

**THE MISSIONAL PURPOSE OF THE LETTER TO THE
EPHESIANS**

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DECLARATION

The content of this thesis is based upon a original complilation of material based upon a sythesis of primary and secondary sources to arrive at an original work of the author. The main argument of this thesis and arrangment of the supporting arguments is soley the work of the author.

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“Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever” (Eph 3:20).

ABSTRACT

The thesis reports an investigation of the letter to the Ephesians, on the hypothesis that the letter has a missionary purpose, presenting a missionary strategy for the church. A survey of the data regarding the letter's socio-historic context brought to light that although the society in Ephesus and Asia Minor was basically Greek, the Jewish component of the population was constantly increasing. The church in Ephesus featured an almost opposite composition: it basically consisted of Jewish members with an ever increasing number of Gentile believers. Since mission to the Gentiles did not form part of the Jewish thinking, Paul wrote his letter i.e. to convince his (Jewish) readers that they had a mission calling regarding the Gentiles and to accept Gentile believers equally as part of the body of Christ. An analysis of the letter contents, according to its structural built-up, confirms that the letter contains such a missionary purpose. The apostle's strategy towards convincing his readers of their mission calling features a number of arguments, often rooted in the Old Testament, to convince his Jewish readers. In these arguments the terms *οικονομία*, *mysterion* and *diakonia* in the letter take a central position. First the apostle argues that the missionary task of the apostles and of the church is part God's plan of redemption for mankind. The concept of *οικονομία* (Eph 1:10; 3:2; 3:9) is central to God's plan. In the letter is revealed that the plan (*οικονομία*) of God consists of different phases. The first phase was that mystery (*mysterion*) of God's grace in Christ was made known to Paul (Eph 3:2-7). Paul in turn made known the mystery to the Church according to the *diakonia* that God gave to the apostles (Eph 3:8-10). The Church in turn was to make known the mystery to the nations (Eph 3:11-13). The mystery of God's plan includes that through the preaching of the gospel the nations and ethnic groups are included with the Jewish believers into the body of Christ – united in one body. Thus united into one body, the preaching of the gospel to the nations takes place through the individual members of the Church (3:10; 4:1-5:20). For this *mission Dei* the church is equipped by the preaching of the words by those appointed for this task (*diakonia*) (Eph 4:11-16). The ethical and moral transformation of individual believers was the goal of mission and also part of the execution of the *mission Dei* (cf. Eph 4:17-5:20). The role of the individual believer in the *missio Dei* begins with inner transformation (Eph 4:22-25) and the simultaneous transformation of social relationships and social structures, as i.e. portrayed in the household codes (Eph 5:20-6:9), which have a missional intent and purpose. The Holy Spirit is the source of the energy and power for transformation of social relationships and social structures (Eph 2:18, 22; 5:16-19). Thus the execution of God's *οικονομία* for the salvation of mankind has a definite Trinitarian basis: the church is called by God to be united in the one body of Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit for the *mission Dei*. This strategy, as presented in Paul's letter to the Ephesians constitutes a sound starting point for the church in its mission to a multi-cultural society today.

OPSOMMING

In hierdie proefskrif word verslag gedoen van 'n ondersoek van die brief aan die Efesiërs, vanuit die hipotese dat die brief 'n missionêre doel het en 'n missionêre strategie vir die kerk stel. Vanuit die data aangaande die sosio-historiese konteks van die brief word aangetoon dat, alhoewel die samelewing in Efese en Klein-Asië basies Grieks was, daar 'n sterk groeiende Joodse komponent van die bevolking was. Die kerk in Efese, daarenteen, het aanvanklik die omgekeerde patroon van samestelling vertoon: Dit het basies uit Joodse lede bestaan met 'n immer toenemende aantal gelowiges uit die heidennasies. Aangesien sending aan die heidene nie deel van die Joodse verwysingsraamwerk was nie, het die Joodse gelowiges in Efese die gelowiges uit die heidennasies moeilik op gelyke vlak met hulleself aanvaar. Daarom het Paulus sy brief geskryf o.m. om sy (Joodse) lesers te oortuig dat hulle 'n sendingroeping met betrekking tot die heidene het en dat hulle die gelowiges uit die heidene as mede-lede van die liggaam van Christus moet aanvaar. 'n Ontleding van die brief-inhoud, volgens die strukturele opbou daarvan, bevestig dat die brief so 'n missionêre doel en strategie bevat. Ten einde sy lesers van hulle sendingroeping te oortuig, volg die apostel 'n aantal argumente, dikwels begrond in die Ou Testament, juis om sy Joodse lesers te bereik. In hierdie argumente neem die terme οἰκονομία, μυστήριον en διακονία 'n belangrike plek in die brief in.

Eerstens argumenteer die apostel dat die sendingtaak van die apostels en die kerk in geheel deel uitmaak van God se verlossingsplan vir die mensdom. Die begrip οἰκονομία (Ef 1:10; 3:2; 3:9) fokus op die uitvoering van hierdie plan van God. In die brief word aangetoon dat die uitvoering van God se plan (οἰκονομία) verskillende fases bevat. Die eerste fase was dat die misterie (μυστήριον) van God se genade in Christus aan Paulus geopenbaar is (Ef 3:2-7). Daarop moes Paulus, volgens die διακονία (dienswerk) wat God aan die apostels toevertrou het, die geopenbaarde misterie aan die kerk bekend maak (Ef 3:8-10). Die kerk op sy beurt moet die misterie aan die nasies bekend maak (Ef 3:11-13). Die misterie van God se verlossingsplan sluit in dat – deur die verkondiging van die evangelie – die nasies en etniese groepe saam met die Joodse gelowiges deel word van die liggaam van Christus – verenig in één liggaam. Te midde van die feit dat hulle in die een liggaam verenig is, het die lede van die kerk individueel die roeping om die evangelie aan die nasies te verkondig (Ef 3:10; 4:1-5:20). Vir hierdie *missio Dei* word die kerk en sy lede toegerus deur die volgehoue prediking van die evangelie deur predikers wat deur Christus vir hierdie taak (διακονία) aangewys is (Ef 4:11-16). Die etiese en morele transformasie van die individuele gelowiges is tegelykertyd die doel van die sending en deel van die uitvoering van die *missio Dei* self (vgl. Ef 4:17-5:20). Die rol van die individuele gelowige in die *missio Dei* begin by 'n innerlike transformasie (Ef 4:22-25), gevolg deur die transformasie van sosiale verhoudings en sosiale strukture, wat o.m. in die huistafels beskryf word (Ef 5:20-6:9) en wat uiteindelik 'n missionêre gerigtheid en doel bevat. Die bron van krag en energie vir hierdie transformasie is die Heilige Gees (Ef 2:18,22;5:16-19). Sodoende het die uitvoering van God se verlossingsplan vir die mensheid 'n besliste Trinitariese onderbou: die kerk word deur God geroep om in die een liggaam van Christus saamgevoeg te word en ontvang deur die Heilige Gees die krag en toerusting vir die *missio Dei*. Hierdie strategie wat deur Paulus in die brief aan die Efesiërs gestel word, bied 'n gesonde vertrekpunt vir die kerk vandag vir sy sendingtaak in 'n multi-kulturele samelewing.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AV Authorized Version

KJB-King James Bible

NASB New American Standard Bible

NEB New English Bible

NET New English Translation

NIV New International Version

NKJB-New King James Bible

NRSV New Revised Standard Version

RSV Revised Standard Version

New Testament books

Lk Luke

Mt Matthew

Ro Romans

Gal Galatians

1 Co 1 Corinthians

2 Co 2 Corinthians

Eph Ephesians

Php Philippians

Col Colossians

1 Th 1 Thessalonians

2 Th 2 Thessalonians

1 Ti 1 Timothy

2 Ti 2 Timothy

Tit Titus

Phi Pihilemon

Old Testament books

Ge Genesis

Ex Exodus

Dt Deuteronomy

Isa Isaiah

Jer Jeremiah

CHAPTER 1:

THE MISSIONAL PURPOSE OF THE LETTER TO THE EPHESIANS

1. PROBLEM STATEMENT METHODOLOGY AND ARGUMENT

The letter to the Ephesians seems to give a definite view on mission. The writer of Ephesians' view of his apostolic mission was *"to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ as the gospel and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God"* (Eph 3:8-9). In Ephesians 3:6 he writes: *"This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Jesus Christ."* From the rest of the letter it is evident that the apostle was convinced that his task was more than merely preaching the gospel to non-believers; it was to preach the gospel to them as a unifying message *"to reconcile both of them to God through the cross"* (Eph 2:16). Thus it seems that the result of Paul's mission would be to unite Jew and Gentile in the one body of Jesus Christ.

The letter also gives witness to the fact that the apostle's mission eventually became the mission of the church. In Ephesians 3:10 the apostle Paul writes that it was God's intent *"that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places"*. The message, which has to be proclaimed by the church, is that *"in Christ Jesus and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence"* (Eph 3:12). Thus the letter itself gives witness to the fact that the mission of proclaiming the gospel was no longer only the task of the apostles of the Lord, but had also become the mission of the church.

Yet a missionary focus of the Ephesians' letter is in scholarly dispute. This dispute is at best put into words by Kitchen (1994:9): "Mission is not the drive behind the theology of Ephesians". Also Strelan (1996:23) says that any talk of Ephesus as Paul's mission basis can only be used guardedly. On the other hand, Patzia (2001:127) believes that the church had its most significant growth during Paul's stay in Ephesus. "His missionary strategy changed from the itinerant 'man on the go' to a settling down in one place. His ministry became characterized by winning converts through his teaching and then depending upon them and his coworkers to begin churches in surrounding communities of Asia" (Patzia; 2001:127). Paul's use of co-workers in Ephesus may have been one of the factors for the rapid and extensive spread of the Christian community throughout Asia Minor.

"In Ephesus, we see an attempt at a more formal type of theological education. Paul was forced to leave the synagogue in Ephesus, 'so Paul left them. He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the

lecture hall of Tyrannus' (Acts 19:9b). Paul apparently used this time to teach new converts and prepare them to continue spreading the gospel and leading new believers. This was an amazingly successful school because within two years 'all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord' (Acts 19:10)" (Abah; 2012:320).

Although these words of Acts 19:10 ('all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord') are probably meant as a hyperbole, it necessitates an examination of the seemingly successful strategy of the mission that Paul employed in Ephesus and its surroundings.

2. THE SOCIO-HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The socio-historical background of the letter to the Ephesians also makes it an important object of investigation for missiology. The situation at Ephesus at the time revolved around religious/ethnic (Christians and Jews), social (ruling class, middle, low class, slaves) and economic set-ups (cf. Koester; 1995). In Ephesus the apostle was set to bring Christians from these divergent backgrounds into a unity (Eph 2:11-22). It seems that ethnic and cultural differences had to make room for a new ethos, which consisted in a unity of faith in Christ (Eph 2:19-22). In as far as the church in Ephesus could succeed in bringing such divergent groups together, it could serve as a model for the surrounding churches in the province of Asia where Jewish and Gentile Christians would have been compelled to become part of the one church (Eph 4:1-6).

Roland Allen (1962:129) points out the danger of separate communities being formed between Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians, which the apostle Paul would have foreseen. Furthermore, it seems that Paul, in order to overcome the danger of two separate groups being formed within the church, in his missionary strategy included the Gentiles and at the same time he kept a strong adherence to the Old Testament (cf. Barth; 1974:4). Käsemann writes about the context that the recipients of the epistle to the Ephesians, being themselves Gentiles, were in danger of divorcing themselves from their Jewish heritage (cf. Sampley; 1971:3). Therefore Paul wanted not to estrange the Jewish Christians in his strive to include the Gentile Christians in the one body of the church (Eph 3:1-9).

Although Käsemann recognizes the imminence of the Gentiles withdrawing from fellowship with the Jewish Christians he nevertheless neglects to show an interest in Jewish Christianity as a context for understanding the Ephesian letter (cf. Sampley; 1971:161). This strategy is probably supported on the one hand by the letter's strong emphasis on unity and on the other hand by the extensive occurrence of Jewish expressions and concepts throughout the letter. Markus Barth has shown that the letter to the Ephesians is

pervaded with material, which has a Jewish source (cf. Barth; 1974:4). The mention of *'the Christ'*, of his sacrificial death, of the temple, of circumcision, and the use of terms such as peace, grace, fear, mystery presuppose a pre-given significance (cf. Barth; 1974:4). Also expressions such as ἀπαβών (1:14), the enthronement and omnipotence of the Royal man (1:19-23), *"the fullness of him who fills all in all"* (1:22), *"the prince of the power of the air"* (2:2), *"sons of disobedience"* (2:2; 5:6), *"the un-circumcision"* (2:11), *"the covenants"* (2:12), *"peace"* (2:14, 16), *"the dividing wall of hostility"* (Eph 2:14,16), *"the law of commandments and ordinances"* (2:15), *"a holy temple"* (2:21), *"the sons of men"* (3:5), *"the wisdom of God"* (3:10) and *"the Father"* (3:14) will have to be considered as possibly being of a Jewish origin. The occurrence of such Jewish expressions does more than merely support the view that the author of Ephesians' intention was to immerse the Gentile Christian converts in Jewish theology, tradition and practices, thereby preventing an otherwise unavoidable split between Judaism and Pauline Christianity. The letter to the Ephesians addresses the problem of the Gentile Christians taking pride in their new position as believers accepted by God and divorcing themselves from Jews Christians (cf. Sampley; 1971:160). But it does more in that it specifically addresses the barriers of the Jewish Christians to the integration of the Gentile converts into one single Church. The first or primary addressees of the letter of Ephesians therefore seem to have been the Jewish Christians and then secondly the Gentile Christians.

The motivation of the author's use of Old Testament and Jewish thought, ethics and practices has to be considered as part of the argument for the identification of the first audience and a missionary purpose of the letter.

3. MISSION EXPRESSIONS AND METAPHORS IN THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS

Another important line of investigation for the study of Paul's missionary strategy in Ephesians seems to be the mission expressions and metaphors referring to the work of the Holy Spirit as part of Paul's mission. From the outset the Holy Spirit was regarded by the apostles as indispensable part of their missionary work cf. (Boer; 1961:100, Hinze & Dabney; 2001; Kärkkäinen; 2002; Welker; 2006; Taylor; 1973; Newbigin; 1978; Kuitse; 1993:110). Scholars have done some valuable research about the work of the Spirit and mission in some individual New Testament writings such as Luke (Kjeseth; 1973, 1985, Won; 2000 & 2001, Woods; 2001, Menzies; 2004, John (Brown, Raymond; 2003), Galatians (Lull; 1980), and Corinthians (Haykin; 1994). Yet, in spite of very useful studies work of the Holy Spirit as such in the letter to the Ephesians (cf. Lemmer; 1988), the pneumatology of the letter to the Ephesians *as related to the field of missiology* still remains largely undeveloped. Therefore the aim of this study is to open up the missiological aspect of the pneumatology-missiology of Ephesians. Fee (1994:661) maintains that much of the *"power"* language in Ephesians is an indirect reference to the Holy Spirit, "especially in contexts over

against the “powers” and the false “spirit” (Fee; 1994:661). However, the “power” vocabulary is used in various ways in Ephesians, so that each specific occurrence has to be observed in its context. Likewise the word “*Gentiles*” implied in Ephesians 2:19 is contrasted with the Gentiles who live a different life style (Eph 4: 17-18). It would seem that the author has two different views of the Gentiles; both tinted by his missionary strategy (cf. Yee; 2005:25). The term “*gentile*” is also used by the author as a rhetorical device in his argument to his first audience, the Jewish Christians.

Metaphors in Ephesians, which seem to have a definite missionary intent, are “*the body of Christ*” (Eph 1:23; 4:12) and the “*household of God*” (Eph 2:19). Arnold (1989:144) writes that “Mission is a definite implication of the head-body imagery where the readers are presented with a dynamic picture of a body empowered and directed by its head to penetrate the world with the gospel”. Also Wiley (2005:75) remarked: “Paul’s image of ‘the body of Christ’ supplied for Gentiles (*and especially for Christian Jews-TvA*) an image analogous to the way the Torah functioned for Israel”. Therefore, the relationship of the “body of Christ”-image with mission will be investigated.

The letter to the Ephesians contrasts the idea of *strangers and aliens* (Eph 2:19) with *fellow citizens and members of the household of God* (Eph 2:19). The “*household*”-metaphor seems to convey more or less the same symbolism as the “*body of Christ*”-metaphor. It will have to be established in what way the household was an instrument of the Apostle Paul and the Holy Spirit in reconciling the differences between Jewish and Gentile Christians and thus a vehicle for mission. Johnson (2003:207), however, points out the possibility that the “*household*”-metaphor could be related to the rise of a church structure but for Button (2003:44-93) it is a church consisting of households rather than household “churches”. Hence the function and structure of house communities and their contribution to the spread of the gospel have to be considered.

4. THE RELEVANCE FOR THE CHURCH’S MISSION TODAY

Since it is important for missiology that models for mission should have their basis in Scripture, the intended research should be important for missiology. Specifically in the situation in Africa, where the church has to be planted in multi-cultural societies, it calls for models that provide for bringing together Christians from different cultural and religious backgrounds into the unity of one church. In this respect the multi-cultural background of the society in which the Ephesians’ church was planted and had to continue proclaiming the gospel, could provide valuable Scriptural information. Therefore, the results of the intended study will be of importance for the development or renewal of mission strategies to be applied to the challenges of the mission of the modern-day church in a multicultural society.

In the light of all the above considerations about the Ephesian letter the preliminary hypothesis of the study is that not only the occasion and purpose of the letter to the Ephesians was basically missionary, but that also the letter contents contains what can be called a mission strategy of the apostle Paul in which he directly involved the Ephesian church and which was focused on unifying diverse groups into the one church of the Lord.

5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The above considerations give rise to the question: Was the letter to the Ephesians written with a specific missional purpose in mind, and if so, what strategy towards reaching that purpose does it present and how can this strategy be related to the church's mission today?

This basic question is accompanied by the following research questions:

- 5.1 What evidence does the social and historical situation of the author of the letter and its intended readers, especially regarding the relation between Jews and Gentiles, provide about a missionary approach of the apostle and the church?
- 5.2 What intrinsic evidence does the Ephesian letter as a whole and its separate parts present about the nature of, approach to, and strategy for mission by the apostle and the church?
- 5.3 What is the role of the church in the apostle's mission strategy, as presented in the letter to the Ephesians?
- 5.4 What is the role of the Holy Spirit in the apostle's mission strategy, as presented in the letter to the Ephesians?
- 5.5 What was Paul's mission strategy for the church, especially in Asia Minor, as presented in his letter to the Ephesians, and how does it compare to the general missionary strategy of the apostles, especially Paul as described in the rest of the New Testament?
- 5.6 What is the relevance of Paul's mission strategy, as presented in the letter to the Ephesians, for the church's mission today?

6. AIM AND OBJECTIVES

It is the overall purpose of the study to establish whether the letter to the Ephesians was written with a specific missional purpose in mind, and if so, to describe the strategy that is set in the letter towards reaching that purpose, and finally to suggest how this strategy be related to the church's mission today.

To serve this purpose the following objectives will be pursued:

- 6.1 To make a study of the social and historical situation of the author and intended readers of the letter, especially regarding the relation between Jews and Gentiles, and to describe its possible impact on the

missionary activities of the apostle and the church;

6.2 to investigate the Ephesians' letter as a whole and its separate parts in order to describe its possible missionary intent and nature;

6.3 to evaluate the role of the church in the apostle's mission strategy, as presented in the letter to the Ephesians;

6.4 to evaluate the role of the Holy Spirit in the apostle's mission strategy, as presented in the letter to the Ephesians;

6.5 to come to a substantiated description of the missionary strategy for the church as set by the apostle Paul in general and especially in his letter to the Ephesians; and

6.6 to indicate the relevance of the missionary strategy in Ephesians for the churches' mission today

7. CENTRAL THEORETICAL ARGUMENT

The central theoretical argument of this study is that the letter to the Ephesians gives evidence of a missionary purpose of the letter and a missionary strategy of the church in which the Holy Spirit is the power of God that unites Jewish and Gentile Christians in Jesus Christ, and that this strategy could be a sound starting point for the church in its mission to a multi-cultural society today.

8. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This New Testament and missiological study is done from within the Reformed tradition and the following methods will be used:

8.1 The social and historical situation of the author and intended readers of the letter will be investigated by means of literature study. This study will include introductory matters related to the Specific Canonics of the letter, such as its author, occasion and purpose. With regard to the intended recipients of the letter, special attention will be given to the relation between Jews and Gentiles in Asia Minor.

8.2 The investigation of the letter as a whole and its separate parts in order to detect traces of a possible missionary intent and nature will be an exegetical study. The exegetical model that will be followed is the grammatical-historical model. Special attention will be given to the semantics of words, phrases and passages in the letter that could relate to the mission of the apostle or the church. These will be done within the framework of the thought-structure and rhetorical structures of which the individual pericopes give evidence.

8.3 Based on the exegetical investigation the study will come to a description of the role of the church in the apostle's mission strategy, as presented in the letter to the Ephesians. This description will be done by way of a revelation-historical synthesis.

8.4 In a similar manner the study will come to a description of the role of the Holy Spirit in the apostle's mission strategy, as presented in the letter to the Ephesians by means of a revelation-historical synthesis of relevant exegetical material from the letter.

8.5 Bringing together into a coherent whole the conclusions of the study thus far, the study will proceed to make a description of the missionary strategy for the church as set by the apostle Paul in general, and especially in his letter to the Ephesians.

8.6 Finally, principle suggestions for a missionary strategy in a multi-cultural society will be made by applying the results of the study to the situation in our time. These suggestions will be based on a literature study leading to a cursory description of the challenges of the modern-day mission in a multi-cultural society. In comparing these results to the socio-historical situation of the Ephesians' church and by identifying mutual aspects, suggestions for possible applications will be formulated.

CHAPTER 2:

THE SOCIO-HISTORICAL SITUATION OF EPHESIANS

In this chapter the historical setting of the letter to the church in Ephesus is researched and described. The historical setting includes socio-historical but also other historical aspects such as the date, authorship and occasion. Special attention is given to the letter recipients and their social environment, allowing for my research hypothesis that the purpose of the letter was basically missional. Therefore, this chapter explores not only the Christian community but also the Jewish and Gentile communities in Ephesus and Asia Minor as possible mission objects in and around Ephesus. The hypothesis about the missional purpose of the letter is explained and supported in Chapter 5 (Paul's mission strategy for the church in Ephesus) and Chapter 6 (The purpose of the letter to the Ephesians).

Basic to any mission strategy is to identify the human objects of the mission. This is also true of Paul's mission in Ephesus. Therefore, in addition to the composition of the Ephesians' church, it has to be established who the population groups in Ephesus and its surroundings were at the time of Paul's third missionary journey. The ethnic composition and the relation between the different ethnic groups in Asia Minor have to be established¹. Of even greater importance than identifying the inhabitants of these areas, is to understand how their minds worked. Therefore, the socio-historical study in this chapter also involves a description of the worldview of these population groups and their cultural and religious outlook has to be described also, bearing in mind that these views were not cast in stone, but changed over time. Once this information has been collected, a comparison can be made with the mission strategy in the Ephesians letter after it has been identified (Ch 4 & 5). This will also enable the purpose of the letter to be formulated more concisely (Ch 8).

In order to make a legitimate study of the socio-historical setting of the mission in Ephesus as portrayed in the Ephesians' letter, some formal matters have to be addressed first, such as the date and authorship of the letter, and its audience and occasion.

1 "Barth has given no real attention to the ethnic factors that led to gentiles being excluded from the Israel of God" (Yee;2005:8). Yee (2005:6) argues that no real attention has been given to the ethnic factor.

1. AUTHORSHIP AND THE DATE OF THE LETTER

1.1. THE AUTHOR OF EPHESIANS

In the letter opening itself (Eph 1:1) the author identifies himself as “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ”. The integrity of the letter, its Pauline authorship has been disputed by New Testament scholars (Du Toit; 1996:110). It is accepted in this study that the Ephesian letter was written by Paul, the apostle, who arrived at Ephesus during his second missionary journey (Acts 19:1) and stayed there for two years, adopting Ephesus as evangelization centre for the surrounding areas of Asia Minor (Acts 19:10). However, when writing the letter to the Ephesians, the apostle was in a situation of imprisonment (cf. Eph 3:1; 4:1; 6:20).

It has to be kept in mind, however, that in Acts Paul is depicted differently from the Paul we meet in the letters. The scholars of the so-called New Perspective (e.g. Johnson; 1986; Dunn; (1983)² 2008) have pointed out convincingly that there is a difference between the Paul speaking in Acts and the Paul speaking in the epistles. This difference is most obvious when the apostle’s ideas and the language in his letters are compared to his speeches in Acts. Based on such a comparison, Johnson (1986:235) came to the conclusion: “The Paul of Acts, like the Peter and Stephen of Acts, does not speak in his own voice. He gives expression in his speeches to the religious perceptions – the theology – of Luke.” Therefore, it would be incorrect to ascribe the words and ideas spoken by Luke directly or unfiltered to Paul in Acts unlike the letters. It does not mean, however, that Paul is any more reliable as a historical source than Luke. “To those who want to play off Luke against Paul, it must be said that the issue is fundamentally not who is historically accurate, but who is theologically accurate” (Strelan; 2004:22). Therefore, the book of Acts will be used in a balanced manner as opposed to a direct mirror of and window into Paul’s theology and life. It but will be taken as a portrayal of his mission from Luke’s perspective. Wherever it is called for, the Lucian insight into Paul’s mission strategy will be compared to Paul’s own strategy discernible in Ephesians. These differences between the Lucan Paul and the Paul of the epistles will be taken into account in Chapter 3 and 4³.

