version (Taubes), and the more activist-vanguard version (Badiou, Žižek). In particular, as these interpreters suggest, when the church forgets or refuses to admit that it is "a purely contingent historical figure," a merely "strategic identification," in the drama of the reconstitution of a new people of God, in which all humanity becomes "all Israel," it is in danger of losing its true vocation and instrumentality

(pure use) toward the fulfillment of the cosmic drama, God's love story with all creation. It loses its character of necessary "auto-suppression" relative to the vision of the reign of God. It forgets that it ultimately has identity only in the universal, eschatological economy of salvation when God will be all in all. When the church seeks to maintain an absolute church-world distinction, despite the *telos* of the universal-eschatological-messianic drama, it is in danger of becoming a mere obscurantist haven for the (self)righteous.

This is not to say that the church as seeking to establish itself as a messianic community cannot have some institutional form. But in its self-conscious preoccupation with its own reality and identity, it walks a never-ending tightrope. In the very gesture of separation founded on messianic love and fidelity, there must be a corresponding embrace of all that is lost, that is other. And it still seems more appropriate to try to stay on the tightrope, than to seek to remain on the apparently firm ground of the alternatives, whether basking in the security of mystical or individualist subjectivity, or retreating into identitarian communal havens, or embracing the coercive universalisms of Christendom or the state, or acquiescing to the niceties and comforts of liberalism and global capital, or being content with reality reduced to the merely historical-material.

Notes

Introduction

1 See the website of Citizenship and Immigration Canada, http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/citizenship/cit-ceremony.asp, accessed 22 May 2012.

2. Ibid.

3. From the website of the United States Embassy in Ottawa, Canada: "The U.S. Government acknowledges that dual nationality exists but does not encourage it as a matter of policy because of the problems it may cause. Claims of other countries on dual national U.S. citizens may conflict with U.S. law, and dual nationality may limit U.S. Government efforts to assist citizens abroad. The country where a dual national is located generally has a stronger claim to that person's allegiance." http://canada.usembassy.gov/consular_services/dual-citizenship.html, accessed 22 May 2012.

4. As with Paul, he had two names for his dual identity: in Hebrew, Yosef ben Matityahu, anglicized to Joseph son of Matthias [Matthew]; in Latin, Titus Flavius Iosephus, taking the name and tribal name of his patron. Roman citizens were set apart as having "three names," and only they could use the privileged tria nomina.

5. Josephus, *Against Apion* 2.164-6. On the high-priestly politics of Josephus, see further Martin Goodman, *Rome and Jerusalem: The Clash of Ancient Civilizations* (London: Penguin Books, 2007), 205-13.

6. In the ancient world, cities and nations were regularly symbolized as feminine. For a similar merging of city (Babylon and New Jerusalem) and female personification, see also Rev 17–22.

7. Thus, all new Roman citizens were inducted into one of the Roman tribes, normally that of the patron. In the same way, Japanese citizenship until very recently meant joining a family registry, which is why I did not receive that citizenship, even though born there. For Paul's Judaic citizenship identity and status, see Phil 3:4-5.

8. Hans Dieter Betz, *Galatians* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 244. While this allegorical text is part of the rhetoric against Torah-oriented, and

Jerusalem-based opponents, its meaning is lost when the geo-political dynamics that undergird the argument are left out of consideration. The imagery of "freedom" and "slavery," and the notion of a city as one's "mother" draws on geo-political realities, even as Paul applies this to a specific debate over matters of Torah.

9. See N. T. Wright, *Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church* (New York: HarperOne, 2008).

10. The relatively rare phrase "kingdom of God" appears in Paul in (a) warnings about not inheriting it, based on gross immoral conduct (1 Cor 6:9-10; Gal 5:21; cf. Eph 5:5), (b) brief depictions of its crucial values or power (Rom 14:17; 1 Cor 4:20; cf. 1 Cor 15:24), or (c) assertions of its significance for the security, identity, and conduct of its adherents (Col 1:13; 4:11; 1 Thess 2:12; 2 Thess 1:5).

11. For the privilege of "suffering" for allegiance to Messiah's polity, see also Phil 1:30.

12. Alluding again to the notion of salvation and citizenship that is secured in heaven, but not destined there.

13. The imagery of a household (*oikos*) was regularly applied to the Roman empire and the entire inhabited world (*oikoumenē*) as its domain. Thus, the image of "residents of God's household" too is distinctly theo-political.

14. Interested readers may also want to check out two related essays that I have published elsewhere: "The Politics of Paul: His Supposed Social Conservatism and the Impact of Postcolonial Readings," *Conrad Grebel Review* 21/1 (Winter 2003): 82-103; reprinted with minor revisions in *The Colonized Paul: Paul through Postcolonial Eyes*, ed. C. Stanley (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011), 62-73; and "Constructions of Paul in Filipino Theology of Struggle," *Asia Journal of Theology* 19/1 (April 2005): 188-220; reprinted with minor revisions in *The Colonized Paul*, 236-55. In the former essay I discuss Paul's counter-Roman posture (despite Romans 13 and against the grain of received interpretations) under three topics: (1) the underlying millenarian script of God's sovereign reclamation and renewal of the entire creation; (2) the regular use of politically loaded words in Paul's social environment to describe Messiah, Messiah's new community, and the liberation and deliverance that comes through Messiah's agency; and (3) Paul's own experience of arrest, imprisonment, torture, and eventually execution at the hands of the Roman empire. For a treatment of Paul's ecological perspective, see my "Ecology according to the New Testament," *Direction* 21/2 (1992): 15-26; available online at http://www.directionjournal.org/article/?763, accessed May 27, 2012.

15. A consequence of respecting Paul's historical particularity is carefully working with sources. Scholarship on Paul has come to recognize seven "undisputed letters" in regard to their authorship by Paul: Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians, and Philemon. In addition to these, I tend to treat Colossians and 2 Thessalonians also within the group of letters directly authored by Paul, considering the arguments against the Pauline authorship of these letters to be equivocal. But I am quite convinced that the Pastoral Epistles (1 and 2 Timothy, Titus) were written sometime after Paul's death, perhaps even a generation later, and that Ephesians is also written after

Paul, though much closer to the historical circle and perspective of Paul in comparison to the Pastoral Epistles. As for the Book of Acts, I do not consider its accounts of events and its speeches from the lips of Paul to represent verbatim records of precise historical details, although I tend to see Acts as relatively reliable in historical terms when judged according to ancient standards. Its use as a source for Paul must be appreciated in light of its own theological and literary aims.

16. See George Shillington, *Jesus and Paul before Christianity* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2011).

17. For a provocative perspective on this complex story, see Daniel Boyarin, *Border Lines: The Partition of Judeo-Christianity* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

18. For a compelling argument that Paul's Messianic Judaic commitments also included a hope for a corporeal "political" renewal extending from the land of Israel (while disavowing any specific relevance to the state of Israel founded in 1948), see Mark Reasoner, "On Earth, Not in Heaven: Paul's Scriptures and the Political Salvation of Israel in Romans 9–11" (paper delivered at the Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, November 18, 2006, Washington, D.C.); available online at http://www.thepaulpage.com/on-earth-not-in-heaven-pauls-scriptures-and-the-political-salvation-of-israel-in-romans-9-%E2%80%93-11/, accessed May 29, 2012.

19. See Chapter 10, however, for a re-reading of Phil 3:2-3.

20. Krister Stendahl, *Paul among Jews and Gentiles, and Other Essays* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976).

21. For the notion of Paul's comprehensive "kyriarchic" conceptuality, see Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *The Power of the Word: Scripture and the Rhetoric of Empire* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 13-29, 82-109, 149-93.

22. For these first two challenges, see Neil Elliott, *The Arrogance of Nations: Reading Romans in the Shadow of Empire* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008), 157-61.

Chapter 1

1. It is a delight and privilege to be able to honour my first significant mentor in biblical scholarship through this essay. I am deeply indebted to John for inspiring and drawing me into the field of biblical studies, and more specifically the study of Paul. This chapter is based on a presentation at the John E. Toews Symposium, Fresno Pacific University, March 28, 2008.

2. John E. Toews, *Romans*, Believers Church Bible Commentary (Scottdale/Waterloo: Herald Press, 2004), 345, 368; see also pp. 38-42, 46-48, 62-63, 318, 342, 349-49, 362. This thesis could be extended further in reference to Rom 8:18-39; 11:25-36; and 15:14-32.

3. Now published as John E. Toews, "Righteousness in Romans: The Political Subtext of Paul's Letter," in *The Old Testament in the Life of God's People: Essays in Honour of Elmer A. Martens*, ed. Jon Isaak (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2009), 209-22; and "The Politics of Confession," *Direction* 38/1 (2009): 5-16.

4. See Toews, *Romans*, 29-32.

5. Two significant early contributions in this area include Klaus Wengst, *Pax Romana and the Peace of Jesus Christ*, trans. J. Bowden (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987); Dieter Georgi, *Theocracy in Paul's Praxis and Theology*, trans. D. E. Green (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991).

6. The term "Jew" itself is misleading: it translates "*ioudaios*," that is, a "Judean," identified as much by land and polity as religion. For a discussion of this term, especially in its ethno-political dimensions in the time of Jesus, see esp. Shaye Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 69-106, 132-39.

7. For various forms of this reading of Paul's politics, see N. Elliott, *Liberating Paul: The Justice of God and the Politics of the Apostle* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1994); R. Horsley, ed., *Paul and Empire: Religion and Power in Roman Imperial Society* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1997; R. Horsley, ed., *Paul and Politics: Ekklēsia, Israel, Imperium, Interpretation* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2000); R. Horsley, ed., *Paul and the Roman Imperial Order* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2004); Warren Carter, *The Roman Empire and the New Testament: An Essential Guide* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2006); John D. Crossan and Jonathan Reed, *In Search of Paul: How Jesus's Apostle Opposed Rome's Empire with God's Kingdom* (New York: HarperCollins, 2004); Jacob Taubes, *The Political Theology of Paul*, trans. D. Hollander (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004); Neil Elliott, *The Arrogance of the Nations: Reading Romans in the Shadow of Empire* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008); Marcus Borg and John Crossan, *The First Paul: Reclaiming the Radical Visionary Behind the Church's Conservative Icon* (New York: HarperOne, 2009). For a cautionary reaction, see Seyoon Kim, *Christ and Caesar: The Gospel and The Roman Empire in the Writings Of Paul and Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008).

8. See my "The Politics of Paul: His Supposed Social Conservatism and the Impact of Postcolonial Readings," *Conrad Grebel Review* 21/1 (2003): 82-103. Reprinted with minor revisions in *The Colonized Paul: Paul through Postcolonial Eyes*, ed. C. Stanley (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011), 62-73.

9. As claimed in the testamentary memoirs of Caesar Augustus, *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* (The Things Accomplished by the Divine Augustus), #8. Available in the public domain in Latin, Greek, and English translations. See "Monumentum Ancyranum" from the Loeb Classical Library at LacusCurtius, http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Augustus/Res_Gestae/home.html, accessed May 29, 2012.

10. See e.g. Bruno Blumenfeld, *The Political Paul: Justice, Democracy and Kingship in a Hellenistic Framework* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 12, 301. Blumenfeld notes: "The letter to the Philippians provided certain key ideas and terms that clued me to the notion that Paul thinks politically." He thus turned to Romans to find the "coherent theory" that informs the usage in Philippians. He concludes: "Paul's views in general, and particularly in the letters to the Romans and the Philippians, are structurally, argumentatively and conceptually coherent with Classical and Hellenistic political thought."

11. Richard Cassidy, *Christians and Roman Rule in the New Testament* (New York: Crossroad, 2001), 86-87.

12. See Toews, *Romans*, 318: "The text supports Paul's anti-imperial stance in the letter. Despite the high view of governmental office, it constitutes a clear rejection of self-divinizing Caesars."

13. For relevant discussions, see Craig de Vos, *Church and Community Conflict: The Relationships of the Thessalonian, Corinthian, and Philippian Churches to Their Wider Civic Communities* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999); Peter Oakes, *Philippians: From People to Letter* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Michael Tellbe, *Paul between Synagogue and State: Christians, Jews, and Civic Authorities in 1 Thessalonians, Romans and Philippians* (Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell International, 2001).

14. This history became especially apparent to me while I lived in the Philippines, whose name also reaches back to the conqueror after whom Philippi received its name, and whose land has also experienced successive colonization, both territorial (Spanish, American, Japanese) and now economic.

15. Note for instance the "accusations" in Acts 16:21-24; 17:6-7: Paul is accused of preaching a Lord who is rival to Caesar, and for promoting a non-Roman pattern of life, indicating that the author of Acts is aware of the critical political tensions involved in Paul's work in Philippi.

16. *Monon axiōs tou eugangeliou tou christou politeusthe*. The opening adverb *monon* ("only, alone") both has interjectory force (cf. Gal 5:13), and qualifies the main verb *politeuesthai* ("be a citizen body, live as citizens, practice citizenship").

17. The TNIV rectifies this somewhat, with its translation "as citizens of heaven live in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ." For the strong nuance of the verb *politeuō* as significantly involving citizenship and a public manner of life, that is, conduct appropriate to a *polis* (city-state), see Cohen, *Beginnings of Jewishness*, 125-26, 136.

18. See E. M. Krentz, "Military Language and Metaphors in Philippians," in *Origins and Method*, ed. B. H. McLean (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 105-127; T. Geoffrion, *The Rhetorical Purpose of the Political and Military Character of Philippians: A Call to Stand Firm* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen, 1993), 35-36, 66-67.

19. This reading of Philippians 3 depends significantly on that of N. T. Wright, "Paul's Gospel and Caesar's Empire," in *Paul and Politics*, 173-81.

20. Why the "finally" (Greek *loipon*, literally "as for that which remains")? What are the "same things" being treated (the command to "rejoice," or something else)? Why is the repetition said to be "not irksome" (RSV; "no trouble," TNIV), or for the sake of their "safety?" Why such a grammatical shift from 3:1 to 3:2? For those defending the integrity of the letter, the explanation includes interruption and delay; many also posit a conflation of distinct letters to Philippi by a scissors and paste method, leaving the awkwardness of 3:1.

21. It is also now evident that 3:1b represents a kind of customary "hesitation formula," explaining how the repetition ("same things") that occurs in 3:1a and that follows in 3:2-4:9 does not involve a "negligence" or "laziness," but will assure their safety. The common translation "trouble" or "troublesome" for *oknēron* is unattested elsewhere; the word literally entails a "shrinking" and thus a "negligence" or "hesitation." See esp. J. Reed, *Discourse Analysis of Philippians: Method and Practice in the Debate over Literary Integrity* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 257-8.

22. Wright, "Paul's Gospel and Caesar's Empire," 173.

23. I have now come to understand 3:2 as a coded attack on Roman society and authority, and 3:3 as a positive appropriation and clarification of the central symbol of Judaic citizenship. See Chapter 10, and my forthcoming *Philippians* (Believers Church Bible Commentary; Herald Press).

24. For a discussion of Nietzsche's view of Paul and Rome, see Taubes, *Political Theology*, 76-88.

25. J. C. Beker, *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), 135-81, 303-49.

Chapter 2

1. For *pisteuontes* as a general label, without other modifiers, see 1 Cor 1:21; 14:22; 1 Thess 1:7; 2:10, 13; the term *apistoi* (those without faith/loyalty) is used as a general term for non-adherents, 1 Cor 6:6; 7:12-15; 10:27; 14:22-24; 2 Cor 4:4.

2. See LSJ. Note also the corresponding opposite terms: *apistia* (infidelity, unbelief), *apistos* (unfaithful, non-trusting), *apisteō* (be unfaithful, disobey, disbelieve, be non-trusting).

3. Émile Benveniste, *Indo-European Language and Society*, trans. E. Palmer (Coral Cables: University of Florida Press, 1973), 95-99, as discussed in Giorgio Agamben, *The Time That Remains: A Commentary on the Letter to the Romans*, trans. P. Dailey (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), 113-15. For what follows, see also LSJ, s.v. "*pistis*"; R. Bultmann, "*pisteuō*," T*DNT*, VI, 174-228; O. Michel, "Faith, Persuade, Belief, Unbelief," *NIDNTT*, I, 593-606.

4. For this reciprocal aspect to *pistis*, see Philo's comment (*On the Life of Abraham* 273) on the mutual *pistis* expressed between God and Abraham, making them equals of a sort ("as one friend with another"); below, n. 29.

5. Agamben, *Time That Remains*, 114-15.

6. Thus, in Paul's texts, we find "*pistis tou theou*" (fidelity of God), "*pistos theos*" (faithful God, or God is faithful); but God is not the subject of *pisteuein* (to trust, be loyal). God does, however, "entrust" (using the passive voice *pisteuesthai*) things or responsibilities to humans.

7. Theognis (sixth century BCE), *Fragment* 1.1135. *Pistis* was one of the good "*daimona*" that escaped from Pandora's box. For *pistis* as Latin *fides*, Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 5.43-45; Statius, *Thebaid* 11.98-100.

8. Agamben, *Time That Remains*, 115-19.

9. Agamben, *Time That Remains*, 115, referencing Salvatore Calderone, *Pistis-Fides: Ricerche di storia e diritto internazionale nell'antichità* (Messina: Università degli Studi), 38-41. On *fides* in Roman political culture, see also N. Elliott, *The Arrogance of Nations: Reading Romans in the Shadow of Empire* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008), 29, 38.

10. See below for *pistis* toward the deliverer who will save from wrath (1 Thess 1:8-10).

11. *Res Gestae* 32, likening these nations to a king "not conquered in war, but seeking our friendship by means of his own children as pledges." Cf. Res Gestae

25, referring to the various nations that "voluntarily took an oath of allegiance to me." Available at http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Augustus/Res_Gestae/home.html, accessed May 29, 2012.

12. Elliott, *Arrogance of Nations*, 38.

13. *Res Gestae* 34: Augustus promotes his *arētē* (*virtutis*, valour), *epieikeia* (*clementiae*, clemency), *dikaiosynē* (*iustitiae*, justice-righteousness), *eusebia* (*pietatis*, piety).

14. J. Rufus Fears, "The Cult of Virtues and Roman Imperial Ideology," *ANRW* 17.2: 827-948.

15. See Naphtali Lewis and Meyer Reinhold, *Roman Civilization, Sourcebook II: The Empire* (New York: Harper & Row, 1955), 35, 85-88, 108, 232; Barbara Levick, *The Government of the Roman Empire: A Sourcebook* (London: Routledge, 2000), chapter 7, "Loyalty: The Role of the Emperor," 125-146; Clifford Ando, *Imperial Ideology and Provincial Loyalty in the Roman Empire* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000).

16. To avoid an anachronism and conceptual misapplication, it is better to translate first-century *ioudaioi* as "Judaens." The term references an ethnicity, national polity, geographical homeland, and "religious" practices or beliefs. See Shaye Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); Elliott, *Arrogance of Nations*, 15-16.

17. Josephus, *Jewish War* 4.616, oath of fidelity to Vespasian; using the expression "fidelity/allegiance toward" (*pistis pros*), see *The Life* 26, 30, 34, 39, 43, 46, 61, 84, 87, 93, 104, 123, 160, 167, 293, 333, 346, 349, 370.

18. *The Life* 30, 370: *proteinein pistin kai dexian*, to offer loyalty and the right hand (in allegiance/pledge). Similarly, Paul refers to "giving the right hand" as a pledge of partnership (Gal 2:9).

19. *The Life* 79; cf. *Jewish War* 6.356: hostages for a country's "fidelity" to the Romans.

20. *The Life* 22, where he advises the revolutionaries to hold back, "to gain the trust (or "credit" in the eyes of their possible victors) of resorting to arms only in justifiable self-defense."

21. The thing deposited (trusted) is expressed in the accusative; and the institution in which the deposit is placed is rendered in the dative: thus, to trust something (accusative) into something (dative).

22. D. Flusser, "Afterword," in M. Buber, *Two Types of Faith*, trans. N. P. Goldhawk (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1973), 211. Cited in Agamben, *Time That Remains*, 113.

23. Plato, *Republic* 505e, 511d, 533e-534a, 601e.

24. E.g. Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1.1.3, 9, 11, 12; 1.2.2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 19.

25. E.g. Josephus, *Against Apion* 1.72; 2:18.

26. In the Hebrew Bible, the notion of a suzerain being loyal and proving trust is not expressed, as in Greek, with the verb *'mn* (stand firm; trust, believe, usually translated with *pisteuein* in the LXX), but with an adjectival descriptor, such as *'emet/'emunah* (fidelity) or *khesed* (loyalty).

27. John E. Toews, *Romans* (Scottdale/Waterloo: Herald Press, 2004), 375.

28. E.g. 4 Maccabees 15:24; 16:22; 17:2; Wisdom of Solomon 1:2; 2:1; 3:1, 9.

29. E.g., Philo, *On the Life of Abraham* 268-76, referring to "the faith (*pistis*) of Abraham in the living God, which faith is the queen of all the virtues. . . ." (270). And God, admiring this man for his faith (*pistis*) in him, giving him a pledge (*pistis*) in return, namely, a confirmation by an oath (*horkos*) of the gifts which he had promised him; no longer conversing with him as God might with man, but as one friend with another. For he says, "By myself have I sworn,"(Gen 15:6) by him that is whose word is an oath (*horkos*), in order that Abraham's mind may be established still more firmly and immovably than before (273; Yonge translation).

30. At the least, this is the first recorded use of the term.

31. Josephus must have known about Paul, though he nowhere refers to him. Josephus refers to Jesus, the group of "Christians" that still exist in his day, and James the Just, the leader of the Jerusalem church until his execution by the High Priest in the year 62 CE; *Jewish Antiquities* 18.63-64; 20.197-203.

32. Michael Gorman, *Cruciformity: Paul's Narrative Spirituality of the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 96.

33. Gorman, *Cruciformity*, 101.

34. For instance, hardly any English translations break with the traditional rendering of Romans 1:16, following Wycliffe (1382-1395), Tyndale (1525-1526), and the KJV (1611), as "all who believe." The RSV and CEV have "those who have faith," and the Message has "those who trust in him."

35. Gorman, *Cruciformity*, 96-98. Also emphasizing the dimension of loyalty-fidelity is D. Campbell, "The Meaning of 'Faith' in Paul," in *The Quest for Paul's Gospel: A Suggested Strategy* (London/New York: T & T Clark, 2005), 178-207.

36. Gorman, *Cruciformity*, 101-2, 120, 125.

37. In these passages we find 76 of the 159 occurrences of the words pisteuein, pistis, pistos, apistein, apistia, and apistos.

38. Toews, "Faith in Romans," in *Romans*, 375-79.

39. For *pisteuein*: 1 Cor 1:21; 3:5; 13:7; 15:2, 11; 2 Cor 4:13. For *pistis*: 1 Cor 2:5; 13:2, 13, 14; 2 Cor 5:7; 8:7.

40. Elliott, *Arrogance of Nations*, 15, 20, 25-53, 151-52, 158.

41. Katherine Grieb, *The Story of Romans: A Narrative Defense of God's Righteousness* (Louisville/London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002).

42. The counterpart to Paul's defense of God's faithfulness, then, is an analysis of the infidelity (for the present moment) of the Judean community for whom salvation in Messiah was first intended (using various words, 10:16, 21; 11:20, 23, 30-32; 15:31; for Judaic priority: 1:17; 2:9; 3:1). Using *apeithō*, 10:21; 11:30, 32; *apeitheia* [non-compliance], 11:32, 32; *apeisthai*, 15:32; also *apistia*, 3:3; 11:20, 23; not obeying, not believing, 10:16.

43. Both "truth" (*alētheia*) and "fidelity" (*pistis*) are regular translations of the Hebrew *'emet/'emunah* in the LXX.

44. The phrase "all those who show loyal trust" (*pantes pisteuontes*) for humans in general is unique to Romans, and is argumentatively polemical (Rom 1:16; 3:22; 4:11; 10:4, 11).

45. Of the remaining four, two refer to apostles as "faithful" stewards of what was entrusted to them (1 Cor 4:2; 7:25), one refers to Timothy as "faithful" co-worker (1 Cor 4:17), and the last refers to "faithful" Abraham as prototype (Gal 3:9).

46. In Roman theo-political propaganda, Caesar is also agent of deliverance, and model of virtue.

47. Finally, the 2011 Common English Bible has rendered Paul's meaning "faithfully," breaking with a hundred years of tradition, and elevating to the text what the NRSV and TNIV had kept in footnotes. In a few crucial texts, where English translations have commonly translated "faith in Christ," what Paul meant was something like the "fidelity/faithfulness of Christ."