1.2. THE PLACE AND DATE OF COMPOSITION

One of the matters that have been disputed is the date of the letter. The date of the letter is significant because it will determine the historical reconstruction of Paul’s missionary work at Ephesus. Furthermore,

² First published in *BJRL*, 65 [1983] 95-122.

³ Luke’s prologues tell us that he is writing an “orderly account”. He uses sources and he uses them critically.

it is significant for considerations about the relation between Judaism and Christianity at Ephesus in the time of Paul.

The problem regarding the date of Ephesians is that, unlike in some other letters of Paul, in this letter there are almost no references to specific times, places or persons from which calculated deductions can be made about the time it was written (cf. Dahl; 2000:419). Regarding the date of the letter Macdonald (2000:419-420) writes: "From a historical perspective, Ephesians is certainly one of the most elusive documents in the New Testament".

1.3. AN EARLY DATE OF THE LETTER: BEFORE THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE

The view amongst evangelical scholars is that the Apostle Paul wrote the letter to the Ephesians around 60-62 AD (Coetzee; 1995:56). The date corresponds to the place of authorship, Rome, during Paul's imprisonment. Mention of the whole praetorian (Php 1:13) and those of Caesar's household (Php 4:22) would naturally if not necessarily suggest captivity in Rome (Acts 24:26-27; 28:30)⁴. Paul could receive visitors freely, a situation which corresponds with the apostle's situation during his imprisonment in Rome (Acts 28:30-31).

The other plausible place of the origin of the letter is Caesarea, and the letter dated 58-59 AD. Arguments in favour of this view are that according to Acts 24:27 Paul was imprisoned in Caesarea for a period of two years, calculated to be 58-59 AD. Caesarea at that time was a boiling pot of political struggle between the Jews and the Romans. The riots in the year 66 in Caesarea ignited the Jewish War (Du Toit; 1996:128). This situation may also correspond to language in the Ephesian letter, such as (a) the ethnic dividing wall (Eph 2:14b), which has been removed in Christ, and the new temple (2:20); (b) the animosity between Jews and Gentiles (2:14c, 16b; cf. Col 1:21), which has been changed into peace in Christ (2:15b, 17); (c) the divine citizenship (2:19), which in Christ belongs also to the Gentiles. Such "politically orientated terms in Ephesians fit the situation of Paul in Caesarea so exactly that this city alone is suitable as a background" (Du Toit; 1996:128). Caesarea, therefore, cannot be absolutely excluded as the place from which the letter could have been penned. It is equally true, however, that the evidence used in favour of Caesarea could

⁴ "Only a Roman imprisonment fits the most natural understanding of the *praetorium* (Php 1:13) and members of the imperial service (Php 4:22) mentioned in the letter, as well as the impending and final nature of the decision upcoming in Paul's case (1:19-26; 2:23). There is no evidence that a procursular headquarters of a senatorial province such as Asia was ever termed a *praetorium* (cf. Bruce; 1983:23).

equally point towards the context in Rome. It can, however, be asserted that whether Rome or Caesarea is accepted as the place of origin of the letter, the letter was penned before 70 AD. It is a matter of preference between Rome and Caesarea for the place of origin of the letter as it will not have a significant influence on the study.

The years 60-70 A.D were turbulent times for the Jewish nation as there was animosity between the Jews and Gentiles in Caesarea and “street battles spread even to Jerusalem after a new high priest by the name of Ishmael ben Phabi had come to power (in A.D.61)” (Du Toit; 1996:128). It was the riots in the year 66 in Caesarea that ignited the Jewish War (Du Toit; 1996:128). Caesarea, therefore, cannot be absolutely excluded as the place from which the letter could have been penned because of language such as (a) the ethnic dividing wall (Eph 2:14b), which has been removed in Christ, and the new temple (2:20). (b) The animosity between Jews and Gentiles (2:14c, 16b; cf. Col 1:21), which has been changed into peace in Christ (2:15b, 17); (c) the divine citizenship (2:19), which in Christ belongs also to the Gentiles are examples, writes J. H Roberts (1983), of “politically orientated terms in Ephesians” (Du Toit;1996:128) that “fit the situation of Paul in Caesarea so exactly that this city alone is suitable as a background” (Du Toit; 1996:128). The evidence, however, could equally point towards the context in Rome.

The year 70 AD, however, is a benchmark for a historical reconstruction – the year when the temple in Jerusalem was destroyed. One of the most significant historical events for the Jewish nation was the destruction of the temple because the temple was the centre of Judaism⁵. If the letter was penned before the destruction of the temple, it would be significantly different for Jewish recipients than after this date. Up to this date the membership of Judaism was very broad and diverse, so that acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah by some Jewish group would be tolerated much more prior to the destruction of the temple (cf. Wedderburn; 2004:140).

In Acts there is no mention of persecution of the Christians by the Roman Empire. It is reasonable to assume then that prior to 70 AD the Roman Empire regarded Christianity merely as a sect within the Jewish religion and so took no notice and action against it. Prior to 70 A.D Christianity would not have sought to define itself and its relationship to Judaism as sharply as after that date in order to distinguish it from Judaism in the view of the Roman Empire. This included a re-evaluation of the relation between Judaism and Christianity.

⁵ Jesus Christ was accused of speaking against the temple institution (Lk 21:5-6; Mt 12:6, 26:61) in the case made against him before the Sanhedrin. Stephen spoke against the temple as the exclusive house of God.

1.4. A POST-PAULINE DATE OF THE LETTER: AFTER THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE

In recent years the tendency is that most theories support and advance a post-Pauline date for Ephesians, later than 70 AD (cf. MacDonald; 2000). A late date would imply that the political situation and the relationship of Christianity towards Judaism would be very different from what it had been before the destruction of the temple, especially in the Roman provinces, including Asia Minor.

1) Separation of Jew and Gentile after 70 AD

The Jews of the Diaspora were not directly involved in the Jewish war of 66-70 AD since they could not afford to jeopardise their own favourable position in the provinces (Trebilco; 1991:34, 186). In Ephesus there was already an anti-Jewish attitude and feeling, partly due the fact that the Jews did not worship Artemis (Acts 19:33-34). Yet, the destruction of the temple would have evoked some reaction or response from the Jews in the Diaspora, be it only sentiments of resentment, anger and subversive hostility towards Gentiles. In the very least there would have been identification with the plight of the Jews in Palestine by the Diaspora Jews⁶. Jewish culture, nationalism and identity would have been strengthened as a result and protective measures undertaken to ensure the survival of Judaism such as the consolidation and reform of Judaism. Faced with a hostile environment, heightened by the act of aggression by the ruling Roman Empire to destroy Jerusalem and the nation of Israel, the Jewish communities would have formed more exclusive communities in order to retain their Jewish identity (cf. Trebilco; 1991:186). This resulted in a growing distance between Jews and Gentiles in the Roman provinces after 70 AD, also in Asia Minor and in the society of Ephesus (Acts 19:34).

2) Separation between Jew and Gentile in society and its effects on the church

The growing distance between Jews and Gentiles in the society at large would have resulted in a greater rift between Christianity and Judaism, Christianity being perceived as a Gentile faith by Jews and Judaism as a Jewish faith by Gentiles. Käsemann places Ephesians in a post-Pauline period in which the Gentile Christians lost their historical roots in Judaism and consequently rejected Jewish Christians (Käsemann; 1966:288-97) as a result of this divide. In his view the Jewish Christians in the Church would have withdrawn from the fellowship, resulting in a rising Jewish/Gentile conflict and hostility in the church. But this would only be consistent with a post-Pauline date after the destruction of the temple in 70 AD (cf. Trebilco; 1991:25).

3) Evidence from the letter to the Ephesians

⁶ The Diaspora Jews made regular trips to Jerusalem for Jewish feasts (1 Co 16:8; Acts 20:16, 21:27-29). The temple served as a unification edifice.

If the Ephesians letter, however, had been written after the temple destruction, it would reflect something of this growing distance and even animosity between Jewish and Gentile Christians, and the Jews who were being alienated from the community. The text of Ephesians 2:11-22, the pericope dealing with the relation between the Jewish Christians (the “circumcised”) and the Gentile Christians (the “uncircumcised”), is then to be read against this background – a response by the author to the tensions between Jew and Gentile in the light of such a catastrophic event – would be the socio-historical context. The author would have had in mind the imminent split of the church initiated by Jewish Christians struggling for self-preservation and the preservation of Jewish identity and the reason for the hostility towards the Gentiles. The relationship between the Jewish and Gentile Christians within the church would have been detrimentally affected as a result of the collapse of the Jewish nation and religion, even more so within Palestine, and the intention of the author in Ephesians would have been to prevent such a division in the church. The fall of Jerusalem threatened to alienate the Diaspora Jews from the Gentiles and the church would have consequently begun to be progressively less Jewish and more Gentile in its composition from that date as Jewish believers separated themselves from Gentile Christians. The church would certainly not have been immune to the tensions and hostility in the society. However, the letter gives evidence to the opposite as it appears that the issue of reconciliation and unity in the letter is not set against the background of alienation between Jewish and Gentile believers. Instead, what we find is an inclusion of the Gentiles into a historically Jewish faith and community (Eph 2:11-12) and historical tensions between Jew and Gentile. The author endeavours to ensure that the Gentiles are not treated as second class citizens by the Jewish Christians (Eph 2:19). As a matter of fact, in the entire letter there are no references or allusions that can be read against the background of the disaster of the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple. On the contrary, the author alludes to the temple as a historical edifice, using it as metaphor for the unity of the church who is “joined together to rise to become a holy temple” (Eph 2:21). This would certainly have been very insensitive of the author to have used such a metaphor if the temple in Jerusalem was no longer in existence and the icon of Judaism. Even Paul, who at times could be very insensitive, as we learn from his bold communication to the Corinthians (2Co 2:1-2), would not have been so insensitive to rub salt unto a national and religious disaster.

1.5. ARGUMENT OF HIGH ECCLESIOLOGY FOR A POST-PAULINE DATE

One of the arguments that have been given for a post-Pauline date of Ephesians is the absence of the “parousia” in the letter which supports a high ecclesiology⁷. Käsemann (1966:288-97) places Ephesians in

⁷ For a summary of earlier works on the understanding of the parousia in Ephesians see F-J. Steinmetz, ‘Parusie-Erwartung im Epheserbrief? Ein Vergleich’, *Bib* 50 (1969) 328-36. Most commentators on Ephesians (including

a post-Pauline period where the imminent expectation of the “parousia” has vanished and the church is moving towards “Catholicism” A high ecclesiology does not imply that the church would have experienced less spontaneous growth but it would have been more structured, which has certain implications for the mission of the church. The implication would be that in Ephesians we are dealing with a well-organised, planned and structured mission in Ephesians, thoughtfully executed. However, the idea of a “high ecclesiology” is refuted and not supported by the letter itself. Dahl (1977:311) rightly argues that there is no clear evidence in Ephesians (Eph 4:1-16) that points to institutionalization. Rather, Ephesians 4:1-16 emphasizes the contribution of each ministry (Eph 4:8-11) as well as each member (Eph 4:2, 10) to the unity and maturity of the Church. The letter to the Ephesians captures something of the spontaneous beginnings of the Christian faith and an early mission structure of the church. The structure of the church was functional, promoting growth and mission. The church structure advocated in Ephesians is not rigid and hierarchical, but rather that of Jew and Gentile growing up into one body of Christ (Eph 4:15) for the purpose of missions (Eph. 4:1-16; 5:7-21; 6:10-20). It was a church that was rapidly growing and had to deal with practical issues, such as cultural, social, economic and ethnic integration, “speaking the truth in love” (ethical -Eph 4:15) and daily fellowship between Jews and Gentiles. The internal evidence supports the view that Paul’s mission in Ephesus was well planned but still in its initial rapid growth phase and that there was room for a spontaneous mission of the Spirit in Ephesus (Eph 4:12-16, 5:13-17, 18-21; Ac 19:18-19). Merklein (1973:118-158) argues that the centre of the letter is the Christology as opposed to ecclesiology. To this should be added the pneumatology, as the Christology and pneumatology of Ephesians are inextricably bound together. This matter will be dealt with in Chapter 3.

1.6. ARGUMENT OF UNITY IN THE LETTER AS AN ANSWER TO AN EXISTING CONFLICT

Finally, the theme of unity in the letter is closely linked to the date of the letter. If the letter is post-Pauline, written to second generation Christians, it would be set in a completely different context than a Pauline letter written to first generation Christians. The function of the theme of unity would have to be read against a context of conflict, division and an imminent split in the congregation. The letter would be an

Schrage, *Ethics*, 245; F. J. Matera, *New Testament Ethics: the legacies of Jesus and Paul*, Louisville: Westminster, John Knox, 1996, 228) argue for the absence of the reference of the parousia in Ephesians. A few scholars continue to hold that the concept of the parousia is still present in the letter: e.g. E. Percy, *Die Probleme der Kolosser- und Epheserbriefe*, Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1946, 114-16, 299-300; A. L. Moore, *The Parousia in the New Testament*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1966, 161; A. van Roon, *The Authenticity of Ephesians*, Leiden: Brill, 1974, 258-61.

attempt to address a situation of a conflict and crises intervention to prevent a schism in the church⁸. This view, however, is refuted by Witherington III (2007:220), who proposes that the letter is set in a situation of an existing unity “celebrating the union of Jew and Gentile together in the Pauline community”⁹. He argues that there is no exhortation to organise unity because the Spirit has accomplished it (cf. Witherington III; 2007: 285). His identification of the context as one of an existing unity forms the background against which he interprets Eph 3:1 as an indication of Paul’s eagerness to keep the unity which had already been created by the Spirit of Jesus Christ. The author would agree with this interpretation. The intention of the author was to strengthen an already existing unity. The letter to the Ephesians deals with the importance and necessity to maintain the unity of the Spirit (cf. O’Brien; 1999:64). Unity already exists but it is a fragile unity and so the admonition to maintain it (esp. Eph 4:3, 4-6).

1.7. SUMMARY OF CONSIDERATIONS OF THE DATE AND PLACE: RELEVANCE FOR MISSION STRATEGY

Taking all of the above considerations into account, it seems plausible that the letter to the Ephesians is Pauline, written before the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem. A date somewhere in the middle of the sixth decade of the first century is the preferred date, and correspondingly Paul, is taken to be the author of the Epistle.

The relevance of the letter date is that it has an influence on the development and reconstruction of the relation between Jews and Gentiles and the structure and role of the church. Before the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple the Jewish Christian community in Ephesus was open to the integration of Jews and Gentiles into the synagogue and also into a single church. The theme of unity between Jew and Gentile is set against the background of the integration of Jews and Gentiles into a new community, in which both groups were struggling to, find one another and discover their communal identity.

⁸ Scholarship has been dominated by the conflict theory. Fischer (1973:79-94) sees in Ephesians a concrete historical situation of alienation between Christians and Jews. The school of thought links a post-apostolic period and dating of the letter with a concrete situation in the letter. Although the letter of Ephesians is set within a concrete situation it is not the post-apostolic period and the already actualised alienation between Jews and Gentile Christians that is the background of the letter. This theory has determined the context and the way the letter has been read.

⁹ “The presence of anamnesis ... indicates that the audience members had knowledge of salvation and reconciliation, but were still in need of reminders that would sharpen their consciousness of their participation in the blessings of the Christian faith” (Witherington III; 2007:223; Jeal; 2000:62).

1.8. CORRELATION OF DATE AND BACKGROUND

The issues in the letter correlate with the date the letter was written. Issues typical of a newly formed multi-ethnic and cultural community are consistent with the letter written at an early date. Consistent with an early date is the context of the community in Ephesus, a community struggling with formative matters such as its identity and boundaries (Eph 4:17-19). But these issues would have been different if the letter was written to a post-Pauline church, an institutionalized church which was seeking to preserve its identity and mission incentive began by its founders, Prisca, Aquila, Apollos and Paul. In terms of the church's mission there is a difference between the early years of the new missions' initiative and the later years of a well-established, post-Pauline mission seeking to keep the movement passionate (Rev 2:1-7). If the letter was a late composition the struggles might have been with a fixed structure, which had become too rigid and inflexible. But this is not necessarily the case. It is possible that a well ordered congregation structure and ecclesiology could have arisen early on but a good order, structure and fixed forms would certainly not have been finalised early on. Fischer rightly asserts that "the author is resisting early "catholicizing" (Fischer; 1973:147)¹⁰. Dunn asserts that the absence of any reference in Ephesians to bishops and elders calls in question Fischer's claim (Dunn; 1977:352). He writes that with regard to the eschatology of Ephesians, Dunn refers to examples of the delay of the parousia in Paul's letters¹¹, where he concludes that if 'early Catholicism' started with the fading expectation of the parousia '*early Catholicism is already well established within the NT*' (Dunn; 1977:351; Petrenko; 2011:9). The absence of elders and deacons in Ephesians is to be attributed to the mission structure of the church, which the author was advocating.

2. THE FUNCTION OF CHURCH STRUCTURE IN THE LETTER

The purpose of the structures in a growing and developing mission conscious church was to promote healthy growth, relationships and facilitate the expansion of the church and the missions' strategy of the church. The function of the elders and deacons in an institutionalized church would have served a different purpose, the perpetuating of the traditions and culture of an established church. But the structures advocated by the letter to the Ephesians church served the purpose of supporting the mission character of the church. Dahl therefore, rightly argues that there is no clear evidence in Ephesians (esp. Eph 4:1-16) that points to the institutionalization of the church. Rather, Ephesians 4:1-16 emphasizes the contribution of

¹⁰ Fischer (1973:79-94) argues that the increasing number of Gentile Christians led to the repudiation of Jewish Christians and Jewish tradition (*Tendenz und Absicht des Epheserbriefes*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht).

¹¹ 1Co 15:51ff.; Phm 1:20ff.; 1Th 4:15-17, Dunn (1977:344-363) also includes some texts from Col, Eph, Luke-Acts, John and 2Pe (*Unity*, 344-363).

each ministry (Eph 4:8-11), as well as each member (Eph 4:7) to the unity and maturity of the church” (Dahl; 1977:4). The church in the letter is to be seen as an organism and not an institution (Bruce; 1984:237-40).

2.1. THE AUDIENCE OF THE LETTER

For any mission strategy both the subject and the object of the mission are of basic importance. For this reason a study of Paul’s mission strategy in Asia Minor calls for a thorough look at the audience¹² the apostle had in mind when he wrote the letter. Paul’s audience in Ephesus is known not only from the Ephesians letter itself but light can also be drawn from other canonical writings dealing with Paul’s interaction with the Ephesians, such as Acts and the letters to Timothy. There are also archaeological and even text-critical considerations that seem to be relevant.

2.2. IDENTITY OF THE AUDIENCE: JEWS AND THE GOD-FEARING GENTILES

The general opinion by scholars is that the audience in the letter was largely Gentile, converts out of paganism. Dahl (1986:36-37) writes: “If there were Christians of Jewish origins among the addressees, the author takes no account of them”. Best (1998:48) identifies the Ephesians’ audience as largely a gentile audience. According to Best “there were a few Jews who were not circumcised”, but he immediately shows that he understands them to be proselytes. The audience is identified as Gentile on the grounds of Eph 2:11; 3:1-2; 4:1, 17 but these texts could equally point to gentile proselytes and God-fearers since in Acts 19:9 Paul certainly would have taken Gentiles with him from the Synagogue. The argument to support the view that the Gentile audience might have included many proselytes and God-Fearers is that, according to Luke, when Paul left the synagogue after speaking persuasively about the kingdom of God, he had many Jewish and Gentile disciples who followed him (Acts 19:8-10). The Gentiles the author of Ephesians implicitly addressed in Ephesians 2:11-13 were familiar with the distinction made by Jews, the distinction between the circumcised and the uncircumcised. This implies that the audience was familiar with the religious categories used by the Jews and may have been proselytes or God-fearers.

¹² Since the letter was probably meant to be read aloud, the term “audience” is preferred to “readers”. Furthermore, since the letter probably was a circular letter, intended not only for the ears of the church in Ephesus, but also for the surrounding churches (Rev 2:1-3:22) the term “audience” is used, rather than “addressees”.

2.3. GENTILE CONVERTS FROM PAGANISM

There are a few scholars who question the general accepted opinion that the letter was written to a gentile audience. MacDonald causes us to re-think the perspective the letter to the Ephesians represents. She suggests that the epistle “may represent the voice of the Jewish Christian minority which, along with the growing number of Gentiles, is devoted to Paul as a leading authority”, (MacDonald; 2004:419-441) but she still holds to the generally accepted view that the majority of the recipients of the letter were Gentiles. She argues that Ephesians 2:11-22 is best understood as reflecting significant engagement with the life and fate of the Jewish people (MacDonald; 2004:419). The historical reconstruction of the context of Ephesians she suggests is made in the light of the situation of the Jews in the empire under Domitian, as she is an advocate of a post-Pauline date for the letter.

2.4. JEWISH CONVERTS FROM JUDAISM

That a large portion of the audience came from a Jewish background is supported by Luke’s account in Acts 19, according to which the first converts in Ephesus seem to have been Jewish. Luke reports that when Paul arrived in Ephesus the second time, he met some disciples who had received the baptism of John but had not heard about or received the Holy Spirit (Acts 19:1-7). It can be assumed that they were not present at Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was poured out upon all the Jewish believers who were present (Acts 2:5, 10). Having been baptised by John, these first disciples of Paul in Ephesus were undoubtedly Jewish because they had not heard about Jesus Christ¹³. Furthermore, Luke reports that Paul spent the following three months in Ephesus teaching, and he did so pointedly in the synagogue (Acts 19:9). He chose the synagogue because it was from the synagogue that he was able to build a solid base through the converts he made from Judaism. At the synagogue it was likely that Paul would meet not only Jews but also gentile proselytes or God-fearers (cf. Allen; 1962:22). Thus the information from Acts 19 gives reason to believe that the first believers in Ephesus, and hence the audience of the letter to the Ephesians, were initially Jewish converts and proselytes or God-fearers who were influenced by Judaism.

¹³ John the Baptist required repentance and confession of sin (Mt 3:2, 6). The call of John the Baptist and the call of the Old Testament prophets were to call the people from worshipping foreign idols to return to a life of covenant obedience (cf. Jer 3:7, 10; 14:4:1-2). The call of John the Baptist was exclusively to the people of Israel, Jewish people. These twelve disciples were therefore Jewish believers.

2.5. JEWISH BACKGROUND FROM EPHESIANS

One of the clues, which help us to understand the audience, is the language that is used in the letter itself. From the letter's language it seems that the audience probably was of Jewish background. In contrast to other letters written by Paul at that time, e. g. the letter to the Colossians, in Ephesians he frequently makes use of Old Testament texts and expressions that are typically Jewish. Abundant Jewish expressions throughout the letter have been identified in the research of especially Yee (2005)¹⁴, such as the following¹⁵:

The introductory eulogy is deeply rooted in Jewish Scripture (Yee; 2005:35). "It is safe to say that "wisdom" language in the introductory eulogy can be located within the Jewish "wisdom" tradition" (Yee; 2005:38). "The language "to be holy and unblemished before him", is exclusively Jewish: it refers to God's relationship with the people of Israel (Dt 7:6; 14:2; 32:6; Isa 63:16; twice; 64:8; Jer 31:9; Mal 1:6; 2:10)" (Yee; 2005:38).

The author's perspective of the husband-wife relationship, is clearly informed by the Jewish Scriptures" (5:31; Ge 2:24; cf. 4Q416. 2.4.1-13; Mt 19:5). "The idea of "putting on the armour of God" is wholly and exclusively Jewish". Jewish expressions in Eph. 6 are "flesh and blood" (6:2; Sir 14:18; 1 Enoch 15:4; San. 91a; Mt 16:17; 18:23; 1Co 15:50; Gal 1:16; Heb 2:14, "having girded your loins" (6:14; Ex 12:11; Jer. 1:17; Judith 4:14), "having put on the breastplate of righteousness" (6:14; Isa 11:5; Wis 5:18), "the helmet of salvation" (6:17; Isa. 59:17), "the sword of the spirit, the word of God" (6:17; Isa 49:2; Hos 6:5), and "open my mouth" (6:19; Eze 3:27; 29:21; Wis 10:21; Sir 15:5; 24:2; Esd 9:28; 14:37-41; 1QH 10:7) (Yee; 2005:42-45).

"There is now a broad consensus that the idea of divine secrets and purposes, which were once hidden but have been revealed or made "seen" by divine agency, is clearly a reflection of the Jewish apocalyptic thought in which God is the revealer of mysteries (Da 2:18-19; 27-30; 1QpHab. 7:4f; 1QH. 4:27f; 1QS 3:23; 4:18; 11:5-7; 1Qmyste; 2 Esd 13:38; 14:5; 1 Enoch 51:3; 103:2; 2 Bar 81:4, et.al) (Yee; 2005:41). "The aeon of this age can be understood as castigating terms underscoring the incongruity of Gentiles who walked according to the creation rather than following the Creator par excellence" (Yee; 2005:51). The idea that the Gentiles were "alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of

¹⁵ We do not claim that Judaism is the only background to Ephesians (as opposed to a Greco-Roman background) or that the author of Ephesians is literarily dependent or influenced by these writings, rather the Jewish texts facilitate our insight into the symbolic universe of Ephesians by comparison with their parallel structures of thought.

promise” (Eph 2:12) indicates that from a Jewish perspective it was the Gentiles who were the outsiders (*ta ethne*; 2:11; 3:1; 4:7)¹⁶.