48. It is unclear as to whether this refers to God's or Christ's fidelity, or both.

49. Toews, *Romans*, 54-62.

50. Gorman, *Cruciformity*, 107-20.

51. Toews, *Romans*, 39-41; R. Jewett, *Romans: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 107-8.

52. For the obvious theo-political overtones of this encomium, see John E. Toews, "The Politics of Confession," *Direction* 38/1 (2009): 5-16; and my forthcoming *Philippians* (Believers Church Bible Commentary; Herald Press).

53. Agamben, *Time That Remains*, 116.

54. Elliott, *Arrogance of Nations*, 45.

55. The word "confession" has lost its original setting in the context of oath-taking, becoming narrowly tied (1) to its creedal context, stressing the dogmatic, not the loyal performative, and (2) to the practice of penance.

56. The quote is from L&N, s.v. *homologeō*; cf. LSJ; Agamben, *Time That Remains*, 113-19, 126-37; Giorgio Agamben, *The Sacrament of Language: An Archaeology of the Oath*, trans. A. Kotsko (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), 25, 58.

57. Agamben, *Time That Remains*, 124-37; *Sacrament of Language*, 25, 58.

58. Toews, *Romans*, 342.

59. Using a participle that is cognate to the Greek word "resurrection." The allusion here could be to Messiah's resurrection (cf. 1:3-4), but more likely to his future realization of lordship over the cosmos (1 Cor 15:24-28; Phil 2:9-11; 3:20-21; Rom 11:25).

60. *Res Gestae* 4; Dio Cassius, *Roman History* 51.20.

61. For a further discussion of this act of submission, see Chapter 7.

62. In Romans 14:11, the same word (and Isaianic quotation) is applied to the appearance of even "convinced loyalists" to give personal account, at the final realization of Messiah's reign.

63. H. Koester, "Imperial Ideology and Paul's Eschatology in 1 Thessalonians," in *Paul and Empire: Religion and Power in Roman Imperial Society*, ed. R. Horsley (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1997), 158-166.

64. Cf. "stand firm in *pistis* (loyalty-faith)," Rom 11:20; 1 Cor 16:13; 2 Cor 1:24; similarly 2 Cor 13:5, "examine whether you are in *pistis*." For "standing firm in the Lord," Phil 1:27; 4:1.

65. *pisteuein*: Phil 1:29; *pistis*: Phil 1:25, 27; 2:17.

66. For this verb, also Rom 14:4; Gal 5:1.

67. Rom 14:1-23. *pisteuein*, 14:2; *pistis*, Rom 14:1, 22, 23. The opposite is internal "self-criticism" and "doubt" (14:22-23). These texts should not be translated with "faith," but with "conviction": e.g. "whatever does not proceed from personal conviction is sin" (14:23).

68. Rom 12:3, 6; 1 Cor 12:9; 13:2, "faith to move mountains"; 2 Cor 8:7.

69. See 1 Cor 11:18.

70. Regarding Abraham, see Rom 4:18-20. Further, "believing, being confident, being convinced" (*pisteuein*): that we shall live with him (Rom 6:8); that God raised Jesus from the dead (Rom 10:9); what we have heard (Rom 10:19); that Jesus died and was raised" (1 Thess 4:14); the word [of Christ's death and resurrection] (1 Cor 15:2). Cf. 2 Cor 4:23: "Having the same spirit of conviction (*pistis*), according to what is written, 'I believed, therefore I spoke', we also believe, therefore also we speak, knowing that He who raised Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and will present us with you." (1 Cor 4:13-15).

71. E.g. Rom 10:8-21; 15:21; Gal 1:23; 3:2, 5; 1 Cor 1:21; 3:5; 15:1-2, 11; 1 Thess 1:5-8; 2:10-13; Phil 1:27.

72. On the subordination of both "knowledge" and even of *pistis* to love, see 1 Cor 13:8-13; for the elevation of *pistis* over "seeing," see 2 Cor 5:7: for we walk by *pistis*, not by seeing.

73. See 1 Cor 16:13; 2 Cor 1:24; 13:5.

74. Similarly, Revelation pictures the sword of Christ as coming out of Messiah's mouth; Rev 1:16; 2:12; 19:15, 21.

75. On how issues of "power" are overlooked by conventional rhetorical studies of Paul, see Elliott, *Arrogance of Nations*, 18.

76. It is unclear whether the clarifying clause, "both toward the Lord Jesus and toward all the saints," is meant to modify only fidelity, or love and fidelity in combination as a hendiadys ("two-in-one").

77. Cf. Gal 5:6, "For in Messiah Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is something significant, but fidelity (*pistis*) working through love."

78. See Rom 1:17; 3:30; 4:16; 5:1; 9:30, 32; 10:6; Gal 3:8, 9, 11, 12, 24; 5:5. Similarly *epi pisteōs*, "upon fidelity," Phil 3:9; *dia pisteōs*, "through fidelity," Rom 3:25, 30, 31; Gal 3:14; simply the dative *pistei*, "in/by fidelity," Rom 3:28.

79. See esp. Elliott, *Arrogance of Nations*, 4, 12.

80. See, for instance, the discussion in Stuart Murray, *The Naked Anabaptist: The Bare Essentials of a Radical Faith* (Scottdale/Waterloo: Herald Press, 2010), 51-70. Privileging the Gospels (presumably the Synoptic Gospel), he proposes that Anabaptists should perhaps call themselves "followers of Jesus," and not Christians, although he stresses that the Anabaptist Network of the UK is committed to "following Jesus as well as worshipping him."

Chapter 3

1. The meaning is either "in (the sphere/modality of) the Spirit," or "in (the power of) the Spirit."

2. For helpful discussions of various aspects of early Christian worship, see D. E. Aune, "Worship, Early Christian," *ABD* VI, 973-89; R. Banks, "Gifts and Ministry," chapter 9 in *Paul's Idea of Community: The Early House Churches in their Cultural Setting,* rev. ed. (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994); A. A. Bichsel, "Hymns, Early Christian," in *ABD*, III, 350-51; G. Borchert, *Worship in the New Testament: Divine Mystery and Human Response* (St. Louis: Chalice, 2008); P. F. Bradshaw,

P. F. *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); O. Cullmann, *Early Christian Worship* (London: SCM, 1973); G. Delling, *Worship in the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1962); F. Hahn, *The Worship of the Early Church* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1973); W. Isenberg, "Hymnody: New Testament," in *Key Words in Church Music*, ed. C. Schalk (St. Louis: Concordia, 1978), 181-85; R. P. Martin, *Worship in the Early Church*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974); C. F. D. Moule, *Worship in the New Testament* (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1961); R. E. Webber, "New Testament Worship; Early Christian Worship," in *Worship Old and New* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 41-63.

3. Of its 21 occurrences in the NT, the KJV translated it 4X as "worship," whereas the NRSV translates it, and its cognate noun (*latreia*, "service," 5X in NT), as "worship" 20 times (Luke 2:37; John 16:2; Acts 7:7, 42; 24:14; 26:7; 27:23; Rom 9:4; Phil 3:3; 2 Tim 1:3; Heb 8:5; Heb 9:1, 9, 14; 10:2; 12:28; Rev 7:15; 22:3). In the NT, it generally refers to serving in the sense of "performing religious/priestly rites."

4. It is not easy to render the phrase, usually translated "spiritual service." Paul uses the adjective *logikē*, that is, pertaining to the *logos*, the essential, substantive or true being or reason, not that which is merely outward. It has the sense of "spiritual" as non-literal, non-outward, or non-physical; but it has more the sense of that which is truly substantive. Paul expands on the reality of the physical *latreia* offered in the Jerusalem temple, but is not attempting to replace that outward, ritual service. Unlike the perspective of the Gospel of John, Paul nowhere denies the significance of the temple, its sacrifice, and the land.

5. Rom 1:1; Gal 1:10; Phil 1:1.

6. Rom 7:4-6; more generally, Rom 6:1-7:6; 7:25. Cf. Col 3:24.

7. Rom 7:1-6; 8:15; Gal 4:24; 5:1; 1 Cor 7:21-23; 2 Cor 3:17.

8. The likelihood of a liturgical connotation of this passage is suggested by the imagery of "being aglow with the Spirit," "rejoicing in hope," and "being devoted to prayer" in the immediate context (Rom 12:11-13). An emphasis on the corporate being of the assembly is also clear in Rom 12:15-16.

9. The KJV translated these words in the NT with "minister/serve," while the NRSV translates these words in a few cases with "worship" (Acts 13:2; Heb 9:21). Outside of Paul, these words refer to public service in the senses of (a) "performing religious rites as part of one's religious duties or role"—temple/priestly/sacrificial ministry (Luke 1:23; Heb 8:2; 9:21; 10:11), (b) the service of angels, both in worship of God and in ministry to people (Heb 1:7, 14), (c) the priestly ministry of Christ (Heb 8:6), and (d) corporate worship of the church, "ministering" to God (Acts 13:2).

10. *diakoneō,* "to serve," *diakonia, diakonos* (100X in the NT)*; hypēreteō*, lit. "to row underneath," thus "to serve" more generally, *hypēretēs*, "servant" (23X in the NT). On a few occasions, Paul uses *diakonia* to refer to apostolic ministry in general (2 Cor 3:6; 4:1; 5:18), based on God's ministry/administration of a new covenant (ministry of the Spirit, ministry of righteousness-justice, 2 Cor 3:7-9), and to Christ as minister in God's act of redemption for humanity (Rom 15:8; Gal 2:17).

11. *sebomai* (10X in NT; Lat. *veneror*; to be devout, devoted; to do homage,

pay respect to; to express/feel especially religious honour/awe/fear; in the NT "to express in attitude and ritual one's allegiance to and regard for deity" [L&N]; Acts 13:43, 50; 16:14; 17:4, 17; 18:7, 13; 19:27 [re: Artemis]; also Matt 15:9; Mark 7:7; used often in reference to "god-worshippers," see n. 12 below); *sebasma* (2X, place or objects of devotion, veneration: Acts 17:23; 2 Thess 2:4); *sebastos* (3X, revered, venerable, worthy of reverence, august [holy, majestic]; only applied to the emperor, e.g. his "majesty," Acts 25:21, 25; 27:1). Compounds related to this root generally refer to adherence to God/the faith, not to worship practice in particular: *eusebeia* (15X; Lat. *pietas*, piety, godliness, holiness: Acts 3:12; 1 Tim 2:2; 3:16; 4:7, 8; 6:3, 5, 6, 11; 2 Tim 3:5; Tit 1:1; 2 Pet 1:3, 6, 7; 3:11); *eusebeomai* (2X; to worship, show piety: Acts 17:23 [re: pagan worship]; 1 Tim 5:4); *eusebēs* (3X, devout, godly person: Acts 10:2, 7; 22:12; 2 Pet 2:9); *eusebos* (2X, in godly way: 2 Tim 3:12; Tit 2:12); *theosebes* (god-worshipper, John 9:31); *theosebeia* (godliness, 1 Tim 2:10); *asebeia* (6X, ungodliness); *asebēs* (5X, ungodly); *asebeō* (not devoted to God, 2 Pet 2:6; Jude 15). Another term that can refer to religious observance is *eulabeia* (2X, caution, circumspection, scrupulousness, e.g. Heb 12:28, to serve/worship acceptably with awe and reverence) and its cognates *eulabēs* (3X, pious, devout, fearing: Luke 2:25; Acts 2:5; 8:2); the verb *eulabeomai* (2X; fear, caution, reverence, awe, obey) is not used in the NT for reverencing God. Also *deos*: fear, alarm, awe (1X; Heb 12:28).

12. For "worshippers of God," see Acts 16:14; 17:4, 17; 18:7, synonymous with "god-fearers" (see Acts 10:2, 22, 35; 13:16, 26), and closely associated with "the devout" (*eusebēs*; Acts 10:2, 7). For "fearing God" (with *phobeomai*), see e.g. Luke 1:50; Acts 9:31; Col 3:22; 1 Pet 2:17; Rev 14:7 [with giving glory to God]; 15:4; 19:5). "Fearing" God in a positive sense represents only a fraction of the occurrences of the use of these words. Cf. also Phil 2:12.

13. Elsewhere in the NT, the word occurs in Acts 26:5 (re: Judaism); Jas 1:26, 27 (pure religion/devotion); *thrēskos* (religious person: Jas 1:26).

14. *proskyneō* (verb, 60X); *prokynetēs* ("worshipper," 1X, John 4:23). Of the 61 occurrences, the NRSV uses "worship" 50 times; the KJV used "worship" for all 61 occurrences. Apart from the 50 times that the NRSV translates this word as "worship," the word is also translated as "to pay homage" (Matt 2:2, 8, 11), "to kneel down" (Matt 8:2; 9:18; 15:25; 20:20; Mark 15:9), "to bow down" (Mark 5:6), "to bow in worship" (Heb 11:21), "to fall on one's knees" (Matt 18:26). Finally, it is noteworthy that 24 of the 60 occurrences of the verb occur in Revelation, confirming its preoccupation with worship and allegiance (homage of those in synagogue to believers: Rev 3:9; homage to God/Lamb: 4:10; 5:14; 7:11; 11:1, 16; 14:7; 15:4; 19:4, 10; 22:9; homage to idols: 9:20; homage to the Beast and its image: 13:4, 8, 12, 15; 14:11; 16:2; 19:20; 20:4; homage to angels: 19:10; 22:8). In two cases, this word is coordinated with *latreuō* ("to minister, serve," Luke 4:8; Matt 4:10 [citing Deut 6:13]).

15. See also Luke 17:16, associated with "giving thanks."

16. See also Rom 11:4, for refusing to "bend the knee" before Baal (citing 1 Kings 19:18). See also Eph 3:14, for "bending the knee" in the posture of supplication.

17. See Chapter 2, pp. 40-41.

18. Elsewhere in the NT: *homologeō,* Heb 13:15 (confess his name, coordinated

with offering "sacrifice of praise"); 1 John 4:2,3, 14; 2 John 7; *homologia* (confession, e.g. 1 Tim 6:12-13; Heb 3:1; 4:14; 10:23); *anthomologeomai*, Luke 2:36-38, Anna, with nuance of "giving thanks, praise"; *exomologeomai* (10X; e.g. confessing sins, Matt 3:6; Mark 1:5; Acts 19:18; Jas 5:16; making a compact, Luke 22:6; make full acknowledgement, Matt 11:25; Luke 10:21.

19. See further Eph 1:21 (above every name that is named); 2 Tim 2:19 (everyone who names the name of the Lord, citing Num 16:5; Isa 26:13). On the significance of "the name," note also: the formula "in the name of" (frequent); to call on the name of… (Acts 2:21; 9:14, 21; 15:17; 22:16; Rom 10:13; 1 Cor 1:2); hallowed be the name (Matt 6:9); proclaim your name in the middle of the congregation and I will sing praise to you (Heb 2:12, citing Ps 21:23, LXX); do all in the name of… (Col 3:16-17; Eph 5:18-20); sing unto the name (Rom 15:9, citing Ps 17:50, LXX); glorify the name… (2 Thess 1:12).

20. In the rest of the NT, a majority of occurrences refer to praise of God or Jesus: Matt 5:16; 9:8; 15:31; Mark 2:12; Luke 2:20; 5:25, 26; 7:16; 13:13; 17:15; 18:43; 23:47; John 12:28; 15:8; 21:19; Acts 3:13; 4:21; 11:18; 13:48; 21:20; 1 Pet 2:12; 4:16; Rev 15:4.

21. See also Luke 2:14; 19:38; Eph 1:6, 12, 14; 3:21; 1 Tim 1:17; 2 Tim 4:18; Heb 13:21; 1 Pet 4:11; 5:11; 2 Pet 3:18; Jude 25; Rev 1:6; 4:11; 5:12, 13; 7:12; 19:1.

22. See also Luke 14:10; 17:18; John 9:24; Acts 12:23; Rev 4:9; 11:13; 14:7; 16:9; 19:7; 21:24, 26. Other cognates are not used in specifically worship settings: *endoxos* (4X, honourable, glorious); *endoxazomai* (2X; 2 Thess 1:10, 12); *sundoxazōo* (Rom 8:17); *kenodoxos, kenodoxia* (conceit).

23. The verb occurs eight times in the NT, three times in regard to humans, and five times in regard to Messiah or God (e.g. Luke 1:47, 58; Acts 10:46; 19:17; Phil 1:20).

24. *timaō* (21X: a. to honour, ascribe worth; b. set price/value on; c. assist; 14X re: humans; 7X re: God, e.g. Matt 15:8; Mark 7:6; John 5:23; 8:49), *timē* (41X: meanings: honour, value, worth, price, pay; in doxologies, "honour be to…": 1 Tim 6:16; Rev 4:11; 5:12, 13; 7:12; 19:1); cognates not used in worship contexts: *timios* (13X, honourable, precious), *timiotes* (1X, costliness). *axios* ("worthy, deserving," Rev 4:11; 5:2, 4, 9, 12). Some words for "honour" refer only to humans: *semnos*, honourable, worthy of reverence; *semnotēs*, propriety, gravity.

25. For *axiōs*, "worthily," see Rom 16:2; Phil 1:27; 1 Thess 2:12; Col 1:10; cf. Eph 4:1. See also 2 Thess 1:11, "that God might make you worthy (*axioō*) of his call."

26. For other uses in the NT: *aineō* (to praise, 8X: Luke 2:13, 20 [with glorifying]; 19:37 [with rejoicing]; 24:53 [with blessing]; Acts 2:47; 3:8, 9; Rev 19:5); cf. *ainos* (praise, 2X: Matt 21:16; Luke 18:43), *ainesis* (Heb 13:15, sacrifice of praise).

27. Using *epaineō* (to praise, commend); of its 5 uses in the NT, only this one refers to praise of God; of the 11 occurrences of the cognate *epainos* (praise, commendation), praise toward God is the focus only in Eph 1:6, 12, 14; Phil 1:11 (in parallel to "glory" to God).

28. See Chapter 2, pp. 53-54.

29. Using *eulogētos*, see also Luke 1:68; Eph 11:31; 1 Pet 1:3; using *eulogia*,

see Rev 5:12, 13; 7:12.

30. Elmer Martens, "Intertext Messaging: Echoes of the Aaronic Blessing (Numbers 6:24-26)," *Direction* 38/2 (2009): 163-178.

31. "Boasting" or "vaunting" (*kauchaomai*) is literally "being loud-tongued, speaking loudly"; See LSJ. E.g. Phil 1:26; 3:3; 1 Cor 1:29-31; 2 Cor 10:17; Gal 6:14 (boasting in the cross of our Lord Jesus).

32. E.g. Phil 3:1; 4:4; cf. "being glad in hope" (Rom 12:12); "being glad in the Holy Spirit" (Rom 14:17; 1 Thess 1:6); "being glad in loyal trust, hope" (Phil 1:25; Rom 15:23); prayer with joy (Phil 1:4).

33. Similarly, the language of "being thankful," *eucharistos*, Col 3:15.

34. Paul uses the verb *adō* (utter words in melodic pattern, sing the praise, sing; also found in Eph 5:19; Rev 5:9; 14:3; 15:3), the cognate noun *ōdē* (song, ode, a melodic pattern with verbal content), *psalmos* (originally song sung to harp, then just song; cf. Luke 20:42; 24:44; Acts 1:20; 13:33; 1 Cor 14:26; Eph 5:19), *hymnos* (a festive song in praise of gods, heroes, or conquerors; see also Eph 5:19). For the verb *psallō* (to sing) see Rom 15:9; 1 Cor 14:15; cf. Eph 5:19; Jas 5:3. The verb *hymneō* (to sing a hymn in praise) does not appear in Paul; cf. Matt 26:30; Mark 14:26; Acts 16:25 (with praying); Heb 2:12.

35. For references to corporate prayer, see 1 Cor 11:4, 5, 13; 14:14-15. For general invitations or expectations to be in prayer, see Rom 12:12; 1 Cor 7:5; Phil 4:6-7; 1 Thess 5:17. For the Spirit's intercession in prayer, see Rom 8:26. For references to particular intercessory prayers, see 2 Cor 9:14 (Macedonians for the Corinthians); Col 4:12 (Epaphras for the Colossians). For references to prayer for his readers in letter openings, in connection with thanksgiving and remembrance, see Phil 1:4; Col 1:3; 1 Thess 1:2; Phlm 4. For the content of Paul's prayers, see Rom 1:9-10 (that he may get to Rome); 10:1 (for the salvation of his fellow Jews); 15:5-6 (for unity); 15:13 (for maturity); 2 Cor 13:7, 9 (for the maturity of the Corinthians); Phil 1:9-11 (for their maturity); Col 1:9-13 (for maturity); 1 Thess 3:10, 11-13 (for reunion, and maturity); 5:23 (for maturity, wholeness); 2 Thess 1:11 (for maturity); 2:16-17 (for encouragement); 3:5, 16 (for maturity); Phlm 6 (for increasing fruit of loyalty). For requests for intercession from readers, see Rom 15:30-32 (for Paul's success and safety); 1 Cor 14:13 (for the power to interpret); 2 Cor 1:11 (for Paul); Phil 1:19 (for Paul's release); Col 4:3-4 (for Paul's ministry); 1 Thess 5:25 (for Paul and his co-workers); 2 Thess 3:1-2 (for Paul and his co-workers); Phlm 22 (for Paul's release).

36. Rom 14:6; 1 Cor 10:30. Cf. Matt 15:36; Mark 8:6; John 6:11, 23; Acts 27:35.

37. 1 Cor 11:24; cf. Matt 26:27; Mark 14:23; Luke 22:17, 19.

38. Rom 1:8; 1 Cor 1:4, 14; Phil 1:3; Col 1:3; 1 Thess 1:2; 2:13; 3:9; 2 Thess 1:3; 2:13; Phlm. 4

39. 2 Cor 1:11; 4:15; 9:11, 12; Col 1:12; cf. Eph 1:16; 5:20.

40. 1 Cor 14:16, 17; Phil 4:4-7; Col 2:7; 3:17; 4:2; 1 Thess 5:18; cf. against idolatry, Rom 1:21; Eph 5:4.

41. Note the participation of Paul in temple sacrifice and ritual in Acts 21:22-26; for other references to Paul and Jewish liturgical practices, see Acts 2:46; 18:18; 20:6, 16; 24:17; 27:9.

42. See also 2 Cor 6:16; 1 Pet 2:4-10. As applied to the individual, see 1 Cor

6:19-20.

43. Esp. 1 Cor 10:14-22.

44. For the idea of all of life, including conduct, as an act of worship, see also 1 Cor 6:19-20; 2 Thess 1:12; Col 3:17.

45. For the "presentation, yielding, or offering" of the self, see also Rom 6:13, 19.

46. *logikē*, in the sense of "non-outward, non-ritual, essential, true, symbolic." See above, n. 4.

47. For the imagery of "being pleasing" to God, see also 2 Cor 5:9-10; cf. Col 3:20; Eph 5:10. For "pleasing God," see also Rom 8:8; 1 Cor 7:32; 1 Thess 2:4; 4:1.

48. For good deeds as "sacrifice," see also Heb 13:16. For the idea of praise as the worthy sacrifice, see Heb 13:15; cf. *Didache* 14, where the proper celebration of the Eucharist (requiring confession of transgressions and the reconciliation of quarreling members) is understood as a "pure sacrifice."

49. For the close connection of "offerings" for the poor and corporate worship in the second century, see Justin, *First Apology*, 67.

50. The "fleshly" dimension of Messiah, land, persons, or liturgy is never discounted; it is only further realized in a spiritual or eschatological dimension. This is in contrast with later developments of supersessionism in the emerging church and later parts of the NT.

51. Cf. "gathering to break bread," Acts 2:42; 46; 20:7, 11; cf. Luke 24:30, 35; Acts 27:35.

52. Paul uses the verb *synerchomai* and in one case uses *synagō*, the verbal root of *synagogē* ("gathering, assembly," 1 Cor 5:4).

53. See also Heb 10:25. The language of Acts 13:2-3 ("giving due service to the Lord" in the presence of the Spirit, using *leitourgeō*) also seems to indicate gatherings focused on "worship."

54. Similarly, the Hebrew word for the legislative "assembly" (*knesset*) in Israel today was originally used in connection with the local assembly, *beit knesset*, "the house of assembly." The Greek words *ekklēsia* and *synagōgē* are synonymous with the Hebrew *knesset*.