In Ephesians expressions such as “*sons of disobedience*” (υἱοὶς τῆς ἀπειθείας in Eph 2:2; and υἱοὺς τῆς ἀπειθείας in 5:6) are evidently Jewish. There are also numerous examples of concepts that have to be read against their relevant Jewish background, such as the concept of creation, καὶνὸν ἄνθρωπον (Eph 2:15). In Rabbinic Judaism a heathen coming to know God is as though he has been newly created by whoever helped him to attain knowledge of God (cf. Moritz; 1996:42). The letter to the Ephesians was penned by an author immersed in Jewish tradition and culture. The author draws upon the Mosaic Torah in Ephesians 6:2, “*Honour your father and mother*” (Ex 20:12), which he indicates is a preeminent commandment. He connects the commandment with an exhortation to fathers which has its origins in the responsibility of the father for the children in Jewish families (Safari & Stern; 1974-76:vol. 2:796). The letter is deeply steeped in the Jewish traditions regarding Gentiles and their conversion. For this reason the Jewish character of Paul’s thought is in fact the key to the understanding of the church and mission¹⁷.

2.6. ORIGINS OF JEWISH LANGUAGE, THOUGHT AND SOURCES

The use of abundant Jewish expressions throughout the letter has to be explained. One possibility is that “the author’s language and metaphors have been shaped by lifelong familiarity with the Jewish Scriptures” (Yee; 2005:42)¹⁸. This would mean that the Jewish expressions were not included into the letter intentionally but were merely a reflection upon the author and his Jewish perspective and identity. However, this possibility is reduced by the frequency in which Old Testament texts were used explicitly in Ephesians and the appearance of issues related to the Torah in key passages of Ephesians (e.g. Eph 2:13-17; 5:31; 6:2). At the same time it should be noted that other letters written by Paul in more or less at the

16 The “evidence in Ephesians is quite enough to show that the author's language, terminology, thought and ideas can be best explained by the hypothesis that his conceptual background is sufficiently and characteristically Jewish” (Yee; 2005:68).

17 The Jewish understanding of Gentiles and their conversion in the second temple period is of foundational importance for understanding Paul’s conception of the role of his churches in mission (cf. Ware; 1996:171).

18 “There are no less than 30 allusions which can be conveniently detected in Ephesians, passages which appear in Ephesians are written in bold letters **4:14**/Isa 57:20; Sir 5:9; **4:24**/Ge 1:26-27; Wis 9:3; **4:25**/Zec 8:16; **4:26**/Ps 4:5; Pr 4L5; Dt 24:15; **4:30**/Isa 63:16; **5:21**/Ex 29:18; Ps 40:6; Eze 16:9; **5:31-2**/Ge 2:24; 1Co 6:16; Mt 19:15; Mk 16:7-8; **6:2-3**/Ex 20:12; Dt 5:16; Mt 15:4; Mk 7:16; Lk 18:20; **6:4**/Pr 2:2; 3:11; **6:7/2** 1Ch 19:6; **6:9**/Lev 25:43; **6:10**/Isa 40:26; **6:13**/Wis 5:17; **6:14**/Isa 11:5; 59:17; Wis 5:18; **6:15**/Isa 5:27; Nahm 2:1; **6:16**/Wis 5:19, 21; **6:17**/Isa 49:2; 59:17; Hos 6:5” (Yee; 2005:42).

same time, such as the letter to the Colossians, do not feature such Jewish expressions (cf. Lincoln; 1990:16-57; Dunn; 1996:136-137)¹⁹. Therefore it can be accepted that these explicit Jewish expressions were introduced intentionally by the author.

The Jewish language and expressions in the letter, if included intentionally, may be a clue and an indication of who the audience was²⁰. There are two possible scenarios: either the author wanted to familiarise his audience with these expressions and incorporated them into the history of Israel (i.e. they themselves were not from Jewish background), or he knew that they were familiar with these Jewish expressions (i.e. most of them were from Jewish background). As far as the first scenario is concerned, the question why Paul would want to familiarise his audience with these expressions needs to be answered. The general tendency in scholarship has been to accept this tension without endeavouring to resolve it (Best; 1998:52). A possible explanation is suggested by Meeks (1977:215), who interprets this data as “the unity of Jew and gentile in Ephesus only makes sense as long as Christians were still strongly conscious of their Jewish heritage”. Meek’s suggestion, however, true as it may be, does not provide a satisfactory answer to the problem. As a matter of fact, considerations in favour of the second scenario seem to carry more weight.

The particular use of terms such as περιπατω (Eph 2:2, 11; 5: μυστήριον (Eph 3:3, 5:32, 6:19), κοσμοκράτωρ (Eph 6:12) suggests that the author assumed that his audience recognized this terminology (Moritz; 1996; ‘Reason for Ephesians, 10, n.27.’)²¹. This is in favour of the second above scenario. How, then, is it possible that believers in Ephesus and Asia Minor were familiar with typical Jewish expressions and terminology? Strelan (2004:292) suggests that “the problem is removed once it is presumed that the majority – or at least many – of the readers are Jews”. He reaches the conclusion on the grounds of Acts and the study of the writings of Paul but makes little or no use of the letter to the Ephesians. Based on the information provided in Acts 19 about the beginnings of the Christian community in Ephesus, Strelan writes: “In Ephesus there was a church of both Jews and Gentiles and the number of Jews was significant, even if they were not the majority” (Strelan; 2004:191). Although we are unable to ascertain the number of Jews and Gentiles in the community, it is evident that there were Jews and Gentiles in the Ephesian church (cf. section 3 below), as the author takes care to distinguish between his gentile and Jewish audience in Ephesians (Eph 2:11, 3:1). But did the author distinguish between his Jewish and Gentile audience or was

¹⁹ See e.g. Lincoln (1990:16-57); J. D. G. Dunn, ‘Deutero-Pauline Letters’ in J. Barclay and J. Sweet (eds.), *Early Christian Thought in Jewish Context*, Cambridge: CUP, 1996, 136-37; Moritz, *Mystery*, *passim*.

²⁰ The frequent and explicit use of the Old Testament (in contrast to Colossians) may indicate that there was a significant Jewish contingent among the readers (Moritz; 1996:1-8, 29-31, 213-18).

²¹ For a thorough study on the Jewish perspective of Ephesians see Yee, “‘You who were Called the Uncircumcision’”, 46-58 and *passim*.

he speaking about Jewish perspectives or from a Jewish perspective? He “speaks about the Gentiles from the perspective of a Jew” writes Yee (Yee; 2005:13)²². The idea that the audience contained many Jews, if not a majority, is supported by who the implied audience was. As a type of rhetorical device the author wrote as if the audience he was addressing was Gentile, but the implied audience was the Jewish believers to whom he deemed it necessary to give an account of his mission to the Gentiles (Eph 3:6, 7-9). So it seems that, although explicitly addressing the Gentile believers in the church, the author was implicitly speaking to the Jewish believers. Therefore, in the letter itself the implied audience and the real audience may be distinguished, with a further distinction between the “insiders” and the “outsiders”.

2.7. THE JEWISH INFLUENCE ON THE LETTER FORMULATIONS

The Jewish sources used in the letter have to be explained. It can best be explained that the audience, although not being exclusively Jewish, consisted of a large number of Jewish Christians or God fearing Gentiles and proselytes familiar with knowledge of the Old Testament. The reason for the Jewish influence was because Paul’s strategy for beginning with the synagogue was not only because he felt a responsibility towards the Jews as his own people, or because it was the most convenient or best place for him to begin. Making converts at the synagogue also enabled St. Paul to receive into the church at least some people who could read the Old Testament and were acquainted with the Law (Allen; 1962:22). Many of these converts at the synagogue probably were not of Jewish origin, but must have been proselytes or God-fearing Gentiles, but there seems to be no substantial evidence for this (Allen; 1962:21). Yet the inclusion of God-fearing Gentiles from the synagogue was very valuable to the young church. These God-fearers were “people who were before dissatisfied with idolatry or heathen philosophy and were seeking a truer and purer teaching” (Allen; 1962:22). Allen explains, “They had already an established conviction of the Unity of God and the folly of idolatry. They possessed a conviction and experience of the necessity of morality for true religion. And they had an acquaintance with the theory and practice of public worship and some knowledge of the Old Testament” (Allen; 1962:21). But this does not suffice to conclude that the audience was largely Gentile. Luke’s account consistently mentions that it was both “Jews and Greeks living in Ephesus” (Acts 19:10, 17), who were all “seized with fear” and embraced the gospel of salvation. Acts 19 - 20 does not indicate that a particular group was dominant in the church and it cannot be concluded from Acts 19-20 that it was the Gentiles who were the largest ethnic group in the church. It is a general assumption that the audience was Gentile upon which scholars, such as Arnold, have based their research.

²² The New Perspective on Paul endeavours to read the NT from Paul’s perspective as a Jew. The divergence with the New Perspective is that it does not recognise that Paul broke away from Judaism.

Similar to the “we/you” passages in the letter; the unique Jewish-Gentile composition of the letter audience has definite implications for how certain other words and phrases that refer to the audience should be understood in this letter. The following words and phrases are involved:

- (1) The term τὰ ἔθνη in Ephesians: 2:1-4; 2:11; 3:1; 6; 4:17, normally translated as “Gentiles”, in this letter might be understood in different ways as the “nations”.
- (2) The identity of “the saints” in Ephesians 1:1, 15, 18 and 2:11-22 needs to be established.
- (3) The personal pronouns “we” and “you”, especially in the first three chapters of the letter, normally understood as references to the Jewish Christians (“we”) and the Gentile Christians (“you”) will need to be re-interpreted.

In Chapter 4 & 5, in which exegetical matters are considered, the identity of appellations such as these in the Ephesian letter will be investigated in the light of the above conclusions about the letter audience. Each time the author uses one of these appellations, it will have to be established whether he has in mind the Jewish audience, or the Gentile audience, or both.

1) τὰ ἔθνη

The term τὰ ἔθνη in Ephesians: 2:1-4; 2:11; 3:1; 6; 4:17 (mostly translated as “Gentiles”) has been used by most scholars to identify the audience as being Gentile. From the above conclusion, however, a new understanding of the term τὰ ἔθνη is called for, at least in the Ephesians’ letter. There are indeed scholars who have pointed out that term can mean more than simply “Gentiles” – it may also refer to those areas outside of Palestine where the Diaspora Jews and others lived “outside of direct jurisdiction of Jerusalem and under the political government of a foreign nation or power (cf. Deissman & Strachan; 1910). The context of Eph 2:11-22 indicates that the outcome of faith in the gospel was a new community in which both Jew and Gentile had equal status, having been preached to on an equal footing that had come into existence (cf. Pereira; 1983). If the author intended to lay stress upon an ethno-cultural conflict between Jew and Greek in Asia Minor, we would expect him to indicate these ethnic groups in more explicit terms in Ephesians 2:11-22 and 4:17-19 (cf. e.g. 1 Cor 12:13; Gal. 3:28). In context of Ephesians 3:6 τὰ ἔθνη indicates “the nations” evident in the contrast made between the nations and the nation of Israel in contrast to 2:11 in which Jew and Gentile are opposite pairs that are juxtaposed.

2) “The saints” as an indication to the audience of the letter

The letter to the Ephesians is addressed to “the Saints”, which most probably has in view all the Christians but it may also have in view the Jewish or Gentile Christians.

The phrase “all the Saints” in the first prayer (Eph 1:15), argues Caird, is directed towards all Christians, Gentiles and Jews and is a rhetoric technique to break down the barriers between Gentiles and Jews (Caird; 1976:43). The second occurrence of “The Saints” (Eph 1:18) may mean either Jewish Christians or all

Christians” (Witherington III; 2007:242)²³ but it is more likely that it has in view all Christians. In terms of a rhetoric technique to break down barriers, the word “Saints” can be a description of the recipients with the view of identifying the Gentile believers with Israel’s heritage (Yee; 2005:35).

The “Saints” can mean either Jewish Christians or all the Christians in Eph 2:11-22, but evidently in the context “it refers to Jewish Christians” (Witherington III; 2007:240).

The term “Saints” (Eph 3:18) in the second Ephesians’ prayer (Eph 3:14-21) also has in view another meaning, the entire Christian community, past, present and future, that includes all the believers who are living and deceased, those “in the heavens and on earth” (Eph 3:15), thus indicating a continuity between believers of all time. This unity transcends the limitations of space and time. It is this eternal community which is implied in Eph 3:18 and 4:12 by the term “Saints”.

The term “the Saints” as used in a range of contexts is unable to provide us with a clear indication of the specific identity of the audience.

3) Personal pronouns - Insider and outsider boundaries

The “insider-outsider” language is most obvious in Paul’s use of the pronouns “we” and “you” in the letter. Taking into account Paul’s own Jewish ethnic background, it seems obvious that the first plural personal pronoun “we” (and accordingly “us” and “our”) in 2:11-3:6 refers to the Jewish audience of the letter (cf. Witherington III; 2007:237), whereas the personal pronoun “you” may be regarded as addressing the Gentile audience.

It would be incorrect, however, to assume that a certain pronoun can consistently be identified with one audience. In the letter there are many shifts in pronouns.

- In the section Ephesians 1:11-14, for example, there are various pronouns shifts: It begins in 1:11-12 with “we” (the Jews), then in 1:13 there is a shift to “you/r” (the Gentiles) and in 1:14 the pronoun “our” has both in view (Jew and Gentile together) (cf. Fee; 1994:669).
- Likewise in Ephesians 2:11-22 the author begins again with his original pronoun “you” (Gentiles), in 2:11-13 the pronoun “you” (the Gentiles) shifts and is replaced by “our” in 2:14 (Jew and Gentile together), again “we” in 2:18 (Jews and Gentiles together), and in 2:19-22 “you” (Gentiles), emphasizing the unity that has been accomplished in Christ.
- A very striking example is Ephesians 3:1-13, where the author in verses 1-4 begins with “you”, but this time he juxtaposes it to τὰ ἔθνη (“ta ethane”) in verses 6 and 8 (“the nations” = all ethnic groups outside of Christ). He juxtaposes their new identity in Christ, the new community they have become a part of, to their past identity as “the Gentiles”. The pronouns “our/we” 3:11-13 (Jew and Gentile together) thus have this new community and identity in view.

Thus it seems that Paul in addressing his audience gradually moves from the Jews (“we”), to the Gentiles (“you”), and then to both (“we”). So the rhetorical strategy of the author is not only to “speak about the

Gentiles from the perspective of a Jew” (Yee; 2005:13), but rather to subtly break down barriers between Jews and Gentiles in the church.

The intention of the author with this insider-outsider language probably was to influence the Jewish believers’ perspective of the Gentiles in the church and to replace this with a new perspective of a shared communal identity (Eph. 3:6) (cf. Yee; 2005). However, this new perspective thinking which the author requires of his audience does not mean that he intends for either the Jews to give up their heritage or for the Gentiles to adopt Jewish culture and practices. His intention is for them to bring their thought process (Eph 4:17, 23) and worldview (Eph 4:18-19, 22) in line with their new identity “in Him” (Eph 4:21), Christ, the negotiation of a new identity (Eph 4:24; 5:8), an identity in which mission is a core value (Eph 4:12-16, 5:9). At the same time it is possible that the author may be calling upon the Gentile audience to respect the Jewish Christians and their Jewish origins (Eph 2:12) (cf. Strelan; 1996:95-96). The research of Strelan (1996:95-96) is of great value because it gives a more accurate picture of the character of Paul’s mission as a dual mission, to both Jew and Gentile (Acts 19:17). Paul was sent as apostle to both the Gentiles and the Jews (Acts 9:15). Therefore he did not focus exclusively upon the Gentiles, as some have depicted him, as the exclusive missionary to the Gentiles. Even though Paul understood an important part of his calling and role as being “the apostle of the Gentiles”, he never neglected his responsibility to his own countrymen, and in the case of Ephesus had great success among the Jews (Acts 19:8, 10, 17).

3. THE INFLUENCE OF THE AUDIENCE IDENTITY ON THE LETTER

So it can be accepted that, in contrast to most other churches that originated in those areas, a significant segment of the church in Ephesus was Jewish, with an equally significant segment of Gentile believers. It seems that in Ephesus there was no one ethnic group that exercised dominance over another. In this respect the Ephesians church community was unique and its situation different from that of other multi-ethnic churches of the time²⁴.

The intention of the author was to strengthen an already existing unity. Unity already exists but it is a fragile unity and so the admonition to maintain it (esp. Eph 4:3, 4-6). The primary reason that Paul wrote the letter is not to address an existing problem of unity.

²⁴ The community in Rome, unlike the community in Ephesus, had conflict. This was due to a large Gentile majority and Jewish minority, which led to the Jewish Christians being marginalized. But when we compare the letter to the Ephesians with Romans it is apparent that the conflict is not identical. The conflict in Rome is from the predominately Gentile majority directed at a Jewish minority

The author of Ephesians may either speak about the Gentiles from the perspective of a Jew or it may indicate a large contingent of Jewish believers in the audience and/or a Jewish leadership of the Church. The author used expressions and language that had Jewish overtones which only a Jewish Christian would have been able to recognize and identify as drawing upon the Old Testament and a Jewish worldview. It may be a reflection upon the Jewish background, culture and understanding of the author, revealing his Jewish identity and presuppositions or more probable it may have been written with a Jewish audience in mind. The author makes use of a rhetorical device as literary strategy to addresses the Gentile audience (Eph 1:13-14; 2:11-13, 19, 22; 3:1; 4:17-19) which seems unnecessary unless of course the actual intended audience were Jewish to whom he deemed it necessary to give an account of his mission to the Gentiles (Eph 3:6, 7-9). Paul makes use of this kind of indirect approach elsewhere in his letters (2 Co 8:1-4). So it seems that, although explicitly addressing the Gentile believers in the church, the author was implicitly speaking to the Jewish believers. We can conclude that it is very probable that Paul achieved a large following among many Jews in Ephesus (cf. Strelan; 2004:2) and that a significant segment of the congregation was Jewish. The frequency in which Old Testament texts were used explicitly in Ephesians and the appearance of issues related to the Torah in key passages of Ephesians support this conclusion (e.g. Eph 2:13-17; 5:31; 6:2). The author draws upon the Mosaic Torah in Ephesians 6:2, “*Honour your father and mother*” (Ex 20:12), which he indicates is a preeminent commandment. He connects the commandment with an exhortation to fathers which has its origins in the responsibility of the father for the children in Jewish families (Safari & Stern; 1974-76:vol. 2:796). The community in Ephesus was unique and its situation different from that of other multi-ethnic communities²⁵. The community may have consisted of a large number of Jews and Gentiles, but there was no one ethnic group that exercised dominance over another.

4. ONE CHURCH OR SEVERAL CHURCHES IN EPHEBUS

Archaeological evidence indicates that by 431 A.D. Ephesus had “more than twenty churches” (Koester; 1995:23). “In Ephesus twenty or so churches and buildings assumed to be churches have been discovered up to this time” (Scherrer; 1995:2). Several of these churches dating before 431 A.D. were built outside the city (Scherrer; 1995:23), probably because the early church faced persecution in the city and therefore had to meet outside the city.

Since there is little evidence of the existence of church buildings before the third century, Worthington III (2007:205) argues that there were no church buildings in the first century. In Acts 19:9 Paul taught and had

discussions publicly in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. So in Ephesus, according to Luke's account, Christian teaching took place publicly. It is probable that it took place under the auspices of a school of Philosophy. The church may have gathered together outside the city or met together for special occasions, probably in secret, but normal meetings had to take place in the members' homes. So the picture of the church in Ephesus is not of one congregation with weekly meetings in one central location, but rather of believers coming together in various house-churches (Worthington III; 2007:205). This, however, does not mean that these household gatherings were separate Churches but one Church which would have met together at certain times. Although it is possible that Paul's letters may have been read aloud during house-gathering meetings, the more general nature of Paul's letter to the Ephesians (cf. 5 below) makes it less likely that the letter was meant for the ears of only one house-gathering in the city. Much more probable is that the letter was read at a meeting of all believers in Ephesus, at one of those special occasions when they gathered outside the city. It is possible that the Way was perceived by the local authorities in Asia Minor as a Jewish sect, an offshoot from Judaism. In Luke's account, Jews were despised in Ephesus (Acts 19:34). That being the case, Paul may have sought to distinguish the Way clearly from Judaism in Ephesus and sought to acquire a legal status and presence in the city. Acts 19:39 indicates clearly that all assemblies and gatherings had to be legal. A legal assembly was ordinarily held three times a month with written permission and request made to the city clerk. It may be the reason that he befriended the city clerk (Acts 19:35) who, from his response, may have been favourably disposed to the Way. It is supported by the comment that in Corinth Paul also had friends in high places. Erastus (Acts 19:22), who was a believer from Corinth, was "the city's director of public works" (Ro 16:23)²⁶. The Christian community consisted of wealthy patrons as well as a large number of people who were not financially secure and wealthy. So, the lack of archaeological evidence of any church buildings of the first century is an *argumentum e silentio* in support of the existence of house-gatherings at the time when Paul wrote his letter. The existence of house-gatherings also provides reason to believe that, as suggested in canonical sources, some members of the church in Ephesus were financially secure themselves or at least had access to wealthy patrons. However, Paul probably did not have any specific house in mind as the audience of his letter, but intended the letter to be read to believers from all the house-gatherings, by the one Church of Ephesus.

²⁶ A reused block of stone in a paved square with the Latin inscription: "Erastus, commissioner of public works, bore the expense of this pavement" was discovered.

5. A CIRCULAR LETTER TO THE CHURCHES IN ASIA MINOR

It has been proposed that the letter was intended as a circular letter, to be sent to the churches in Asia Minor. The notion of a circular letter is based on specifically two considerations (cf. Guthrie, Coetzee, et al):

(1) A text-critical consideration: Various early manuscripts (P⁴⁶* B* 6 424^c 1734 Marcion Origen) omit the words ἐφ' ἡμεῖς in the letter opening, so that the first verse of the letter in these manuscripts reads only: "Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints, the faithful in Christ Jesus ...". From this early variation the deduction is made that Paul sent the letter to the church in Ephesus with the instruction that it should be circulated among the churches of Asia Minor. Thereupon the Ephesians did not pass on Paul's original letter, but made copies of it, omitting the words "to the Ephesians".

(2) An intrinsic consideration: Compared to the other letters that Paul wrote from his imprisonment in Rome²⁷ the Ephesians' letter is of a much more general nature. Whereas those other letters address problems of each individual church, the Ephesians' letter deals with principles and situations that were universally true for all the churches in Asia Minor. Also different from the other imprisonment letters, the Ephesians' letter does not call any person by name, except the name of Tychicus who will deliver the letter (6:21). All of this suggests that the letter was written to be circulated among the surrounding churches. Johnson (1986:367) proposes that Paul wrote a circular letter since it was his desire to communicate to a wider circle of Gentile churches his insight into the implications of his mission.

It has been demonstrated that the letter was intended as a circular letter, to be sent to the congregations of Asia Minor, the seven churches of Asia Minor and Colossians. This supports the proposal that it was intended to be a missional letter. Johnson (1986:367) proposes that it was Paul's desire to communicate to a wider circle of Gentile churches his insight into the implications of his mission for their self-understanding.

6. CONCLUSION ABOUT THE IDENTITY OF THE LETTER AUDIENCE

By way of conclusion: The data from the letter to the Ephesians and other canonical writings, as considered above, gives good reason to conclude that the apostle Paul with this letter had in mind an audience of believers of whom many were from Jewish ethnic background as well as a significant number of former Jewish proselytes or God-fearing Gentiles. However, he clearly distinguishes between his Jewish and Gentile audience. On first sight it seems as if he is addressing the Gentiles, but, he is actually addressing the Jews. As a type of rhetorical device, the author writes as if the audience he is addressing were Gentile, but the implied audience is the Jewish believers to whom he deems it necessary to give an account of his

²⁷ They are accepted to be the letters to the Colossians, Philippians and Philemon.

mission to the Gentiles (Eph 3:6, 7-9). So it seems that, although explicitly addressing Gentile believers in the church, the author is implicitly speaking to Jewish believers.

Taking into account some relevant archaeological evidence it is highly probable that at the time when Paul wrote his letter the believers in Ephesus used to meet in separate house-gatherings, and only occasionally all the believers in Ephesus would come together for special purposes. However, Paul probably did not have any specific house gathering in mind as the audience of his letter, but intended the letter to be read to believers from all the house-gatherings. Therefore, it can be accepted that the letter was meant to be read at such a special occasion, where all the believers in Ephesus could be the audience of Paul's letter.

Finally, there is good reason to conclude that the letter, although originally addressed to the Ephesians, was intended by Paul as a circular letter to be read in all the surrounding churches of Asia Minor. Thus it can be concluded that the letter's audience also included the house-gatherings of Asia Minor.

7. THE COMPOSITION OF THE FIRST CHURCH IN EPHEBUS AND ASIA MINOR

In the above section the audience for whom the Ephesian letter was intended was identified. Their identity was constructed from evidence drawn from the letter itself and other canonical writings about Paul's interaction with the Ephesians. But to what extent did the identity of the letter's audience correspond with the general picture of the church at that time? What was the composition of the first century church in Ephesus and Asia Minor? Therefore, in this section information that could cast some light on the composition and character of the church in Ephesus and Asia Minor is taken into study. The main source of such information about the church is other relevant canonical writings, enlightened by relevant data from socio-historical research.