55. For the language of "tradition," see 1 Cor 11:2, 23; 15:1-3; for "custom, customary practice (*synētheia*)," see 1 Cor 11:16; for "directions" (*diatagē*) regarding observances, see 1 Cor 11:34. See also Rom 6:17; 1 Cor 4:17.

56. For explicit references to house assemblies, see Rom 16:5, 10-11, 14, 15; 1 Cor 16:19; Col 4:5; Phlm 2. The groupings of names in Rom 16 also seem to indicate house assemblies, even where *ekklēsia* is not used. See also Acts 1:13; 2:2, 46; 8:3; 12:12; 17:5; 18:7; 20:8-9; 21:8, 16; 2 John 10.

57. Possible fragments or allusions to a baptismal liturgy include: Gal 3:28; Rom 6:4-5, 11; 1 Cor 6:11; Col 2:11-3:15 (cf. also 2 Cor 4:4-6; Tit 3:4-7; Eph 2:19-22; 5:14). Many have proposed that the acclamation "Abba" by newly baptized believers was a part of the baptismal liturgy, ritualizing "adoption" into God's family: Rom 8:15-16; Gal 4:5-7 (cf. 3:26-29). For a reconstruction of the ritual and theology of baptism in Paul's churches, see Wayne Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), 150-57.

58. For corporate mourning, weeping, or grieving, see Rom 12:15; 1 Cor 7:30; 1 Thess 4:13; cf. 1 Cor 12:26. For funeral rituals and concerns, see e.g. 1 Cor 15:29; 1 Thess 4:13-18. For the language of formal musical dirge in the NT (*thrēneō, thrēnos*, mourning chant, dirge), see Matt 11:17; Luke 7:32; 23:27; John 16:20.

59. E.g. Gaius in Corinth (Rom 16:23); Lydia in Philippi (Acts 16:14-15, 40). Cf. one reference to gatherings in the (rented?) "lecture hall of Tyrannus," Acts 19:9.

60. Acts 1:13; 20:7-9. For handy visual examples of *insula* ruins, see "Insula (buildings)," Wikipedia The Free Encyclopedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Insula_%28building%29, accessed May 29, 2012.

61. E.g. 1 Cor 16:1-2; cf. Acts 20:7; Rev 4:1. In this way, the early Christians seem to avoid the Roman designation "day of the Sun," and instead eventually come to name the preferred day as "the day of the Lord, the Lord's Day," (Rev 1:10; *Didache* 14:1; Ignatius, *To the Magnesians* 9:1), as a counterpart of the expression "Day of Augustus" (Day of the Venerable One, Imperial Day), observed as the first day of the month in Egypt and Asia Minor.

62. Not until Ignatius (ca. 117 CE) in Antioch do we see a deliberate avoidance of the Sabbath so as to eschew any "judaizing" practices in the by-then-dominant Gentile churches.

63. It cannot be absolutely known whether this occurred before, during (cf. Mark 14:22, "while they were eating"), after, or at the beginning and the end of the meal (cf. 1 Cor 11:25, where only the cup is shared specifically "after" the supper). See Aune, "Worship," 983-94, who prefers both at the conclusion of the meal.

64. Compounding "in one voice," is the modifying adverb *homothymadon*, found only here in Paul. While the adverb can simply denote "in agreement," in all of the other occurrences of the word in the NT (all in Acts), the reference is specifically to "togetherness" in physical gathering and in communal sharing, or the agreement that comes from or with physical gathering (Acts 1:14; 2:46; 4:24; 5:12; 8:6; 12:20; 18:12; 19:29). This seems to be the sense also in Rom 15:6.

65. For rhetoric against Greco-Roman polytheistic idolatry, see also 1 Thess 1:9-10; Gal 4:8-9; Rom 1:18-30, esp. vv. 21, 23, 25 (they did not honour God as God or give thanks; they exchanged the honour/glory of the immortal God for images; they worshipped and rendered service to the created things instead of the Creator). In Paul's understanding, following the perspective of the Wisdom of Solomon (13–15), idolatry is the root of all Gentile sin.

66. For a discussion of the political dimensions of the separation of the alternative community relative to the existing "organic community," see Slavoj Žižek, *The Fragile Absolute – Or, why is the Christian legacy worth fighting for?* (London/New York: Verso, 2000), 122-30.

67. Similarly, Richard Horsley, *Covenant Economics: A Biblical Vision of Justice for All* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2009), 140-41. On the ubiquity of imperial altars and rituals in connection with civic shrines and sacred festivals in Roman Corinth, see Barbette Stanley, "Imperial Cult in Roman Corinth," in *Rome and Religion: A Cross-Disciplinary Dialogue on the Imperial Cult*, ed. J. Brodd and J. Reed (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 61-81.

68. The stress on corporate and mutual edification is evident throughout 1 Cor 14, notably verses 4, 12, 17, 26. See also the stress on "the common good" (*to sympheron*) in 1 Cor 12:7.

69. For instance, opening/welcoming grace and peace wish, opening thanksgiving formulations, personal updates, exhortation and teaching, doxologies, prayers, confessional statements, hymnic fragments, benedictions, and the closing grace wish. Some have argued that Paul's letters themselves as a whole replicate liturgical patterns; see John Paul Heil, *The Letters of Paul as Rituals of Worship* (Eugene: Cascade, 2011).

70. For "greeting with the holy kiss," see Rom 16:16; 1 Cor 16:20; 2 Cor 13:12; 1 Thess 5:26; cf. 1 Pete 5:14.

71. In the rest of the NT, one can observe complete hymns/songs (Luke 1:46-55; 2:29-32), doxologies identified as songs (Rev 4:11; 5:9-10, 12, 13; 7:12; 11:17-18; 15:3-4), and possible fragments of songs (Eph 5:14; 1 Tim 6:15-16; 2 Tim 2:11-13; Tit 3:4-7; Rev 22:17).

72. See Rom 1:3-4; 4:24; 8:34; 10:9; 1 Cor 8:6; 12:3; 15:3-7; 16:20-24; Gal 1:4; Phil 2:6-11; Col 1:15-20; cf. Eph 1:3-14.

73. Three forms can be found in Paul's writings: using the form "blessed be" (following the Jewish *berakah* pattern; Rom 1:25; 9:5; 2 Cor 1:3; 11:31), using the form "thanks [*charis*] be" (Rom 7:25; 1 Cor 15:57; 2 Cor 9:15), using the form "glory be" (Rom 11:33-36; 16:25-27; Gal 1:5; Phil 4:20). Strikingly, all these are theological acclamations of God, never of Christ.

74. See "word of knowledge" (1 Cor 12:8); "teaching" (*didachē*, 1 Cor 14:6, 26), "knowledge" (1 Cor 14:6).

75. For the reading of scripture, see 2 Cor 3:14-15; cf. 1 Tim 4:13; 2 Tim 3:16. For the reading of letters during assembly, see e.g. 1 Thess 5:27; Col 4:16.

76. Ecstatic, in-spirited expressions include (a) prayers, which can be verbal or "in the spirit" (1 Cor 14:15; Rom 8:26-27); (b) visions and revelations (1 Cor 14:6, 26, 30; 2 Cor 12:1-7); (c) tongues/glossolalia (1 Cor 14:2, 4, 18-19), not common among Jews, but familiar to Greek religious experience; (d) prophecy (Rom 12:6; 1 Cor 12:10; 13:8-9; 11:4-5; 14:1-6, 22, 24, 31, 39; 1 Thess 5:20).

77. See Rom 15:33; 1 Cor 16:23-24; 2 Cor 13:14; Gal 6:18; Phil 4:23; 1 Thess 3:12-13; 5:23-24, 28; 2 Thess 3:16, 18; Phlm 25. See also Eph 6:23-24; 1 Tim 6:21; 2 Tim 4:22; Tit 3:15; Heb 13:20-21; 1 Pet 5:14; Rev 22:21.

78. See 1 Cor 14:25: "falling on one's face," "giving homage to God"; Phil 2:11, "bending the knee." For prostration, see also Matt 26:39; Mark 11:25; Luke 22:41; Eph 3:14. Elsewhere in the NT we have the practice of "lifting hands" in prayer (1 Tim 2:8) or "standing" in prayer (Mark 11:25; Luke 18:11, 13).

79. Meaning "so be it, it is true indeed." 1 Cor 14:16 and 2 Cor 1:20 confirm this basic usage in worship settings such as thanksgivings. Paul also follows his own prayers, doxologies, or benedictions/blessings with "Amen" (Rom 1:25; 9:5; 11:36; 15:33; 16:27; Gal 1:5; 6:18; Phil 4:20). Other Hebrew liturgical formulations, but not found in Paul, include *allēlouia*, "praise the Lord" (Rev 19:1, 3, 4, 6), and *hosanna* (all from the "triumphant entry"; a plea and acclamation "come and save"; a familiar Jewish liturgical formula, part of the Hallel [Ps 113-18], e.g. 118:25-27), coordinated with *eulogemenos* ("blessed is…," Matt 21:9; Mark 11:9; John 12:13).

80. For an overview of synagogue worship, see E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C. – A.D. 135)*, rev. and ed. G. Vermes, F. Millar, M. Black (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1979), Vol. II, 423-63.

81. Thus Paul stresses that inspired speech must be assessed from the point of view of its content in 1 Cor 12:1-2.

82. Cf. James 2:1-26.

83. There is substantial evidence that the verses specifically designed to silence women in assembly (1 Cor 14:34-35) were added later to biblical manuscripts in the second century or later. See Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 699-708; Philip B. Payne, *Man and Woman, One in Christ* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 252-61.

84. This passage is also cited in Rom 14:11 and Phil 2:10-11 (Isa 45:23).

85. See especially Robert Wilken, *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 1-47.

86. Sacred, cultic meals were regularly forbidden of unregistered (secret) societies under the application of the *lex Julia*. For discussion of the complex, politically pragmatic approach of the Roman imperium to voluntary associations, see Ilias N. Arnaoutoglou, "Roman Law and *collegia* in Asia Minor," *Revue Internationale des droits de l'Antiquité* 49 (2002): 27-44; W. Cotter, "The Collegia and Roman Law: State Restrictions on Voluntary Associations, 64 BCE–200 CE," in *Voluntary Associations in the Graeco-Roman World*, ed. J. S. Kloppenborg and S. Wilson (London: Routledge, 1996), 74-89.

87. For this translation in the public domain, with minor changes, see http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/pliny.html, accessed May 29, 2012.

88. Roberts-Donaldson translation, with minor changes, at http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/justin.html, accessed May 29, 2012.

89. *prostatis*, "leader, president"; the same word describes Phoebe in Rom 16:2.

90. He earlier explained Amen as a Hebrew expression, meaning "so be it."

91. Earlier Justin remarked (*First Apology* 67): "And the wealthy among us help the needy; and we always keep together; and for all things wherewith we are supplied, we bless the Maker of all through his Son Jesus Christ, and through the Holy Spirit."

92. See above n. 35. It was common practice to encourage a certain number of prayer observances during the day (e.g. three times day, as in *Didache* 8, Mishnah, *Berakoth*).

93. Note Paul's "visions and revelations" (2 Cor 1-7). Paul also assumes that prayer and song can be verbal and with the mind engaged, or "in the Spirit" (1 Cor 14:14-16; Rom 8:26-27). He claims to "speak in tongues" far more than most others (1 Cor 14:18-19).

94. Acts 18:18; 21:24.

95. The practice of personal fasting may appear in 2 Cor 6:5; 11:27. Though usually translated "hunger," the same word (*nēsteia*) is used for fasting in Luke 2:37, Matt 6:16-18, and elsewhere in the NT. Fasting, however, is more of a communal practice, apparent for instance in connection with worship and commissioning, see Acts 13:2-3; in connection with ordinations, Acts 14:23. For the corporate fast in connection with the Day of Atonement, see Acts 27:9. For

fasts before baptisms, see *Didache* 7; Justin, *First Apology* 61. *Didache* 8:1 specifies regular fast days as Wednesdays and Fridays.

96. See Gordon D. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence: the Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994); idem, *Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1995).

97. See e.g. Rom 1:9; 7:4-6; 8:4-16, 26-27; 12:11; Gal 4:6; 1 Cor 1:5-7; 5:4-5; 12:1–14:40; 2 Cor 3:6-18; 13:13; Phil 3:3; 1 Thess 5:19.

98. Indeed, things are somewhat more complex, in that the Greco-Roman world also saw a variety of elective, voluntary options, such as the pervasive "mystery religions." But these functioned easily alongside revered civic or imperial divinities, and where that was not the case (where cultic devotion was perceived to compromise identification with the civic-sacral community), they were pressured in the same way that emerging Christian communities were.

99. John E. Toews, "The Politics of Confession," *Direction* 38/1 (2009): 5-16.

100. A Christocracy is otherwise an anarchy. In a certain crucial sense, then, leadership as a formal structure is a concession to the practical needs of communal life short of the *parousia* of Christ, just as continued slavery "in the realm of the flesh" is a concession short of the total revolution that emerges with the final presence of Messiah. For the tensions and ambiguities that this creates for Paul, see Chapter 4. On the dilemma of leaderless movements among movements of radical social change, see Chapter 10, n. 43.

Chapter 4

1. See 1 Cor 2:6-8; 15:24-28, Phil 2:9-11; 3:20-21; Rom 15:12; 16:20.

2. See Rom 8:18-25; 11:25-36; Col 1:19-20; cf. Eph 1:10.

3. For the texts, see Rom 3:3-8, 19-26; 4:13-25; 5:6-11; 9:6-29; 11:17-36; 15:7-13; Phil 2:9-11; 3:20-21; 1 Cor 15:24-28. See Chapter 7.

4. This is the two-fold grouping that also worries Paul in Rom 15:31.

5. See Rom 8:23-25; 13:11-14; 16:20; 1 Cor 7:29-31; 10:11.

6. Rom 9:1-5.

7. Phil 1:27–4:1.

8. Gal 3:26-28; 1 Cor 12:12-13; Col 3:12, 15; cf. "both as one," Eph 2:14, 15.

9. 1 Cor 10:17; anticipating 1 Cor 11:17-34, and evoking comparisons with the problem of table fellowship between Jew and non-Jews in Gal 2 and Rom 14–15.

10. 1 Cor 12:4-31; Rom 12:3-8; cf. Eph 4:1-16. For the inversion theme, see 1 Cor 12:22-26; Rom 12:3.

11. Rom 12:3; cf. 1 Cor 12:14-26.

12. Phil 2:2-13; Rom 12:16; cf. Rom 11:18, 20, 25; 12:10, 13; cf. boasting by factional proponents in Corinth: 2 Cor 5:12; 11:12, 18, 21.

13.Rom 15:5; 2 Cor 13:11; 1 Cor 1:10-11. Factionalism is associated with (a) intolerance of legitimate variation (Rom 14–15); (b) faulty identity formation (1 Cor 1–4); or (c) faulty practice or teaching (Rom 16:17-19).

14. Phil 4:2-3.

15. Phil 1:27-28.

16. Gal 3:26-28; 6:15; 1 Cor 7:19; 12:12-13; Col 3:11, 15.

17. See Gal 3:26-4:11; 4:21-5:6; 6:15; Col 2:8-3:15. We could also say that citizenship is also mainly a function of birth, a very important prestige factor that seems to have affected unity (Phil 1:27-30; 3:17-21).

18. See Joseph H. Hellerman, *Reconstructing Honor in Roman Philippi: Carmen Christi as Cursus Pudorum* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

19. Neither/nor: Gal 3:28; Col 3:11; 1 Cor 7:19; Gal 6:15.

20. In terms of the body politic, Paul can also use the imagery of transfer of dominion relative to membership in a prior organic community: Col 1:13; 1 Thess 2:12.

21. See 1 Cor 7:25-31; 11:17-34; Phlm 16.

22. 1 Cor 7:17-24.

23. See 1 Cor 15:24-28; Rom 11:26.

24. 2 Cor 4:7-12; 5:12; 11:21–12:10.

25. For Messiah as model in Paul, see 1 Cor 10:24–11:1; 2 Cor 8:6-13; Phil 2:3-11; Rom 15:1-3, 7-9.

26. See 1 Cor 4:10-15; 10:24–11:1; Phil 3:4-17; 4:9; 1 Thess 1:6; implicitly in Phil 2:17-18; 4:10-13 and elsewhere. When Paul invites others to "imitation," he is not demanding sameness, nor is he negating difference in the interest of mere power (against the thesis of Elizabeth Castelli, *Imitating Paul: A Discourse of Power* [Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991]; for a rejoinder to Castelli, see Kathy Ehrensperger, "Be Imitators of Me as I Am of Christ: A Hidden Discourse of Power and Domination in Paul?" *Lutheran Theological Quarterly* 38 [2003]: 241-61). In these passages, Paul specifically points to cruciformity: patterning life on self-giving love for the other.

27. It is important to note that Paul considers any judicial decision, including one that might involve exclusion from the local assembly, to be penultimate, relative to the higher judgment to be enacted at the judgment seat of Messiah (Rom 14; 1 Cor 3–4; 2 Cor 5). That is, Paul specifically avoids making pronouncements on eternal destiny. Paul's equanimity in Phil 1:15-18 does not involve any mitigation of the serious denouncement, but transfers the situation to the agency of Messiah, in a crucial use of the passive voice.

28. The attack on preachers whose motivation is identified with rivalry in Phil 1:15-18 probably stems from a similar issue. For an attack on anonymous opponents from a different (presumably Judeo-Christian) persuasion, see Rom 3:5-8. Whether we are to think of these pronouncements as authoritarian intolerance is a matter for a different discussion; rather, the point here is that there are some behaviours and practices that are inappropriate to loyalty to Messiah, and must be confronted.

29. The situation is obviously more complex. One can also point to differences within these general camps—for instance fissures within the Judean group (e.g. Acts 11, 15, 21; Gal 2). We could also distinguish those congregations within the sphere of John; in large measure these would appear more closely affiliated with the Pauline stream. But they seem to go even further than Paul in the rejection of institutions of Judaism, including the temple. See also Chapter 7, n. 2.

30. It is only because of years of distance and separation from the Jewish tradition that we are unable to understand how Paul's perspective was so

subversive to "Jewish-Christian" sensibilities.

31. Paul pleads for the almost impossible. And ironically, that community of Judaic, Torah-observant believers with whom Paul sought rapprochement, was a hundred years later denounced and eventually excluded as heretics by the majority "great church" of Gentile believers.

32. Article 4 of *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* (Scottdale, PA, and Waterloo, ON: Herald Press, 1995) similarly distinguishes between the "living Word" and "the Word of God written."

Chapter 5

1. Plato, *Republic* 333a, 423e-424a, 449d-450c, 453a, 457a, 461e,-462c, 464a, 466c-d, 470e; Aristotle, *Politics* 1.1252a (cited in the epigram above).

2. Lawrence Welborn, "That There May Be Equality" (paper delivered at the SBL Annual Meeting, San Francisco, November 20, 2011).

3. See Justin Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty, and Survival* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998); Todd Still and David Horrell, eds., *After the First Urban Christians: The Social-Scientific Study of Pauline Christianity Twenty-Five Years Later* (London: T & T Clark, 2009); Bruce Longenecker, *Remember the Poor: Paul, Poverty, and the Greco-Roman World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010).

4. See Keith Nickle, *The Collection: A Study in Paul's Strategy* (London: SCM Press, 1966; Dieter Georgi, *Remembering the Poor: The History of Paul's Collection for Jerusalem* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1992); David Horrell, "Paul's Collection: Resources for a Materialist Theology," *Epworth Review* 22 (1995): 74-93; Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty, and Survival*, 155-61.

5. "Those distinguished as the pillars gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of partnership," Gal 2:9.

6. Paul says that they "did not add anything to me," Gal 2:6, perhaps in the sense of not demanding any concessions.

7. For a detailed discussion, see Longenecker, *Remember the Poor*, 157-206.

8. Brian J. Capper, "The Palestinian Cultural Context of Earliest Community of Goods," in *The Book of Acts in Its Palestinian Setting*, ed. R. Bauckham (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 323-56.

9. Cf. Paul's claim in Acts 24:17 to have delivered "alms for his nation/people" in general.

10. Cf. "collection for the saints," "to Jerusalem," 1 Cor 16:1; either "the poor among the saints in Jerusalem," or "the poor who are the saints in Jerusalem," Rom 15:26.

11. Cf. Rom 15:27: "[The Gentiles] owe it to [the poor of Jerusalem]—for if the Gentiles have partnered [come to share] in their [the Judeans'] spiritual blessings, they [in return] ought also to be of service to them in material things."

12. We also cannot be certain that measures toward a collection for the poor had ceased. See Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, 43-46.

13. Thus, it may be that funds collected in Galatia (1 Cor 16:1; cf. Gal 6:6-10) were delivered directly to Judea, perhaps via Antioch, given Paul's admission that the donors for the fund he is delivering to Jerusalem are limited to Macedonia

and Greece (Rom 15:26). The reference to a donation from Antioch in which Paul figured (11:27-30), which cannot be accounted for in Paul's own itinerary of visits to Jerusalem, may reflect such a delivery.

14. Paul's concern for proper audit is evident in how the final delivery and completion of the fund will be "sealed" (that is, receipted; Rom 15:28), and in how its multiple administrators are confirmed as trustworthy and well-commended (cf. 1 Cor 16:3-4) such that there should be no innuendo of "blame" attached to it (2 Cor 8:18-23).

15. Josephus is careful to document how this privilege was granted during the early days of the Roman domination of Judea. See Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 14.213; 16.162, 166-67, 171-72. For further passages, see Nickle, *Collection*, 82-84.

16. Josephus, *Jewish War* 7.218. For discussion, see Nickle, *Collection*, 144-45.

17. On the temple tax and its administration, and as a possible model for Paul's collection, see Nickle, *Collection*, 74-93.

18. Paul's extensive use of Isaiah in Romans confirms this, in connection with the eschatological perspective of Rom 11:25-32 and 15:7-32. For key passages in Isaiah that Paul must have drawn upon, see Isa 2:1-4; 11:12 (cited in Rom 15:12); 24:14-16; 25:6-10; 56:1-8; 59:20-21 (cited in Rom 11:25-26); 60:3-18 (esp. 60:3, 5); 61:5-6, 11; 62:10; 66:12-23.

19. See Nickle, *Collection*, 111-33; Horrell, "Paul's Collection," 74-93.

20. The Book of Acts also presents Paul as centrally involved in bringing charitable relief funds for Judea when he resided in Antioch (Acts 11:27-30), which would date to ca. 44 CE. But this visit to Jerusalem does not fit into Paul's own review of his Jerusalem visits in Gal 1–2.

21. For "fruit" as "harvest, profit, or returns" pertaining to charitable giving, see also Phil 4:17.

22. For this phrase, see also 2 Cor 11:9; cf. the language of supplying "need" (*chreia*), Rom 12:13; 1 Cor 12:21, 24; Phil 2:25; 4:16, 19.

23. For the "generosity" of a donor, see also Rom 12:8.

24. For the same word, see also Gal 2:10.

25. For the "cheerfulness" of the one showing mercy, see also Rom 12:8.

26. For the flip side of this, that is, the attempt to prove virtue through sacrificial giving but without love, see 1 Cor 13:3. For calls to "love" as implying some form of mutual aid, see e.g. Rom 12:9-16; 13:8-10; 1 Thess 4:9-12.

27. Cf. Paul's prayer that the Philippians continue to exhibit the "fruit [harvest] of righteousness-justice, the fruit that emerges through Messiah Jesus" (Phil 1:11), where righteousness-justice is either the fruit itself, or the motivating ground of the fruit.

28. For a similar assumption of reciprocity, see 1 Cor 9:11: "If we have sown spiritual good among you, is it too much if we reap your material benefits?"

29. For a close correlation between the ideas, language and assumptions of Paul's partnership with the Philippians, see Phil 1:5, 7; 2:25; 4:10-20.

30. Cf. the call to "love" not only "one another," but also "all people" in 1 Thess 3:12. For a broader horizon, see also Rom 12:13; Gal 6:10. On the question of attending to the poor beyond the Messianic community, see Longenecker, *Remember the Poor*, 291-94.

31. For the image of sowing for charitable giving, see 2 Cor 9:6-15; Rom

15:28; Gal 6:7-8. For the "harvest of righteousness-justice," see also Phil 1:11.

32. The same word is used to refer to his concern that the fund will be "acceptable" (*euprosdektos*) to the targeted recipients; Rom 15:31.

33. The notion of loving God with one's "strength" or "power" (Deut 6:4-6) was proverbial in Early Judaism for giving financial assistance to the poor, and central to the practice of community of goods in the Rule of the Community (1QS) of the Qumranic Essenes. See Gordon Zerbe, "Economic Justice and Non-retaliation in the Dead Sea Scrolls: Implications for New Testament Interpretation," in *Jesus and the Origins of Christianity*, ed. J. H. Charlesworth (The Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls, Vol. 3; Waco: Baylor University Press, 2006), 319-355.

34. Similar is the language of Acts 11:27-30.

35. Paul similarly emphasizes that the contribution that enacted a partnership between himself and the Philippians emphatically involved "all" in the assembly (Phil 1:1, 4, 3, 7, 8).

36. This phrase has been the subject of considerable debate, whether it refers to the collection's measure, purpose, or ground. Georgi, for instance, argues that it refers to a divine force (following Philo) as the ground of the endeavor, not to notions of Greek judicial equality; Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, 84-93. Given the parallel with 2 Cor 8:14, and the implications of citation of Exod 16:18 in 8:15, however, it seems best to understand it to refer primarily to the goal and motivating framework of the collection. See Welborn, "That There May be Equality."

37. "General" or "generalized reciprocity" in cultural anthropology is the notion that the exchange of goods and services need not be accounted with any exact value, since the give and take of mutual assistance will balance out over time. By contrast "balanced" or "symmetrical reciprocity" assumes a fair and tangible return, at a specified amount, time, and place. See Marshall Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics* (Chicago: Aldine-Atherton, 1972).

38. While the phrase "in the now time" might conjure up a particular notion of Messianic time (cf. the other uses of the phrase in Rom 3:26; 8:18; 11:5), here the phrase seems to stress the opportunity of the present moment, in contrast with what "might become" (*genētai*) in the near or longer future. For an emphasis on the assumption of mutual interdependence in this text, see Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty, and Survival*, 158-59.

39. The verb *pleonazō* is regularly used in Greek literature for the "amassing" of wealth, or for "getting ahead" of the next person, e.g. Plato, *Republic* 344a, 349b-350c, 359c, 362b, 365d, 565a, 574a, 586b.

40. E.g. NRSV, TNIV; cf. NAB, "had no excess" and "had no lack"; KJV, "had nothing over" and "had no lack."

41. Philo, *Who is the Heir* 141-236, esp. 191. On Philo's discussion on *isotēs*, see Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, 85-86, 138-40. For a rejoinder to Georgi, see Welborn, "That There May be Equality."

42. See Jacob Cherian, "Paul, Poverty, and Equality: A Plutocritical Reading of 2 Corinthians 8:1-15" (paper presented at the SBL Annual Meeting, Paul and Politics Group, San Diego, November 19, 2007, based on his dissertation, "Toward a Commonwealth of Grace: A Plutocritical Reading of Grace and Equality in

Second Corinthians 8:1-15" [Princeton Theological Seminary, 2007]).

43. J. K. Chow, "Patronage in Roman Corinth," in *Paul and Empire: Religion and Paul in Roman Imperial* Society, ed. R. Horsley (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1997), 105-125.

44. "God is able to make every grace (*charis*, blessing of generosity) overflow in/among you, so that, as you have every (self)sufficiency always in everything, you may overflow in every good work." Cf. Phil 4:10-20.

45. Cf. Phil 4:10-20. Similar, therefore, is the exhortation in the Gospels on letting go of anxiety, such that needs are taken care of through new relations of mutuality as people commit to the framework of the kingdom (Matt 6:25-34; Luke 12:22-31).

46. See Longenecker, *Remember the Poor*, 135-56.

47. Gerd Theissen, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity: Essays on Corinth*, ed. and trans. John H. Schütz (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982).

48. On "greed" as a major vice, see also Rom 1:29; Col 3:5; Eph 5:5.

49. The counterpart of *philadephia* (Rom 12:10) is *philoxenia* (love of the stranger, usually translated "hospitality," Rom 12:13); both have practical, economic connotations.

50. The play on the *phil-* (love) compound words is lost in translation.

51. NRSV: "mind your own affairs."

52. NRSV: "be dependent on no one."

53. Paul's text implies an interest in avoiding the patronage of just a few key people: "night and day I worked in order not to burden certain of you."

54. NRSV: help the weak. Paul's carefully chosen verb (*antechō*) has the strong connotation of "clinging to, holding close" someone, that is, being in close relationship with them, not that of "helping" per se.

55. Paul might be referring to those engaged in some sort of civic agitation, not just those who are "idle" (the usual translation).

56. For the same phrase, see Gal 6:9, where a reference to charitable ministries is also evident (Gal 6:6-10).

57. Cf. the economic aspect of eschatological themes in 1 Cor 7:29-31.

58. It is not impossible that this divide also reflected economic issues. The terms "weak" and "strong" are used by Paul to signal economic conditions (1 Cor 1:27-28). In Romans "the weak" are clearly those of a Judaic background, and thus among those who were expelled from Rome (along with all Jews) in 48 CE, having returned to Rome soon after the ending of the expulsion order in 54 CE, only a short while prior to Paul's letter (ca. 56 CE). We can assume that their financial assets were relatively diminished in comparison to the Gentile wing of the church in regard to any capital assets or livelihood from income during the same period.

59. Literally, "the one who imparts a share" (*metadidōmi*). "In generosity" recalls the language of 2 Cor 8:2; 9:11, 13.

60. "Acts of mercy" are especially measures of assistance to the poor in the Hebrew-Judaic tradition. "In cheerfulness" recalls 2 Cor 9:7.

61. Lit. do not be high in your thinking. It is unclear whether this negates thinking high in aspiration, in orientation (giving too much regard for those things that are high), or in character (e.g. NRSV: "do not be haughty").

62. Either in the sense of "do not claim to be wiser than you are" (NRSV), or in the sense of "regarding oneself to be of a status or rank beyond what is appropriate."

63. For an interpretation along these lines, see also Longenecker, *Remember the Poor*, 207-19.

64. E.g. using the language of "weight," 2 Cor 11:9; 12:13, 14, 16; 1 Thess 2:9; 2 Thess 3:8; cf. 1 Tim 5:16. Cf. 2 Cor 8:13, using the language of "pressure."

65. This phrase strikingly echoes Romans 8:28, with its synergistic involvement of "those who love God," alongside God (or the Spirit), in the "work toward the good" for the whole universe, precisely in the context of distress.

66. For the extension of the charitable work of love beyond the community, see also 2 Cor 9:13; 1 Thess 3:12.

67. In 1 Tim 6:6-10 the author, writing in Paul's name, encourages the lifestyle of "contentment" (*autarkeia*, [self]sufficiency; cf. Phil 4:11; 2 Cor 9:8) as opposed to acquisitiveness (and the desire to be rich), noting that "the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil" (6:9). The rich are advised not to be haughty, but to do good with their wealth through generosity (1 Tim 6:17-19). And in 2 Tim 3:2 the author warns of "lovers of money" in a list of immoral persons.

68. 1 Thess 2:4-11; 2 Thess 3:6-13; 1 Cor 4:12; 9:1-27; 2 Cor 11:7-12; 12:13-18. Cf. Acts 20:33-35. In 1 Thess 2:8, Paul refers to the "donating" of himself with the same verb to denote the "donor" in Rom 12:8.

69. Similarly Acts 20:33-35.

70. Similarly Phil 2:3-11; 3:4-21; 4:11-17; 1 Cor 4:8-13; 2 Cor 4:3-12; 6:3-10; 11:7-11, 23-30; 12:7-10.

71. The NRSV ("I do it all for the sake of the gospel, so that I may share in its blessings") is not quite to the point; Paul says more literally "I do all things for the sake of the gospel, in that I am its co-partner (*sygkoinōnos*, in effect, "shareholder"). See Gordon Zerbe, "Shareholders of the gospel," *The Marketplace* 30/5 (September/October 2000): 14.

72. Here, *logos* carries the sense of a "reckoning, computation, accounting" (cf. *logeia*, collection, 1 Cor 16:1; *eulogia*, good contribution, 2 Cor 9:5; from *logizomai*, to reckon, count); *logos* in this sense was regularly used for both public treasury accounts and private business accounts; see LSJ.

73. Nevertheless, Paul also says that he received support from multiple "assemblies" in Macedonia when he was in Corinth, and that his needs were met by the "brothers who came from Macedonia" (2 Cor 11:8-9). While either the Philippian's uniqueness or the multiplicity named in 2 Col 11 can be attributed to rhetorical excess, it is also possible that in Philippi things were formalized as a "partnership" in a way that was unique.

74. For *leitourgia* as obligatory in the context of "partnership," see also Rom 15:26-27.

75. See my forthcoming *Philippians* (Believers Church Bible Commentary; Herald Press).

76. See P. Garnsey, *Famine and Food-Supply in the Greco-Roman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); M. Atkins and R. Osborne, eds., *Poverty in the Roman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006). For a survey of recent treatments, see Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty, and Survival*,

41-73. For a review of recent attempts at a "poverty scale" for the early Roman empire, see Longenecker, *Remember the Poor*, 36-59, 317-332.

77. Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty, and Survival*, 73.

78. For a more pessimistic conclusion, see Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty, and Survival*, 164-71; for a more optimistic, but still measured appraisal, see Longenecker, *Remember the Poor*, 60-107.

79. These could involve "the removal of dependants from the household (through exposure, ejection, or sale), emigration, begging, crime or asset stripping (which could take a number of forms, from the sale of clothing, household utensils, furniture, stock or tools)." See Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty, and Survival*, 165-66.

80. See Longenecker, *Remember the Poor*, 108-31.

81. 1 Cor 1:9; 9:23; 10:16-18; 2 Cor 1:7; 13:13; Phil 2:1; 3:10. Also crucial here would be Paul's "in Christ" and "body of Christ" ecclesiology (e.g. 1 Cor 6:15; 10:16; 12:27; Rom 12:4-6), tied to a corporate pneumatology (e.g. 1 Cor 12:13).

82. Rom 12:13; 15:27; 2 Cor 8:4, 23; 9:13; Gal 2:9-10; 6:6; Phil 1:5, 7; 4:14-15; Phlm 17; Gal 6:6.

Chapter 6

1. Neil Elliott, *Liberating Paul: The Justice of God and the Politics of the Apostle* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1994), 31-52; Justin Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty and Survival* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998), Appendix 1, Paul's Social Conservatism: Slavery, Women and the State, 181-88.

2. On Paul's approach to the ruling authorities, and his rhetoric of submission or subordination to the political rulers, see Gordon Zerbe, "The Politics of Paul: His Supposed Social Conservatism and the Impact of Postcolonial Readings," *Conrad Grebel Review* 21/1 (Winter 2003): 82-103. Reprinted with minor revisions in *The Colonized Paul: Paul through Postcolonial Eyes*, ed. C. Stanley (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011), 62-73.

3. For a review of research on slavery in Paul, and in the Greco-Roman world, see John Byron, *Recent Research on Paul and Slavery* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2008). For a helpful survey, see S. Scott Bartchy, "Slavery (New Testament)," *ABD* I, 65-73.

4. Catherine Hezser, *Jewish Slavery in Antiquity* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

5. Social, political, and legal status in the cities of the empire was also graded according to whether one enjoyed citizen status as a Roman, Latin, Greek (e.g. citizens of city-states with varying levels of status), or finally any other conquered city or people (e.g. Judeans, Egyptians, etc.). Slaves owned by Romans could, upon manumission, become Roman freedpersons, and their children, common Roman citizens.

6. Strabo, *Geography* 14.5.2. See J. D. Crossan and J. L. Reed, *In Search of Paul: How Jesus's Apostle Opposed Rome's Empire with God's Kingdom* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 2004), 41-47.

7. See Finley, *The Ancient Economy*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 35-94.

8. The celebrated example is the notorious Trimalchio of Petronius' *Satyricon* (ca. 60s CE), the Great Gatsby of antiquity.

9. See Crossan and Reed, *In Search of Paul*, 209-213, which includes samples of dedicatory formulas for manumission in the synagogue from the first century.

10. This would then provide a parallel scenario to that of Epaphroditus (Phil 2:25-30).

11. Pliny the Younger, *Letters to Trajan* 10.96. For the text, see Chapter 3, p. 71.

12. See J. Albert Harrill, *The Manumission of Slaves in Early Christianity* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1995).

13. The literature is by now voluminous. See Ross Kremer and Mary D'Angelo, *Women and Christian Origins* (New York: Oxford Unviersity Press, 1999); Sandra Polaski, *A Feminist Introduction to Paul* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2005); for a brief review, see also Polaski's "Paul and Real Women," *Word and World* 30/4 (2010): 391-98.

14. For a review of primary source materials, see Mary Lefkowitz and Maureen Fant, *Women's Life in Greece and Rome: A Source Book in Translation*, 3rd ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005).

15. See also Rom 12:8; cf. 1 Tim 3:4, 5, 12; for the noun Paul uses as referring to the "presider" of the congregation, see Justin, *First Apology*, 66-67.

16. Wayne Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 60.

17. When comments in both Paul's letters and Acts are correlated, the following profile emerges. They were expelled with all Jews from Rome in 49 CE (Acts 18:1-2). Meeting Paul in Corinth, they serve in Corinth with him for 18 months (Acts 18:1-18). They travel with Paul to Ephesus on his way back to Antioch (Acts 18:18-19), and at Ephesus they correct the theology of Apollos (Acts 18:26). They are with Paul when he writes 1 Corinthians from Ephesus (1 Cor 16:19), and it is probably in Ephesus where they "risk their necks" for Paul's life, during Paul's ordeal with the Roman imperial authorities (Rom 16:4; cf. 2 Cor 1:8-10; 2:14-16; Phil 1:12-30). They were hosts of a house assembly in Ephesus (1 Cor 16:19), and they are back in Rome when Paul writes Romans, presumably returning after the expulsion is lifted in 54 CE., and again host to a house assembly. Paul greets them as "fellow workers in Christ Jesus," and compliments them on their risks as his associates (Rom 16:3-5).

18. Persis is relatively rare among names in Rome; the name recalls a geographical area (Persia) and was a typical slave name; she was probably a migrant to Rome from the East. Tryphena and Tryphosa were also probably freedwomen. See P. Lampe, "Persis," *ABD* V, 244; idem, "Tryphena and Tryphosa," *ABD* VI, 669.

19. Eldon J. Epp, *Junia: The First Woman Apostle* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005).

20. Paul is either using a name or nickname, or a kind of term of endearment: the word means "co-yoked." Paul uses the vocative case, and it could be taken as either male (Syzygus) or female (Syzyge).

21. See Florence Gillman, "Apphia," *ABD* I, 317-18.

22. Some later manuscripts changed the original "her" house to "his" or "their." See Florence Gillman, "Nympha," *ABD* IV, 1162.

23. Thekla is a popular virgin martyr ("witness") and saint of the Eastern Church; sites associated with her (Ephesus, Seleucia, Iconium, Nicomedia) become important pilgrimage destinations in the first centuries of the church. In the Eastern Church she is recognized with the designations "equal to the apostles" and "proto-martyr" ("first suffering witness" in a locality). Tertullian (African church father, 160-230) says that the story about her was composed shortly before his time "out of love for Paul" by an elder from the province of Asia, who was then convicted of the deception and removed from his office. Tertullian complained that some Christians were using the example of Thekla to legitimate women's roles of teaching and baptizing in the church (*On Baptism* 1.17). The date of it may therefore be about 160 CE, though undoubtedly based on a long history of oral tradition. See Dennis MacDonald, "Thekla, Acts of," *ABD* VI, 443-44. For an accessible translation, see http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/actspaul.html, accessed May 29, 2012.

24. Thus to be "in Messiah" is to be (or to signal) "new creation" (2 Cor 5:17).

25. Cf. 1 Cor 12:13 and Col 3:11 which, however, omit the male/female binary.

26. See further, Chapter 4.

27. Alternatively, this ambiguous text could refer to "managing wives."

28. For a recent treatment, see Jennifer Bird, "To What End? Revisting the Gendered Space of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 from a Feminist Postcolonial Perspective," in *The Colonized Paul: Paul through Postcolonial Eyes*, ed. C. Stanley (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011), 175-85.

29. For other examples in the NT, see Eph 5:21-6:9; 1 Pet 2:18-3:7; Tit 2:2-6, 9-10; 1 Tim 3:4-5, 12b; 6:1-2. I consider these more definitely post- and non-Pauline.

30. See Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroad, 1983), 76-80, 205-35, 251-59. She takes Colossians as written by a disciple of Paul, and representing a patriarchal routinization (already started by Paul) of the more egalitarian expression of the earliest forms of the Christian movement.

31. Other texts expressing an explicit concern for communal "order" are 1 Cor 14:40 (*taxis*), 1 Cor 7:35 (*euschēmon*, decorum, good form), 1 Cor 14:33 and 2 Cor 12:20 (speacking against *akatastasia*, disorder), and 1 Thess 5:14 (contra the *ataktoi*, the disorderly). In 1 Cor 14:33, however, the concern for "peace" somewhat constrains the quest for "order."

32. J. Christiaan Beker, *The Triumph of God: The Essence of Paul's Thought* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 35-36. For the visionary side of things with respect to spousal relationships, see 1 Cor 7:29.

33. For the power of the eschatological now, compare the claim by Babi prophets at the Conference of Badasht (1848) that the presence of paradise now (the arrival of the Messianic age) meant that women could be freed of wearing veils, marking to both the Islamic mainstream and the Babi movement (which generated the Baha'i Faith) the formal split between the two. See Abbas Amanat,

Resurrection and Renewal: The Making of the Babi Movement in Iran, 1844-1850 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989); Negar Mottahedeh, "Ruptured Spaces and Effective Histories: The Unveiling of the Babi Poetess Qurrat al-'Ayn-Tahirih in the Gardens of Badasht," *UCLA Journal of History* 17 (1997): 59-81.

34. See Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 699-708; Philip B. Payne, *Man and Woman, One in Christ* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 252-61.

Chapter 7

1. John Howard Yoder, *Body Politics: Five Practices of the Christian Community before the Watching World* (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 1992), ix.

2. Space does not permit a thorough survey of the divergent streams within the emerging messianic movement, which in the time of Paul was still self-understood as a sub-unit (denomination) within the religio-political entity of Israel/Judaism (cf. Acts 16:20; 24:5, 14; 28:22, where the Jesus Messianists are a "party" within the people of Israel). These streams or divisions (evident both between and within regions of Paul's work) were based, as today, both on social factors (broadly speaking: linguistic-ethnic-cultural, economic-class, and status-rank-legal factors) and on the impact of key personalities that embody or express these factors (Cephas, Apollos, James, Barnabas, Paul; cf. Antioch in relation to Jerusalem; Paul's Greek-speaking congregations in relation to the "saints in Judea"; the agitators and "men from James" in Galatians; the super-apostles and their adherents in 2 Cor; rival preachers in Phil 1:15-18). Acts 6–8 also attests to divergent streams, that of Stephen and the "Hellenists" and those of Peter and James and the "Hebraists," including even more Torah-committed messianic Pharisees (cf. Acts 14:4; 21:20-21). That only the "Hellenists" were subjects of the persecution in Acts 7–8 confirms that there were significant differences in their approach to the Torah and the temple, the immediate cause of the persecution. Subsequent to Paul's ministry, a Johannine stream can be distinguished (along with schismatics from it; 1 John 2:18-25; 4:1-6; 2 John 7), as can a Petrine stream (Matthew). While considerable diversity is evident from the beginning of the messianic movement, such that one must recognize polygenesis, what is especially difficult is to provide appropriate descriptive terms or adequate characterization of the various streams. For instance, the terms "Jewish Christianity" or "Hellenistic Christianity" are certainly problematic, and even the term "Christianity" is significantly anachronistic for Paul's time and for his theology. See Daniel Boyarin, *Border Lines: The Partition of Judeo-Christianity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004); J. D. G. Dunn, *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament: An Inquiry into the Character of Earliest Christianity*, 3rd ed. (London: SCM Press, 2006). While Paul takes pains to resolve emerging diversity and tension within the messianic movement itself, an equally crucial question for Paul is the growing "intramural" rift within Israel more generally, as a result of adherence and non-adherence to Messiah.

3. For a consistent apocalyptic-eschatological framework for Paul's ecclesiology, see esp. J. Christiaan Beker, *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God*

in Life and Thought (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980): 135-81, 303-349. By contrast, some other interpreters treat "anthropology" or "soteriology," but not "ecclesiology" under the framework of the Pauline already-not yet; e.g. J. D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998): 461-92. The eschatological framework for Paul's ecclesiology is certainly a neglected theme in most treatments of biblical ecclesiology.

4. For an apocalyptic, "illiberal" reading of Paul over against the Western liberal tradition, see Jacob Taubes, *The Political Theology of Paul*, trans. D. Hollander (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 24 and throughout; see also Doug Harink, *Paul among the Postliberals: Pauline Theology beyond Christendom and Modernity* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2003).

5. On this reading of Paul's theology, see Beker, *Paul the Apostle*, 143: "Only a consistent apocalyptic interpretation of Paul's thought is able to demonstrate its fundamental coherence." See also the defense of this understanding of Paul's theology in approach in Douglas Campbell, *The Quest for Paul's Gospel: A Suggested Strategy* (London: T & T Clark, 2005); he calls this "pneumatologically participatory martyrological eschatology," over against justification by faith or salvation history models of Paul's theology. Below I draw language from my "The Politics of Paul: His Supposed Social Conservatism and the Impact of Postcolonial Readings," *Conrad Grebel Review* 21/1 (2003): 88-90.

6. V. P. Furnish, *Theology and Ethics in Paul* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1968), 122: "Salvation" is "Paul's overall descriptive term for the final victory of God in the coming age, when the last enemy shall have been destroyed and God shall reign as the unchallenged Sovereign above all." In Paul's thought, "the future dimension of 'salvation'" has primacy.

7. For Paul resurrection is what affects a "people," not merely what happens to individuals.

8. "Heaven" is a rare word in the undisputed writings of Paul (11 times, 16 times if Colossians is included), compared to the rest of the NT (273 times). "Heaven" is the source of deliverance (Rom 1:8; 2 Cor 5:2; 1 Thess 1:10; 4:16; cf. Rom 11:26), and the place where salvation is now reserved (Phil 3:20; Col 1:5; cf. Gal 4:26), until the time when it emerges with a renovated earth (e.g. Rom 8:18-25; cf. Rev 21); but it is not itself the final destination.

9. Beker, *Paul the Apostle*, 303, 313, 316.

10. Cf. Paul's discussion in Rom 5:12-21.

11. That is, their own resurrection/vindication; cf. Phil 3:10-11, 21; 1 Thess 4:13-18.

12. See LSJ. Indeed, a quick survey of Paul's vocabulary yields a number of words that more specifically denote "destroy," ones which Paul appears to have deliberately avoided here: e.g. *olethros*, *apōleia*, *kataluō*, *phtheirō*, *apolummi*, *kathairesis*, *kathaireō*, *portheō*.

13. E.g. putting enemies under his feet; 1 Cor 15:25, from Ps 110:1; 8:7; cf. 1 Thess 5:1-11; Phil 2:9-11; 3:20-21; Rom 15:8-12; 16:20. For another expression of messianic sovereignty, see 1 Cor 10:26, "the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof."

14. E.g. Furnish, *Theology*, 122-23.

15. See also 2 Cor 5:16-19; Eph 1:10, 22-23; 2:1–3:21; cf. Acts 3:21,

apokatastasis pantōn, "re-establishment of the universe."

16. Note the explanation of the implications of Romans 11 by the philosopher Giorgio Agamben, *The Time That Remains: A Commentary on the Letter to the Romans*, trans. P. Dailey (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005). "[The remnant] is therefore neither the all, nor a part of the all, but the impossibility for the part and the all to coincide with themselves or with each other. *At a decisive instant, the elected people, every people, will necessarily situate itself as a remnant, as not all*" (p. 55; italics original). "The remnant is precisely what prevents divisions from being exhaustive and excludes the parts and the all from the possibility of coinciding with themselves. The remnant is not so much the object of salvation as its instrument, that which properly makes salvation possible. . . . The remnant is therefore both an excess of the all with regard to the part, and of the part with regard to the all" (p. 56). The remnant is thus never any self-assured "kind of numeric portion or substantial positive residue" (p. 50), but rather a division "without ever reaching any final ground" (p. 52), while still providing the means to that destination. "In the *telos*, when God will be 'all in all,' the messianic remnant will not harbour any particular privilege and will have exhausted its meaning in losing itself in the *plērōma* [the fullness]" (p. 56). Similarly Alain Badiou, *Saint Paul: The Foundation of Universalism*, trans. R. Bassier (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003). He argues that there can never be a contentment with any historical realization of the Pauline hope, nor with any preoccupation with a new identity apart from the hope for the universal. Paul's "clearest conviction is that the evental figure of the Resurrection exceeds its real, contingent site, which is the community of believers such as it exists at the moment. The work of love is still before us; the empire is vast. . . Paul's universalism will not allow the content of hope to be a privilege accorded to the faithful who happen to be living now. It is inappropriate to make distributive justice [which focuses on the punishment of the wicked] the referent of hope" (p. 95).