7.1. THE RATIO BETWEEN JEWISH AND GENTILE BELIEVERS

An important question, about which scholars are divided, is whether the Christian church as a whole, all the house-gatherings in Ephesus and Asia Minor, was a Jewish community into which Gentiles were being integrated or a predominately Gentile church into which Jews were being integrated. W Baur (1971:89), for example, says that the communities established by Paul in Asia Minor were mostly Gentile, but that many of the Gentile Christians in time became less and less suited for ecclesiastical fellowship, "so that in the developing church the emphasis would automatically shift sharply in favour of the Jewish Christian

element”.²⁸ Käsemann (1971:109-110), on the other hand, asserts that the Gentiles were incorporated into Jewish Christianity, so that the church in Ephesus became less and less Jewish and more Gentile as the gospel spread.²⁹ Likewise Campbell (2005) is of the opinion that the original converts in the Churches of Asia Minor may well have come from a Jewish background, but “the racial make-up of the congregations would have come from a non-Jewish background” (Campbell; 2005:10). This latter view is a possibility, but equally possible is that the growing tension in Caesarea and Jerusalem during the sixties, building up to the Jewish War, made quite a number of Palestinian Jewish Christians leave their country and come to Asia Minor, so that the character of the churches in that region became more and more Jewish.

These different views have to be weighed in the light of information about the composition of church in Ephesus that can be drawn from canonical writings, and further, in light of the relevant information from socio-historical research.

7.2. CONSIDERATIONS FROM ACTS AND SOCIO-HISTORICAL DATA

According to Acts 19:9 the first converts of the Church in Ephesus were predominantly Jewish, with a few proselytes. It has been assumed on the basis of the events in Acts that the Church in Ephesus generally became more Gentile in nature. This is attributed to events in the city such as, special miracles by the hands of Paul and the large conversion of many Gentiles in response to his preaching, who brought their magic books and burned them together in public before all men (Acts 19:19). But it is equally possible that it were Jews who burned their magic books.

Acts 19 does not specify that it was Gentiles or Jews who openly confessed their evil deeds but that “they were all seized with fear”, both “Jews and Greeks living in Ephesus” (Acts 19:17). Both Jews and Greeks practised sorcery. It was amongst the Jews that sorcery was most common (Acts 8:9-25). “Two magical amulets with Jewish characteristics were found” (Kraabel; 1968:56-9). Jewish elements used in magical practices in Ephesus were found in the Ephesus area (Kraabel; 1968:59-69). The Jews commonly believed in the power of amulets. “A magical amulet with Jewish characteristics was found in the area around Ephesus. Additional amulets were reportedly discovered between Smyrna and Ephesus, also bearing Jewish characteristics” (Arnold; 1989:16³⁰).

²⁸ This view seems to be supported by Ephesians 3:19.

²⁹ This view seems to be supported by Ephesians. 2:11-220

³⁰ Arnold underplays the Jewishness of the false teachings in Colossi by emphasising angel worship and the principalities and powers. He makes the mistake of over extending the allusion to Ps 110:1 in Ephesians 1:22-23,

“The Jews living in Asia Minor could not be distinguished from their pagan neighbours in terms of appearance, dress, language and profession” (Wedderburn; 2004:647). The influence of magic and astrology was found not only among the pagan Gentiles but also among the Jews. “The common feature in all of these religious and/or magical traditions is an acute and thriving belief in and fear of evil spiritual powers” (Arnold; 1989:125). It is Jews who went around driving out evil spirits and who tried to invoke the name of Jesus over those who were demon-possessed (Acts 19:13). “With the proper formula a spirit-induced sickness could be cured, a chariot race could be won; sexual passions could be enhanced, etc” (Arnold; 1989:18).

The religious background of Ephesus and Asia Minor indicates the syncretism in Ephesus was both a Jewish and Gentile syncretism, as opposed to being an exclusive Gentile syncretism (Acts 19:13), as Arnold portrays.³¹ It would not have been extraordinary for the Jewish and Gentile readers to understand, for example, the grip that evil powers had upon their lives. After hearing an implicit attack on the powers in Ephesians 1:20-22, the Jewish and Gentile readers would not be surprised that these powers alienated them from God (Eph 2:3) and thus their response of “confessing and making known their practices” and “a considerable number of those who practiced magic brought their books together and burned them before all” (Acts 19:18). Strelan makes a valuable contribution when he explores the perception of the pagan inhabitants of Ephesus towards Artemis, that Artemis was perceived in a positive light. “In Ephesus, it was primarily the presence, protection of the goddess Artemis Ephesia that gave sanctity to the “polis” (Strelan; 1996:29). Artemis was seen as the protector of the family, the provider of political and social stability, and not the goddess of orgiastic behaviour and fertility. Another important role of Artemis was that she was perceived as the goddess who protected woman in childbirth and played an important role in the experience of “virginity to matronhood” (Stelan; 1996:93).

The historical reconstruction of Strelan is in accord with the presentation by Luke of the way that the population responded to the preaching of Paul and the apparent demise of Artemis (Acts 19:26, 28). It is precisely because the goddess Artemis was seen in a positive light that Demetrius was able to appeal to the ethos of the crowd. It may also be the motivation behind the admonishment “...*that you no longer walk as the pagans walk in the vanity of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance which is in them*” (Eph 4:17-20), thereby establishing the boundaries of

which he asserts his Christ’s specific rule over demons and spirits. Ps 110:1 was often used in early Christianity simply to indicate the superior position of Christ (cf. Witherington III; 2007:243).

³¹ This is contrary to what Arnold advocates. He argues that it is a Gentile syncretism.

the community and closing the door to syncretism. Syncretism was common among the Diaspora Jews but there is no evidence that syncretism was a problem within the community of Ephesus³². But how do we reconcile the statement of Demetrius, “*You observe and hear that not only at Ephesus but in almost all of Asia this Paul has persuaded and perverted a considerable number, saying that the gods being made by hands are not gods at all*” (Acts 19:26)? Did Paul have such great success among the pagan population of Ephesus “that Paul worked so successfully in Ephesus that all other gods just lay down and died?” (Strelan; 1996:8). Paul’s mission strategy and his approach to mission in Ephesus will be explored in Ch.4 & 5.

8. CONSIDERATIONS FROM PAUL’S LETTERS AND FROM SOCIO-HISTORICAL DATA

In addition to the Ephesian letter, other writings of Paul that also involve interaction with the church in Ephesus are his letters to Timothy³³, his letters to the Corinthians³⁴ and his letter to the Romans³⁵.

8.1. RELEVANT INFORMATION FROM THE LETTERS TO TIMOTHY

There is good reason to accept that 1 and 2 Timothy were written to Timothy while he was working in Ephesus. The picture that we have from 1 and 2 Timothy is that the church in Ephesus did not only come from Gentile Christians, but that there was a large number of Jewish Christians in the Ephesians’ church. This is evident from the use of language such as “*myths and endless genealogies*” (1Ti 1:4), which are Jewish expressions. The use of “myth” implies a Jewish Old Testament background. “Genealogies” were used by Jews to determine a person’s ancestry and descent; to be a Jew a person’s parents had to be Jewish. “Prayers, intercessions and thanksgiving” (1Ti 2:1) are part of a Jewish liturgy.

In this section thus far the identity of the letter audience has been viewed from data gathered from the letter itself, enlightened by information from Acts that more or less deals with Paul’s interaction with the Ephesians. Two other letters of Paul that may also provide relevant information about the letter audience in

³² Rev 2:1-7 indicates that the warnings of Eph 4:17-20 were followed by the community of Ephesus and that at the time the letter of Rev was written (90-95 A.D) this the church did not have a problem with syncretism.

³³ Timothy was doing pastoral work in Ephesus towards the end of his life.

³⁴ 1 and 2 Corinthians were for the most part written from Ephesus.

³⁵ Romans was probably written from Corinth.

Ephesus are 1 and 2 Timothy.³⁶ There is good reason to accept that 1 and 2 Timothy were written to Timothy while he was working in Ephesus (1Ti 1:3; 2Ti 1:15-18; 3:19). As far as can be deduced from canonical data, Paul wrote these letters to Timothy more or less in 64-65 A.D.³⁷, i.e. only a few years after his letter to the Ephesians. Many of the problems that Timothy at that time had to face in Ephesus, were Jewish matters, e.g. false teachers of the law (1Ti 1:7) and abstinence from certain foods (1Ti 4:3). On the other hand there were also problems that probably went back to the Greek way of thinking, such as the prohibition of marriage (1Ti 4:2) and the “absurdities of so-called knowledge” (1Ti 6:20; 2Ti 2:16). This is a confirmation of the mixed Jewish-Gentile character of the church community in Ephesus.

The fact that Timothy from childhood would have learned about Judaism from his Jewish mother (Acts 16:1; 2Ti 1:5; 3:15), made him an able instrument to take care of the Jewish members in the church. Likewise, having been born of a Greek father in Asia Minor (Acts 16:1), Timothy would have been equally able to understand the Greek members of the church. Thus to Paul Timothy was an excellent go-between for the Ephesians church (cf. Johnson; 1986:389). His function as go-between may also have included reconciling the various ethnic groups together. So the position of Timothy at Ephesus seems to be an extension of Paul’s mission strategy for the church in Ephesus. Thus it seems that the data of the letters to Timothy support the preliminary conclusion above, that the audience in Ephesus that Paul was writing to, had a dual ethnic-cultural background, viz. both Jewish and Gentile.

8.2. THE INFLUENCE OF JUDAISM ON THE CHURCH IN TIMOTHY

1) The role of women

The reference to the role of women in the worship service is set against a Jewish cultural background. The clearest example of this influence is provided by the position of women in the Jewish communities in Asia Minor (cf. Trebilco; 1991:177). There were aggressive and untrained women in Ephesus involved in false teaching. The author refers to the importance of children in the Jewish context when he writes, “But women will be saved through childbearing – if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety”

³⁶ The debate about the authorship of the Pastoral Letters (Johnson;1999:423-424) is not that relevant to this study and need not be discussed in this section. The view of scholars such as Guthrie (1970) and Coetzee (:1975:96-106) that 1 and 2 Timothy were indeed written by Paul in the last years before his death, is accepted in this study. It will be assumed that “the letter is to be read as a production of the Pauline mission under the authority of Paul himself within his lifetime” (Johnson; 2013:363).

(1Ti 2:15). A woman who was unable to bear children experienced shame. The real focus was not whether a woman was able to bear children or not but whether she had faith, love, holiness and propriety. The importance given to widows in the letters to Timothy is also an indication that the author addressed the concerns and issues of a Jewish audience in which caring for the orphans was to obey the Torah. The Jewish community was reminded that what God accepts as pure and faultless was to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world. The idea of separation from the world and being unpolluted was an important idea to protect the Jewish Christian community from harmful external influences. The role of younger woman or windows is relevant because they were instructed to manage their households well (1 Ti 5:14) which will be discussed in Ch. 6.

2) The laying on of hands

There was also “the laying on of hands” (1Ti 5:22) which may have been a liturgical practice taken over from Judaism and the concept of purity, “Keep yourself pure” (1Ti 5:22). The first letter to Timothy digresses upon one of the most important aspects for any Jew and Judaism, the law (1Ti 1:8-11). Such a digression on the law was intended specifically for a Jewish audience. The Law had a specific function within the community of Ephesus, it convicted of sin and identified the “ungodly and sinners, unholy and profane, murderers and fornicators, homosexuals, slave traders, liars, and perjurers” (1Ti 1:9).

3) Organized Church structure

The first epistle of Timothy has a specific focus on how the church in Ephesus should be organized in order to conduct themselves as “the household of God, the church of the living God” (1Ti 3:16). A striking perspective that comes forward in the letter, is that such a well organised church is also a missional church: on behalf of the entire society the church should pray to God who “wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth” (2:1-7), and should act as “pillar and foundation of the truth” (3:16).

8.3. RELEVANT INFORMATION FORM THE CORINTHIAN LETTERS

The same Old Testament texts are used in both letters, for example Psalm 8:6-8 lies behind Ephesians 1:22 and 1Corinthians 15:27, indicating that he shared the same thought-world. There are certain quotations that appear similar at first glance but they do not necessarily have the same audience in mind, purpose, focus and function in both letters. The occurrence of similar phrases, vocabulary and style reveals that the author of both letters shared the same thought world, e.g. (Eph 3:2-1 Cor 9:17-stewardship; Eph 1:19-20, 3:7, 20-1 1Co 12:6-operation); (Eph 3:8-1 1Co 15:9-least of all the Saints); (Eph 1:9-10, 13, 2:17-18, 22, 3:6, 8, 13, 6:15-1 1Co 9:16-18-gospel); Eph 4:4-1 1Co 12:12-13 (one body, One God and Father); (Eph 4:11-1 1Co 12:28-One Lord, apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds, teachers); (Eph 2:20-1 Cor 3:9-11-foundation); (Eph 4:28-1 Cor 4:12-working with our hands); (Eph 5:1- 1 Cor 11:1-imitators). However, the different use of the same phrases and vocabulary reveals that the audience was not the same, the audience of 1 Corinthians being predominantly Gentile and Ephesians Jewish and Gentile.

The value of the letter to the Corinthians is that it assists in establishing the context and background to Paul's situation at the time of his mission work in Ephesus, as it was written from Ephesus during his stay in that city (55 A.D). The problem, however, is that many of the allusions in 1 Corinthians, which may possibly reflect upon his own context, could equally be a reflection upon his understanding of the situation of the church at Corinth gained from Chloe's household (1Co 1:11) who informed him of the situation in the city. He may also have gained insight into the situation at Corinth through Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus who were with Paul in Ephesus at the time (1Co 16:17). Paul certainly would not have been able to be neutral and able to divorce himself completely from his situation in Ephesus when he wrote to the Corinthians. The fact that Paul had only one conceptual and theological framework through which he interpreted and processed and made sense of all external and internal information may account for similarities of language between the two letters. It is thus necessary to consider the letter of 1 Corinthians to better understand Ephesians.

8.4. THE HISTORICAL INFORMATION FROM 1 CORINTHIANS

It is generally accepted that the first letter to the Corinthians was written from Ephesus. As 1 Corinthians was written from Ephesus it reveals Paul's mission strategy during his stay in Ephesus (cf. 1Co 9:19-23). If the letter of 1 Corinthians is considered to be a genuine Pauline correspondence it would reveal the struggles that Paul went through at the time it was written (cf. 1Co 4:11-13; 15:9-11, 31-32). The letter also speaks about Paul's mission in Ephesus and Asia Minor: "But I will stay on at Ephesus until Pentecost, because a great door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many who oppose me" (1Co 16:8-9). About the trials Paul had to suffer from the opposition in Ephesus he wrote in 1 Corinthians 4:12-13: "*Reviled we bless; persecuted we endure; defamed us exhort.*" The issue of whether Paul's mission work was successful will be dealt with in Chapters 4 & 5.

The letter to the Corinthians provides evidence by Paul of his mission in Ephesus. It reveals the frame of mind he was in, and throughout the letter he gives references to his situation in Ephesus.³⁸ It also provides some inside views into Paul's missional thinking while he was working in Ephesus. In this respect numerous parallels between 1 Corinthians and Ephesians are found, e.g.:

- The church should be "built up as one building" (1Co 8:1; 10:23; 14:4-5; 12; 17; 26; cf. also Eph 4:12; 16; 29);
- the church/believers are built as a temple of the Holy Spirit (1Co 6:19; cf. also Eph 2:22);
- the church should grow like one organism (1Co 3:1-2; 7; 14:20; sf. also Eph 4:13 -16); and

³⁸ 1Co 15:32; 16:1-4; 16:8-9; 12, 19-20; 2 Cor 1:8-10; 4:8-9; 6:4-10; 8:6; 11:23-33; 12:10.

- the church should be one body, the body of Christ (1Co 10:16-17; 12:12-27; cf. also Eph 1:23; 3:6; 4:4; (11)12; 25; 5:30).

There are, however, also important differences between 1 Corinthians and Ephesians. The evidence in the first letter to the Corinthians' points towards a Roman culture for Corinth, whereas Ephesus' culture was Judo-Hellenistic. Inscription evidence on gravestones found in Corinth in the first century was all in Latin (Kent; 1966:18, 113-116) and "therefore points towards a Roman culture in Corinth in New Testament Times" (Button; 2003:11). In the letters to the Corinthians the problems dealt with "relate much more to pagan than to Jewish society" (Button; 2003:11). We can conclude this from the content of the letter, and especially as there are no references to disputes over circumcision or the Jewish Laws so characteristic of the Jewish-Gentile controversy in early Christianity (cf. Acts 15, Gal) but there is much to do with pagan issues like morality (1Co 5-6), idolatry and pagan worship (1Co 8-10), wisdom and teachers of wisdom (1Co 1-4; 2 Cor 10-12) (Button; 2003:11). Although the Jewish community in Corinth was particularly large (Murphy-O'Connor; 1983:78), the evidence indicates that Paul had little success among the Jews in Corinth³⁹. This is the opposite of Ephesus where "there is little evidence of great numbers of Gentiles in the Pauline community in Ephesus, and the claim that gentile Christianity was dominant there has little support to it" (Strelan; 2004:11). If the letter to the Ephesians addressed a predominantly Gentile audience, as has been argued, then one would expect there to be a greater affinity and similarity between the two letters, at least in terms of content and style⁴⁰. But this is not the case.

8.5. RELEVANT INFORMATION FROM THE LETTER TO THE COLOSSIANS

The letters to the Ephesians and Colossians each addresses its own specific and unique problems. F. O. Francis, Dunn, T. J. Sappington see Colossians as dealing with some sort of esoteric or mystical Jewish philosophy and not a pagan philosophy to which have been added a few marginal Jewish elements (Sappington; 1991:151-65). Dunn (1996:232) hints at the fact that the false teaching was Jewish in character in Col 3:11. O'Brien (1982:xxxli) is confident that Paul was countering some Christian belief and practice that had been influenced by mystical and apocalyptic Judaism. Lincoln (2002) views Paul confronting a Jewish philosophy affecting Christians. The Jewish heresy probably involved the main

³⁹ Although the Jewish community at Corinth formed the initial focus of his evangelistic efforts "relatively few Jews were converted, with the result that the church in Corinth consisted mainly of Gentile believers" (Button; 2003:11).

⁴⁰ The letter to the Corinthians assumes the importance of the OT background for the theology of the church (cf. 1Co 10:1-13) as there are little and few Jewish expressions in the letter. Most importantly the issue of Jewish identity, central to Ephesians, is absent from 1 Corinthians.

elements of the Jewish calendar, Jewish food laws, and some regulations having to do with physical activities. The Jewish heresy claimed visionary experience in association with worship; it claimed to offer some sort of special wisdom (cf. Barclay; 1997:53-54). It is unclear whether the audience of the letter to the Colossians was Jewish Christians themselves⁴¹. The similarities and differences between the two letters cannot be reduced to an issue of language.

8.6. CANONICAL DATA FROM COLOSSIANS

The letters to the Ephesians and Colossians have the most in common in terms of language and style in comparison to other letters. “Even the most conservative commentators on these documents have to admit that passages such as Colossians 4:7-9 and Ephesians 6:21-22 seem to indicate some sort of literary relationship between these documents” (cf. Worthington III; 2007:103). There is no clarity whether Colossians depended upon Ephesians or Ephesians upon Colossians or dependence in both directions. The similarities and differences between these letters, however, may provide helpful information about the unique character and identity of these communities. It may provide invaluable information about the community at Ephesus.

There is, for example, similar concepts such as the mystery of Christ, which is the body, the church of Jesus Christ (Eph 1:22; 2:16; 3:6, 10, 21; 4:12, 16) but in Colossians the mystery is Jesus Christ (Col 1:28; 2:2). The concept of the Head occurs in both letters, in Ephesians Jesus Christ is the “head over all things to the church, which is the body of Him” (Eph 1:22-23) which is the same as in Colossians, “*He is the Head of the body, the church*” (Col 1:18). But the headship in Colossians is expressed within a universal scope, “*being before all things and holding all things together in Him*” (Col 1:17). In Ephesians the Headship of Christ is for the benefit of the church, He serves the Church, and fills the church and is connected to it organically like a head is to a body, leading it and nurturing it (Eph 1:22-23). The second occurrence of the term Head in Ephesians (Eph 4:15) is set within the context of the growth of the body, the building up of the body. In Colossians Jesus Christ is the Head who supports and holds together the whole body, the church, by giving it cohesion (Col 2:19). It is an ethical relationship which issues from having Christ as the Head (cf. Witness Lee; 1985:937). Unlike in Colossians moral practice in Ephesians does not flow from having Christ as the Head but “directly from a transformed self whereby believer’s new identity in Christ

⁴¹ “These Jews were “confident in their religion (2:4, 8), above all in the access it gave them to the worship of heaven (2:18), through faithfulness to what were traditional (Jewish) observances (2:16, 21-23) What Paul is addressing is recognizably Jewish, with concern for circumcision (2:11-13; 3:11), observance of the Sabbath (2:16), and food rules (2:16, 21).

and moral behaviour are two faces of the same coin” (Petrenko; 2011: 6). The similarities in language, phrases and vocabulary between the two letters should thus not be emphasized at the exclusion of the specific and unique context in which the language is used in Ephesians and Colossians.

8.7. THE VARIANT AUDIENCE OF EPHESIANS AND COLOSSIANS

It is reasonable to infer from the fact that although the heresy in Colossi was a Jewish heresy, that the audience, unlike Ephesians, was not constituted by a large number of Jewish Christians but rather a large audience of Gentile Christians. It is certain that if the Jewish Christians were a minority that they exercised a large influence upon the Christian community in Colossi. The fact that the Jewish boundary markers such as circumcision and observance of the Sabbath are not addressed, “Paul does not argue in any sort of direct way against circumcision” (Worthington III; 2007:177), indicates that the character of the community was not Jewish as in Ephesus but primarily Gentile as has generally been accepted. So it can be concluded that “despite all the close parallels between Ephesians and Colossians they differ greatly in the use of Old Testament traditions, as in Ephesians, or the neglect of them in Colossians. Given the subtle way in which such traditions are employed in Ephesians, it could be argued that contrary to common opinion it is Ephesians, not Colossians, which was intended for an at least partly Jewish minded audience, whether it was ethnic Jews, proselytes, or ex-God-fearers” (Moritz; 1995:393-396).

The letter to the Colossians is the only other letter (next to Ephesians) that is addressed to a church in Asia Minor. Most likely the audience of Colossians was primarily Gentiles, indicated by the false teachings of ascetism (Col 2:21-23), animism (“the Phrygians believed in the great power of what was known as primitive (elemental) spirits” (Pawson; 1999-2001:1036), mysticism and Gnosticism (Col 1:15-20; 2:2-3:9), deceptive philosophy (Col 2:8) and reliance on human wisdom (Col 2:4, 8). Ceremonialism (circumcision in 2:11; 3:11), Jewish religious festivals, new moon festival or Sabbath Day (Col 2:16-17) and angel worship (Col 2:8, 18) imply that the audience was Jewish. It is clear that the author wasn’t facing the strict Jewish teaching that he encountered elsewhere (cf. Pawson; 1999-2001:1038).

9. CONSIDERATIONS FROM OTHER CANONICAL WRITINGS AND FROM SUPPORTING SOCIO-HISTORICAL DATA

9.1. RELEVANT INFORMATION FROM JOHN’S WRITINGS

Based on the evidence of the early Church Fathers, it may be accepted that also 1, 2 and 3 John were written more or less from Ephesus⁴². Furthermore, the book of Revelation was addressed to “the seven churches in Asia” (Rev 1:4), i.e. the churches of Asia Minor, of which the church in Ephesus took first place (Rev 2:1-7)⁴³. These Johannine writings originated towards the end of the first century, probably in the late eighties and early nineties⁴⁴. The audience John addresses has been characterised as Jewish⁴⁵. A good explanation for John’s Jewish audience seems to be that after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. many Jews from Palestine made Asia Minor their new home ⁴⁶, so that the church in Ephesus was much more

⁴² “Jerome speaks of John the Presbyter, writer of these two letters (1 & 2), as if he were someone other than John the apostle. He would also have lived in *Asia Minor* in the later part of the first century” (Du Toit, 1993:201). Guide to the New Testament VI). “The three letters were probably sent at the same time to the same destination, for it would be difficult otherwise to account for the preservation of letters” (cf. Johnson; 1986:503). The three letters were also sent from the same place, Asia Minor, most probably Ephesus. The author of 1 John claims for his testimony the authority of having been an ear- and –eye- witness to Jesus’ words and deeds as his very intimate companion (cf. Coetzee & Du Toit; 1993:202).

⁴³ The letter to Revelations provides a connection between these writings and the community in a specific location, Asia Minor. If John is the author, early tradition indicates that he was the leader in Ephesus for many years (cf. Coetzee & Du Toit; 1993:206).

⁴⁴ A.D 100 must be regarded as the latest possible date and the date cannot be earlier than around the year 85 (cf. Coetzee & Du Toit; 1993:203).

⁴⁵ The language of “Father” (1Jn 1:2, 2:13, 15-16, 22-24; 3:1), light and darkness (1Jn 1:5-7; 2:8-11), “truth” (1Jn 1:6, 2:5, 8, 2:1; 3:18-19), “the righteous One” (1Jn 2:1), “atoning sacrifice” (1Jn 1:2; 4:10), commands, obedience and walk (1Jn 2:3,-8), lust of the eyes (1Jn 2:16), the world and its desires (1Jn 2:17), “anointing from the Holy One” (1Jn 2:20), “children of God” (1Jn 3:1-2, 10), “pure” (1Jn 3:3), “lawlessness” (1Jn 3:4), “born of God” (1Jn 3:9; 4:7; 5:4, 18), “God’s seed” (1Jn 3:9), “Spirit of God” (1Jn 4:2), “the Spirit of truth” (1Jn 4:6), “the day of judgement” (1Jn 4:17), “Spirit is the truth” (1Jn 5:6) are Jewish expressions which presuppose a Jewish author and recipients. It was an early form of Christian Gnosticism that was threatening the congregation(s) which may explain the language. The language may reflect the authors contact with the Qumran community, i.e. light and darkness, the righteous One.