17. Thus, Romans 11 is also a crucial build-up toward Rom 12:14-21.

18. On the imagery of "reconciliation," see further Rom 5:6-11; 11:15; 2 Cor 5:18-21; Col 1:20.

19. Note also the imagery of rejection and casting off in relation to inclusion and reception in Rom 11:11-14.

20. At the same time, the animation of human fidelity-faith is certainly crucial in Paul, though based on the prototypical fidelity of Messiah himself; e.g. Rom 1:16-17; 3:21-26; 5:12-21; 10:5-21; 11:22-23. For analysis of these texts, see John E. Toews, *Romans* (Scottdale/Waterloo: Herald Press, 2004).

21. See further below, n. 24.

22. Available in the public domain, in Latin, Greek, and English translation. See "Monumentum Ancyranum" from the Loeb Classical Library at LacusCurtius, http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Augustus/Res_Gestae/home.html, accessed May 29, 2012.

23. For the theme of eschatological recompense in Paul (using terms such as wrath, condemnation, judgment, perishing, destruction, etc.; day of the Lord; *parousia* of Messiah) note: (a) the reality/principle of divine wrath/judgment in response to injustice (Rom 1:18-3:20 [day of wrath, 2:5-16]; 5:16, 18; vessels of wrath destined for destruction, Rom 9:22; Col 3:5-6 [cf. transformed in Eph 5:6

to focus "upon the sons of disobedience"]), which operates via Law (Rom 4:15; 5:20; cf. ministry of condemnation, 2 Cor 3:9); (b) references to the "day of the Lord" or "*parousia* (coming, presence) of Messiah" as a time of final judgment, used as warning, assurance, or theodicy/vindication: "day" (Rom 2:5, 16; 13:12; 1 Cor 1:8; 3:13; 5:5; 2 Cor 1:14; Phil 1:6, 10; 2:16; 1 Thess 5:2, 4; cf. 2 Thess 1:10; 2:2, 3); *parousia* (1 Cor 15:23; 1 Thess 2:19; 3:13; 4:15; 5:23; cf. 2 Thess 2:1, 8); (c) those destined/liable for wrath, destruction (those perishing, 1 Cor 1:18; cf. 2:6-8; 2 Cor 2:15; 4:3); those who will meet destruction, (Phil 3:19, *apōleia*; 1 Thess 5:3, *olethros*; but not Phil 1:28, which refers to outsiders' expectation of the church's demise); the condemnation of the world (1 Cor 11:32; cf. 2 Thess 1:5-12; 2:3, 8, 10, 12); (d) salvation as deliverance from wrath, condemnation (1 Thess 1:10; 5:9-10; Rom 5:9, 16, 18; 8:1-4); (e) judgment of those now "in Messiah," as threats, warnings (e.g. Rom 14:10-12; 2 Cor 5:10; 1 Cor 3:10-15, 16-17; 4:1-5; 10:1-12; 11:30-34); for purgation, see 1 Cor 3:12-15; 5:3-5; (f) deferring judgment of "outsiders" to God (1 Cor 5:12-13; Rom 12:17-21; Phil 4:5); (g) believers to participate in judgment of "world" and "angels" (1 Cor 6:2-3); (h) oracles of judgment on some (believers or not; Rom 3:8; Gal 1:8-9; 5:10-12; Gal 2:11; 2 Cor 11:15; Phil 3:19); (i) divine recompense in the present age (Rom 1:18-32; 13:2-5; 1 Thess 2:16; 1 Cor 11:30-32). What is noteworthy is that the most assured, vivid, and indeed vindictive statements of wrath and condemnation on outsiders appear in deutero-Pauline writings (esp. 2 Thess 2:5-12; cf. Eph 5:6). One might say in general that this broad theme in Paul reflects: (a) the conviction that God wills the good, that which is just, on account of God's holiness; and (b) the conviction that all people are ultimately and individually accountable to God for their actions. Paul speculates neither on the certainty of any final judgment, or the specifics of any rewards or punishments, in contrast to later NT and Christian writers. Paul's purpose throughout is hortatory, that is, to encourage even stronger fidelity. See Furnish, *Theology*, 120-22.

24. It is crucial, however, to try to distinguish in Paul between argument and conviction; this is not always easy. It is also important to discern the particular function of statements in this area: that is, are they meant to warn, to console, to assure, to provide a theodicy, etc.? Moreover, it can also be noted that Paul is not overly preoccupied with the fate of the unbeliever (noted, for instance, by Badiou, *Saint Paul*, 95), quite in contrast to later writers in the New Testament and beyond. Furthermore, Paul can indeed say things to some audiences quite in tension with things said to other auditors. Paul's letters are interventions that certainly display a theological coherence; but they are certainly not products of systematic, abstract theologizing that smooths out all points of tension. The point is that clearly not all statements have the same probative force for Christian theology.

25. See the impressive treatment of Paul's ecclesiology, especially of the church's groaning along with the rest of creation in anticipation of "the apocalypse of God's love which conquers all the powers of separation," in the work of Baptist Doug Harink, *Paul among the Postliberals*, 180 and throughout.

26. On Paul's resistance to supersessionism, see ibid., 151-207.

27. On the notion that the divide between Christianity and Judaism "did not have to be," see John Howard Yoder, *The Jewish-Christian Schism Revisited*

(Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003).

28. For instance, 1 Corinthians, which has been described as "one great fugue around the single word *pan* [all]," in Taubes, *Political Theology*, 1. Paul's internationalism and his emphasis on corporate unity relative to Corinthian congregationalism, localism, and individualism is evident from the outset (e.g. 1:2, 9; 4:6-7, 17; 7:17; 11:16; 12:1-13; 16:1-4, 15, 19). Romans 15:7-33 (the "collection," cf. Gal 2:10; 1 Cor 16:1-4; 2 Cor 8–9) is also a crucial text for Paul's vision of a globally united church.

29. This also suggests that we can never rest content with a retreat to any so-called tradition-based rationality and its attendant identitarianism, by which one implicitly posits that you must be "X" to understand and justify "X-ness."

30. E.g. D. Durnbaugh, "Believers Church," *Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encylopedia Online* (1987; <http://www.gameo.org/encyclopedia/contents/B4458.html> accessed 10 June 2008).

Chapter 8

1. *Faith Today*, March/April 22/2 (2004): 2. *Faith Today* is the publication of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada.

2. As cited on the web-site, www.tmconference.com [no longer posted]: Ps 45:4 ("In your majesty, ride out to victory, defending truth, humility, and justice. Go forth to perform awe-inspiring deeds."); Heb 12:4 ("You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood."); Joel 3:9 ("Proclaim among the nations: Prepare for War! Rouse the warriors! Let all the fighting men draw near and attack.").

3. Michel Desjardins, *Peace, Violence and the New Testament (S*heffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997).

4. Desjardins, *Peace, Violence and the New Testament*, 82.

5. E.g. Desjardins, *Peace, Violence and the New Testament*, 63-65; David Williams, *Paul's Metaphors: Their Context and Character* (Peabody: Hendricksen, 1999), ch. 10, "Warfare and Soldiering," 211-44; Raymond Collins, *The Power of Images in Paul* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2008), 36-38, 62-63, 107, 133, 172, 169-72 and passim (see index). W. Swartley ("War and Peace in the New Testament," *ANRW* II.26.3: 2315) rightly correlates the war and peace images in Paul, but minimizes the frequency and diversity of military language and images. Similarly, O. Bauernfeind, "*strateuomai*," TDNT VII, 708-710, suggests that the *strateuomai* (fighting, battling) word group is "not really at home" in the vocabulary of Paul.

6. A. Malherbe, "Antisthenes and Odysseus, and Paul at War," *Harvard Theological Review* 76 (1983): 143-73.

7. The Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, abbreviated LXX, dating to the second century BCE.

8. See Victor C. Pfitzer, *Paul and the Agon Motif* (Leiden: Brill, 1967); Martin Brändl, *Der Agon bei Paulus: Herkunft und Profil paulinischer Agon metaphorik* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006). Particularly relevant is the use of *athlēsis* (striving, contending) and *agōn* (struggle) to describe military struggle and

resistance in Josephus and the Maccabees.

9. While Paul's use of this imagery is mainly analogical, metaphorical, or mythic, exceptional cases where concrete historical violence is described include: his own violent persecution of church (Gal 1:13, 23), the crucifixion of Jesus by the rulers (1 Cor 2:6-8), the "sword" of physical persecution by the Roman imperial order (Rom 8:35-36), or the judicial "sword" of the imperial regime (Rom 13:4).

10. This listing below is a maximalist list, including many places where military imagery or allusion is likely, but not certain.

11. *machē*, battle, fight, 2 Cor 7:5 [cf. deutero-Pauline 2 Tim 2:23; Tit 3:9; for *machaomai*, 2 Tim 2:24]; *thēriomacheō*, battle beasts, 1 Cor 15:32; *antikeimai*, be lined up in combat, be in opposition, Gal 5:17; 2 Thess 2:4; *agōn*, struggle, contest, Phil 1:30; 1 Thess 2:2; Col 2:1 [1 Tim 6:2; 2 Tim 4:7]; *agōnizomai*, contend, battle, Col 1:29; 4:12; 1 Cor 9:15 [1 Tim 4:10; 6:12; 2 Tim 4:7]; *synagōnizomai*, Rom 15:30; *synathleō*, strive together, Phil 1:27; 4:3; [*athleō*, 2 Tim 2:5]; *polemos*, battle, war, 1 Cor 14:8; *strateia,* military campaign, 2 Cor 10:4 [1 Tim 1:18]; *strateuō*, serve in war, engage in war, 1 Cor 9:7; 2 Cor 10:3 [1 Tim 1:18; 2 Tim 2:4]; *antistrateuō*, to make war against, Rom 7:23; [*stratologeō*, commander, 2 Tim 2:4; *palē*, struggle, Eph 6:12].

12. *systratiōtēs*, fellow soldier, Phil 2:25; Phlm 2; *tis strateuetai*, someone going to war, 1 Cor 9:7; [*stratiōtēs*, 2 Tim 2:3-4]; *angeloi*, as angelic warriors, Rom 8:38; 1 Cor 6:3; 2 Cor 12:17; 2 Thess 1:7; *archangelos*, archangel, 1 Thess 4:16; *hagioi*, saints as heavenly warriors, 1 Thess 3:13; *opsōnion*, wages paid to a soldier, donatives, Rom 6:23.

13. *echthros*, enemy, Rom 12:20; 1 Cor 15:25, 26; 2 Thess 3:15; *antikeimenos*, adversary, 1 Cor 16:9; Phil 1:28; 2 Thess 2:4 [1 Tim 1:10; 5:14]; *anthistēmi*, to rebel, resist, Rom 13:2; *antitassomenos*, rebel, Rom 13:2; *archontes*, rulers, Rom 13:3; 1 Cor 2, 6, 8; *kyrios*, lord, passim; *exousiai*, authorities, Rom 13:1, 2; 1 Cor 15:24; *dynameis*, powers, Rom 8:38; *rhyomemos*, deliverer, Rom 11:26; 1 Thess 1:10; *sōtēr*, deliverer, Phil 3:20.

14. *machaira*, sword, Rom 8:35; 13:4 [Eph 6:17]; *hopla*, battle attire/weapons, 2 Cor 6:7; 10:4; Rom 6:13; 13:12; [*panoplia*, whole body armour, Eph 6:11, 13]; *thōrax*, breastplate, 1 Thess 5:8 [Eph 6:14]; *perikephalaia*, helmet, 1 Thess 5:8 [Eph 6:17]; [*perizōnymmi*, "girding on" belt/armour, Eph 6:14; *endyomai*, "enrobe" with arms, Eph 6:14; *thyreōs*, shield, Eph 6:16; *belos*, missile, Eph 6:16]; *en hetoimō echontes*, making [battle] readiness, 2 Cor 10:6; *tis paraskeuasetai eis polemon*, someone getting ready for battle, 1 Cor 14:8.

15. The words for "virtue" in Greek (*aretē*, valour; Phil 4:9) and Latin (*virtus*, manliness, valour) originally derive from the context of warfare. Also: *andrizomai*, be manly, courageous, 1 Cor 16:13; *krataioō*, be strong, 1 Cor 16:13; [*kratēs*, strength, Eph 6:10; *ischys*, might, Eph 6:10]; *stēkete en tē pistei*, stand [firm] in loyalty, 1 Cor 16:13; Phil 1:27; 4:1; Gal 5:1; 1 Thess 3:8; 2 Thess 2:15 [Eph 6:14]; *nēphō*, be sober, 1 Thess 5:6, 8; *grēgoreō*, be watchful, 1 Cor 16:13; 1 Thess 5:6; cf. Rom 13:12; [*agrypneō*, be alert, Eph 6:18; cf. *agrypnia*, sleeplessness as battle virtue, 2 Cor 6:5; 11:27]; *proskartereō*, perseverance, Rom 12:12; Col 4:12; [*proskarterēsis*, Eph 6:18]; *mē ptyresthai*, not frightened, Phil 1:28; *tharrō*, be bold, courageous, 2 Cor 10:1-2; [*anthistemi*, withstand, stand against, Eph 6:11].

16. *kataraomai*, Rom 12:14; *anathema*, 1 Cor 16:22; Gal 1:8-9. The ritual cursing of enemies was a regular pattern of ancient warfare.

17. *parakeimai*, lie beside [in stealth], Rom 7:21; *aphormē*, base of operations, Rom 7:8, 11; Gal 5:13; *ekkoptein tēn aphormēn*, undercut a base of operations, 2 Cor 11:12; *enkoptō*, set a roadblock, 1 Thess 2:18; *salpigx*, trumpet, 1 Thess 4:16; 1 Cor 14:8; 15:52; *kata taxin*, in proper battle array, 1 Cor 14:40; *taxis kai stereōma*, good order and firmness, Col 2:5; *tagmata*, ranks, 1 Cor 15:23; *stoicheō*, walk/keep in (battle) line, Gal 6:16; Phil 3:16; *keleusma*, word of command, 1 Thess 5:16; *phōnē tou archangelou*, sound/voice of the archangel, 1 Thess 5:16.

18. *ekphobein*, causing fear/terror, 2 Cor 10:9; cf. *ptyresthai*, become afraid, Phil 1:28; *phobos*, fear/terror, Rom 13:4.

19. *kathaireō*, tear down, 2 Cor 10:4; *kathairesis*, tearing down, 2 Cor 10:4, 8; 13:10; *methistēmi*, *methistanō*, remove, transfer, Col 1:13; 1 Cor 13:2; *ochyrōma*, stronghold/fortress, 2 Cor 10:4; *hypsōma epairomenon*, raised obstacle [defensive rampart], 2 Cor 10:5; *phroureō*, guard, hold at bay, Phil 4:7; *katargeō*, make null, render idle, destroy, 1 Cor 1:28; 2:6; 15:24, 26; Rom 6:6; 2 Thess 2:8, in parallel with *anaireō*, to slay; *apollymi*, destroy, 1 Cor 1:19; Rom 14:15; be destroyed, 1 Cor 8:11; 10:9; *apōleia*, destruction, Phil 1:28; 3:19; Rom 9:22; 2 Thess 2:3 [1 Tim 6:9]; *olethros* [*ollymi*], destruction, 1 Cor 5:5; 1 Thess 5:3; 2 Thess 1:9 [1 Tim 6:9]; *phtheirō*, corrupt/destroy, 1 Cor 3:17; *portheō kath' hyperbolēn*, devastate with excess, Gal 1:13, 23; *en puri phlogos*, with flaming fire, 2 Thess 1:8.

20. *syntribō*, crush, Rom 16:20; *diōkō*, pursue, Gal 1:13, 23; cf. Rom 12:14; 1 Cor 4:12; *apokteinō*, kill, Rom 7:11; 8:36; 1 Thess 2:15; *bareō*, crush, 2 Cor 1:8; *kataballō*, strike down, 2 Cor 4:9; *anaireō*, take away/kill, 2 Thess 2:8.

21. *diōkō kai portheō*, pursue and devastate, Gal 1:13, 23.

22. *nikaō*, conquer, Rom 12:21; *hypernikaō*, supremely conquer, Rom 8:37; *nikos*, victory, 1 Cor 15:54, 55, 57; *hypotassō*, bring to submission, Phil 3:21; Rom 8:20; 1 Cor 15:27-28; *hypakoē* vs. *parakoē,* submission vs. insubordination, 2 Cor 10:6; cf. *katergazesthai. . .eis hypakoēn ethnoōn*, unto the submission of the nations, Rom 15:18; *zygos douleias*, yoke of slavery, Gal 5:1; every knee bend and every tongue swear allegiance, Phil 2:9-11; *sōtēria*, deliverance, Rom 13:11; Phil 1:28; 1 Thess 5:9; *sōzō*, to deliver, save, Rom 5:9 [from "wrath"; cf. 1 Thess 1:10; 5:9]; *exaireō*, deliver, Gal 1:4; *rhyomai*, deliver, Rom 7:24; 11:26; 2 Cor 1:10; Col 1:13; 1 Thess 1:10; 2 Thess 3:2; *basileuō*, reign, make reign effective, 1 Cor 15:25; Rom 5:17; 6:12; 1 Cor 4:8; 15:25; *parousia*, as royal "arrival" [*adventus*] for judgment and deliverance, 1 Thess 2:19; 3:13; 4:15; 5:23; 1 Cor 15:2; to put enemies under foot, 1 Cor 15:26; *sylaō*, plundering, strip arms from a slain foe, 2 Cor 11:7-8; *sylagōgeō*, carry off spoils of war, Col 2:8.

23. *apōleia*, Rom 9:22; Phil 1:28; 3:19; 2 Thess 2:3; *apollymenoi*, perishing, 1 Cor 1:18; 2 Cor 2:15; 4:3; 2 Thess 2:10; receive *orgē*, "wrath," 1 Thess 1:10; 5:9; Rom 9:22; *stenochōreō*, be squeezed, crushed, 2 Cor 4:8; *stenochōria*, squeezing; *thlipsis*, pressure, tribulation; *diōgmos*, persecution, *kindynos*, peril, Rom 8:35; *hybrizomai*, be mistreated [violently], 1 Thess 2:2.

24. *aichmalōtezō*, Rom 7:23; 2 Cor 10:5 [2 Tim 3:6]; *synaichmalōtos*, fellow captive, Phlm 23; Rom 16:7; Col 4:10; cf. *desmios*, prisoner, bound captive, Phlm 1, 9 [Eph 3:1; 4:1; cf. *aichmalōsia, aichmalōteuō*, captives, take captives, Eph 4:8]; *phroureō*, guard, hold in custody, 2 Cor 11:32; Gal 3:23; *synkleiō*, confining, Rom

11:32.

25. *ekdikos*, vindication, vengeance, 1 Thess 4:6; Rom 13:4; *ekdikeō*, Rom 12:19; 2 Cor 10:6; [*ekdikēsis*, 2 Thess 1:8]; execute "wrath," 1 Thess 1:10; 5:9; Rom 1:18; 12:19; 13:4-5; *thriambeuō*, parade in triumph, 2 Cor 2:14; Col 2:15; *stauros*, cross, 1 Cor 1:17, 18; Gal 5:11; 6:12, 14; *stauroō*, execute on a cross, Rom 6:12, 14; 1 Cor 1:23; 2:2, 8; 2 Cor 13:14.

26. See notably Ernst Käsemann, "The Beginnings of Christian Theology," in *New Testament Questions of Today* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), 82-107 ("apocalyptic was the mother of all Christian theology," p. 102); J. Christiaan Beker, *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980); Douglas Campbell, *The Quest for Paul's Gospel: A Suggested Strategy* (London/New York: T & T Clark, 2005).

27. Peter W. Macky, *St. Paul's Cosmic War Myth: A Military Version of the Gospel* (New York: Peter Lang, 1998), esp. ch. 2, The Lord as Man of War: Military Symbolism in the Hebrew Theological Tradition; Adela Yarbro Collins, *The Combat Myth in the Book of Revelation* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1976).

28. See John J. Collins, "Early Jewish Apocalpyticism," *ABD* I, 282-88; Norman R. C. Cohn, *Cosmos, Chaos, and the World to Come: The Ancient Roots of Apocalyptic Faith* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001).

29. For an attempt to reconstruct the broader narrative, see Macky, *Paul's Cosmic War Myth*, 55-218; he incorporates deutero-Pauline material (Col; 2 Thess; Eph) into his analysis.

30. For the various metaphors of salvation in Paul, see Beker, *Paul the Apostle*, 256-71.

31. Macky, *Paul's Cosmic War Myth*, 54-116.

32. The manifestation of the dark powers in the present order of time is evident in expressions such as: "Satan hindered [set a roadblock against] us" (1 Thess 2:18, alluding to the Roman imperial authorities); "the tempter had tempted you" (1 Thess 3:5); "the god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers" (2 Cor 4:4); "the rulers of this age crucified the Lord of glory" (1 Cor 2:6-8); active "messengers/agents of Satan" (2 Cor 11:14-15; 12:7). Human institutions or persons can, it seems, either be under the thrall of Satan, or operate as ministers of God (Rom 13:4-5); the "rulers" and "powers," whether cosmic or historical, are not categorically evil (cf. Col 1:16). Satan as destroyer of nature and of physical life/health is evident in such texts as 1 Cor 5:5; 10:10; 2 Cor 12:7; and probably Rom 8:20-22. Satan as the tempter/tester of moral evil is apparent in 1 Thess 3:5; 1 Cor 7:5.

33. For the imagery of darkness, see Rom 13:12; Col 1:13. For the expression "this age" or "this world," see 2 Cor 4:4; Gal 1:4; 1 Cor 2:6-8; 7:31. For the contrasting imagery of (the regime of) "light" or "the day," see Rom 13:11-14; 1 Thess 5:8.

34. See below, and n. 48.

35. E.g. 1 Cor 7:26, 29, 31; 10:11; Rom 13:11-14; Phil 4:5.

36. A compelling case can be made that Paul also envisions some kind of renewal of corporeal Israel in the land (but without any connection to the modern secular state of Israel, and just as with traditional orthodox Jewish Messianic expectation). See Mark Reasoner, "On Earth, Not in Heaven: Paul's

Scriptures and the Political Salvation of Israel in Romans 9-11," (paper delivered at the Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, November 18, 2006, Washington, D.C.; available online at http://www.thepaulpage.com/on-earth-not-in-heaven-pauls-scriptures-and-the-political-salvation-of-israel-in-romans-9-%E2%80%93-11/, accessed May 29, 2012.

37. K. Wengst, *Pax Romana and the Peace of Jesus* Christ, trans. J. Bowden (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 77-78; H. Koester, "Imperial Ideology and Paul's Eschatology in 1 Thessalonians," in *Paul and Empire: Religion and Power in Roman Imperial Society*, ed. R. Horsley (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1997), 158-66; Collins, *Power of Images*, 32-33.

38. The ambiguity in regard to the final destiny of the "powers" is evident in Paul's choice of verbs (*katargeō*, esp. in 1 Cor 1:28; 2:6; 15:24, 26). This verb literally denotes "make idle/fallow, render ineffective, deactivate, bring to nothing, nullify" and by extension "bring to submission, remove, give up, discharge from, remove, take away," and in some cases "abolish, destroy." This last, stronger sense is evident when Paul uses this verb as a parallel to "crucify" (Rom 6:6) or to "slay" (2 Thess 2:8). But Paul's meaning in this eschatological text is more likely "to bring to submission, to render ineffective," in the sense of "putting under one's feet," not the stronger sense "to destroy," as in most modern English translations.

39. See Martinus C. de Boer, *The Defeat of Death: Apocalpytic Eschatology in 1 Corinthians 15 and Romans 5* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1988).