⁴⁶ The Jewish and Gentile Christians fled Judea before war broke out in 66 AD and as the church in Jerusalem was predominantly Jewish there would have been an influx of Jewish Christians to major Jewish centres of the Roman world. Ephesus, Alexandria, Antioch of Syria and Corinth were major Jewish centres. Eusebius in his church history of the early church (*Hist. Eccl. III 5.3*) mentions the flight of the Jewish Christians to Pella (Galilee), but this was for different reasons from those fleeing the war. The Jewish communities in Asia Minor, Greece and maybe Rome appear to have been unaffected by the Jewish revolt (66-70 AD) (cf. Goodman; 2010:36). In Alexandria and Cyrene there were also heavy loss of life as there was an anti-Roman move by these Diaspora communities and Jews living in these places resulting in them suffering backlash after the revolt. The Gentile inhabitants of Antioch in Northern Syria, where there was a sizable Jewish community, took advantage of the anti-Jewish prejudice of the Romans immediately after the war to institute a systematic persecution aimed at the extinction of Jewish religious practices: all who failed

Jewish by the time John was writing than even in the time of Paul. Josephus writes that there was no anti-Roman move against other Jewish Diaspora communities, such as Asia Minor, Ephesus, where there was a large settlement of Jews (cf. Goodman; 2010:30). Another possibility is that the letters of Paul and John were written to different churches in Ephesus, so that Paul wrote to an audience with a dual character, and John to a more Jewish audience. This possibility is supported by the view of Arnold (1989:6): “One needs to be cautious not to assume that there was only one local congregation in Ephesus. By the time Ephesians was written there may have been a network of new churches established within the city.” So it is possible that even in Paul’s time there were several house churches in Ephesus, some Jewish and others Gentile, with overseers that were overseers of all the churches in the city⁴⁷. So the difference of audience between Paul’s letter to the Ephesians and those of John may be explained that these letters were probably written to different factions within the one church.

9.2. RELEVANT INFORMATION FROM 1 PETER

The letter of First Peter was also written to the believers in Asia Minor. “The letter, written by probably the foremost apostle in the early Church, from perhaps the very heart of the Roman Empire, may well have been a circular epistle designated to be taken around the congregations throughout Asia Minor” (Campbell; 2005:8). The letter of Peter describes the Gentile Christians of Asia Minor as being the new people of God

to sacrifice to pagan deities were punished, cessation from work on the Sabbath was forbidden and Jewish privileges were withdrawn (cf. Goodman; 2010:30). Although, Goodman argues that Asia Minor was too far for a large settlement of refugees the Jews fleeing the war, the Jews would have sought to settle in a place where there was no anti-Roman sentiment and persecution (cf. Goodman; 2010: 30). For this reason large groups of refugees would have settled in Asia Minor and Greece even though it was far removed from Judea. It is noteworthy that Claudius’ sweeping statement in 42/43 AD applying to the whole Roman Empire formulated a general policy of toleration for Jewish observances throughout the Roman Empire to circumvent planned troubles in other cities. Jewish crises are recorded as having taken place in Palestine, Alexandria and perhaps Antioch. The Jews fleeing Judea and seeking for a safe haven would have been aware of the anti-Jewish sentiments and the past history of these cities (cf. Trebilco; 1991:10).

⁴⁷ The role of the οἰκονόμος was not to oversee the entire church. “The first Christian “presbuteros” seem to have been cut from a different cloth: they were exemplary, activist believers who were ready to exert themselves in the new movement. Then as the church expanded into the suburbs and villages those who carried that title were no longer members of a corporate policy group: each one found himself presiding over a satellite parochial community of his own” (Burtchaell;5:1992).

(cf. Campbell; 2005:9)⁴⁸. It is very probable that Paul wrote the letter to the Ephesians specifically having the Hellenistic Jews and Gentile Christians in mind while Peter wrote addressing the needs of the Palestinian Jews and Gentile Christians in the Diaspora (1Pe 1:1). His letter was specifically written to the Gentiles, “now part of the Church of Jesus Christ throughout Asia Minor” (Campbell; 2005:10).

One of the ways in which the letter of 1 Peter is relevant to the study is that it establishes the audience of Asia Minor. A comparison of the language of Ephesians and 1 Peter leads to the identification of the same terms used in Eph 2:19 which also occur in 1 Peter 2:11-12, 18-25, “aliens and strangers”. It is by comparing these terms that it is possible to determine the similarities and the differences between the audiences of the letter to the Ephesians and first Peter, which were both addressed to churches in Asia Minor. In first Peter “aliens” is used to identify “settled foreigners” and “strangers” is used for “visiting foreigners” (cf. de Klerk & Van Rensburg; 2005:60). The distinction between “settled foreigners” and “visiting foreigners” is that “visiting foreigners” were unable to own property, and were therefore always dependent upon others for housing (cf. de Klerk & Van Rensburg; 2005:60). “This meant that they had to obtain the right to occupy a house from a citizen of the particular country. The foreigners usually acquired this by working for that person. This made them very vulnerable, as the owner could evict them for any reason whatsoever and they simply had to comply” (de Klerk & Van Rensburg; 2005:60). The importance of this is that “visiting foreigners” had no political rights, because of their non-citizen status and fell prey to discrimination and injustice whereas “settled foreigners” had certain political rights and protection from discrimination and injustice. In the first Epistle to Peter these categories of distinction continue, but in the letter to the Ephesians the distinction between “settled foreigners” and “visiting foreigners” in the Christian community has been replaced by a new category, “fellow citizens” and “members of God’s household” (Eph 2:19). The purpose of the author in Ephesians is to create a new communal identity which does not perpetuate the divisions of the society, whereas the author of first Peter addresses persecution and discrimination that the Christian community faced. A comparison of the use of these terms indicates that the letter to the Ephesians is nuanced to address discrimination and injustice within the Church, whereas first Peter addresses discrimination and injustice that the Church was facing from the society. The author of Ephesians employs a rhetorical strategy specifically directed at a Jewish Diaspora audience who identified with the categories of “settled foreigners” and “visiting foreigners” and used this to address the discrimination of the Jewish believers towards the Gentile outsiders. It was the experiential world of the

⁴⁸ “From the internal evidence of 1 Peter there is little indication that the letter was directed to churches made up of predominantly Jewish converts” (Campbell; 2005:9). “Peter writes that “once you were no people but now you are God’s people” (RSV). It is unlikely that any Jew could ever describe himself or herself as not belonging to the people of God” (Campbell; 2005:9).

Jewish believers, daily discrimination and injustice that they were encountering that the author sought to harness as a motivation and drive for eradicating any counter discriminative attitudes and disposition of the Jews towards the Gentiles in the church.

“Peter seems to confine himself to a letter that touches the pulse of events of Asia Minor and is accessible and applicable to the people of Asia Minor whether urbanised and sophisticated Ephesus or the backward Cappadocia” (Campbell: 2005:9). The value of 1 Peter for this study is that it sheds light upon the relationship between Gentile and Jew in Asia Minor. “For Peter, the Gentiles, now part of the Church of Jesus Christ throughout Asia Minor, stood in the line of the believers in the Lord God and were truly part of the people of God” (Campbell; 2005:10). The letter of Peter mentions the context of persecution, a persecution of the Jews, including the Jewish Christians, as the Roman Empire did not distinguish Christians as a third race, a new ethnic group. There seems to be no evidence that the Gentile Christians were persecuted at this time. The relevance of this is that the letter to the Ephesians is to be dated before the breaking out of Jewish persecution during the Jewish wars (66-70 AD) and after the destruction of Jerusalem. The letter to the Ephesians, therefore, has to be read against its own unique social context, the context of discrimination and injustice within the society between Jews and Gentiles which the author wanted to ensure would not be part of the life of the Church.

Thus it seems that the data from other canonical writings, especially the letters to Timothy, is in support of the preliminary conclusion at the end of 9.2 above, that the audience in Ephesus that Paul was writing to, had a dual ethnic-cultural background, viz. both Jewish and Gentile.

10. THE JEWISH COMMUNITY IN EPHEBUS

10.1. THE JEWISH POPULATION OF EPHEBUS AND ASIA MINOR

Asia Minor had one of the oldest Jewish communities outside of Palestine and it also boasted the greatest number of Jews in any of the Roman provinces (Jews settled in the city very early on). A significant aspect of Paul’s mission in Asia Minor was to reach the Jews of this region (cf. Trebilco, 1999)⁴⁹. Ephesus

⁴⁹ P. Trebilco studied the Jewish communities within a 150-mile radius of Colossae, P. Trebilco, “*Jewish Communities in Asia Minor*”(Cambridge; Cambridge university Press; 1991). Josephus quotes a letter to Zeuxis, the governor of Lydia (Ant. 12:148-53), written by Antiochus III while he was in the East between 212 and 205/4 BCE. “He wrote to his strategos Zeuxis with instructions concerning the settlement of 2 000 Jewish families in Lydia and Phrygia in an attempt to maintain internal security in the region, which was beset by unrest” (Trebilco; 1991:5). “They were distributed among an unspecified number of cities, so we cannot estimate the size of any one settlement” (Trebilco;

apparently had a large Jewish community as it was the only city in Asia Minor which had a high priest, Sceva (Acts 19:14)⁵⁰. Many Jews may have moved to Ephesus from Lydia and Phrygia for economic reasons as it was the main economic centre of Asia Minor, the capital⁵¹, and located on an important trade route. The Jews in Ephesus were exempt from military service because Jews “cannot undertake military service because they may not bear arms or march on the Sabbath; nor can they obtain native foods to which they were accustomed”⁵² “The population of the city in the Roman period is generally estimated at between 200 000 and 250 000⁵³. This would probably make Ephesus the third largest city in the Empire after Rome and Alexandria. “The population of the city in the Roman period is generally estimated at between 200 000 and 250 000⁵⁴. This would probably make Ephesus the third largest city in the Empire after Rome and Alexandria. The Jewish population of Ephesus, if this estimate is correct, could be as large as 20 000 or 25 000 people. Strelan (1996:181) estimates that there were up to 25 000 Jews in the city.

The literature of Second Temple Judaism is vast and a selection of a group of texts is inevitable. The samples of texts chosen have an emphasis on the Spirit in which we find similar themes and concepts as in Ephesians. We would like to examine whether the particular form in which these themes and concepts are clustered in these texts parallel that of Ephesians. (Petrenko 2011:50-65 identifies the parallel texts as *1 Enoch*, *Jubilees*, and the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*). Having concluded that it is probable that the majority of the members of the congregations in Asia Minor were Jewish and that the community in Ephesus contained a large number of Jews, we are not certain if they were the majority. We cannot, however, state definitely the exact make-up of the church in Ephesus. In Ephesus, it would seem that Paul spent a great amount of time specifically with Jews. It could be that towards the end of his mission he wanted to reach his own people in Asia Minor as it had a very large Jewish population. “That Paul continued to preach to the Jews is clear from 2Co 11:24, written shortly after he left Ephesus in which he tells us that on five occasions he received forty lashes less one at the hands of the Jews” (Strelan;1996:141). It is in Ephesus and “nowhere else, that Jews continued to be attracted to a Christian

1991:6). “Other evidence suggests that Jewish communities were established in a number of cities in Asia Minor by 139-8 BCE” (cf. 1Mac 15:16-23) (Trebilco; 1991:6).

⁵⁰ “No synagogue has yet been found in the city of Ephesus. However, the existence of a synagogue in Ephesus seems to be implied in Ant 14:227, to be dated 43 BCE, where the Jews are given permission “to come together for sacred and holy rites in accordance with the Law” (Trebilco; 1991:43).

⁵¹ “Ephesus was elevated to the status of the capital of the province of Asia in place of Pergamum by Augustus” (Trebilco; 1991:13)

⁵² Letter written by Dolabella to Ephesus in 44/43 BCE.

⁵³ Many Jews may have shifted to Ephesus from Judea.

⁵⁴ Many Jews may have shifted to Ephesus

community” (Strelan; 1996:17). It can be concluded with relative certainty that there was a sizable Jewish population in Asia Minor and that Ephesus had one of the largest Jewish populations outside of Israel (cf. Best; 1998:68).

10.2. EPHESUS AND THE TYPE OF JEWISH COMMUNITY

One often has the impression that the target audience was individuals and that it were individuals who were converted. Paul’s target was always the conversion of the entire family. In the Jewish community the family occupied central place. “That the Jews of Ephesus had a degree of communal life and organization, which was crucial for the retention of identity, is clear from the fact that the community approached ruling bodies and gained the right of assembly and permission to build a synagogue and administer their own finances” (e.g. Anthl. 4:262-4; 16:27-30; 1723). The Jewish community in Ephesus maintained significant facets of Jewish identity. These factors-communal life and the right of assembly, and the temple tax and the link with Jerusalem, observing the Torah including food laws and the Sabbath show that the Jewish community maintained significant facets of Jewish identity.

The Jewish community in Ephesus flourished and shared in the prosperity of urban life in Asia (Trebilco; 1991:173-85). It is probable that a number of the Jews who followed Paul were wealthy. Barclay (1996:268-9) notes that the evidence indicates that “the Jewish community clearly had a reputation for prosperity”. It may have been a contributing factor in the response of the crowd to Alexander who was pushed forward to make a defence to the populace and was rejected (Acts 19:33-34). The Jewish Christian converts may have contributed financially so that “all those in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks” (Acts 19:10). The Jewish community in Ephesus was well known for its opposition to abortion and infanticide (Tactius, Hist. 5:5). In Hellenistic times widespread use of child murder was used as birth control (Gorman; 1982:13-32).

“Jewish concepts of family life must have had at least some influence on the Christian communities which Paul founded (cf. Eph 5:31 and 6:23 where Paul quotes the Old Testament passages in connection with family life” (Button; 2003:12).

10.3. JEWISH CONCEPT OF SALVATION

The “salvation” spoken of in the Jewish sources of this period has to do with the rescue from the national enemies, restoration of the national symbols, and a state of *shalom* ... “Salvation” encapsulates the entire

future hope (Wright; 1992:300). E. P. Sanders (1976:41)⁵⁵ who understands the soteriology of Palestinian Judaism as the restoration of the nation of Israel argues that ‘salvation comes by *membership* in the covenant, while obedience to the commandments *preserves* one’s place in the covenant’.⁵⁶ Turner (1996:136-137) asserts that soteriology in Judaism ‘was largely construed as the restoration, transformation and glorification of Zion from the faithful remnant’ in history.⁵⁷ Turner also recognizes that the soteriological pattern in some Jewish texts includes primarily the eschatological hope of spiritual/ethical renewal and transformation of Israel through the Spirit, as evoked by Ezekiel (36:27) and Joel (2:28-32).⁵⁸ (Petrenko; 2011:40). Inner/spiritual transformation leads to moral practice and to the restoration of social relations (epitomised in the restoration of ‘Israel’).

10.4. JEWISHNESS AND CIRCUMCISION AS THE SIGN OF THE COVENANT

Circumcision was a confessional sign which enabled the maintaining of the status of the covenant people of God (cf. Yee; 2005:80), “its decisive value in the Jews’ sight is understandable as it marked out ethnic identity and a defining boundary...” (Yee; 2005:80). It protected the covenant people of God from the assimilation of foreign influences and customs into Jewish way of life. “Circumcision is a *sine qua non* for Israel’s definition as the people of God. In sum: circumcision as the sign of the election was (and still is) for the Jews the first act of full covenant membership and obligation” (Yee; 2005:80-90). He writes “Circumcision is a sure sign of Jewish identity and not at least, a bond which holds the Jews together as the elect of God. It was the self-evident correlation between covenant and law as epitomised in circumcision that was the heart of the problem for Jews and Gentiles” (Yee; 2005:81). It was through circumcision that the Jews were able to locate their own distinctive status as the legitimate heirs of God’s gracious covenant. The way in which the covenant concept is used in Eph 2:11 are much broader than the Jewish view of the covenant. God is not interested merely in Israel’s own well being or Israel as God’s portion or Israel being the people of a national God. God’s plan (Eph 1:3-14) is for the entire humankind. God’s intention and plan

⁵⁵ See also Kelly, R.G & Scroggs, R. (1976).

⁵⁶ Since Sanders’ thesis on ‘covenantal nomism’, permutations of his view by different scholars brought a fresh interpretative approach to Paul and Judaism, and this new approach has been called the ‘new perspective’. Amongst the leading voices of the ‘new perspective’ (with some disagreements) are James D. G. Dunn (e.g. ‘The New Perspective on Paul’ in *Jesus, Paul and the Law. Studies in Mark and Galatians*, Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1990, 183-214, first published in *BJRL*, 65 [1983] 95-122; *idem*, *Romans* [2 vols], Texas: Word, 1988; *idem*, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, London: A. C. Black, 1993) and N. T. Wright (e.g. *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology*, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1991; *idem*, *the People of God*, *passim*).

⁵⁷ Turner, *Power from on High*, 136-37.

⁵⁸ Turner, *Power from on High*, 130-137.

was for the Jewish people and nation to play a role in including the Gentiles in the covenant of God. His plan was for them to share in the blessings of being his covenant people who revealed God's gracious promise to all ethnic groups. Instead they saw the promises narrow scope of the divine grace and so limits membership to what constitutes the "body politic" to include only ethnic Israel, a much smaller group than the whole of humankind. It can be concluded that the boundaries between Jews and Gentiles are socially motivated rather than inherent in the original plan of God (cf. 1:3-14).

10.5. THE TORAH: THE SOURCE OF COMMUNITY LIFE

The importance of the Torah for the community is shown by the decree in Josephus which shows the Ephesians' Jews arguing that they should be allowed to live in accordance with "ancestral/tradition" or "with their own laws and maintain their own customs" (Ant. 14:225-7). Issues related to the Torah appear in key passages of Ephesians (Eph 2:13-17; 5:31; 6:2) (cf. Petrenko; 2011:33). The Jews from Asia Minor were zealous defenders of the Law and the Temple. Jews from Asia accused Paul of teaching "against our people, our law and this place" (Acts 21:27-30). He is accused of desecrating the Temple by bringing Greeks into the temple (Acts 21:28). This indicates that there was tension in Ephesus between the Jewish community and Christian community. Further, these decrees show that the Ephesian Jews followed Jewish practices and beliefs such as observing food laws (Ant 14:22-6) and the Sabbath (Ant 16:167-8) and they seemed to have gained exemption from military service so that they could keep the food laws and the Sabbath (Ant 14:223-30). "Paul does not exclude those who had the Torah from the power of sin (cf. Ro 2:17-3:20), for "we, the Jews, were in the same state of alienation (2:3)" (Johnson; 1986:374). Judaism taught that circumcision and the observance of the Torah were the basis of Jewish claims to distinctive access to God (cf. Ro 9:4-5) and entrance into the Holy Place, the Temple. The Torah or circumcision is not identified as the problem separating Jews from Gentiles. The author indicates that a perfect way has been opened for Jews and Gentiles, and all humanity, to enter into the presence of God, through the crucifixion and death of the Messiah. "Paul drastically restructures these symbols by the figure of the crucified Messiah" (Johnson; 1986:375).

10.6. THE JEWISH CONCEPT OF MISSION

"There is nothing comparable in Jewish sources to the language of proclamation. Gospel and mission" (Ware; 2011:287). He writes that "in Jewish thought, the conversion of Gentiles is an eschatological event" (Ware; 2011:286). The context of Jewish consciousness of mission was in the expectation of a pilgrimage of the nations to Zion in the impending time of the Jewish nations' eschatological restoration, linked with

an interest in present day converts as an anticipation of this future conversion of the Gentiles. Judaism did not share the same understanding of what was mission as Christianity. “The concept of redemption, does not, in fact, exist in Judaism. The term used in Judaism for redemption, in Hebrew “*geoulah*”, can be translated as “liberation”, without any metaphysical meaning whereas in Christianity redemption means salvation” (Nehoff; 1998:197). Judaizing mission gave undue authority to the Torah and ancestry angelic powers seen by holy visionaries on entering the heavenly places (cf. Turner; 1996:143).

10.7. THE HOLY SPIRIT AND JUDAISM

Central to the work of the Holy Spirit is Jewish soteriology. M. Turner argues for “restoration and moral transformation of Israel” (and a remnant) (Turner; 1995:157) as the persuasive Jewish soteriological understanding behind the soteriology of Ephesians. “The emphasis on the social/sociological dimensions of Ephesians 2:1-22 is in danger of leaving out of account the transformation of all parties (Jews and Gentiles) in their reconciliation to God. The Jewish motifs of ‘being created in Christ Jesus for good works’ (Eph 2:10), ‘new creation’ (Eph 2:15), and the work of the Spirit (Eph 2:18, 22) need to be integrated into the analysis of this passage” (Petrenko; 2011:10). Second Temple Judaism writings seem to indicate that the individual is not capable through reason alone *to be* and *to do* what has been required of him/her, but an outside force (God/Spirit) facilitates and enables the individual to be transformed cognitively and ethically (cf. Petrenko; 2010:26). In Rabbinic theology the Spirit is specifically brought into connection with the resurrection: “Holiness leads to the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit leads to the resurrection” (Vos; 1912:211-259). It is a misleading impression that the period of Judaism was an un-pneumatic period. It is due to an unwarranted comparison with the following Spirit-filled days of the early Christian Church (cf. Vos; 1930:162). The pneumatic state in the period of Judaism “assumed the form of a translation into the heavenly sphere” (cf. Vos; 1930:163). Ecstatic experiences and transference into a heavenly sphere was a feature of Jewish Apocalyptic in the period of Judaism.

10.8. THE JEWISH WORLDVIEW

Yee (2005:122) draws attention to the fact that there were other kinds of Judaism and that these religious systems were in the same period and geographical region (e.g., Gal 2:11-16; Col 2:16, etc.). When speaking of the unfolding of the idea of Ephesians, therefore we stress that “these testify to the inner life and worldview of only one Jewish group among many” (Yee; 2005:123).

The Jewish perception was that there were many layers of heaven or the heavenly realm, which consisted of a number of regions. This understanding of the “heavenlies” enables the author to speak about the other

“powers” that populate “the heavenly places”, probably understood as the lower regions of the highest high (2:10; 6, 12; cf. 4:10).

10.9. JEWISH CONCEPT OF SPACE

The “heavenly realm” (1:3, 10, 20; 2:6; 3:10, 15; 4:10; 6:9, 12) is characteristic of Jewish apocalyptic thought, where the heavenly realm had a number of regions (Dt 10:14; 1Ki 8:27; 2Ch 2:6; Neh 9:5; 1 Enoch 60:8; 61:12; 70:3; 2 Enoch 8:1; Apoc. Mos 37:5). In Ephesians we find texts which express a Jewish point of view (1:12-13; 2:11-12; 3:6).

10.10. JEWISH SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS

In the letter to the Ephesians the relationship between slaves and masters is expressed in typical Jewish thought. The direction to slaves and masters (Eph 6:5-9) are based on two Jewish motifs: the fear of the Lord and God’s impartiality, which are peculiarly Jewish ideas. The author’s perspective on the husband-wife relationship is clearly informed by the Jewish Scriptures (Eph 5:31; Ge 2:24; cf. 4Q416.2:4:1-13; Mt 19:5). What were the Jewish concepts of family? Jewish understanding of the husband-wife relationship? Jewish ideal of relationship between husband and master, employment relationships in Judaism? Fear of the Lord?

10.11. JEWISH CONCEPT OF THE SPIRITUAL REALM

The idea of putting on the armour of God (Eph 6:11) is wholly and exclusively Jewish. The idea of “wrestling not against flesh and blood” (Eph 6:12) is a Jewish expression (Sir 14:18; 1 Enoch 15:4; Sanh 91a; Mt 16:17; 18:23; 1Co 15:50; Gal 1:16; Heb 2:14). A series of words typical of Jewish battle imagery is used, “having girded your loins” (Eph 6:14; Ex 12:11; Jer 1:17; Judith 4:14), “having put on the breastplate of righteousness” (Eph 6:15; Isa 11:5; Wisd 5:18); “the helmet of salvation” (Eph 6:17; Isa 59:17), “the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God” (Eph 6:17; Isa 49:2; Hos 6:5), “open my mouth” (Eph 6:19; Eze 3:27; 29:21; Wisd 10:21; Sir 16:5; 24:2; 2 Esd 9:28; 14:37-41; 1Q H10.7).

10.12. MAGIC

“The influence of popular folk religion regarding spirits and demons eventually infiltrated the worldview of even Jewish people. While the more theologically conservative among the Jewish people may have viewed the practice of these magical acts as contrary to believing in a Sovereign and omnipotent God, at the

popular level many Jews of the Diaspora saw nothing intrinsically wrong in combining to their faith a trust in and use of magic” (Campbell; 2005:15). In Ephesus Jewish magical practices were popular. Luke recalls the arrival of a group of travelling Jewish exorcists in Ephesus tempting to perform the exorcism of a group of individuals, each one troubled by evil spirits. The existence of these itinerant Jewish exorcists in Ephesus shows clearly that magic and exorcism were the preserve of the Jewish inhabitants of Ephesus. It was the Jewish travelling magicians who were selling their abilities⁵⁹. The events in Acts 19 and the religious history of the city being the home to the temple Artemis, clearly indicates that Ephesus was the centre for the worship of Artemis. However, it is a misconception that the worship of Artemis involved magical practices and to conclude on the bases of the worship of Artemis that Ephesus was a centre of magic and divination⁶⁰). In Ephesus there is evidence of the “grammata”, but this does not per se constitute a climate of magic and divination. Jewish apocalyptic used terms to refer to pagan deities, demoting them to the level of lesser demonic beings (cf. Jubilees 19.3-31; 1 Enoch 15,8-12; Testament of Simeon 4.9), as does Paul himself (1 Cor. 10:20).

These Jewish people might have come into the Ephesians Christian community with a worldview shaped by the contemporary magical arts. Such a pronounced background might have continued to influence their thinking as Jewish Christians. Arnold (1989:31) writes that “Jewish magic was famous in antiquity”. He writes about the Jewish magic in Ephesus, “There is substantial amount of evidence pointing to Jewish involvement in magic in this locale” (Arnold; 1989:32)⁶¹. Magic was not popular amongst the general society of Ephesus but specifically amongst the Jews. “Jews played a prominent part in the magic of the ancient world” (Strelan; 1996:150). Strelan (1996:87) correctly concludes that, “there is almost no evidence, even in Acts 19, to support the claim that it was a city “preoccupied with magic” (Williams; 1985:90).

⁵⁹ Campbell (2005:17) argues by reason that if there were travelling Jewish magicians then “it is even more likely that Hellenistic non-Jewish travelling magicians would have also been travelling throughout the region making a living”. This, however, is an assumption.

⁶⁰ Arnold bases his argument that Ephesus was the centre of magic and divination on the bases of magical papyri evidence from Egypt. The background of the letter to the Colossians arises out of the error of ascetic and mystical Jewish apocalyptic thought and practices adapted for Christian use. The worship of angels is not necessarily the same as placating hostile cosmic powers (cf. Worthington III; 2007:162).

⁶¹ Arnold endeavours to identify a syncretism, that some believers may have been tempted to syncretise their past magical beliefs and practices with their new found Christian faith. But there is no evidence to support this view.

10.13. JEWISH Gnostic BACKGROUND TO THE LETTER

“It is questionable whether a Gnosticized Judaism existed in the first century or indeed ever existed” (Arnold: 1989:13). There is no evidence of Gnosis as having existed in Ephesus in the first century (cf. Arnold; 1989:8). “It should caution us against interpreting Ephesians in light of second-and third century systems” (Arnold; 1989:8). The “once-now” scheme and the so-called spatial eschatology used to support a Gnostic interpretation are Jewish expressions and thoughts. If a Gnosticism did exist in Ephesus then, the “epistle was intended to refute an increasing Gnosticism of a Jewish kind” (O’Brien; 1999:52) Both Jewish and Gentile Christians are in view but it is specifically the Jewish believers who are the particular focus in the letter. The implied audience is Jewish.

11. SUMMARY

The Jewish community in Ephesus maintained significant facets of Jewish identity. Itinerant Jewish exorcists existed in Ephesus, which shows clearly that magic and exorcism were the preserve of the Jewish inhabitants of Ephesus. Magic was popular amongst the Jews. The Jewish people may have come into the Ephesians Christian community with a worldview shaped by the contemporary magical arts. Jewish and Gentile Christians are in view but it is specifically the Jewish believers who are the particular focus in the letter. The implied audience is Jewish.

12. THE GENTILE COMMUNITY IN EPHEBUS

In Ephesus virtually all spheres of city life were dominated by pagan religious thought. This was the case with economic life, particularly in the trade guilds for artisans, whose meetings involved sacrifices to a pagan deity. The general cultural and social life was interwoven with religious practices. Those who intentionally avoided such practices were often barred from social interaction (cf. Trebilco; 1998:319).

12.1. THE GENTILE LETTER AUDIENCE

In Ephesians 2:1-3 Paul addresses his audience of pagan gentile converts as follows: “He has brought you to life, you who were dead through your sins in which you formerly lived when you followed the ways of the world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air” (Eph 2:1-2). The author is drawing clear boundaries between the Christian community and the outside world. He develops this thought further in Eph 4:17-24 but before doing so he addresses the boundaries between Jew and Gentile, in Eph 2:11-3:13. In Eph 4:17-24 he “defines the boundaries that separate insiders from outsiders, with “Gentiles” here clearly referring to pagans, not to Christian Gentiles” (Witherington III; 2007:294). In this section he addresses “the loss of

boundary markers associated with Judaism (e.g. circumcision)” (Witherington III; 2007:304). The ethical section of the letter compensates the Gentiles for their loss of boundary markers by giving detailed attention to ethical boundaries (cf. Witherington III; 2007:304). The author begins with the status of the Gentiles in the community. In Eph 2:11-13 he writes: “Remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called uncircumcised” and addresses the attitudes and disposition of the Jews towards the Gentiles. Lincoln clearly shows that Eph 2:11-22 is addressed specifically to believing Gentiles, drawing a contrast between their pre-Christian past in relation to Israel’s privileges and their present status in Christ (cf. O’Brien; 1999:28). The author makes a clear distinction to the heritage and different birthrights implying that the Gentiles had no rights by birth to the covenant God made with Israel because they were born outside the covenant.

The terms “sons of disobedience” and “children of wrath” are expressions found within the Qumran community to depict the Gentiles. The Christian Gentiles had certain struggles because they were at the same time still part of the same environment which they were part of before their conversion, an environment in which the Gentiles discriminated against the Jews, but had become part of a new community, the Christian community. The context the Gentile Christians were faced with was the everyday contact with others who continued to discriminate against Jews who were still part of the same world and lifestyle as they once shared. “Banqueting with a non-Christian friend, going to the theatre, attending a city festival, being part of a voluntary association which existed for the mutual benefit of its members, all these aspects of city life were connected with pagan religiosity” (Trebilco; 1998:319). “What was the Christian to do? Take the trade guilds for example. There were real economic, professional and social advantages to be had from being part of the guild. But the guild had a religious dimension which involved pagan sacrifices, and meat sacrifices to idols pagan sacrifice” (Trebilco; 1998:319). These trade guilds were adversely affected by the monotheism of Judaism and Christianity.

The first converts of the Church in Ephesus were predominantly Jewish, with a few proselytes (Acts 19:9). Over the course of time larger numbers of pagan Gentiles were converted. Gradually the ratio between Jewish and Gentile converts became more in favour of the Gentiles. Elliott (2000:89) argues that the Gentiles would not have outnumbered their Israelite counterparts until a much later date. Recently scholars are becoming more and more convinced that by the time of Paul “many Christians in Ephesus were probably Jewish” (Cairns; 1995:51) and that the audience of the letter of Ephesians, although containing Jews and Gentiles, consisted with far more Jewish Christians than has been previously recognized. Furthermore, it clarifies the purpose of the author, the correction of the Jewish Christian attitude and disposition towards the Gentile Christians. The letter to the Ephesians, when read together with first Peter, suggests that the preaching of a Gospel to the Gentiles, that decentres the Jews as God’s exclusive people were factors behind the conflict in Ephesus.

12.2. EPHESUS AND THE TYPE OF GENTILE COMMUNITY

The right interpretation of Acts 19:1-7 must confront the specific redemptive-historical delimitation that is the gospel is spreading also to the pagan Gentiles who have come into contact with it. Arnold extrapolates a background of the mystery religions, magic, astrology, Hellenistic religions, and a problem of syncretism based upon this assumption, that the audience was gentile. But there is no evidence in Acts 19 to support the claim that it was a city pre-occupied with magic (Willimas; 1985:90). “Apart from “grammata”, there is little evidence to suggest Ephesus was notorious for its association with magic” (Massyngherde Forde; 1975:389) or that it was the headquarters of magical arts...a hotbed of cults and superstitions” (Swete; 1922:23 Beckwith; 1922:447). Furthermore, it is unclear whether it was Jews or Gentiles who practised sorcery. Arnolds (1989:5) view that Ephesus was a major centre of magic practices has little textual support as it depends upon the audience being largely gentile.

12.3. GENTILE WORLDVIEW

The background of the letter to the Ephesians is Jewish astrology. In Ephesians 6:12 the term “kosmokrator” literally means “world ruler”. “It was originally an astrological term used of the planets and stars with the belief that they were gods and had control over human destinies” (Witherington III; 2007:350).

13. CULTURE, CLIMATE AND GEOGRAPHY OF EPHESUS: A GREEK CITY

Ephesus was a city with a predominant Greek culture which it maintained even under Roman rule. “For the novels, Ephesus remained a bastion of the normal Greek world, a centre of order” (Thomas; 1995:113). “City policy and literary production agree first in presenting Artemis of Ephesus as a Greek goddess, and then in emphasizing and presenting the role of the city as a place of asylum” (Thomas; 1995:114). It can be inferred from the fact that the dominant culture in Ephesus was Greek that the culture Gentiles in the church of Ephesus would have been Greek. As the Jews in Ephesus were Hellenistic Jews, language would not have been a barrier in the church.

13.1. ARTEMIS OF EPHESUS

One of the main deities to be worshipped in Ephesus was a female goddess called Artemis. The worship of Artemis underwent changes from the Greek Great Artemis to the Artemis Ephesia in the Roman period. In

the Greek period Artemis was depicted as a virgin huntress. The earliest coins of Artemis Ephesia, dating from the third century BCE, portrayed her as the short-skirted huntress. Only from the second century BCE onwards does the well-known cult statue appear on the coinage of Ephesos. Beginning in that period, both the “Great Artemis and Artemis Ephesia continued to appear on various minting into the late Roman Empire” (Thomas; 1995: 95). It was as Artemis was depicted in new ways that “especially from the second century CE onwards, new variants of the Greek Artemis appear: Artemis pulled by a span of deer or holding a torch” (Thomas; 1995: 95). It would seem that the worship of Artemis was a central part of the identity of the citizens of Ephesus with the result that when the Emperor cult was introduced “at best, the imperial cult stood alongside Artemis-it certainly never replaced her, a fact which the Roman emperors knew only too well” (Strelan; 1996:80). Strabo relates that it was an Ephesian who told Alexander tactfully that it was inappropriate to dedicate offerings to a god when Alexander wished to have a statue of him dedicated in Ephesus (Strabo; 14.1.22).

It is well documented that Pergamum and Smyrna both honoured Roman emperors and so in 40 CE Gaius couldn't establish the worship of himself as emperor there but he was also denied by Ephesus, not because of any Roman emperor already being worshipped there, but because of Artemis (Strelan; 1996:80).

Each polis or city had its own specific deity and there existed a distinct and unique bond between the city and the deity. In Ephesus there was a bond between the city of Ephesus and the goddess Artemis (cf. Oster; 1990:1700). “Just as the cult of Artemis was variously affected by the cultural and political changes, so also her history as a significant and important deity in Ephesus was not static or smooth”, as Oster warns (1990:1699). The events of Acts 19 and the riot in Ephesus indicate that the worship of Artemis went through a period of decline. There was a severe famine in Asia Minor between 91-94 CE (Levick; 1982:57) which may account for the loss in confidence in Artemis. The earthquake which damaged Ephesus and “guttered many houses in the city putting the Artemis funds under strain” (Lewis; 1974:130) may have resulted in a period of decline in the worship of Artemis. The worship of Artemis was more associated with economic prosperity than any benefit, which could be derived from worshipping her. Travellers came to the city and sought the protection of Artemis. Artemis of Ephesus exercised a great deal of influence on the economic activity of both Ephesus and Asia Minor and contributed greatly to the financial welfare of the region (Strelan; 1996:26). The temple was connected with the economic structure of Ephesus and the province of Asia Minor.

Paul faced in Ephesus not only a building in the form of the temple of Artemis, and not only an image of great antiquity housed in the temple, but also a complex system of myths and rituals created which

sustained the life of Ephesus. There is, however, no evidence in the letter to the Ephesians that syncretism was a problem as has been assumed by some as the background⁶².

The geographical setting of the city of Ephesus

The historical-cultural context of a letter includes information about the geography as well as the architecture and the city itself. “Sometimes knowing more about the geography or topography assumed by the text can help you grasp the meaning” (Duvall & Hays; 2008:53).

13.2. NATURAL DISASTERS

The people of Ephesus were familiar with natural disasters and they were conscious that disaster could strike at any moment. “Ephesus was not immune to natural disasters and these left their mark on the psyche of the city. Asia Minor was earthquake prone (Seneca; Ep 91.9) and Ephesus suffered from one such in the year 17 CE; in about 44 CE, fire gutted many houses in the city putting the Artemis temple funds under severe strain (Lewis; 1974:130), and there is at least one report of severe flooding in the city(Greek Ant. 3.9.424). There was also “a severe famine in Asia Minor between 91-94 CE” (Levick; 1982:57). The relevance of this is that Artemis was seen as the protector of the city, protecting it from natural disasters. Hence any (new) religion that would challenge the worship of Artemis would have been regarded as a menace to the safety of the city. Therefore it was not difficult for Demetrius to convince the crowd in Ephesus that the new teachings brought by Paul was dangerous and should be forbidden (Acts 19:27). This pagan attitude towards keeping the city safe against natural disasters was probably a matter Paul had to keep in mind in his mission strategy in and around Ephesus.

Scherrer (1995:16) proposes that the decline of the city which began in 262 CE can be attributed to an earthquake and an accompanying fire. “These events cannot have happened later than the mid-fourth century, and were probably much earlier, during the time of Gallienus in 262 CE” (Koester; 1995:16). He writes that “with major earthquakes and the devastation caused by Gothic plunderers, the prosperity of the city had begun to decline as early as the time of emperor Gallienus, and the population seemed to have declined” (Koester; 1995:16-17).

13.3. THE CLIMATE OF EPHEBUS

⁶² In the letter to the Ephesians there is no evidence of the syncretism of the worship of Artemis and the Christian faith. Conversion involved the breaking with all rituals of the worship of Artemis (Ac 19:19).

“Modern-day travellers comment on the heavy rains and hot unbearable summers” (Chandler; 1971:78-79; Burchner; 1905:2784). This would have influenced the practical aspect of the mission strategy of the Church, as it would have been difficult to travel during the rainy or wet season.

13.4. THE GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING OF EPHESUS AND ITS ARCHITECTURE AND CITY PLAN

Historical data regarding the climate of Ephesus is scarce. Mostly one has to rely on more general information, such as the fact that the city shared in the Mediterranean climate of dry summers and wet winters. Little would have changed in this regard until today, as Chandler (1971:78-79) writes: “Modern-day travellers comment on the heavy rains and hot unbearable summers”.

14. THE CHURCH OF EPHESUS

14.1. THE FINANCIAL RESOURCES OF THE CHURCH OF EPHESUS

The church in Ephesus showed signs of wealth when Timothy was the pastor of the church (1Ti 2:9; 6:17; Acts 19:19). The letters of 1 and 2 Timothy express concern about a wealthy woman, and it would seem that there were a large number of wealthy women in the church of Ephesus. This situation would have been favourable for the church to be able to set aside time and finances for visiting neighbouring communities in order to spread the gospel.

14.2. THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY IN EPHESUS

“In general, in Asia Minor and elsewhere, as time went on links between Jewish communities and those who regard themselves as members of Christian communities were close but could also be contentious” (Trebilco; 1998:37). The thinking of the Christian community was Jewish thinking. Hanson rightly perceives the background to the teaching in Ephesians to be found in the Old Testament, Inter-testamental and Jewish Christian thinking (cf. Hanson; 1946:56).

It is probable that the Christian community was influenced by the Qumran communities’ method of interpretation until the community was destroyed in 70 A.D. “The Qumran community used an eschatological hermeneutics, their approach was built upon a distinctively Christological foundation” (Silva; 1987:29).

15. EPHESUS AND THE TYPE OF CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

The *new set of relationships*, which empowered and strengthened the Christian community and household. (The new set of social relationships writes Petrenko, was because of a new structure and perception of knowledge (cf. Petrenko; 2011:29-30). The further reiteration and fortification of the *knowledge received* — “learn what is pleasing to the Lord” (Eph 5:10), “understand what the will of the Lord is” (Eph 5:17), the husband’s and wife’s perceptions and relationship are shaped by the Christ–church relationship (Eph 5:22-33), the education of children in the “discipline and instruction of the Lord” (Eph 6:4), the slaves “doing the will of God from the heart” (Eph 6:6), and slaves and masters *knowing* that their ultimate Master is Christ (Eph 6:8-9) — *aimed to refashion the attitudes and practices of the Christian community and the household* (Petrenko; 2011:30).

The paraenesis also reminded the readers of the *new set of relationships that dominated their new life in Christ*. Believers were to continually allow the Holy Spirit to empower and transform them so to facilitate and sustain the unity of the corporate community (Eph 4:2-3; cf. Eph 2:14-18, 22). The Greco-Roman household codes were developed primarily to instruct the head of the household about how to deal with members of his family. The apostle Paul used the household code concept, but he transformed it in powerful ways. For instance, Greco-Roman codes told husbands to make their wives submit, but they never listed love as a duty of the husband. In Ephesians 5:25 Paul broke the mould when he instructed husbands to “love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her” (Duvall & Hays; 2008:53). Paul exhorts the members of the household even further, to “submit to one another out of reverence for Christ” (5:21). Worthington III (2007:320) says that “the Christian code is about everyone in the household and treats everyone as moral agents, even the children. It is not about the head of the household anymore”. The Christian household codes in Ephesians were less restrictive, especially to women’s roles, than the Greco-Roman household codes (cf. Worthington III; 2007:230). Paul used the word *hypo* of all believers in relationship to each other as well as the relationship of wife to husband. “There seems to have been no precedent in the literature” (Worthington III; 2007:320).

It appears that the author sought to refashion the attitudes and practices of the Christian community. Ephesians plays a central role in refashioning the believer’s ethical behaviour and social relationships. The purpose was to distinguish the Christian community as separate and unique in its cultural and social context.

Furthermore, believers’ *social practices* are identified in terms of *communal unity* seen in: the head/body imagery (Eph 1:22b-23; 2:16; 3:6; 4:4, 12, 15, 16, 25; 5:23, 28, 30), peace (Eph of 2:20-22; 4:12, 16, 29), and relations with one another ἀλλήλων (Eph 3:17; 4:2, 25, 32; 5:19, 21). “Christian community” is a vital

part of Christian mission. The life of the Christian community is part of the way by which the gospel is communicated. Lesslie Newbigin describes the local congregation as “the hermeneutic of the gospel”-the way in which people understand the gospel” (Timmis & Chester; 2009:75).

16. THE EARLY CHURCH AND CONCEPTS

It seems that the Christians in Ephesus upheld a concept of mission that was in general shaped by the Old Testament and especially related to God’s covenant with his people. It is a mistake to assume that the Old Testament does not have a missionary focus. It is important to understand the differences between the Old Testament and New Testament concept of mission. If we fail to do so it will result in the extrapolation of the gospel fulfilment in the anti-type and apply it in the Old Testament as if there were no distinction. The Old Testament uses different concepts from that of the New Testament and care has to be taken to distinguish between these. We have to recognize that “the nations” in the Old Testament is not purely an ethnic concept. It is the theological significance of the nations that is primarily in view” (Goldsworthy; 2002:6)⁶³. Although Israel did not have a missionary task in the modern day sense or was dominated by an evangelical thinking about mission (cf. Goldsworthy; 2002:2), but she had the role to function as priests and had a mediatorial role in relation to the nations (cf. Kaiser; 1981:29-30). Kaiser (1981:29-30) writes, “Unfortunately for Israel, they rejected this priesthood of all believers and urged Moses to go up to the mountain of Sinai on their behalf and as their representative. Nevertheless, even though God’s original plan was for the moment frustrated and delayed until New Testament times, it was not defeated, substituted, or scrapped”. Goldsworthy (2002:3) writes, “Kaiser has taken the application of this passage in 1Pe 2:9 and Rev 1:6, to show that the priesthood of all Christian believers involves them in proclamation of the mighty acts of God. He extrapolates the gospel fulfilment in the anti-type and applies it to the type in the Old Testament as if there were no distinction”. Kaiser overlooked that the missional nature was essential to the essence of the covenants. The Mosaic covenant had a missional dimension. Obedience to the covenant was important because it demonstrated that the God of Israel was the God of Heaven, the One and only God to the nations. It was by obeying the demands of the covenant that God would be exalted among the nations. “The nation of Israel witnesses to the saving purposes of God by experiencing them and living according to them” (Goldsworthy; 2002:2). Israel had a role in God’s plan and purposes for the nations, and God’s plan was accomplished through Israel. “The function of Israel in the purposes of God to bring salvation to the

⁶³ It was because Israel had lost the motive of mission that it *overestimated* the covenant relationship. The significance of being Jewish was overstated with the result that belonging to the nation of Israel was seen as synonymous with salvation. Election and ethnicity became intertwined so that ethnicity became an important, even the exclusive, criteria of the covenant.

nations is in the indicative, not the imperative” (Goldsworthy; 2002:2). Israel’s calling was not to engage in “cross-cultural” or foreign mission or in being a nation of priests, as understood as meaning a nation of evangelists and foreign missionaries, but in obedience to the covenant. In this regard Israel failed miserably in being the missionary people of God, disregarding and breaking the Mosaic covenant. Obedience revealed the holiness of the God of Israel and that Israel as his chosen people had been called and set apart by Him as his own special people. The calling and election of Israel was inseparable from her missionary task. Her identity was to be found in her calling by God to be “a light to the nations” (Isa 42:6; 49:8; 55:3, 4). Her living out her missionary obedience to the Mosaic commands was central to Israel’s missionary calling because salvation in the Old Testament was a centripetal movement of ingathering. “In the light of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, the movement is now seen to be one of outreach; centrifugal movement” (Goldsworthy; 2002:2).

“Amongst the first explicit missionary texts is Genesis 12:1-3” (Goldsworthy; 2002:5). The covenant with Abraham contained in essence a missionary dimension. Abram had to leave his country, people and father’s household and to go to the land that the Lord showed him (Ge 12:1). The necessity of separation which both the Abrahmic and Mosaic covenants required was intended to create a community of the covenant. It was when Israel neglected the covenant that she began to resemble the nations and worship the idols of the nations. “The Old Testament does present a missionary focus, but with a different perspective from the New Testament. It is largely preparatory. The ingathering of the nations is eschatological, for it will be on the great day of the Lord, the day of Israel’s final salvation, that the nations will come seeking the Lord at the temple and find blessing” (Goldsworthy; 2002:10)⁶⁴. The promises to Abraham concerning the blessing to the nations will come about as an eschatological event. “His coming kingdom and the inclusion of the nations is the re-establishing of the rule against which all mankind rebelled in Adam” (Goldsworthy; 2002:8). The separation of community and people of God from its role in society was essentially a violation of the covenant.

Against this Old Testament background the Christians in Ephesus also regarded mission. As will be indicated in Chapters 3 and 4 below, the apostle Paul kept the Old Testament background of his audience’s view of mission in mind when he explained God’s mission strategy for the church in Ephesus.

17. SUMMARY

⁶⁴ “The shift in focus from an Old Testament centripetal ingathering of the nations to a New Testament centrifugal reaching out in missionary activity is not an absolute one” (Goldsworthy; 2002:13).

Mission was essential to the Old Testament covenant concept. Obedience to the covenant had a missional dimension. It was through obedience that Israel testified to the uniqueness of Yawheh. Israel's calling was not to engage in "cross-cultural" or foreign mission or in being a nation of priests, as understood as meaning a nation of evangelists and foreign missionaries, but in obedience to the covenant. The concept of missions did not involve going to the nations but instead the nations were expected to come to Israel. In the New Testament the concept of mission undergoes a transformation; the Church is called to go to the nations. It was when Israel neglected the covenant that she began to resemble the nations and worship the idols of the surrounding nations and so lost her missional witness to the nations. Missions results in a community that is not isolated or exclusive. Israel experienced the nations as a threat and attempted to protect them through strengthening the boundaries between them and the surrounding cultures. It is specifically because Israel did not serve the redemptive purposes of God that she became like the surrounding nations.

18. THE PURPOSE OF THE LETTER TO THE EPHESIANS

The key to the letter to the Ephesians is the reason that it was written (cf. Duvall & Hays; 2008:52). The purpose of a letter can be established by determining the historical-cultural context, discovering the literary context and then bringing these into discussion with the grammatical exegesis. If the purpose of the letter is used as a safety net to verify an interpretation this becomes apparent.

Lincoln suggests that Ephesians has no specific purpose or specific setting. Best (1998:69) writes that it is difficult to detect anything in the letter specifically directed at a purpose. If, however, the letter had no purpose there would not have been any indication of a relationship between the author and the recipients. It has been suggested that Ephesians is rhetorical literature in which case it would not have a purpose. But even so the letter would have an authorial purpose or goal. The author had a clear structure in mind when he composed the letter, and a structure presupposes an intention and purpose. It would also be uncharacteristic of Paul not to communicate with a church which he nurtured for a period of 2½ years (Ac 19:8, 10). "When one doubts its authorship, destination, audience, and date of composition, the problem of purpose becomes even more complex" (Hoehner; 2002:97).

1) Possible purpose of recovering the conflict between Jews and Gentiles

Dating of the letter before A.D 70 excludes several possible purposes of the letter. Schmithals (1983:122) regards the occasion of the letter as that of the expulsion of Jewish Christians from the synagogue and its chief purpose was to secure the acceptance by Gentile Christians from the Pauline communities of their Christian brothers who came from the synagogue and at the same time acquaint the latter with the Pauline tradition. It has been suggested that Ephesians might have multiple purposes. In accordance with a late date MacDonald (1988:89) identified the purpose of the paraenesis "as an attempt to bring stability to the Christian community" implying that there is a crisis in the community. It has been suggested that the crisis

was the result of persecution. In the light of this crisis, the intention of Ephesians, writes Fischer, was to reconcile the different positions in the church whereby the ethical material was the basis for living together beyond all theological differences within the Christian community (Fischer; 1973:202). This view presupposes conflict between the gentile and Jewish communities or between the Pauline and Johannine community and schools which is unsubstantiated. It was suggested that the background was the conflict between Jew and Gentile Christians as a reaction by the Jewish Christians to the disappearance of national Israel and the temple cult following 70 AD. There is, however, no indication that the author had a historical circumstance of conflict that was a reaction to the events in Palestine in mind.