40. For Paul's interest in this military "command" structure, see also 1 Cor 14:8.

41. Daniel G. Reid, "Triumph," in *Dictionary of Paul and his Letters*, eds. G. F. Hawthorne and R. P. Martin (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 946-54.

42. Ibid., 952.

43. Cf. Eph 1:10, 20-22; 3:10.

44. See Chapter 7.

45. Gordon Zerbe, "'Pacifism' and 'Passive Resistance' in Apocalyptic Writings: A Critical Evaluation," in *The Pseudepigrapha and Early Biblical Interpretation*, ed. James H. Charlesworth and Craig A. Evans (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 65-95.

46. For their "battle" in the present order of time, see below.

47. The active synergy of the faithful alongside God is also expressed in Rom 8:28 – "We know that together with those who love God, he [God, or the Spirit] co-works [Gk. *synergei*] all things [either: "all experiences," or "the universe"] toward the good, together with those called for this very purpose." For another synergy text, see Phil 2:12-13.

48. Paul nowhere defines precisely the relationship between Error and Satan, and thus the relationship between the battle against Error and the battle against Satan and oppressive cosmic powers. Since Paul in some places links Satan with human sinfulness (1 Cor 7:5; 2 Cor 2:11; 1 Thess 3:5; cf. Eph 2:2) it would follow that Error may be pictured as some sort of subversive agent of Satan, even though its origins remain a mystery. But on the other hand, the subversive spirit of Error is merely the flip side of the proclivity of human beings to err (Rom 5:12); Paul would never put Error solely on the side of a cosmic force that absolves human beings of liability.

49. "Mortal" in Greek is literally "death-liable" (*thnētos*), deriving from "death" (*thanatos*). Thus "death-liable body" (Rom 6:12) is equivalent to "body of death" (Rom 7:25).

50. For this particular meaning of *opsōnia*, usually translated generically as "wages," see Williams, *Paul's Metaphors*, 224-25. For a positive analogy of soldiers' pay, see 1 Cor 9:7.

51. Using *katargeō*. See above, n. 38.

52. Lit. "removed from its power," using the passive of *katargeō*; see above, n. 38.

53. See Malherbe, "Antisthenes and Odysseus, and Paul at War," 144-65; Collins, *Power of Images*, 36-38.

54. Phil 1:27-2:1; 2:12-13; 4:5-7; later in Macedonia, 2 Cor 7:5.

55. 1 Thess 1:6; 2:14; 3:1-8.

56. 1 Thess 2:1; cf. Acts 16:11-40.

57. 1 Thess 2:1, 18; cf. Acts 17:1-9.

58. 1 Cor 4:8-13; 15:30-32; 16:9; Phil 1:7; 1:12-26, 30; 2:17, 23-24; 3:2, 19; 2 Cor 1:8-11; 2:14-17; 4:7-12; 6:4-10; 11:23-28; 12:10; perhaps also Col 1:24, 29; 2:1; 4:10, 12, 18; Phlm 1, 9, 13; cf. the retrospective in Rom 5:1-5; 8:17-39. For the arguments in favour of the Ephesian setting for Philippians, and for the "dogs, evil-doers, and butchery" (3:2-3) as a coded reference to Roman power and culture, see my forthcoming *Philippians* (Believers Church Bible Commentary; Herald Press).

59. For the notion of the gospel as the "constitution" of the Messianic polity, see also Collins, *Power of Images*, 53-56.

60. For the military connotations of Paul's rhetoric in Phil 1:27-30, see T. C. Geoffrion, *The Rhetorical Purpose and the Political and Military Character of Philippians: A Call to Stand Firm* (Lampeter: Mellen Biblical Press, 1993); Joseph A. Marchal, "Military Images in Philippians 1-2: A Feminist Rhetorical Analysis of Scholarship, Philippians, and Current Contexts," in *Her Master's Tools? Feminist and Postcolonial Engagement of Historical-Critical Discourse*, eds. C. Vander Stichele and Todd Penner (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005), 265-86; Collins, *Power of Images*, 53-56.

61. The very word for "virtue" (*arētē*) is originally a military term, denoting "valour." See above, n. 15.

62. See also Eph 6:10-20.

63. Thomas Yoder Neufeld, *'Put on the Armour of God': The Divine Warrior from Isaiah to Ephesians* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 73-93.

64. Malherbe, "Antisthenes and Odysseus, and Paul at War," 156-72.

65. The word is especially apt here, deriving from the Greek word *polemos*, "battle."

66. At the end of the letter Paul threatens with a curse anyone who is unwilling to demonstrate "love for the Lord" (1 Cor 16:21).

67. The verb *tharreō* (to be bold, courageous, confident) has strong athletic and military connotations. See for instance Plato's remarks in the mouth of his Athenian hero: "And does not this fear, besides saving us in many other important respects, prove more effective than anything else in ensuring for us victory (*nikē*) and security (*sōtēria*) in war (*polemos*)? For victory is, in fact, ensured

by two things, of which the one is boldness/confidence (*tharsos*) towards enemies, the other, fear of the shame of cowardice in the eyes of friends." (*Laws* 647b; cf. *Phaedrus* 239d).

68. Paul's first letter was a sharp demand that the congregation engage in disciplinary action against certain members (1 Cor 5:9-13). The second letter (1 Corinthians) begins with a sharp shaming of the sophistic elite of the congregation (1:10-4:21) that ends with an ultimatum ("What do you wish? Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love in a spirit of gentleness?" 4:21), and includes sharp admonition along the way, while concluding with the warning of a curse if anyone wavers in their "love for the Lord" (16:22). The third letter was written in response to an aborted "painful visit" by Paul (2:1), when Paul was in some way personally insulted or wronged (2:5-11; 7:12). In the letter, Paul demands that the offending party be punished by the majority, as a demonstration of their loyalty (2 Cor 1:23-2:11; 7:7-13).

69. Paul concedes that his previous letter did indeed "cause pain," even though it was motivated out of love, and designed to assure their zeal for the gospel (2 Cor 2:2-4; 6:11-13; 7:2-4, 8). He even declares that he specifically did not thereby seek "to lord it over their loyalty" (1:24), delaying a potentially punitive visit out of a desire to "spare" them (1:23).

70. Paul seems to play on the image of an imperial *adventus*. In 10:2 and 10:11 Paul uses the participle form ("coming") of the noun *parousia* (used in 10:10), which could have military connotations (as explicitly in 1 Thess 4:15).

71. This phrase is subject to considerable debate. Some commentators suggest that it refers to Paul's general unrefined rhetoric along with his low social status (cf. 2 Cor 5:12; 10:7), his unimpressive credentials in visions and ecstasy, or his lack of real spiritual authority when in person. Others suggest that it refers to his insincerity, duplicity (2 Cor 12:16-17), vacillation, adaptability, or expedient/opportunistic practice (see 2 Cor 1:7 in light of 1:12-14; 5:16a).

72. That is, he admits that he shares in the general weakness that attends to being human, but then asserts that he acts much more potently than someone who merely "does not walk according the flesh," that is, has some kind of greater spiritual or sophistic credentials, because he is one who "does not wage war according to the flesh." Mere "walking" has been escalated into waging war, a warfare so much more powerful than any merely human, physical warfare, and a divine warfare more potent than sophistic defenses can bear.

73. The weapons used are not "according to the flesh" (*kata sarka*), apparently a reference to some slander against himself that he himself acts "according to the flesh" (*kata sarka*; 1:17; 11:18), but "powerful by God" (10:4; cf. 13:3, 4).

74. V. P. Furnish, *2 Corinthians* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1984), 463, citing H. Windisch.

75. The same image occurred in 2 Cor 5:12: "so you can answer those who boast in the face, and not in the heart."

76. Again, playing on the possible military connotations of *parousia*.

77. LSJ, s.v. *phthanō*. The verb has a dual connotation: "to come first" and "to overtake." For the latter meaning, see 1 Thess 2:16.

78. For the importance of this boast to Paul, see also 1 Cor 9:15-18.

79. But notice the contrasting disclaimer in 2 Cor 1:24, that Paul is not

seeking to "be lord over their loyalty." Note also the threat of "destruction" on any leader who "destroys" the community as "God's temple" by fostering divisions (1 Cor 3:17).

80. Contra Malherbe ("Antisthenes and Odysseus, and Paul at War," 166-73), who argues that Odysseus is the main analogous prototype in 2 Cor 10:1-6.

81. Cf. 2 Cor 4:4, in relation to 3:12–4:3.

82. Similar use of *noēma* is found in 2 Cor 3:14; 4:4, again closely tied to Satan. On the other hand, "the peace of God" is what will "guard" thoughts (*noēmata*) in Messiah Jesus (Phil 4:7).

83. That is, it is not simply for apostolic authority itself. Most certainly, however, Paul's jealously as a parent for a church that he has helped to birth is patently obvious (1 Cor 4:14-21; 6:11-13; 7:2-4; 10:13-15; 11:1; 12:14-15).

84. The same verb appears in 2 Cor 10:4, and the noun form (*kathairesis*) of the verb occurs in 2 Cor 10:4, 8, 10.

85. The same word appears in 2 Cor 10:4.

86. The same verb is found in 2 Cor 10:7, and the noun form in 10:2.

87. For discussion and references, see Malherbe, "Antisthenes and Odysseus, and Paul at War," 144-65.

88. Ibid., 173.

89. E.g. A. Harnack, *Militia Christi: The Christian Religion and the Military in the First Three Centuries*, trans. D. M. Gracie (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981), 35-36.

90. E.g. Mary Boyce, *Zoroastrians: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979), 17-29, 31-33, 39-43.

91. See www.avesta.org/ritual/ritualk.htm [accessed 28 March 2012].

92. E.g. Farhang Mehr, *The Zoroastrian Tradition: An Introduction to the Ancient Wisdom of Zarathustra* (Rockport: Shaftesbury, Dorest, 1991), 69.

93. Mary Fisher, *Living Religions*, 8th ed. (Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 2011), 238.

94. Northrop Frye, *The Great Code: The Bible and Literature* (Toronto: Academic Press Canada, 1982), 3-30. Following the schema of Italian philosopher Giambattista Vico (1668-1744), who sketched the evolution of language use from the poetic, the heroic/noble, to the vulgar, Frye periodizes Western language use into the phases of the hieroglyphic/poetic, hieratic/allegorical, and demotic/descriptive.

95. Thus, we might also ask how literally/realistically Paul understood the cosmic war to be unfolding? In the cases of (a) Paul's intellectual battle for God's knowledge, and (b) weapons of virtues as the only armaments in the struggle against "the powers" or against concrete earthly social structures or individuals, the metaphorical dimension is clearly apparent. As for the battle of Grace over Error, it is certainly mythic-poetic in character, but not intended to be any less real. When it comes to engagement with "the powers," one can observe that Paul is not concerned to precisely define their ontological nature, but to highlight their functional manifestation in the human or earthly arena. It would follow then that the liberation/conquest imagery should also be taken without excessive literalism, but without considering the struggle to be any less real. The imagery of heavenly/angelic armies thus should be understood in the same mythic-poetic

framework. For further discussion on this last issue, embracing "true myth" over against "literalism" or "allegory," see Macky, *Paul's Cosmic War Myth*, 219-58.

96. See Chapter 10. Perhaps Paul's polemic reflects something in the human psyche, or at least the pattern of many cultural traditions, that actions and words toward the perceived traitor are often more brutal than those toward the enemy, especially when one is in a defensive position.

97. W. Swartley, "War and Peace in the New Testament," *ANRW* II.26.3: 2314-15.

98. Harnack, *Militia Christi*, 36.

99. See further Gordon Zerbe, "Peace and Justice in the Bible," in *Peace and Justice: Essays from the Fourth Shi'i Muslim Mennonite Christian Dialogue*, eds. H. Huebner and M. Legenhausen (Winnipeg: CMU Press, 2011), 124-43.

100. See for instance Neil Elliott, *The Arrogance of Nations: Reading Romans in the Shadow of Empire* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008).

Chapter 9

1. For the thesis that this opening phrase functions as the thesis statement for all of Rom 12:9-21, see Walter Wilson, *Love without Pretense: Romans 12:9-21 and Hellenistic-Jewish Wisdom Literature* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1991), 150-52.

2. The "you" is somewhat dubious textually, omitted in several key manuscripts; see Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (London: United Bible Societies, 1971), 528. Arguably the "you" is implied in any case.

3. *makrothymeō*, literally "be macro-passioned," is often translated as being longsuffering, forbearing, or patient. In the Septuagint (Greek Old Testament), this term regularly translates the Hebrew idiom "slow to anger" (e.g. Exod 34:6; Num 14:18; Psalm 86:15; 103:8; 145:8; Prov 14:29; 15:18; 16:32; 19:11). We might say, "long-fused."

4. See also 1 Pet 2:18-25; Eph 6:5-9.

5. The plural form of the cognate noun *anochē* (used in Rom 2:4; 3:26) could be used for a truce or armistice. See LSJ.

6. For this meaning of *parakalein* here, see BAGD, s.v. "parakaleō," #5. This meaning is also evident in 2 Cor 2:7, used synonymously with *charizesthai* ("forgiving"); 2 Macc 13:23; Luke 15:28; Acts 16:39.

7. For other references to being at peace in Paul that refer particularly to relations within the community, see Rom 14:17, 19; 1 Cor 7:15; 2 Cor 13:11; cf. Col 3:15.

8. For *charizomai* in the sense of "forgive," see also 2 Cor 12:13; Col 2:13.

9. "Ethic" here is used in its colloquial, nonphilosophical sense as "a set of moral principles and values." "Nonretaliation" and "peace" are the best general terms for summarizing the substance of these exhortations, without prejudging their specific interpretation. I deliberately avoid the term "love of enemy" as a descriptive term, since the language of "loving enemies" is not found in Paul's letters and since it already assumes a certain interpretation of the texts.

10. See George E. Mendenhall, *The Tenth Generation: The Origins of the Biblical Tradition* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), ch. 3: "The 'Vengeance' of Yahweh," 69-104. Mendenhall identifies three uses of the Hebrew root *nqm* that accord with the uses of the Greek *ekdikein* and the Latin *vindicatio*: (1) to avenge, vindicate through socially sanctioned executive action by royal or divine power; (2) to avenge or to litigate through judicial action; and (3) to take revenge through self-help, extralegal self-redress. All of these are distinguished from defensive vindication, which takes place at the moment of the offending action, whereas the former three are subsequent in time to the offense.

11. See Luise Schottroff, "Non-Violence and the Love of One's Enemies," in *Essays on the Love Commandment*, ed. L. Schottroff et al (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), 16-22. She identifies three attitudes or types of renunciation of revenge in the Greco-Roman world. (1) Nonretaliation as the proper ethic of the underdog, whether exhorted by the powerful or the powerless: the dependent, especially a slave, must accept injustice and has no other recourse than to make a virtue of necessity, since it simply does not pay to attempt to avenge injustice. Here, nonretaliatory acceptance of injustice springs from a position of dependence or alienation. She notes 1 Peter 2:18-25; Col 3:25 in this category, to which 2 Cor 11:19-21 could be added. (2) Nonretaliation and clemency as the ethic of the powerful, appropriate for superiors, rulers in relation to their subjects, or defeated opponents. This ethic is motivated especially by the interest to preserve harmony in the family, body politic, or empire. Here, nonretaliation means the exercise of one's own power. (3) Nonretaliation as the protest of the powerless, based especially on the Socratic prototype: the philosopher is abused by society because of his disturbing teaching but desists from retaliation, declaring himself to be a victim of injustice, in order to proclaim the rottenness of society See Epictetus, *Discourses* 3.22.54, perhaps the only example of the explicit use of love to an enemy ¡n Greco-Roman philosophy: "For this too is a very pleasant strand woven into the Cynic's pattern of life; he must needs be flogged like an ass, and while he is being flogged he must love (*philein*) the men who flog him, as though he were the father or brother of them all" (LCL).

12. E.g. 1 Cor 15:20-28; Rom 8:18-39; 11:36; 16:20. For references to the eschatological "kingdom," see 1 Cor 6:9-10; Gal 5:21; 1 Thess 2:12.

13. E.g. 1 Thess 1:10; 5:9; Rom 2:5, 8; 5:9.

14. For treatments of Paul's redemptive vision along these lines, see esp. Victor Paul Furnish, *Theology and Ethics in Paul* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1968), 115-206; and J. C. Beker, *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), 11-19, 135-367.

15. E.g. Rom 2:10; 8:6; 14:17; cf. Eph 6:15, "the gospel of peace."

16. 2 Cor 5:19; Rom 11:5; cf. Col 1:20.

17. E.g. Phil 3:21; 1 Cor 15:21, 24-28; Rom 8:28-39; 11:36. Cf. also the language of "new creation" (2 Cor 5:17; Gal 6:15) and the notion of the renewal of the image of God (Rom 8:29; 1 Cor 15:29; 2 Cor 3:18; cf. Col 3:10; Eph 4:24).

18. Rom 15:33; 16:20; 2 Cor 13:11; Phil 4:9; 1 Thess 5:23; cf. 2 Thess 3:16.

19. For the eschatological reconciliation of all people (Jews and Gentiles), see esp. Rom 11:25-32. See also Eph 2:14-18 for the notion of the eschatological arrival of peace between Jew and Gentile, through the redemptive work of Christ,

who is "our peace." See Chapter 7.

20. See 1 Cor 14:33. Rom 16:20 is particularly noteworthy, since it is "the God of peace" who will "soon crush Satan under your feet."

21. Rom 5:1, related to "reconciliation" in 5:10-12; cf. Col 1:20. Note also Eph 2:14-18; 2 Cor 5:18-20.

22. See above, n. 7.

23. Expressed in salutations (Rom 1:7; 1 Cor 1:3; 2 Cor 1:2; Gal 1:3; Phil 1:2; 1 Thess 1:1; Phlm 3: cf. Col 1:2; 2 Thess 1:2; Eph 1:2) and benedictions (1 Cor 16:11; Gal 6:16; Rom 15:33; 2 Cor 13:11; Phil 4:7, 9; 1 Thess 5:23; cf. 2 Thess 3:16; Eph 6:23).

24. For detailed documentation of scholarly opinions on this topic, see the original publication of this essay, in *The Love of Enemy and Nonretaliation in the New Testament*, ed. W. Swartley, 177-222 (Philadelphia: Westminster/John Knox, 1992), 182-84.

25. Krister Stendahl, "Hate, Non-Retaliation and Love: 1QS X, 17-20 and Romans 12:19-21," *Harvard Theological Review* 55 (1962): 343-55.

26. For the framework of imminent apocalyptic expectation as providing the foundation for radical conduct in the present, see Jacob Taubes, *Occidental Eschatology*, trans. D. Ratmoko (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 10-11.

27. John Piper, *"Love Your Enemies": Jesus' Low Command in the Synoptic Gospels and in the Early Christian Paraenesis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 114-19.

28. Ibid., 118.

29. For a helpful recent analysis, see Robert Jewett, *Romans* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 755-58.

30. Similarly, J. D. G. Dunn, *Romans 9-16* (Dallas: Word Books, 1988), 739; Jewett, *Romans*, 758-79. For the view that Paul limits his exhortation to relations within the community, see Kent Yinger, "Romans 12:14-21 and Nonretaliation in Second Temple Judaism: Addressing Persecution within the Community," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 60 (1998): 74-96.

31. Regarding Paul the persecutor, see 1 Cor 15:9; Gal 1:13, 23; Phil 3:6; on persecution from outsiders, see 1 Cor 4:12, 2 Cor 4:9; Gal 4:29; 5:11; 6:12; cf. 2 Cor 11:23-26.

32. E.g. Rom 2:9; 3:4; 5:12, 18; 1 Cor 7:7; 15:19; 2 Cor 3:2; 4:2; Gal 5:3; 1 Thess 2:15; cf. Col 1:28.

33. E.g. Jacob Taubes, *The Political Theology of Paul*, trans. D. Hollander (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 40-41.

34. See J. Christiaan Beker, *Suffering and Hope* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 57-79.

35. *thlipsis*, tribulation: 2 Cor 1:4, 8; 2:4; 4:17; 6:4; 7:4; 8:2; Phil 1:16; 4:14; Col 1:24; 1 Thess 1:6; 3:3, 7; 2 Thess 1:4. *stenochōrja*, distress: 2 Cor 6:4; 12:10; cf. Rom 2:9. *diōgmos*, persecution: 2 Cor 12:10; 2 Thess 1:4; cf. *diōkein*, 1 Cor 4:12; 2 Cor 4:9; Gal 4:29; 5:11; 6:12. *limos*, famine: 2 Cor 11:27. *gymnotēs*, nakedness: 2 Cor 11:27; cf. *gymnos*, 2 Cor 5:3-4; *gymniteuesthai*, 1 Cor 4:11. *kindynos*, peril: 2 Cor 11:26; cf. 1 Cor 15:30.

36. 2 Cor 1:3-11; 4:7-12; 6:3-10; 7:5; 11:23-28. If Romans is dated in the

summer/fall of 56 CE, 2 Cor 1-9 and 10-13 date to fall 55/spring 56 CE The Asian crisis of Paul probably occurred in the summer of 55 CE Paul also refers to his experience of persecution in 1 Thess 1:6; 2:2, 14-16 (ca. 50—51 CE); 1 Cor 4:12 (ca. 54 CE); and Gal 4:29; 5:11; 6:12 (ca. 56 CE). For these dates, see esp. Victor Paul Furnish, *II Corinthians* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1984), 54-55. For the persecution facing the Macedonian churches, see 2 Cor 8:2; cf. Phil 1:27-30, probably written in the summer of 55 CE during Paul's Asian imprisonment.

37. See Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, 738: the exhortation reflects the church's status as an "endangered species, vulnerable to further imperial rulings against Jews and societies."

38. Beker, *Paul the Apostle*, 59-74.

39. Notably Rom 12:3-8, 10, 13, 15-16, in terms of the dynamics of internal disunity and rivalry (Rom 14:1-15:13).

40. Suetonius, *Claudius* 25.

41. Tacitus, *Annals* 15:44.

42. For Paul's counter-imperial perspective in Romans, see Neil Elliott, *The Arrogance of Nations: Reading Romans in the Shadow of Empire* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008).

43. *agapētoi* occurs especially for emphasis in paraenetic contexts: 1 Cor 10:14; 1:58; 2 Cor7:1; 12:19; Phil 2:12; 4:1; cf. 1 Cor 4:14. The same term is also strikingly used in Romans to refer (a) to the broad scope of his readers in Rome, "all God's beloved in Rome" (1:7), (b) particular individuals named as his "beloved" (Rom 16:5, 8, 9, 12), and (c) the special status of the Jews as a whole as God's "beloved" (11:20). Jewett (*Romans*, 774-75) proposes that the emphatic use of *agapētoi* in 12:19 might be designed to appeal to a special group of returning refugees (whom Paul has met earlier) that are now subject to prejudice.

44. E.g. H.-G. Link, "Blessing," *NIDNTT* 1:215.

45. See Gordon Zerbe, *Non-retaliation in Early Jewish and New Testament Texts: Ethical Themes in Social Contexts* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 234-35.

46. For the pattern of judicial self-help, or self-redress, in relation to other patterns of vindication from an anthropological perspective, see Douglas Fry, *The Human Potential for Peace: An Anthropological Challenge to Assumptions about War and Violence* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 88-91, 108-113.

47. Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, 747; Jewett, *Romans*, 772-73: "Within the context provided in Romans, a saying that otherwise seems to demand social conformity and ethical relativism is lifted up into the service of divine righteousness."

48. E.g. Klassen, *Love of Enemies*, 116.

49. See also 1 Thess 4:10b-12; Rom 13:13; Phil 2:15; 1 Cor 10:32-33; 2 Cor 6:3; cf. Rom 13:3-4; Col 4:5-6.

50. Lev 19:1 8a, LXX: *kai ouk ekdikatai sou hē cheir*, "your own hand shall not avenge for itself." The LXX translation clarifies Lev 19:18a by using the Hebrew idiom of "saving/avenging with one's own hand," i.e. avenging by self-help, perhaps to exclude other forms of vindication from the prohibition. For this idiom, see 1 Sam 25:26, 31, 33; Judg 7:2; Deut 8:17; CD ["Damascus Document" of the Essenes] 9:8-10. Philo (*On the Special Laws* 3.91, 96; 4.7-10) and Josephus

use the term *autocheir* ("self-handed") for this.