2) Possible purpose of addressing a spiritual or other crises

“Occasionally it has been suggested that the readers of the letter were in a state of spiritual crises which the letter was written to meet” (Schnackenburg; 1991: 34; Lincoln; 2000:440). Best (1998:72-73), however, finds no internal evidence in the letter for such a crises. If the letter was addressing spiritual crises and at the same time was a circular letter “the same major crises would hardly be affecting several congregations simultaneously” (Best; 1998:73). It would exclude the possibility of spiritual crises.

It has often been assumed that the purpose of the letter must be related to a specific problem in the community. The proposals that have been made about a purpose of the letter have assumed that the letter address a specific problem. The purpose of the letter, however, is not dependent upon identifying a specific problem within the community. We should avoid speculating about a specific problem where no such problem is specifically stated or implied.

3) Possible purpose of refuting Gnostic or other deviant teaching

Käsemann characterizes the epistle as refuting a Gnostic influence within the church (Eph 2:14-16) and emphasizing the prominent place of the church as the new creation and historical entity (Käsemann; 1958:517-18). Martin follows Käsemann’s (Martin; 1967-68:298). He perceives Ephesians as attacking Gnostic teachings (Martin; 1967-8:299-300). Petrenko (2010:11) is correct when, after examining the evidence, she concludes that “the suggestion of a Gnostic background and hostility against Jewish Christians is found unconvincing”. Dahl regards the letter as an instruction to new Gentile Christians on the meaning of baptism (Dahl; 1951:241-64).⁶⁵ He understands Ephesians to be addressing a possible problem of disunity in the church (Eph 2:11-22) and deviant teachings. There is, however, no indication that disunity existed in the community.

⁶⁵ ‘The Concept of Baptism in Ephesians’ in D. Hellholm, V. Blomkvist and T. Fornberg [eds.], *Studies in Ephesians: Introductory Questions, Text- & Edition-Critical Issues, Interpretation of Texts and Themes*, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000:413-33, esp. 415).

The teachings in the letter have been used to extrapolate the problems in the community. These include 'revealed knowledge of divine mysteries' (Eph 3:17-19), 'rejection of marriage' [Eph 5:21-33] and 'association with morally lax pagans' (Eph 5:3-14). But to infer a problem based upon a teaching by the author is to go beyond the intention of the author. The major works of Hanson 1946:⁶⁶ Caragounis; 1977:144-146⁶⁷ and Lincoln; 2000:32-35; 96-97⁶⁸ argue that the ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι was at the heart of the passage refers to cosmic reconciliation and the return to cosmic harmony as a central teaching in the letter. O'Brien has suggested that the purpose of the letter is related to the central message of Ephesians, the cosmic reconciliation and unity in Christ, emerging in Eph. 1:9-10. The cosmic reconciliation and unity in Christ is part of the setting of the letter and has to be distinguished from the purpose of the letter. Best (1998:74) writes that the letter is set within a supernatural or cosmic framework.

4) Possible purpose of renewing baptismal vows

The purpose of the letter has been stated positively by Kirby. Kirby claims that the letter was intended for renewing baptismal vows on the Feast of Pentecost now of significance for Christians (Kirby; 1968:140-44). In order to identify the renewal of baptism vows as the central purpose of the letter it is necessary to demonstrate that Ephesians is a baptismal liturgy. Although the author identified the ordinance that identified all believers as belonging to the community (Eph 4:4-6), it is obvious that it is a mark of identification of the new converted Christians that the author has in view in Eph 2:1-10 but used in the context of unity (Eph. 4:3) . The reference to a baptismal liturgy is used to support the theme of the unity of the body. Kirby identifies baptism as the key that unifies the letter and he sees ecclesiology, specifically the phrase 'eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace' (Eph 4:3)⁶⁹ as central to the purpose of the letter. Kirby notes that Ephesians contains comparatively more references to the Spirit than any other Pauline letter apart from Romans, but in Romans they tend to be grouped together whereas in Ephesians they are spread out (cf. Best; 1998:70).

The purpose of the letter to the Ephesians has almost exclusively been focused on the division of the Ephesians in two parts 1-3 and 4-6. The proposal of Petrenko (2011:4, 10, 15, 19-21) that questions the division and identifies soteriology and pneumatology as central to the letter leads us to consider a purpose that is consistent with these central themes⁷⁰.

1) A combination of subsidiary purposes

⁶⁶ Hanson, *Unity*, *passim*.

⁶⁷ Caragounis, *Mysterion*, 144-46.

⁶⁸ Lincoln, *Paradise*, 143-44; *idem*, *Ephesians*, 32-35; Lincoln, *Theology*, 96-97.

⁷⁰ Petrenko has demonstrated that soteriology and pneumatology is central to the letter. Baptism is an ordinance indicating the inward and invisible baptism of the Spirit, reneration (Ro 6:3-4).

O'Brien confers that proposals have been made about the purpose of the letter but there is no finality about the reason the letter was written. O'Brien (1999:51) writes "There is no unanimity as to the purpose for which it was written" (O'Brien; 1999:51). It is possible that the author might have had in mind to adjust the attitudes and responses of the Christian Jews towards the Gentiles, to make them responsive and open to welcome the Gentiles as equal recipients of the grace that they had received but this is a subsidiary purpose. A subsidiary purpose serves to help to supplement and is not of primary importance.

Ecclesiology is an important idea of the letter but not the final purpose for writing the letter. Therefore, it is a subsidiary purpose of the letter. "Normally in writing a letter, there is a primary reason or purpose though there may also be subsidiary purposes included" (Hoehner; 2002:98). Subsidiary purposes correlate with the main themes of the letter. The relationship between a theme and a subsidiary purpose is that a theme is one of the central ideas in the letter and the subsidiary purpose is the reason for the theme. The function of the purpose of a letter is to unify all the subsidiary purposes into one purpose. "To establish the purpose of the letter it must be looked at as a whole and minor interest and sections must not be elevated to a primary position" (Best; 1998:74). Hoehner recognizes that there is no agreement about the purpose of the letter, even if there is considerable unanimity among them about the significant themes in the letter. In order to establish the purpose of the letter the significant themes have to be identified, the purpose for each theme established and unified to derive the purpose of the letter.

A major theme of the letter has to do with the nature of the church and the kind of behaviour expected from believers (cf. Best; 1998:73). Robinson (1903:11-13; 292-295) has identified ecclesiology as a central message of the letter which led him to postulate, by relating it to other central ideas, such as unity, that the purpose of the letter is God's purpose for the human race in its unity in Christ. Robinson demonstrates through his approach that the central purpose of the letter is found by identifying the central ideas and relating them together to arrive at the purpose of the letter. The Church itself as organism and institution, however, is not the purpose of the letter. The Church has a role in God's plan of redemption, which is a subsidiary purpose in the letter (Eph 1:22-23; 2:21-22; 3:10-11; 20-21; 4:16; 5:25-27; 29-30; 32; 6:12). In order to avoid separating the function and role of the church from its structure and self-identity we need to speak about a "missionary ecclesiology" (cf. Van Engen; 1996:105) rather than simply identifying an ecclesiology in the letter. Unity has been a popular suggestion for the purpose of the letter. "One of the themes most commentators agree is unity" (Hoehner; 2002:102). Chadwick (1960:145-53) has suggested that "the epistle stresses unity of the church and thus demonstrates to the non-Pauline churches their need for unity with the Pauline churches and the Jewish Christians". His assumption is that there was a Johannine community in Ephesus and that the letter was written late. Unity can thus be identified as a subsidiary purpose in the letter. The relationship of the Gentiles to Israel is a theme (Eph 2:11-13) in the subsidiary purpose of unity (Eph 2:11-22). Paul's missionary work (Eph 3:1-9) to create unity is a theme in

this subsidiary purpose of unity between Jew and Gentile. Best (1998:75) writes that “the relation to Israel and the reference to Paul then report subsidiary purposes”. These are in fact themes in the subsidiary purpose of unity. Barth claims that the Book of Ephesians shows that Gentiles who had been alienated came into the household of God and had to learn to know and obey God “in Christ” by observing what God had done for Israel (Barth; 1974: see Hoehner; 2002:99) (cf. Eph 2:11-22; 3:1-9; 5:1-6:9).

2) Missions as possible connection of subsidiary purposes

Every text has a question behind it, an issue that called the text into being. If the purpose was not to address a specific problem, the intention of the author would have been to safeguard the community against possible future problems, or as is the case in Ephesians, to give to the community a certain character and identity. It can be affirmed that the purpose for writing Ephesians was not to address a specific problem in the community⁷¹. We should take care not to read a problem into a text. For this reason it will require that we search for a more holistic purpose, a purpose which can unite all the subsidiary purposes and themes in the letter. One possibility for the central purpose of the letter is missions. In order for mission to be the central purpose of the letter it will be necessary to demonstrate that it brings together and brings to full expression all the main ideas in the letter. These are the effective functioning of the body, the believer’s identity in Christ, soteriology and pneumatology, the church, unity, growth and maturity and love. It will be necessary to identify the role of each of the themes in the broader purpose of the letter, to demonstrate the centrality of the idea of missions and show that these themes together make the best interpretative of the letter as a letter about missions. The central message of the letter will be identified by examining the literary structure of the letter, (Ch. 3) by identifying the structure of the letter (Ch. 4 & 5).

19. CONCLUSION

Taking all of the above considerations into account, the following conclusions regarding the author, letter audience and purpose of the letter are drawn. The letter to the Ephesians is Pauline, most probably written before the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem. A date somewhere in the middle of the sixth decade of the first century is the preferred date, and correspondingly Paul is taken to be the author of the Epistle. From the letter’s intrinsic evidence as well as historical considerations from the book of Acts, it seems plausible that Paul wrote the letter while imprisoned, probably from Rome where he was imprisoned towards the middle of the sixth decade.

The relevance of the letter date is that it has an influence on the way in which the development of the relation between Jews and Gentiles and the structure and role of the church in Ephesus should be

⁷¹ “Ephesians was not sent to deal with some particular false teaching in a specific congregation” (O’Brien; 1999:56).

understood. Before the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple the Jewish Christian community in Ephesus was open to the integration of Jews and Gentiles into the synagogue and also into a single church. The theme of unity between Jew and Gentile at that time is set against the background of the integration of Jews and Gentiles into a new community, in which both groups were struggling to find one another and discover their communal identity.

The data from the letter to the Ephesians and other canonical writings, as considered above, gives good reason to conclude that the apostle Paul with this letter had in mind an audience of believers of whom many were from Jewish ethnic background as well as a significant number of former Jewish proselytes or God-fearing Gentiles. However, he clearly distinguishes between his Jewish and Gentile audience. On first sight it seems as if he is addressing the Gentiles, but he is actually addressing the Jews. As a type of rhetorical device, the author writes as if the audience he is addressing were Gentile, but the implied audience is the Jewish believers to whom he deems it necessary to give an account of his mission to the Gentiles. So it seems that, although explicitly addressing Gentile believers in the church, the author is implicitly speaking to Jewish believers.

So in the letter both Jewish and Gentile Christians are in view, but it is specifically the Jewish believers who are the particular focus of the letter. The implied audience is Jewish. Accordingly the language, arguments and general style of the letter can be expected to be directed at the Jewish way of thinking in the Ephesian church. With regard to their religious and social life, the Jewish community in Ephesus maintained significant facets of Jewish identity. This was probably also true regarding their views on soteriology and eschatology. They continued to view spiritual salvation as maintaining their place in the covenant, and they reserved the Jewish eschatological hope for the restoration, transformation and glorification of Zion. These matters would probably have been at the back of Paul's mind when composing the letter to the Ephesians.

Finally it has to be admitted that the letter does not seem to have been written with one specific purpose in mind. Much rather the letter gives witness of a number of subsidiary purposes. At the same time it is plausible that the connection point between these subsidiary purposes is the theme of mission. Whether this is indeed the case, has to be established from a thorough-going analysis of the letter contents, which is the aim of the next three Chapters of this thesis.

CHAPTER 3:

THE LITERARY CONTEXT

In the previous chapter the background of the letter was carefully examined. It was determined that the letter was not written mainly to Gentile Christians, but to both Jewish and Gentile Christian, in fact it specifically addressed to a Jewish audience who had obstacles to the integration of Gentiles into a Jewish Church. He writes to both Jew and Gentile to explain the divine plan of God. In this chapter the genre, structure and style of the letter will be examined. As stated in Chapter 1, the exegesis is done within a grammatico-historical framework. In addition to the socio-historical context of the letter, which was studied in Chapter 2, the exegetical method involves matters such as thought structure analysis, word study (semantic analysis), observation of the broad Scriptural context, comparing Scripture with Scripture (intra-textual observations) and observing the theological (revelation-historical) context of the letter. Before continuing to more detailed exegetical matters, the general structure of Ephesians is investigated, on the basis of which the exegetical studies of Chapters 4 and 5 will be based and structured.

1. THE GENERAL STRUCTURE OF EPHESIANS

The basic structure of Ephesians is in agreement with that of the typical Pauline epistles (cf. Du Toit; 1996:132) and can be summarized in general terms as follows:

1:1-2 Letter opening: author, addressees, blessing

1:3 – 6:20 Letter body

6:21-24 Letter ending: last arrangements, greetings and blessing.

Regarding the letter body there is general consensus among scholars that it consists of two main parts. The first part is Ephesians 1:3-3:21, is more or less an exposition of the theological principles on which the rest of the letter is based. The second part, Ephesians 4:1-6:20, is of more practical nature, containing exhortations based on the principles of the first part (cf. Jordaan; 1990:49-60; Du Toit; 1996:133). Due to this obvious division of the letter its exegesis is presented in this thesis in two separate chapters: This chapter (Chapter 3) deals with the first three chapters of Ephesians; the next chapter of the thesis (Chapter 4) deals with the last three chapters of the letter.

2. GENRE- LITERATURE TYPE AND STYLE

It is necessary to identify the form or genre because each literature type has certain particular rules and guidelines (cf. Duvall & Hays; 2008:64). R. R Jeal (2000:65, 69-71) sees in Ephesians a sermon which intends to motivate the thoughts and emotions of the readers with the theological realities and concepts of Ephesians 1–3 (e.g. ‘Christ, salvation, and reconciliation’), which will encourage a response expressed ethically or behaviourally (Eph 4–6). The call for a specific behaviour (Eph 4:1–6:9) is based on the ‘facts’ of the Ephesians 1–3. These serve as theological and pragmatic statements of the paraenesis itself.

2.1. THE STYLE

The letter consists of several long sentences which should be treated as single thought units. Ephesians 1:3-14 consists of a single sentence which is deliberately extended by using relative clauses, participles and prepositions, rather than dividing it into separate sentences. For this reason Ephesians 1:3-14 should be treated as a single thought and unity. Ephesians 1:13-14 is the final clause of the *berakah* which is one long sentence (202 words). The first long sentence is immediately followed by two more long sentences (1:15-23; 2:1-7) and should also be treated as a single thought unit. “Paul begins with a series of long periods at 3:2-13, 14-19” (Worthington III; 2007:229) and so Ephesians 3:1-13 and 3:14-19 in a similar fashion are to be treated as though it is a thought unit (see Pericope division). The central idea of the letter concerns the plan of God. The place of the mystery within God’s plan and the role of the church in the working out of God’s plan for the cosmos are revealed in Ephesians chapters 1-3. The paraenesis concerns the practical working out of God’s plan in the daily life of the believer.

2.2. STRUCTURE OF THE LETTER TO THE EPHESIANS

In the “theological” section of Ephesians (Eph 1–3) there is an absence of the significance of the parousia, an emphasis on a realized eschatology,⁷² and the “already/not yet” tension characteristic

⁷² Conzelmann’s earlier work influences Lindemann’s thesis (and of those who advocate a Gnostic background to Ephesians on an ‘over-realized’ eschatology of Ephesians. He affirms that the writer has gnosticised the Pauline apocalyptic two-age structure and salvation-history framework. The church in Christ lives in a timeless (heavenly) realm of salvation not being bound by an eschatological dualism or by a historical climax (A. Lindemann, *Die Aufhebung der Zeit: Geschichtsverständnis und Eschatologie im Epheserbrief*, Gütersloh: G. Mohn, 1975, 95-96. See reference to other scholars that follow Lindemann’s view in Arnold, *Ephesians*, 208 n. 65). Lindemann’s view, however, has been heavily criticized by scholarship, which affirms that Lindemann pushes too far the realized

of Ephesians. Petrenko (2011:20-21) points out that ‘the “already” aspects of salvation presented in chapters 1–3 seems to have been ignored in the paraenesis. There are several ways in which the letter to the Ephesians can be approached: For example, by identifying Christological, sacramental, pneumatological and/or eschatological foundations. Scholars recognize an eschatological and soteriological development in Ephesians compared with the undisputed Pauline letters.⁷³ The Christological and pneumatological foundations of Ephesians are unique to the letter of the Ephesians in the Pauline corpus.

In the soteriological pattern of Ephesians one identifies *soteriological contrasts*: once/now (Eph 2:2, 11, 13; 3:5, 10; 5:8), dead/alive (Eph 2:1, 5; 5:14), old/new creation (Eph 2:10, 15; 4:22, 24), darkness/light (Eph 1:18; 3:9, 10; 5:8, 9, 13, 14), folly/wisdom (Eph 1:8, 17; 3:10⁷⁴; 5:15, 17). Those characterized as ‘dead’, ‘old creation’, in ‘darkness’ and ‘folly’ seem to be under the *power* and *dominion* of the ‘ruler of the power of the air’ (Eph 2:2; cf. Eph 1:20-21), and this power is identified in Ephesians 4:26-27 and 6:11 as the devil.

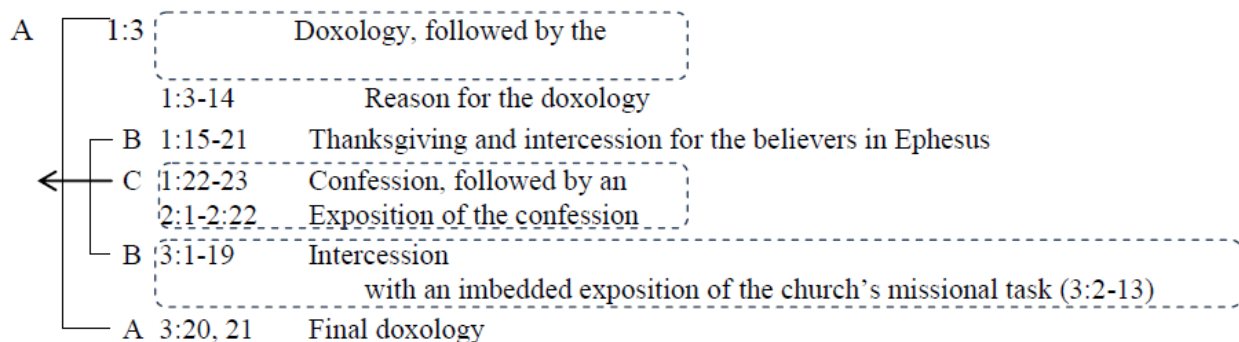
The principle part of the letter (1:3 – 3:21) features a composition that is rather extraordinary for Paul. Its built-up is similar to the way in which the Jewish *berakah*-prayers of Biblical times were structured (cf.

eschatology of Ephesians with the abolition of time. A more moderate interpretation has been argued by H. Lona and followed by most scholars — Ephesians does not exclude general future eschatological elements (e.g. Eph 1:13-14; 1:18, 21; 2:7; 4:30; 5:5; 6:13) as seen in the Pauline letters; however, it gives stronger emphasis to a present or realized eschatology which is not found in the earlier Pauline letters (Eph 1:3, 9-10; 1:20-23; cf. Eph 2:6-10). See H. E. Lona, *Die Eschatologie im Kolosser- und Epheserbrief*, Würzburg: Echter, 1984. For a summary of Lindemann’s and Lona’s positions, see e.g. Arnold, *Ephesians*, 148-54. Cf. also G. F. Wessels, ‘The Eschatology of Colossians and Ephesians’, *Neot* 21 (1987) 183-202; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, lxxxix-xc, A. T. Lincoln and A. J. M. Wedderburn, *The Theology of the Later Pauline Letters*, Cambridge: CUP, 1993, 114-118; H. R. Lemmer, ‘A Multifarious Understanding of Eschatology in Ephesians: A Possible Solution to a Vexing Issue’, *HTS* 46 (1990) 102-119; Schnackenburg, *Ephesians*, 61; Best, *Ephesians*, 151-152 (Best prefers to describe Ephesians as a ‘realized soteriology’ rather than a ‘realized eschatology’); O’Brien, *Ephesians*, 30-33, 113-14, Muddiman, *Ephesians*, 18; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 56-58.

⁷³ M. Gese attempts to demonstrate that Ephesians is a reworking and reflection of Pauline theology (*Das Vermächtnis des Apostels. Die Rezeption der paulinischen Theologie im Epheserbrief*, Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1997). Cf. Sterling ‘From Apostle to the Gentiles’, 74-98.

⁷⁴ In Eph 1:8, 17; 3:10 there is no explicit contrast but mainly a reference to wisdom. We correlate it with Eph 5:15, 17 in that the latter implies that to be wise is to have acquired wisdom.

Jordaan; 1990:49-60; Du Toit, 1996:131-133), so that the structure of Ephesians 1:3 – 3:21 may be presented as follows (cf. Du Toit, 1996:132):



A liturgical structure of chapter 1-3 has been suggested by Roberts (1983:14) and de Klerk (1988:43). The chiasmic structure they identified enables an understanding of the prayers in the framework of the context of the letter. Based on this chiasmic structural observation, as well as the letter argument at large, there is wide agreement among scholars that the confession of 1:22-23 forms the central argument on which the rest of the letter argument is built. This involves the confession that Christ, who is above all things in the universe, is Head of the church, which is his body. So this confession of Christ as Head and the church as his body has to be kept in mind throughout the investigation of the letter. The above structure of Ephesians 1 to 3 is taken as the first point of departure for its pericope division. Some adjustments are called for, however, due to certain considerations regarding content and style:

First it seems practical and appropriate to take 1:15-23 as one pericope, even though they form separate parts of the *berakah*-division. The reason for this is that the final part of the intercession (1:17-21) is the direct introduction to the confession of 1:22-23, to such an extent that they logically belong together.

Secondly the stylistic build-up of 2:1-22, together with its content, give good reason to take this chapter as two separate pericopes, viz. 2:1-10 and 2:11-22.

Third, the final part of the intercession in 3:1-19, viz. 3:14-19, is so closely connected to the final doxology in 3:20-21 that they feature as one prayer, and hence should be studied as a single pericope.

A division is made in these larger thought units into smaller thought units or “thought-blocks” to distinguish them from the larger pericope. The thought unit 3:1-13 can be sub-divided into the “thought-blocks” 3:1-2; 3:3-7 and 3:8-10, 11-13 (see sub-division or thought-block division) even though 3:1-13 is one sentence and thought, explanation of the mystery. “The rhythm is only briefly interrupted at 3:20-21 by a benediction, and then we start again with another long period, 4:1-6” (Worthington III; 2007:229). There are another five long sentences in Ephesians. The identification and analysis of the “thought-blocks” of the letter enables the identification of the themes and central message of the letter. Each “thought block” or sub-division is connected to a theme, the central idea of the letter. Although this theme can be made up of

different elements, these will nevertheless link together to deal with the central theme (cf. Wolvaart; 1999:99).

Therefore the following pericope division is followed in this Chapter:

- 1:3-14 The doxology, including God's plan and purposes for his church
- 1:15-23 Intercession and confession – Christ is Head of his church
- 2:1-10 The new life in Christ as God's plan of grace for sinners
- 2:11-22 God's purpose to unite all believers in Christ as his household
- 3:1-13 God's eternal purpose and plan revealed through Paul to the church
- 3:14-21 The purpose and plan of God to bring his glory through the church.

These pericopes are treated below in exegesis one after the other, with a view to the light they provide regarding Paul's mission strategy in Ephesus and Asia Minor.

2.3. PERICOPE DIVISION: THE MAIN THOUGHT-BLOCKS

The diagram below illustrates the main idea of each pericope.

1:3-14 The plan and purposes of God for Jew and Gentile	1:15-23 God's plan to unite all things in Christ as Head of the Church	2:1-10 The new life in Christ as God's plan of grace for sinners	2:11-22 God's purpose to unite all believers in Christ as household of God	3:1-13 God's eternal purpose and plan revealed by Paul to the Church
3:14-21 The purpose and plan of God to bring glory to Him by the Church	4:1-16 The role of the individual believer and the Church in the plan of God	4:17-5:20 The boundaries set to the Church community as body of Christ	5:21-6:9 The household relations within the community	6:10- 20 Resisting spiritual opposition to the plan and purpose of God

2.4. THE IDENTIFICATION OF SUB-DIVISIONS OR "THOUGHT-BLOCKS"

A letter has to be read as a unity, as “each book forms a wonderful unity in its content and the structure in which it is written” (Wolvaard; 1999: 90). It is a temptation to view the different “chapters” and “verses” as separate and independent units. Paul’s letters form a wonderful unity in its composition (cf. Wolvaard; 1999:90). The letter to the Ephesians has a flow of thought and throughout the whole book the author develops his argument from one paragraph to the next. The pericope consists of a group of thought-blocks that together form a pericope because they are joined together by the same unifying idea. It is then by establishing the main idea and identifying the “thought-blocks” and then relating them to one another that the main idea is established. In each pericope there is usually one central idea, an idea which binds all the related elements together. And the “thought-blocks” are like bricks that are related together to form a larger structure, the pericope. A “thought-block” is a group of words or sentences that are related together and functions on a different level than a pericope (cf. Wolvaard; 1999:91). “When neighbouring paragraphs are very closely related, they can form a “block of thought” (Wolvaard; 1999:91), a larger unit. This is important because it implies that “thought-blocks” do not necessarily follow the chapter and verse division of a book.