51. Philemon 17-19 confirms this noncategorical preference. Paul assumes that Philemon as a slave owner can legitimately pursue his legal right for compensation, either for the loss of work incurred through his slave's defection or for some unknown injury. But Paul also implies that Philemon should give up this right to compensation; he recommends that the loss be "charged to his account" and that Philemon is himself indebted to Paul.

52. J. Rufus Fears, "The Theology of Victory at Rome: Approaches and Problems," *ANRW* 17.2: 737-826; Jewett, *Romans*, 779.

53. For detailed documentation for this next section, see the fuller discussion in Zerbe, *Non-Retaliation*, 249-64.

54. For the text, see F. L. Griffith, *Stories of the High Priests of Memphis* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1900), 32: "I will cause him to bring this book hither, a forked stick in his hand and a censer of fire upon his head."

55. Phil 1:28 might also be cited here. But that ambiguous text more likely refers to the adversaries' hope for the Messianic community's demise. See my forthcoming *Philippians* (Believers Church Bible Commentary; Herald Press).

56. A similar notion is evident in 1 Thess 2:16, the latter part most certainly, and all of it probably, however, is an editorial addition to Paul's text after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE.

57. On eschatological judgment for unrepentance and the rejection of Jesus's message, see Matt 10:14-15/Luke 10:10-12; Matt 11:21-23/Luke 10:13-15; Matt 12:38-42/Luke 11:29-32. On judgment for the persecution of Jesus and his followers, see Matt 23:29-30, 34-36/Luke 11:47-48, 49-51; Matt 23:37-39/ Luke 13:34-35; Matt 24:45-51/Luke 12:42-46. For discussion, see Zerbe, *Non-Retaliation*, 198-204.

58. See Zerbe, *Non-retaliation*, 232-40.

59. 2 Cor 1:5; Phil 3:10-11; Rom 8:17; 2 Cor 4:10-12; Gal 6:17; cf. Col 1:24; 1 Peter 4:13; 5:1.

60. Gal 2:19-20; 6:15; cf. 3:27; Rom 6:1-11; cf. Col 2:11-14; 3:3.

61. Gal 6:17; 2 Cor 4:7-11; 1 Cor 15:30-32. Paul's and Christian suffering is also on Christ's behalf: Phil 1:27-28; 2 Cor 4:11; 12:10.

62. 2 Cor 4:12. Cf. Phil 2:17; Eph 3:1, 13.

63. 2 Cor 4:17. Cf. Rom 5:2-4; 8:17-18; Phil 3:10-11; on the necessity of suffering, cf. 1 Thess 3:4.

64. See Michael Gorman, *Cruciformity: Paul's Narrative Spirituality of the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001); idem, *Inhabiting the Crucified God: Kenosis, Justification, and Theosis in Paul's Narrative Soteriology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), esp. ch. 4: "While We Were Enemies": Paul, the Resurrection, and the End of Violence, 129-60.

Chapter 10

1. For the application of this image to Scripture, I am indebted to Clark H. Pinnock, "'This treasure in earthen vessels': the inspiration and interpretation of the Bible," *Sojourners* Oct 9 (1980): 16-19. The figural use of this text beyond

its original application is consistent with Paul's own hermeneutical flexibility in appropriating his own sacred text; Paul uses this image to highlight how the power is not in his own instrumentality, but in God, and that the light comes not from the letter, but through the Spirit (2 Cor 3:4–4:7).

2. Gordon Matties, *Joshua* (Waterloo/Scottdale: Herald Press, 2012).

3. Perry Yoder, *Shalom: The Bible's Word for Salvation, Justice, and Peace* (Newton: Faith and Life Press, 1987).

4. Willard Swartley, *Slavery, Sabbath, War, and Women* (Scottdale/Kitchener: Herald Press, 1983), 96-149.

5. E.g. Robert McAffee Brown, *Religion and Violence*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1987); Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Philippe Bourgois, eds. *Violence in War and Peace: An Anthology* (Oxford and Malden: Blackwell, 2004); Slavoj Žižek, *Violence* (New York: Picador, 2008). Even when "violence" signified primarily some kind of overt physical harm to person or property, its use was certainly complicated in that it was not so much a descriptive term, but an evaluative one, denoting not so much something that is immediately injurious (physically), but something that is judged to be wrong, inherently harmful, or illegal. Thus, surgery, policing, or (just) war, for instance, could be excluded from its purview. It is certainly proper that violence is now seen in institutional, latent, verbal, psychological, systemic, covert, or social forms. But the term violence is now becoming a blunt, catch-all word of pejoration, replacing (or absorbing) words such as oppression, domination, harm, exclusion, marginalization, or discrimination.

6. The explicit reference to some aspect of theory or location in the very organization of scholarly communities in the Society of Biblical Literature has multiplied immensely in the last 25 or so years.

7. Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*, 3rd ed. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003); J. Harold Ellens, ed., *The Destructive Power of Religion: Violence in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, 4 vols. (Westport/London: Praeger, 2004); Joseph Hoffman, ed., *The Just War and Jihad: Violence in Judaism, Christianity and Islam* (New York: Prometheus Books, 2006); Jack David Eller, *Cruel Creeds, Virtuous Violence: Religious Violence across Culture and History* (New York: Prometheus Books, 2010); John Teeham, *In the Name of God: The Evolutionary Origins of Religious Ethics and Violence*, 5th ed. (Oxford and Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010); Charles Kimball, *When Religion Becomes Lethal: The Explosive Mix of Politics and Religion in Judaism, Christianity and Islam* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2011); Jeffrey Ian Ross, ed., *Religion and Violence: An Encyclopedia of Faith and Conflict from Antiquity to the Present*, 3 vols. (M. E. Sharpe Reference, 2010). For one rejoinder, see William Cavanaugh, *The Myth of Religious Violence: Secular Ideology and the Roots of Modern Conflict* (Oxford, 2009).

8. Yvonne Sherwood and Jonneke Bekkenkamp, eds., *Sanctified Aggression: Legacies of Biblical and Post-Biblical Vocabularies of Violence* (New York/London: T & T Clark, 2003); Shelley Mathews and E. Leigh Gibson, eds., *Violence in the New Testament* (New York/London: T & T Clark, 2005); David A. Bernat and Jonathan Klawans, eds., *Religion and Violence: The Biblical Heritage* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Phoenix, 2007); Ra'anan S. Boustan, Alex Jassen and Calvin Roetzel,

eds., *Violence, Scripture, and Textual Practices in Early Judaism and Christianity*, *Biblical Interpretation* 17/1-2 (2009); Peter G. R. Villiers and Jan Willem van Henten, eds., *Coping with Violence in the New Testament*, Studies in Theology and Religion (Leiden: Brill, 2012). Also noteworthy is the continued work of the SBL Section, Violence and Representations of Violence among Jews and Christians.

9. There are many strands of "nonviolence theory," one of which is enshrined in Mennonite confessions of faith, e.g. *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*, Articles 20–24. Swartley is to be applauded for seeking to keep peacemaking biblical and the Bible to be about peace; Willard Swartley, *Covenant of Peace: The Missing Peace in New Testament Theology and Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 1-10. At the same time, those who embrace that confessional commitment will make alliances and correlations in the broader nonviolence movement, not all of which will make the same kind of confessional commitments, and not all will have the same regard to Paul as an apostle of peace. Indeed, now some of the attacks on Paul for his violence come from precisely those who espouse a theory of nonviolence.

10. See, for instance, the concluding words in my "The Politics of Paul: His Supposed Social Conservatism and the Impact of Postcolonial Readings," in *The Colonized Apostle: Paul through Postcolonial Eyes*, ed. C. Stanley (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011), 73: "In contexts where Paul's authorial voice is venerated, it will be natural to highlight Paul's anti-imperial perspective, reading against the grain of received interpretations. On the other hand, in contexts where readers are open to placing Paul in broader dialogue with other voices in the Christian canon and in the merging Christian assemblies (including those that were silenced), it will be appropriate to highlight how Paul both challenges and reinscribes imperial and subordinationist schemes."

11. E.g. John G. Gager, with E. Leigh Gibson, "Violent Acts and Violent Language in the Apostle Paul," in *Violence in the New Testament*, ed. S. Matthews and E. L. Gibson (New York/London: T & T Clark, 2005), 18; Joseph A. Marchal, "Imperial Intersections and Initial Inquiries: Toward a Feminist, Postcolonial Analysis of Philippians," in *The Colonized Apostle*, 155.

12. *blepete* here has the dual sense of "observe" and "danger," as in the French "attention!"

13. Gager, with Gibson, "Violent Acts," 16-19.

14. For Roman violence, see for instance Magnus Wistrand, *Entertainment and Violence in Ancient Rome: The Attitudes of Roman Writers of the First Century A.D.* (Göteborg: Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, 1992); Andrew Lintott, *Violence in Republican Rome*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); Klaus Wengst, *Pax Romana and the Peace of Jesus Christ*, trans. J. Bowden (London: SCM Press, 1987).

15. See my forthcoming *Philippians* (Believers Church Bible Commentary; Herald Press).

16. The Masoretic Text of Ps 22:16 (Hebrew 22:17) is garbled. The verbs used in the Dead Sea Scrolls (*krh*) and the LXX (*oryssō*) overlap in meaning with *katatemnō*, referring usually to gouging or digging in the ground, but sometimes also to the incision or chopping of flesh. Paul's choice of *katatomē* is occasioned

not first by the required contrast with *peritomē*, but by the paronomasia of Phil 3:2, in its correlation with Ps 22:16.

17. Once this focus of Paul's rhetoric is recognized (the close correlation of 1:27–2:16 and 3:1–4:1), all the reasons to postulate multiple letter fragments collapse.

18. The profile of the Philippian assembly also appears to be more Judaic than Gentile in background.

19. For this general line of interpretation (but still assuming that Phil 3:2 refers to judaizers or Jews in some way), see Chapter 1 in this volume; N. T. Wright, "Paul's Gospel and Caesar's Empire," in *Paul and Politics; Ekklesia, Israel, Imperium, Interpretation*, ed. R. A. Horsley (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 2000), 173-81.

20. For instance, Gordon Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 293-96.

21. Joseph Hellerman, *Reconstructing Honor in Roman Philippi: Carmen Christi as* Cursus Pudorum (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 121-28. "No confidence in the flesh" (Phil 3:3) does not refer to a negation of circumcision in particular, but anticipates the question of worldly privilege and status more generally (Phil 3:4-21; cf. 1:27–2:11; similarly 2 Cor 11:18).

22. 2 Cor 1:8-11; 2:14-16; 4:7-12; 6:2-10; 11:23–12:10; Rom 5:3-5; 8:17-27, 31-37.

23. Augustine, *A Treatise against Two Letters of the Pelagians*, ch. 22; John Chrysostom, *Homily on the Epistle of St. Paul to the Philippians*, X.

24. Isaiah M. Gafni, "The World of the Talmud: From the Mishnah to the Arab Conquest," in *Christianity and Rabbinic Judaism*: *A Parallel History of their Origins and Development*, ed. H. Shanks (Washington, D.C.: Biblical Archaeological Society, 1992), 240-51.

25. "Hee warneth them to beware of the false teachers of the Circumcision."

26. For instance, Fee, *Philippians*, 294-96, quoting: The reason for the invective lies with Paul. Such people have been "dogging" him for over a decade, and as the strong language of Gal 5:12 and 2 Cor 11:13-15 makes clear, he has long ago had it to the bellyful with these "servants of Satan" who think of themselves as "servants of Christ" (2 Cor 11:15, 23). . . . Paul uses epithets that "turn the tables" on them, as to what they think themselves to be about in contrast to what he thinks. . . . [The first] metaphor is full of "bite," since dogs were zoological "low life," scavengers that were generally detested by Greco-Roman society and considered unclean by Jews, who sometimes used "dog" to designate Gentiles. Paul thus reverses the epithet; by trying to make Gentiles "clean" through circumcision, the Judaizers are unclean "dogs." . . . *katatomē*, used here, denotes "cutting to pieces," hence "mutilate." . . . Along with the play on "cutting" in Gal 5:12, where he urges them to "castrate" themselves, this is the ultimate derogation of circumcision, the most "cutting" epithet of all.

27. Mark D. Nanos, "Paul's Reversal of Jews Calling Gentiles 'Dogs' (Philippians 3:2): 1600 Years of an Ideological Tale Wagging an Exegetical Dog?" *Biblical Interpretation* 17 (2009): 448-82.

28. Marchal, "Imperial Intersections," 159.

29. For instance, Walter Wink, *Engaging the Powers: Discernment and*

Resistance in a World of Domination (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992); Neil Elliott, *The Arrogance of Nations: Reading Romans in the Shadow of Empire* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008), 143-66.

30. See Gordon Zerbe, "Peace and Justice in the Bible," in *Peace and Justice: Essays from the Fourth Shi'i Muslim Mennonite Christian Dialogue*, ed. Harry Huebner and Hajj Muhammad Legenhausen (Winnipeg: CMU Press, 2011), 124-43.

31. See Chapter 9 in this volume; William Klassen, *Love of Enemies: The Way to Peace* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 110-32; Richard B. Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament: Community, Cross, New Creation* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996), 16-59, 317-46; Swartley, *Covenant of Peace*, 189-253; Michael Gorman, *Inhabiting the Crucified God: Kenosis, Justification, and Theosis in Paul's Narrative Soteriology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 129-60.

32. E.g. Elliott, *Arrogance of Nations*, 12: "Paul issued no call to arms against Rome; he rallied no rebel garrison," even though "inescapably in conflict with the empire's absolutizing claims on allegiance."

33. Kent Yinger, "Romans 12:14-21 and Nonretaliation in Second Temple Judaism: Addressing Persecution within the Community," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 60 (1998): 74-96.

34. See Chapter 9.

35. See below on the "kyriarchic" character of Paul's worldview.

36. See, for instance, Jennifer Bird, "To What End? Revisting the Gendered Space of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 from a Feminist Postcolonial Perspective," in *The Colonized Apostle*, 175-85.

37. Neil Elliott, *Liberating Paul: The Justice of God and the Politics of the Apostle* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1994), 1-90.

38. Thomas R. Yoder Neufeld, *Killing Enmity: Violence and the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 98-121.

39. Philip L. Tite, *Conceiving Peace and Violence: A New Testament Legacy* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2004), 135-91.

40. Elizabeth A. Castelli, *Imitating Paul: A Discourse of Power* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991); Sandra Hack Polaski, *Paul and the Discourse of Power* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999).

41. Cynthia Briggs Kittredge, *Community and Authority: The Rhetoric of Obedience in the Pauline Tradition* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1998); Kathy Ehrensperger, *Paul and the Dynamics of Power: Communication and Interaction in the Early-Christ Movement* (London/New York: T & T Clark, 2007); Todd Still, "Organizational Structures and Relational Struggles among the Saints: The Establishment and Exercise of Authority within Pauline Assemblies," in *After the First Urban Christians: The Social-Scientific Study of Pauline Christianity Twenty-Five Years Later*, eds. T. D. Still and D. G. Horrell (New York/London: T & T Clark, 2009), 79-98.

42. For the imagery of warfare in ancient moral discourse, see Abraham Malherbe, "Antisthenes and Odysseus, and Paul at War," *Harvard Theological Review* 76 (1983): 143-73.

43. The notion of leaderless movements is a fairly recent innovation. On the issue of discipline and hegemony within (arguably analogous) radical movements,

see Richard J. F. Day, *Gramsci is Dead: Anarchist Currents in the Newest Social Movements* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2005). See also Chapter 12 in this volume.

44. Cf. Rom 14:10-12, where [personal] judgment against fellow members is censured, in favour of deferring to God's judgment.

45. Shillington, *2 Corinthians*, 237-38. His alleviating explanation is that (a) Paul does not attack his opponents directly, (b) his purpose is to steer the congregation from the misguided (triumphalist) teachings, (c) his desire is to defend the (cruciform) gospel, not his personal status, and (d) other texts confirm that Paul can also ignore abuse and that he is fundamentally committed to love and not retaliation. I think that in many circumstances (especially those where a very high view of Scripture is maintained) this will be a sufficient explanation, but in other settings an explanation that simply admits to rhetorical excess here will also be appropriate.

46. Marchal, "Imperial Intersections," 154-59. The word "violent" to depict Paul's ideology and texts is perhaps more frequently used in the work of Marchal in comparison to other scholars.

47. See Chapter 7 in this volume.

48. Joseph A. Marchal, "Military Images in Philippians 1-2: A Feminist Rhetorical Analysis of Scholarship, Philippians, and Current Contexts," in *Her Master's Tools? Feminist and Postcolonial Engagement of Historical-Critical Discourse*, ed. C. Vander Stichele and Todd Penner (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005), 265-86.

49. Michel Desjardins, *Peace, Violence and the New Testament* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 82.

50. See Zerbe, "Politics of Paul," 66-68; Chapter 8 in this volume.

51. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *The Power of the Word: Scripture and the Rhetoric of Empire* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 13-29, 82-109, 149-93.

52. Phil 2:9-11; 3:20-21; Rom 15:8-12; 1 Cor 2:6-8; 15:24-28.

53. Rom 8:18-25; 11:15; cf. Col 1:19-20; Eph 1:10, 22-23; 2:1–3:21.

54. I take the final statement on the final judgment of the Jews in 1 Thess 2:16 (at the least) to be a later gloss; but the heightened rhetoric against persecutors and non-believers in 2 Thess 1:5-9; 2:8-12 can't be so confidently discarded as non-Pauline in character or source.

55. Thomas R. Yoder Neufeld, *'Put on the Armour of God': The Divine Warrior from Isaiah to Ephesians* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 73-156; idem, *Killing Enmity*, 122-49; Swartley, *Covenant of Peace*, 222-53.

56. There is perhaps an irony that this is the one area where for Mennonites and biblical pacifists warfare is not always by definition labeled as violent. Still, this would be consistent with the common usage of violence, that it is not so much a descriptive word but an evaluative one, in which certain "violent" acts are deemed to be proper, and thus not specifically violent. See above n. 5.

57. Swartley, *Covenant of Peace*, 222-53; see Chapter 12 in this volume.

58. Elliott, *Arrogance of Nations*, 152-66.

59. Yoder Neufeld, *'Put on the Armour of God'*, 84-93; Gordon Zerbe, "'Pacifism' and 'Passive Resistance' in Apocalyptic Writings: A Critical Evaluation," in *The*

Pseudepigrapha and Early Biblical Interpretation, ed. James H. Charlesworth and Craig A. Evans (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 65-95.

60. Marchal, "Imperial Intersections," 159.

61. For instance, F. Nietzsche. For excerpts, see W. Meeks, *The Writings of St. Paul* (New York/London: W. W. Norton, 1972), 288-302.

62. See Chapter 8.

63. Citing texts such as Rom 6:6; 8:36; 1 Cor 2:2; 4:9; 2 Cor 6:5; 11:23-29; Gal 2:19.

64. Gage, with Gibson, "Violent Acts," 16-19.

65. Ibid., 16.

66. Ibid., 19. Since Paul had other Christological options before him—Jesus the prophet, teacher, healer, gloriously resurrected Son of God in heaven, and others—Paul's unique cruciform Christology requires special explanation. That Paul's Christology was that eccentric in this sense is historically doubtful.

67. At the very least, there is no discussion of Paul's supposed personality dysfunction in reference to current psychological, social-psychological, or socio-cultural theory.

68. See Luise Schottroff, Silvia Schroer, and Marie-Theres Wacker, *Feminist Interpretation: The Bible in Women's Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), 218-223, esp. Schottroff's discussion titled "Cross—Sacrifice—The Concept of God—Christology."

69. Gorman, *Inhabiting the Cruciform God*, ch. 4: "While We Were Enemies": Paul, the Resurrection, and the End of Violence, 129-60.

70. Other factors could be overlaid over it, for instance questions regarding the social and cultural location and function of interpretation.

71. For instance, in the preamble to *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*, 8, the first stated function of confessions of faith is to "provide guidelines for the interpretation of Scripture."

72. Marchal, "Imperial Intersections"; Bird, "To What End?"; Mathews and Gibson, "Introduction."

73. One might call this a "mediating" position, except that such mediation might certainly be rejected (as with many attempts at mediation) by either of the two ends of the continuum already noted, even when there is agreement on core values of nonviolence.

74. Jacob Taubes, *The Political Theology of Paul*, trans. D. Hollander (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004); Agamben, *Time That Remains*; Daniel Boyarin, "Paul among the Antiphilosophers; or, Saul among the Sophists," in *St. Paul among the Philosophers*, eds. J. Caputo and L. Martin (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), 109-40.

75. Paul, too, was aware of both the limits and the revelatory potentiality of the sacred written text (Rom 3:21-31; 2 Cor 3:4–4:6).

76. Caputo and Martin, eds., *St. Paul among the Philosophers*, 160-83.

77. On the theme of textual recapitulation, "the time of legibility," as opposed to interpretive license, see also the thought of G. Agamben, *Time That Remains*, 138-45.

Chapter 11

1. Nancey Murphy, *Religion and Science: God, Evolution, and the Soul* (Scottdale: Herald Press, 2002); idem, *Bodies and Souls, or Spirited Bodies?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Warren S. Brown, Nancey Murphy and H. Newton Malony, eds., *Whatever Happened to the Soul?* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998); Warren S. Brown and Malcolm A. Jeeves, "Portraits of Human Nature: Reconciling Neuroscience and Christian Anthropology," *Science and Christian Belief* 11 (1999): 139-50; Philip Heffner, *The Human Factor: Evolution, Culture, and Religion* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993); John R. Russell, N. Murphy, T. Merering, M Arbib, eds., *Neuroscience and the Person* (Vatican City State: Vatican Observatory, 1999); J. P. Moreland and Scott B. Rae, *Body and Soul: Human Nature and the Crisis in Ethics* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000); William Hasker, *The Emergent Self* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999); Kevin Corcoran, ed., *Soul, Body, and Survival*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001); Joel B. Green, ed., *What About the Soul? Neuroscience and Christian Anthropology* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2004).

2. Augustine, *On the Literal Interpretation of Genesis*, 19.

3. Tim Folger, "What Fills the Emptiness?" *Discover* (August 2008): 24-28.

4. For a sketch of the shift from a pervasive assumption of dualism to the predominant emphasis on monism or holism, see Murphy, "Human Nature: Historical, Scientific, and Religious Issues," in *Whatever Happened to the Soul?*, 21-26.

5. R. Gundry, *SŌMA in Biblical Theology, with an Emphasis on Pauline Anthropology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 147-56; J. Knox Chamblin, "Psychology," in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, ed. G. F. Hawthorne, R. P. Martin, and D. G. Reid (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1993), 765-75; John W. Cooper, *Body, Soul, and Life Everlasting: Biblical Anthropology and the Monism-Dualism Debate*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000); idem, "Biblical Anthropology and the Body-Soul Problem," in *Soul, Body, and Survival*, ed. Kevin Corcoran (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), 218-28.

6. This pervasive conception in evangelical circles is attributed by Joel Green especially to the "enormously influential" writings of Watchman Nee. See Joel B. Green, "'Bodies—That Is, Human Lives': A Re-examination of Human Nature in the Bible," *Whatever Happened to the Soul?*, 151.

7. Nancey Murphy, *Bodies and Souls, or Spirited Bodies?*, 1-37; see also idem, "Human Nature: Historical, Scientific, and Religious Issues," in *Whatever Happened to the Soul?*, 1-30. For Murphy, the biblical witness would suggest that both a radical dualism (which denigrates the body, and posits the immaterial soul as that which seeks reuniting with God) and a radical, reductionist monism (materialism, physicalism), in which there is no room for human uniqueness and relating with God, are "out of bounds."

8. Joel B. Green, "'Bodies—That Is, Human Lives'," 149-73; idem, "Scripture and the Human Person: Further Reflections," *Science and Christian Belief* 11 (1999): 51-63; idem, "Monism and the Nature of Humans in Scripture," *Christian Scholar's Review* 29 (2000): 731-43; idem, "Eschatology and the Nature of Humans: A Reconsideration of the Pertinent Biblical Evidence," *Science and Christian Belief* 14 (2002): 33-50; idem, "Body and Soul? Questions at the Interface of Science and Christian Faith," in *What About the Soul?*, 5-12; idem, "Resurrection of the Body: New Testament Voices Concerning Personal

Continuity and the Afterlife," in *What About the Soul?*, 85-100.

9. Green, "'Bodies—That Is, Human Lives'," 152.

10. For older bibliography see G. Harder and C. Brown, "Soul," *NIDNTT* 3.676-89; newer literature in J. D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 51.

11. E.g. "hardening of thoughts-minds" is parallel to the "veiling of heart," 2 Cor 3:14-15.

12. E.g. Paul can refer to the "refreshing" of the "innards" (Phlm 7, 20) or of the "spirit" (1 Cor 16:18; 2 Cor 7:13) without any significant difference in meaning.

13. That is, Paul can move from describing the human through the personal pronoun, and then make a parallel statement highlighting one of the specific faculties/aspects; e.g. "ourselves" in parallel with "our bodies," Rom 6:10-14; 2 Cor 4:7–5:10.

14. E.g. Phil 1:7; 4:7; Rom 1:21, 24.

15. Robert Jewett, *Paul's Anthropological Terms: A Study on Their Use in Conflict Settings* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1971), 448.

16. For the range of usage, see Dunn, *Theology*, 62-73.

17. E.g. Dunn, *Theology*, 52-61.

18. Emphasized especially by R. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, trans. K. Grobel (New York: Scribners, 1951), I, 192-203, and many scholars after him.

19. E.g. 1 Cor 13:3; 9:27; 7:4; Phil 1:20. In particular Rom 12:1-2 in connection with Rom 6:12-13, 16, 19. And especially 1 Cor 15:35-57.

20. References to a "spirit" especially associated with a person or a church include: Rom 1:9; 8:16; 1 Cor 2:11; 5:3-5; 7:34; 14:14; 16:18; 2 Cor 2:13; 7:1, 13; Gal 6:18; Phil 4:23; Col 2:5; 1 Thess 5:23; Phlm 25; Eph 4:23; 2 Tim 4:22; further possible references include: 1 Cor 4:21; 14:15, 32; 2 Cor 4:13; Gal 6:1; Phil 1:27; Eph 1:17. Many scholars hold that (with the exception of 1 Cor 2:11) this reference to a human spirit is but an apportioned manifestation of the divine Spirit, and in that sense can be one's own. E.g. E. Schweizer, "*pneuma*," *TDNT* VI, 434-35; Jewett, *Anthropological Terms*, 182-200; G. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1990), 24-26.

21. Dunn, *Theology*, 76-77. The (Holy) Spirit is "given" to a person (Rom 5:5; 2 Cor 1:22; 5:5; Gal 4:6; 1 Thess 4:8), "dwells" in a person (Rom 8:9, 11; cf. 1 Cor 6:19), and is "received" (Gal 3:2; 1 Cor 2:12), such that Paul can refer to believers as "having" the Spirit (Rom 8:9, 23; 1 Cor 7:40; cf. the "spiritual ones," 1 Cor 2:13, 15), or to be "one spirit" in union with the Lord (1 Cor 6:17). Contrariwise, it is also possible to receive a different spirit (2 Cor 11:4; cf. 1 Cor 2:11). It is the Spirit that "makes alive" in a moral sense (Rom 8:10), apportions different manifestations to believers (1 Cor 12:7-11), is the source of joy (Rom 14:17; 1 Thess 1:6), the source of revelation, teaching, understanding (especially of "spiritual" realities; 1 Cor 2:10-12, 16; 7:40), animates moral character (Rom 7:6; 8:4, 13-14; Gal 5:16, 18, 25), animates hope (Rom 15:13; Gal 5:5), intercedes by virtue of its discerning power (Rom 8:26-27; cf. 1 Cor 2:11-13), animates faith (2 Cor 4:13), and bears witness with a person's own (apportioned?) spirit (Rom 8:16).

22. Jewett, *Anthropological Terms*, 448; Dunn, *Theology*, 76.

23. Jewett, *Anthropological Terms*, 448-49. He observes that Paul also avoids

the regular interchangeability of *pneuma* and *psychē* characteristic of later Rabbinic usage, especially pertaining to the fate of the soul after death.

24. The Greek notion of a bodiless and immortal *psychē* that temporarily inhabits a body is explicit for example in Wisdom of Solomon 2:22; 3:1, 13; 7:27; 8:19; 9:15; 14:11; 15:8, 11; 16:9, 14; 4 Maccabees 1:20, 28; 13:13, 15, 21; 14:5, 6; 15:4, 25; 17:12; 18:23; Philo, *On the Sacrifices of Cain and Abel* 5; *On Dreams* 1.135, 181; *On Planting* 14; *On the Confusion of Tongues* 161; *On the Migration of Abraham* 18; and Josephus, *Jewish War* 2.154, 163; 7.341-60; *Jewish Antiquities* 18.18. The preservation and popularity of these writings among Christian theologians certainly contributed to (or expressed) the pervasive adoption of anthropological dualism in early Christian centuries.

25. Beginning in the second or third century. E.g. *Epistle to Diognetus* 6:1-8: "The *psychē* dwells in the body, but is not the body. . . . The *psychē* is invisible, and is guarded in a visible body. . . . The flesh hates the *psychē*, and wages war upon it. . . . The *psychē* has been shut up in the body, but itself sustains the body. . . . The *psychē* dwells immortal in a mortal tabernacle."

26. E.g. Jewett, *Anthropological Terms*, 449.

27. For an emphasis on the Hebrew notion of "heart" as constituting the critical foundation for Paul's anthropological understanding, see Jewett, *Anthropological Terms*, 447-48.

28. E.g. Rom 14:17.

29. Similarly when Paul wants to highlight life in its bodily aspect, he also draws attention to resurrection realities, e.g. 1 Cor 6:13-14. For other key texts on resurrection, see Rom 6:5; 8:17, 22-23, 29; 1 Cor 15:20-28, 35-57; 2 Cor 4:14, 16–5:10; Phil 3:10, 14, 21. For a comprehensive treatment, see N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 207-374.

30. For this reason R. Bultmann (*Theology*, I, 192) suggests that here Paul uses language that seems to regard the *sōma* as a body-form, which might be stamped upon various materials-substances, whether fleshly (psychic) or spiritual, a perspective more characteristic of his dialogue opponents than himself. Yet, the bottom line, Bultmann admits, is that in these verses "the underlying idea is genuinely Pauline: The only human existence that there is—even in the spirit of the Spirit—is somatic existence." Bultmann's reading of *psychikos* and *pneumatikos* to denote various "substances," however, is not quite on target. What Paul more has in view would appear to be different kinds of vitalities—animations in the two modes.

31. Wright, *Resurrection*, 200-206, 372-74.

32. Similarly, in connection with this, Paul's imagery for the reign of God has nothing to do with landscape, but the relational modality of "justice, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Rom 14:17).

33. Cf. the metaphor of the body being "the temple of the Holy Spirit within you," 1 Cor 6:19.

34. For this reading of the verb, see esp. G. Shillington, *2 Corinthians* (Scottdale/Waterloo: Herald Press, 1998), 109-11.

35. E.g. Jewett, *Anthropological Terms*, 274-77.

36. Space does not permit a careful discussion of the difficult passage in 1 Cor 5:1-5; for a very helpful and comprehensive recent discussion in non-dualist terms, see A. C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 395-97.

37. See Gundry, *SŌMA,* 87-109.

38. For an accessible and articulate rendering of 2 Cor 4:16–5:10 along these lines, see G. Shillington, *2 Corinthians*, 105-112; similarly Wright, *Resurrection*, 361-71.

39. M. Bockmuehl (*The Epistle to the Philippians* [Peabody: Hendrickson, 1998], 91-93) helpfully explains that to seek a final answer to this question of an intermediate state is to demand the impossible—to describe transcendence and eternity in immanent and temporal terms. Paul, he argues, does not directly address this question, and to focus on it misses the point of the passages in which hints are found. Wright, *Resurrection*, 226-27, 267, says that all we can gather is that Paul posits some experience of "consciousness" in the presence of the one who loved us.

40. Dunn, *Theology*, 489-90.

41. See Doug Harink, *Paul among the Postliberals: Pauline Theology Beyond Christendom and Modernity* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2003). For this rendering of Paul's theology primarily in "apocalyptic" terms, see esp. J. Christiaan Beker, *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980); J. Louis Martyn, *Theological Issues in the Letters of Paul* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1997); Douglas Campbell, *The Quest for Paul's Gospel: A Suggested Strategy* (London: T & T Clark, 2005), who calls this "pneumatologically participatory martyrological eschatology," over against justification by faith or salvation history models of Paul's theology.

42. For a resistance to any reading of Paul that assimilates him into modern immanentist terms (philosophically or politically), see the Jewish scholar J. Taubes, *The Political Theology of Paul*, trans. D. Hollander (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004).

43. E.g. 1 Cor 1–2; see Chapter 12 in this volume.

44. Murphy, *Bodies and Souls*, 28.

45. See N. Murphy, section on "Integration from a Radical Reformation Perspective," in *Why Psychology Needs Theology*, eds. A. Dueck and C. Lee (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 3-76.

Chapter 12

1. Theodore W. Jennings, Jr., "Paul and Sons: (Post-modern) Thinkers Reading Paul," in *Reading Romans with Contemporary Philosophers and Theologians*, ed. David W. Odell-Scott (New York: T. & T. Clark, 2007), 85-114.

2. Theodore W. Jennings, Jr., *Reading Derrida / Thinking Paul: On Justice* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 2-4.

3. As cited in Slavoj Žižek, *The Puppet and the Dwarf: The Perverse Core of Christianity* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003), 107, from the back cover of the French edition, which Žižek suspects must have been written by Agamben since it "provides such a precise résumé of the book." Cf. Giorgio Agamben, *The Time That Remains: A Commentary on the Letter to the Romans*, trans. P. Dailey (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), 144-45: "this orientation toward the past characteristic of Benjamin's messianism finds its canonic moment in Paul"; "these two fundamental messianic texts of our tradition, separated by almost two thousand years, both written in a situation of radical crisis, form a constellation whose time of legibility has finally come today."

4. Žižek, *Puppet and the Dwarf*, 171.

5. Ibid., 3, 6.

6. Alain Badiou, *Saint Paul: The Foundation of Universalism*, trans. R. Brassier (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003); Jacob Taubes, *The Political Theology of Paul*, trans. D. Hollander (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004).

7. This was illustrated at the 2005 Syracuse University conference on "Saint Paul among the Philosophers," where Badiou and Žižek were in attendance. My impression is shared by Alain Gignac, "Taubes, Badiou, Agamben: Contemporary Reception of Paul by Non-Christian Philosophers," in *Reading Romans with Contemporary Philosophers and Theologians*, ed. David Odell-Scott (New York: T & T Clark, 2007), 155-211, esp. 200-201, n. 5.

8. For a similar concept, see Barbara Epstein, "The Politics of Prefigurative Community: The Non-violent Direct Action Movement," in *Cultural Resistance: A Reader*, ed. Stephen Duncombe (New York/London: Verso, 2002), 333-346.

9. Here and in the remainder of this section on Agamben, parenthetic page number references refer to *The Time That Remains*.

10. See Giorgio Agamben, *The Coming Community*, trans. M. Hardt and A. Bove (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 1-4, 11, 44, 85-86, 107; and *Means Without End: Notes on Politics*, trans. V. Binetti and C. Casarino (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 3-11, 57-58, 116-17. An interesting treatment of the figuration of humanity at the end of history, in which "form of life" will not be possible to isolate bare life as the biopolitical subject, appears in his *The Open: Man and Animal*, trans. Kevin Attell (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), a reflection on an image of the messianic banquet of the righteous on the last day (preserved in a thirteenth century Hebrew Bible) in which the righteous are pictured with animal, not human heads. This opens a reflection on the enigma of the ultimate reconciliation of humans with their animal nature, taking up a Pauline theme of Romans 8:19. The righteous, however, "do not represent a new declension of the man-nature relation," but indicate a zone of non-knowledge that allows them to be outside of being, "saved precisely in their being unsavable" (*Open*, 92).

11. This is anticipated in his essay "In This Exile," in *Means without End*, 135-36: "The task that messianism has assigned to modern politics—to this human community that would not have (only) the figure of the law—still awaits the minds that might undertake it."

12. Agamben, *Time That Remains*, 1.

13. Agamben, *Means without End*, 135.

14. In this connection, Agamben, in *Time That Remains*, identifies three non-messianic interpretations of the Pauline "as not": (a) as eschatological "indifference" to the world (as proposed by Max Weber; pp. 20-22); (b) the model of Christendom, in which the "as not" is merely a mental reserve, a spiritualist indifference that is really an affirmation of dominant politics (p. 33); and (c) various philosophical modes of discourse in modernity (including Heidegger, Adorno, Kant, Forberg, Hegel, structuralism, deconstructionism, and Derrida) that imply some form of Stoic mental reserve and detachment, and at worst suggest an acquiescence and accommodation to the world as it is (pp. 33-39). Agamben is especially antagonistic to the transformation of the "as not" into an "as if," the reduction of religion and ethics into the mere embrace of fiction. Agamben is not so much worried about the matter of whether or not the messianic claim might be fiction as such; rather, he is more concerned about the ecclesial-political consequence of such a position. Such an approach is unable to "conceive of restoring possibility to the fallen," and contrasts with Paul's own

claim that "power is actualized in weakness" (2 Cor 12:9) (p. 38).

15. In this framework, Agamben, in *Time That Remains*, admits that Marx's original rendering of the Pauline "as not" is truly messianic, in that it rejects the individual-political disjunction, positing the coincidence of individual revolt and political revolution through the vehicle of the proletariat. In this case, the fulfillment of individual and egoist need coincides with a political revolution. Crucial is the idea of the redemptive function of the proletariat, which in itself incarnates the split between the individual and his social figure under capitalism; the revolution aims toward the dissolution of all estates, but only through the auto-suppression of the proletariat. But this view necessarily founders by the aporia created by the party, namely in the notion of the working class or of the vanguard, as the embodiment or vehicle for the dictatorship of the proletariat (pp. 31-33): (1) The identification of the proletariat with the working class is a most serious betrayal of Marx; for Marx this is only a strategic identification, "a historical figure contingent on the proletariat." (2) There is the theoretical problem of the party as identical to the working class while simultaneously different from it: that is, if ego need and social revolution coincide, why is a party needed? (3) There is the problem of organization, with the inevitable introduction of rule and its discipline. The party acknowledges that it is distinct from the messianic community, and yet pretends to coincide with it. (4) The organization inevitably succumbs to "right theory" as its criterion for inclusion, with resulting claims of infallibility, and necessary purges. (5) As a true and proper social identity which claims prerogatives and rights for itself, it is no longer a "historical figure contingent on the proletariat" and loses its revolutionary vocation. It establishes a rule and a law, that emulates the very rule of that which it seeks to oppose. For Agamben, then, any form of organizational vanguardism inevitably betrays the messianic.

16. According to Agamben, Paul negates other separations "in the name of another separation that is no longer a separation according to the *nomos*, but a separation according to the messianic proclamation" (*Time That Remains*, 46). Insofar as the law operates primarily in instituting divisions and separations, the messianic community is comprised of the division of the division (p. 47).

17. Agamben rejects Badiou's conception of Paul that there is a universalism above the cuts and divisions; for Agamben the universal will always be a remnant in messianic time (*Time That Remains*, 51-53).

18. J. Christiaan Beker, *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), 135-81, 303-49.

19. Jacob Taubes, *Occidental Eschatology*, trans. D. Ratmoko (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 10.

20. Gershom Scholem, *The Messianic Idea in Judaism (*New York: Schocken Books, 1971), 1-36.

21. Agamben, *Time That Remains*, 70-71, 100.

22. The disenchantment with thoroughgoing eschatology seems closely correlated with a comfortable political-social location, but also with a concomitant capitulation to a progressivist, immanentist consciousness of nature's necessity and cycles. For an appropriation of the Pauline (Christian) millennial vision in Filipino theology of struggle, see Gordon Zerbe, "Constructions of Paul in Filipino Theology of Struggle." *Asia Journal of Theology* 19/1 (April 2005): 188-220; reprinted in *The Colonized Paul: Paul through Postcolonial Eyes*, ed. C. Stanley (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011), 236-55.

23. Taubes, *Political Theology*, 53.
24. Beker, *Paul the Apostle*, 135-81, 303-49.
25. Žižek, *Puppet and the Dwarf*, 109-13.
26. Cf. Rom 14:17; Paul's word for *eudaimonia* is *chara*, joy.
27. E.g. Richard Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1–4:11*, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002).
28. Taubes's basic line of approach to Paul is already evident in his 1947 doctoral dissertation, *Occidental Eschatology*; see Joshua Robert Gold, "Jacob Taubes: Apocalypse from Below," *Telos* 134 (2006): 140-56, n. 48 for citation of essays which discuss influences on Taubes's reading of Paul.
29. Here and in the remainder of this section on Taubes, parenthetic page references refer to *The Political Theology of Paul*.
30. Marin Terpstra and Theo de Wit, "'No Spiritual Investment in the World As It Is': Jacob Taubes's Negative Political Theology," in *Flight of the Gods: Philosophical Perspectives on Negative Theology*, eds. Ilse N. Bulhof and Laurens Ten Kate (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000), 320-53.
31. Ibid., 324 (emphases original); they argue that Taubes is equally against an imperialistic secularism, which resists the incursion of political theology in the world, and against a political theology on behalf of the ruling order [Schmitt], but not against all political theology.
32. Wolf-Daniel, et al., "Afterword," in *Political Theology*, 121-22.
33. Ibid., 140-41.
34. On this two-fold refusal, see further Gold, "Jacob Taubes," 142-50.
35. For Paul there is only *one* love commandment, "an absolutely revolutionary act" relative to the powers that be, not a dual commandment as in the Jesus tradition; Taubes, *Political Theology*, 53. See also Hartwich, et al., "Afterword," 128-31.
36. Hartwich, et al., "Afterword," 128.
37. Taubes, *Occidental Eschatology*, 64.
38. Ibid., 64-65.
39. Gold, "Jacob Taubes," 142, 144, 148-51, shows that in his earlier *Occidental Eschatology*, Taubes includes as chief marks of (Pauline) apocalyptic (a) a modality of interpretation—reading (the signs of the times) and speaking (witnessing); (b) the interiorization of the Messianic via *pneuma* (in a manner parallel to, but distinct from Gnosticism); (c) the conferral of significance to the act of decision in the context of distress, versus capitulation to necessity, cycle, and inevitability; and (d) an eschewing of both the temptation to force the course of events, and the retreat to a passive comportment, against the self-immolating flames of eschatological intensity.
40. E.g. John Howard Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus: Vicit Agnus Noster*, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994). For Yoder's treatment of Paul's ecclesial themes, see also Doug Harink, *Paul among the Postliberals: Pauline Theology beyond Christendom and Modernity* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2003), 105-49.
41. Beker, *Paul the Apostle*, 135-81, 303-349. Crucial to Beker's approach to Paul is the thoroughgoing embrace of Paul's apocalypticism as the critical carrier and centre of his thought. If there is a problem of social conservatism in Paul, it is not one of fundamental theory, but instead, one of failure of nerve. There is certainly in Beker a more heightened interest in the "transformative vocation" of the messianic community in the rest of society than in pure alternative community formation and the delegitimation of all sovereignty (as compared

to Taubes and Agamben). Beker specifically resists the collapsing of futurist eschatology in the church into either spiritualization and/or a salvation-history oriented ecclesiologizing and institutionalizing, as occurred especially under the influence of Origen and Augustine, (p. 139) though admittedly underway already in the NT: "The vocation of the church is not self-preservation for eternal life but service to the created world in the sure hope of the world's transformation at the time of God's final triumph" (p. 313). "If God's coming reign will establish an order of righteousness that encompasses the created order (Rom. 8:19-21), and if the Pauline hope is not to be identified with a Gnostic discontinuity between the material and the spiritual (so that the material will simply perish and is therefore 'indifferent'), then one would expect that the church as the blueprint and beachhead of the kingdom of God would strain itself in all its activities to prepare the world for its coming destiny in the kingdom of God. . . . If the world is to be the scene of the "worship" of the Christian, then the church exists for the world in the world. Unless this is true, the sighing of the Christian for the redemption of the world (Rom. 8:19-21) is simply reduced to a faint ecclesial whisper" (pp. 326-27).

42. E.g. Slavoj Žižek, *The Fragile Absolute – or, Why is the Christian legacy worth fighting for?* (London/New York: Verso, 2000), 2.

43. Žižek, *Puppet and the Dwarf*, 108.

44. E.g. ibid., 3: "One possible definition of modernity is: the social order in which religion is no longer fully integrated into and identified with a particular cultural life-form, but acquires autonomy, so that it can survive as the same religion in different cultures. This extraction enables religion to globalize itself. . .; on the other hand, the price to be paid is that religion is reduced to a secondary epiphenomenon with regard to the secular functioning of the social totality. In this new global order, religion has two possible roles: *therapeutic* or *critical*. It either helps individuals to function better in the existing order, or it tries to assert itself as a critical agency articulating what is wrong with this order as such, a space for the voices of discontent—in this second case, religion *as such* tends toward assuming the role of a heresy" (emphases original). That is, "heresy" especially related to state- or society-demanded orthodoxy.

45. Ibid., 133-34.

46. Ibid., 136.

47. Slavoj Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject: The Absent Centre of Political Ontology* (London/New York: Verso, 1999), 171-72; he expresses an equal distaste for traditionalist communitarians (Taylor), universalists (Rawls, Habermas), and postmodern "dispersionists," all of whom share a reduction of the political.

48. While Žižek is sympathetic to Badiou's attempt to argue for a conception of universality in opposition to both a capitalist globalism and communitarian logic, he rejects Badiou's claim that Lacanian psychoanalysis is unable to provide the foundation for a new political practice. See *Ticklish Subject*, 3, 127-244. For his engagement with Agamben, see esp. *Puppet and the Dwarf*, 107-21, 134.

49. Žižek, *Fragile Absolute*, 160.

50. For a definition, see Žižek, *Puppet and the Dwarf*, 9-10.

51. Ibid., 171.

52. Žižek does not resolve the problem of how the immanent Holy Spirit can keep itself from becoming merely another big Other. While certainly suspicious of the Marxian notion of the communist utopia (insofar as it is founded on the notion of unbridled productivity and the notion of a balanced, self-restrained

society), and certainly wary of the possible co-opting of the revolution by the party, he still maintains a decisive place for the transformative vocation of an emerging revolutionary community.

53. Žižek, *Puppet and the Dwarf*, 118-21; *Fragile Absolute*, 128-29.

54. Žižek, *Fragile Absolute*, 120, 158-59.

55. Žižek, *Puppet and the Dwarf*, 111-12; *Fragile Absolute*, 129.

56. Žižek, *Fragile Absolute*, 129-30 (emphases original).

57. Ibid., 121.

58. Ibid., 130 (emphasis original).

59. Žižek, *Puppet and the Dwarf*, 108.

60. Ibid., 133.

61. Ibid., citing F. Rosenzweig, *The Star of Redemption*, trans. W. Hallo (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1985), 227.

62. Žižek, *Fragile Absolute*, 135.

63.Here and in the remainder of the essay, parenthetic page references refer to Badiou's *Saint Paul*. For the notion of evental truth, see further Badiou, *Being and Event*. "Truth procedures" apply to the domains of politics, art, science, and love, but not to religion-theology.

64. See Badiou, *Saint Paul*, 11-14, 55-64, 98-107.

65. See the lengthy analysis of this theme in Badiou by Žižek, *Ticklish Subject*, 145-58. In my view, when it comes to understanding Paul's politics, it is indeed crucial not to understand Paul's counter-imperial perspective as deriving from some envy or resentment. Paul's approach derives from his articulation of the messianic glad tidings, not from a reflex of discontent (as in the Nietzschean version); Paul refuses to make Rome as such the singular enemy or particular target.

66. Alfred Loisy, *The Gospel and the Church*, trans. C. Home, ed. Bernard B. Scott (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), 166.

67. Ibid., 165-69.

68. Vladimir Lenin, *Essential Works of Lenin: "What is to Be Done?" and Other Writings*, ed. H. M. Christman (New York: Dover Publications, 1987). Lenin argues for the establishment of an organization (party) at the centre of the revolution: to direct the efforts of the working class (identified as the proletariat) in the socialist revolution, to help achieve the dictatorship of the proletariat, and eventually the communist society. He posits a central organization to establish discipline according to "the most advanced theory," and rejects the more anarchist voices that favoured "spontaneity," "freedom of criticism," and "democratic" process. As a result, the document created a split in the international socialist movement, leading to the formation of the Third International in 1919, which was in turn eventually co-opted by its statist, Stalinist incarnation.

69. See Slavoj Žižek, *In Defence of Lost Causes* (London/New York: Verso, 2008).

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