2.5. SCHEMATIC REPRESENTATION OF THE SUB-THOUGHT-BLOCKS:

The diagram below illustrates that each pericope consists of sub-thought ideas called “thought-blocks” and a preliminary title of each thought-block is given. The title of each thought-block will be re-examined after the exegesis (Ch 4 & 5) has been completed. The value of the schematic representation is that it gives a bird’s eye view of the thought development of the letter (Ch 4 & 5). The introduction in which Paul introduces himself as an apostle by the will of God has not been included as a thought-block.

1:3-6 God has chosen his children	1:15-16 Paul's prayer of thanks - giving	2:1-3 Dead by sins	2:11-13 Jew and Gentile equal members	3:1-2 The steward-- ship of the gospel givne to Paul
1:7-12 In Christ He set his plan into action	1:17-19 Prayer for a Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation	2:4-7 Alive by God's grace	2:14-18 Jew and Gentile a new humanity	3:3-7 Jew and Gentile recipient of the promise
1:13-14 Sealed by the Holy Spirit	1:20-23 The living Christ is alive and rules the cosmos	2:8-10 The New life received from God	2:19-22 Jew and Gentile members of God's household	3:8-10 The task of the Church to make known the Gospel
3:14-15 Prayer for the transform- ed life of the community to be revealed	4:1-6 Unity and the call to witness	4:17-25 The old life transformed into a new life	5:3-7 Imitators of God and Christ in love	5:21-32 Love and respect between husband and wife
3:16-19 Prayer for the Gospel to be applied to the heart	4:7-14 The task to prepare God's people for service	4:26-31 The continuation of the transformed behavior	5:8-14 Transforme d from darkness to light	6:1-4 The conduct of parents and children

3:20-21 Prayer for Jew and Gentile to take up the task	4:15-16 The Church built up for its task and calling	4:26-5:2 The continuation of the transformed behaviour	5:15-20 Live the new life wisely to the glory of God	6:5-9 The conduct of masters and slaves
6:10-12 The wrestle against the powers and principalities	6:21-23 The servant ministry of Tychicus as representative of Paul	6:13-17 The armor of God for the battle	6:18-20 Truth claims made in speech	

2.6. THEMES

A theme is a common idea that is repeated, that is, all the pericopes share a similar idea. The theme sets forth the central issues of a “thought-block” so that within a book the central issues can be identified⁷⁵. It is, however, not necessary for paragraphs to be in close proximity to each other in order for them to be related together, Ephesians is an example of this. “Although neighbouring paragraphs can be related to form blocks of paragraphs, it is also possible for paragraphs that are removed from one another to be related” (Wolvaart; 1999:91). The “blocks of thought” are also related to other thought-blocks so that the message of the book can be reduced to two or three themes, unity (Eph 2:11-2; 4:1-6), identity and transformation (Eph 4:17-25) and love (Eph 1:4; 3:14-21). The relationship between these themes helps one identify the central message of the letter. The arrangement of these blocks also communicates a message (cf. Wolvaart; 1999:94). For example, in Ephesians 1-3 the following themes are identifiable: ‘in Christ, salvation, and unity or reconciliation’. The approach of examining the structure and identifying blocks, pericopes and

⁷⁵ Kaiser, W. & Silva, M. (1994:132) identify main themes of blocks in the book of Nehemiah.

Chapters 1-7: Principles of effective leadership

Chapters 8-10: Principles of spiritual renewal

Chapters 11-13: Principles of dedicated excellence

themes, ensures that ideas are not imposed upon the letter but that the letter is approached as a thought unit. The author had a specific purpose in mind when he wrote the letter, which only becomes clear when the letter is approached using thought structure analysis. This then will help to determine the purpose of the letter.

A discernable movement of thought is identifiable in Chapters 1-3 of the letter. It is a rhythmic movement that has been observed by N.A Dahl (1961-62)⁷⁶. Dahl (1965:7-83)⁷⁷ finds that the author of Ephesians follows a movement of thought that involves an alternation between two stages:

- (1) A specific reference to his readers and to something that pertains to them as they are or have been. From this, the author turns to
- (2) A rehearsal of what Christ, or God, did in Christ, or God in Christ, has accomplished for them” (Sampley; 1971:11).
- (3) The author then comes back to the situation of the readers and makes a full circle back to the situation of the readers.

This has relevance for understanding the key themes in Chapter 1-3 of the letter and movement of the themes in these chapters.

2.6.1. Key themes

1) Ephesians 1:3-14 and 1:15-23

The main theme of the letter is the plan of God (Eph. 1:9-10). The main idea of Eph 1:9-10 is the unification of everything under the one head, Jesus Christ. This, however, is the result of the working out of God’s plan and should be understood as the climax of the pericope 1:15-23, in fact of Ephesians 1:3-23. It has been suggested that the main idea of the thought-block Ephesians 1:15-23 is the reign and rule of Jesus Christ over the spiritual powers and that this is the central theme of the letter that is continued until the end of the letter (cf. Bruce; 1984:231; de Klerk; 1988:41). This, however, is the idea of the sub-thought-block 1:20-23 that communicates the cosmic implications of what Christ has done. The main idea of the pericope 1:15-23 is God’s work and plans to unite all things in Christ. This includes Paul’s prayer of thanksgiving (1:15-16), prayer for a spirit of wisdom and revelation (1:17-19) and the confession that the living Christ is alive and rules the cosmos (1:20-23) and climaxes in the idea of the headship of Christ over the body of Christ (1:23). The idea of the headship of Christ is worked out in terms of his headship over the Church, a community of Jew and Gentile unified in Christ as Head of the Church (Eph 2:11-22) and the most basic

⁷⁶ Seminar on Colossians and Ephesians, Yale University, 1961-62 (Sampley; 1971:11).

⁷⁷ Dahl (1965:24) writes, “Der Apostel wendet sich wieder an seine Leser”.

idea is of the entire pericope is the plan of God (Eph 1:9-10)⁷⁸. The prepositional phrases move one theme to the next throughout the letter. *In him* God's plan is to finally reconcile the whole cosmos to himself (Eph. 1:8-10). The *berakah* is "a Christianized version of the traditional Jewish "blessing" of God (Fee; 1994:664) which was traditionally an exclusive blessing for the nation of Israel is extended to include the Gentile nations. The *berakah* communicates a typical Jewish blessing and is used in the context of a blessing to Jew and Gentile. "The various 'in him/in whom' phrases move the 'blessing' foreword from one theme to the next" (Fee; 1994:665)⁷⁹. The phrase "in the heavenlies" may also function to move the central idea of the letter foreword. The climax of the pericope and the letter is that Christ is the centre of all created things, the one "in whom" everything is held together and the main idea is that this is the out working of the plan of God.

The rhythmic movement that Dahl has identified sheds light on the relationship of the thought-blocks in Ephesians 1. The author begins with a reference to his Jewish and Gentile readers, **"the plan and purposes of God for Jew and Gentile"** (Eph 1:3-14), and then turns to a Christological or theological development, **"God's plan to unite all things in Christ as Head of the Church"** (Eph 1:20-23). He then comes back to the situation of the readers, the unity between Jew and Gentiles in the body of Christ, **"God's plan to unite Jews and Gentiles in Christ as the Head of the Church"** (Eph 1:20-23 esp. 23).

2) Ephesians 2:1-10

The pericope of Ephesians 2:1-10 provides the presuppositions of salvation of the recipients and indicates the relationship of the recipients to God. It provides a theology of grace. The thought-block, Ephesians 2:11-22 provides the soteriology of what God has accomplished in Christ.

In Ephesians 2:1-3 one finds a description of the readers past, in which the author includes himself, **"Dead by sins" (2:1-3)**. It is a specific reference to the readers and pertains to what they had been. The author then turns in to what God has done for the readers with and in Christ, **"alive by God's grace"** (Eph 2:4-9). A transition back to the situation of the authors has been identified in Ephesians 2:10.

⁷⁸ O'Brien (1999:60) identifies Ephesians 1:9-10 as providing the key for unlocking the letter to the Ephesians.

⁷⁹ "Accordingly, "in him" God in love has chosen "us" (Jew and Gentile together) for "adoption as sons" all to the praise of God's own glory (v. 4-6); "in whom" we (both) have realized God's redemption and through whom God will yet "sum up" all things earthly and heavenly (v. 7-10); "in whom also" you Gentiles have heard the good news of your salvation (v. 13a); "in whom also," having believed in Christ, you were "sealed" by the Holy Spirit for the full realization of redemption, both now and forever (v. 13b-14) (Fee; 1994:665).

3) Ephesians 2:11-22

The focus of Ephesians 2:11-22 is the barriers which have been broken down in Christ. It begins with the religious and cultural barriers (Eph. 2:11-13) and proceeds to the social barriers (Eph. 2:19) in order to form a new community, the community of the Spirit which is not built upon the same constructs and values of society.

In Ephesians 2:11-13 one finds that the author directly treats the past situation of the hearers once again (cf. Eph 2:1-3), **“Jew and Gentile equal members of the covenant” (2:11-13)**. The author then turns to what God has done for the readers (Eph 2:14-18) and established the Christological foundation for the transformation that has taken place, **“Jew and Gentile a new humanity” (2:14-18)**. He then returns to the situation of the Gentile and Jewish readers, beginning with the Gentiles, **“Jew and Gentile members of God’s household” (2:19-22)**.

4) Ephesians 3:1-13

The thought-block Ephesians 3:1-13 has the central theme of the church, specifically the relationship of the church to the missionary work of Paul. In Eph. 3:8-10 Paul speaks of his missionary work, through which the mystery that previously was concealed, has been disclosed (cf. Roberts; 1983:279).

The first part of Ephesians 3:1-2 deals with the ministry Paul has received and his own present situation, **“the stewardship of the gospel” (3:1-2)**. He then describes the situation of the readers, **“Jew and Gentile recipients of the promise” (3:3-7)** and in “verse 8 begins the move that finally leads the author into a statement concerning God’s purposes and plans (stage 2)” (Sampley; 1971:12), **“the task of the Church to make known the Gospel” (3:8-10)**. And “with v. 13 there is the return to particular problems (stage 1)” (Sampley; 1971:12), **“the eternal purposes of God in Christ” (3:11-13)**.

5) Ephesians 3:14-21

The prayer in Ephesians 3:14-21 completes the section 1:3-3:21 in which the framework of God’s eternal plan, the confession of faith of and the new community of Jew and Gentile is set out. In this pericope the theme of the kingdom of God is very prominent (cf. de Klerk; 1988:44). The prayer is placed in the context of God’s reign in Christ and therefore it is placed in the framework of the kingdom of God. The “therefore” (3:14) relates to the previous thought-block (cf. de Klerk; 1988:46). It refers back to 3:1 and is specifically related to 3:2-13 (cf. de Klerk; 1988:44). The message of the thought-block concerns intercessory prayer for new believers in Christ, the kingship of Christ and the extension of the kingdom of God (cf. de Klerk; 1988:44). The thought-block reveals that the kingdom of God and the Church are inter-connected.

The first part of the prayer is a **“prayer for the transformed life of the community to be revealed” (3:14-15)**. The author specifically prays for the Church to be a visible community and for the transformed

lives of the believers to be visible (stage 1). The author prays that his readers will fully know and experience the glorious riches, strength and power through the Spirit which they already have in their inner being (stage 2). It is expressed by the **“prayer for the Gospel to be applied to the heart” (3:16-19)**. There may have been a discrepancy between confession of faith of the readers (Eph 1:20-23) and their experience of faith. This, however, is an assumption. The author returns again to focus upon his readers and **“prayer for Jew and Gentile to take up the task” (3:20-21)**.

2.6.2. Identifying the central themes of the letter

Various attempts have been made to identify the centre of the letter. The soteriology of Ephesians 2:1-22 has been identified as “the heart of the letter” (Johnson; 1986:374). Jordaan (1990:49-60) identified Eph 1:20-23 as the centre of 1:3-3:20-21 and the central idea of the letter. He identifies a chiastic structure (A-B-C-B-A pattern) in the thought structure of Eph 1:3-3:21 (cf. Roberts, 1984:140; De Klerk; 1988:43). The centre of the chiastic structure is Eph 1:20-23, which Jordaan (1986:52) identifies as a confession of faith. Within this structure he identifies v. 20 as the centre of the confession of faith and thus the letter (cf. Jordaan; 1990:52).

The foundational statements are the indicative statements but these are not by necessity limited exclusively to 1:3-3:20, but dispersed throughout the letter. The structure can be approached by identifying key words and concepts that are repeated throughout, for example “ἐνεργέω” (1:11, 19; 3:20); παρακαλῶ (Eph 1:4; 4:1; 6:20, 22). A Trinitarian structure is also identifiable, “Father” (Eph 1:4-6; 17, 3:14; 3:20-21), “Jesus Christ” (Eph 1:7-12; 2:18; 20; 3:4; 3:14) and “Holy Spirit” Eph (1:13-14; 17-18, 22; 3:5, 16) (cf. Jordaan; 1990:58).

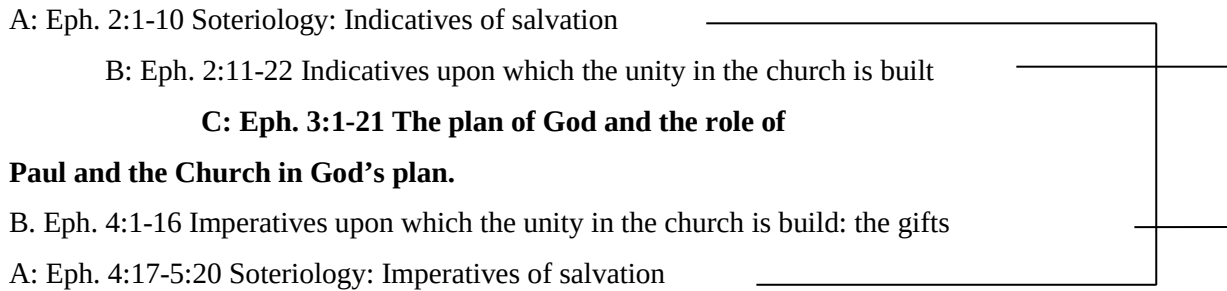
2.7. THE CHIASTIC STRUCTURE OF THE LETTER

In Chapters 4-6 an understanding of the content and message of these chapters are facilitated by means of a chiastic structure. Pericopes that are removed from one another may be related together in an “X” structure, called a chiastic structure or in a reverse order chiastic structure, ABC-D-CBA and “D” is the central idea of this structure. A chiastic structure “can be a key in detecting the author’s aims, for the main idea typically appears in the apex-that is in the middle” (Kaiser Jr. & Silva; 1994:131).

2.8. SHEMARIC REPRESENTATION OF CHIASTIC STRUCTURE OF EPHESIANS

2:1-5:20

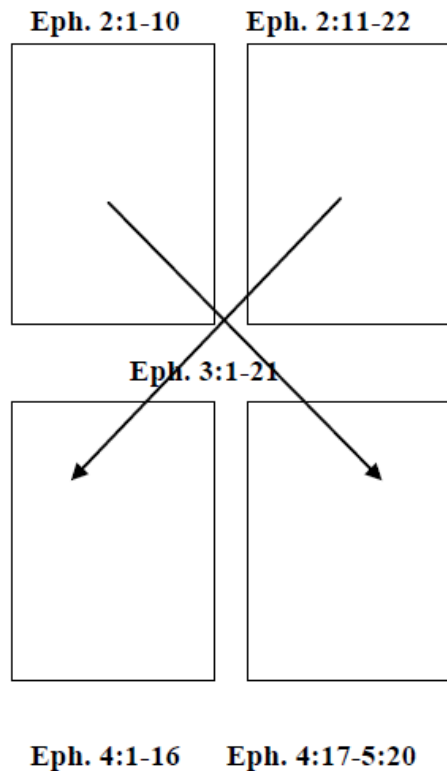
The following diagram is based upon the missional character of the letter:



The relationship between chapters 1-3 and 4-6 is demonstrated by the above chiasmic structure.

Petrenko (2011:21) has demonstrated the sections of Ephesians that is chapters 1–3 *do not* offer the theological and eschatological motivations (as found in other Pauline epistles) for the ethical behaviour expected from believers in chapters 4–6. The value of the insight is that Ephesians 4-6 does not consist exclusively of ethical material but is equally important in terms of its soteriology, pneumatology and theology. The parenthesis is therefore equally important for the missionary purpose of the letter and of no less value or importance than chapters 1-3 for mission. The ethical material found in Ephesians 4–6 is an integral part of the theology/soteriology contained in chapters 1–3 and not merely an appendage with its own self-contained theology (cf. Petrenko; 2011:19).

The diagram below is an alternative representation of the chiastic structure:



2.9. EXPLANATION OF CHIASTIC STRUCTURE

The chiastic structure of the letter will be demonstrated by the relationship of vocabulary in Ephesians 2:11-22 and Ephesians 4:1-16, and Ephesians 2:1-10 and Ephesians 4:17-5:20⁸⁰. The pericope Ephesians 3:1-13 is the centre of the chiastic structure of the letter. It is supported by the fact that Paul resumes his discussion of the theme of *oikonomia* in Ephesians 3:1-13 introduced in 1:10 which O'Brien (1996:58-65)

⁸⁰ The term "walk" is used in both 2:1-2 and 4:17. There is the repeated use of "walk" in 4:17, 5:2, 8, 15 (cf. Hoehner; 2002:62). The soteriology of 2:1-10 is picked up again in the "new life" (4:17-24). Paul lays out specific, concrete exhortations (4:25-5:2) which flows out of the change from spiritual death to new life in Christ (2:1-10). The language, "sons of disobedience" (Eph 2:2) re-occurs in Eph 5:6.

Unity is the focus of 2:11-22 and 4:1-16, the new union of Jewish and Gentile Christians (2:11-22) corresponds to the Holy Spirit is the one who brings about the unity of believers (4:3-4), to walk in unity by being truthful with love (4:15). The idea of apostles and prophets (2:20) is taken up again in Eph 4:11. The unity of the body of Christ (2:11-22) is connected to the confession of unity (4:4-7). The idea of being jointly fit together grows into a holy temple (2:20-22) corresponds to the growth of the body (4:16).

has suggested contains the central idea of the letter⁸¹. The concept of the *oikonomia* is expanded upon and explained in Ephesians 3.

1) Ephesians 2:11-22 & Ephesians 4:1-16

Themes, phrases and vocabulary used by the author in earlier passages re-appear elsewhere in the letter. The idea of a *oikos* (“building” or “house”) and *οικοδομέω* (“the activity of building”) (Ro 15:20; 1 Cor 8:1; 10:23; 14:4, 17; Gal 2:18; 1Th 5:11), *ἐποικοδομέω* (“building together”) (1Co 3:10,12,14; Col 2:7) which is about the internal maintenance and growth of the church occur in Ephesians, specifically the idea *ἐποικοδομέω* occurs in Ephesians 2:20-22 and in Ephesians 4:10-12 where the vocabulary *οικοδομῆν* (*οικοδομέω*) (v.12) without the preposition re-occurs. In Ephesians 2:20 the apostles and prophets are identified as the foundation of the building, the house or church, they re-occur in Ephesians 4:11 but part of a list which includes evangelists, shepherds and teachers. The role of the apostles and prophets in Ephesians 2:20 are the founders of the church together with Jesus Christ, the cornerstone and in Ephesians 4:11 the apostles and prophets work together with the evangelists, shepherds and teachers to grow and mature the church. The work of the apostles and prophets is not only to establish the church, but also to equip the “saints for the work of the ministry” (Eph 4:12), to prepare the body of Christ to function effectively and to fulfill its calling. This will be demonstrated in the study. Another idea that is repeated is that of the *καὶνὸν ἄνθρωπον* (“new man”) in Ephesians 2:15, a dual reference to the new nature, the divine nature working in humanity and the church, which is a new creation. The *καὶνὸν ἄνθρωπον* was created with Christ and in Ephesians 2:15 the new man was created through the law of commandments being annulled. In this context the new man specifically relates to the new community and relationships that have come into existence through ritual commandments being abolished (circumcision, dietary regulations, keeping the Sabbath), the *καὶνὸν ἄνθρωπον* in Ephesians 4:23, however, is constantly renewed, indicated by the present infinitive *ἀνανεοῦσθαι* (“to renew”). The same Greek noun *κτίσις* (“create”) occurs in Ephesians 2:15 and *κτισθέντα* in 4:24 which indicates that the association between Ephesians 2 and 4 is not coincidental but purposely intended by the author.

2) Ephesians 2:1-10 and Ephesians 4:17-5:20

In Ephesians 2:2 the past conduct and behaviour of the *τοῖς υἱοῖς τῆς ἀπειθείας* (“sons of disobedience”), the title given to the Christians before they were regenerated by God, is explained in detail in Ephesians 4:18-19, “ignorance,” “hardness of heart”, “lewdness”, “impurity”, “greediness”. The phrase *τοὺς υἱοὺς τῆς ἀπειθείας* also occurs in Ephesians 5:6 and is connected with

⁸¹ O’Brien (1996:58-65), Moritz (1991:96), Caragounis (1977:143) argue that Ephesians 1:10 contains the central idea and message of Ephesians. The emphasis argues Lincoln (1981:34) is on a universe centred and reunited in Christ.

“the wrath of God”, a wrath which is not limited to the end-time judgement, but is already being revealed in God’s abandonment of the wicked to their sins. In Ephesians 5:6 the imperative is used to indicate with force that the Gentiles must not allow themselves to be led astray again. The Christians have received a different spirit which operates in them than in the “sons of disobedience” (Eph 2:2). The verb περιπατήσατε (“walk”) views the Christians past life, as a total past life at a point in Ephesians 2:2 and expresses an ethical moral command in Ephesians 4:17. The same word is used as an indicative or statement of faith in Ephesians 2:2 and as an imperative, an exhortation in 4:17. The way in which the Christian life is produced in a person by Christ is set out in Ephesians 2:1-10 and it is related and inseparable from the daily walk, ethical lifestyle, of the Christian, set out in detail in Ephesians 4:17-32. The past life is portrayed as ended (Eph 2:3) in terms of temporal and spatial aspects, and the source of the desires, the flesh and the “ruler of the air” (Eph 2:2), no longer has control over the person. Theologically what is in view in Ephesians 2:1-10 is justification, denoting the once and for all, definite, concluding action. Since Paul has the imperative in view when he communicates the indicative, the imperative which corresponds to the indicative Ephesians 2:3 is to be found in Ephesians 4:22-24, where Paul uses an imperative to express the continual process of the changing manner of life and the character of a person. The process of the former character which was growing more and more corrupt, has been replaced by a newly created character which is growing more and more holy. Paul states the negative first (Eph 4:22) and then the positive (Eph 4:24). The growth takes place in terms of a greater obedience and fulfilling of the divine commands which God places on mankind.

3. THE “BODY OF CHRIST”: A METAPHOR FOR THE CHURCH AND MISSION

Ekklesia in Ephesians has more than a local sense (3:10, 21; 5:23-32) since it is Christ’s body. This Universal sense of the term supports the theory that the letter was intended as a circular letter. This is indicated by the fact that the word “ekklesia” appears only in the singular” (Van Engen; 1996:106). The church is identified as the body of Christ. The church is the body of Christ in that it manifests the presence of the living God in Christ. The term *ekklesia* in Luke-Acts refers to individual congregations rather than the universal church (Bosch; 1996:120⁸²).

⁸² “Only in Acts 9:31 does the term have the later, broader extension (“the church throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria” (Bosch; 1996:120).

Roels argues that the “body of Christ” metaphor is never “ever found in a context which speaks of the church’s relation to the world”, that is “the body of Christ image always looks inward rather than outward” (Roels; 1962:110). He writes, “even though the church may be regarded as an organism the church herself is never presented as the “body of Christ” to describe the instrumental function of value of the church” (Roels; 1962:110). But He recognizes that “this does not mean that it is impossible to find a fruitful and meaningful relationship between the church’s mission and the designation of the church as the body of Christ” in Ephesians (Roels; 1962:110). The possibility of a meaningful relationship existing between the church’s mission and the church as the body of Christ cannot be overlooked. It is necessary to determine whether a relationship exists between the mission of the church and the church as the body of Christ. Roels (1962:101) recognises that the “body of Christ” metaphor serves various purposes and functions within the Pauline epistles. “The body of Chris image serves a different function in the earlier epistles than in the captivity epistles, even though the foundation of the image remains essentially the same wherever the image is used”. The thought of the building up of the body (Eph 4:12) and the concept of the Church (Eph 1:23) are images of the body of Christ (cf. Roberts; 1983:269).

4. THE ESCHATOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK OF EPHESIANS

The eschatological framework of the letter supports the hypothesis that the purpose of the letter is for the promotion of missions. “Paul understood himself to be an eschatological emissary to the nations” (like those of Isa 66:19) (Köstenberger & O’Brien; 2001:172). He was part of the eschatological missionary efforts to the ἔθνη in Isaiah 66:19.

4.1. THE FUNCTION OF ESCHATOLOGY IN THE LETTER

A characteristic of Pauline thinking is the indicative-imperative dialectic. It is the indicative-imperative that gives the salvation of Christ in an eschatological reality a double sense (cf. Pelser; 1996:260). The indicative-imperative is an eschatological reality because the imperative, the actions flowing out of an understanding of personal salvation is an expression and expectation of the consummation in Christ (cf. Pelser; 1996:260). It is through the eschatology of Ephesians that the old and new dispensations are brought into a dynamic relation. “The eschatological strand is the most systematic in the entire fabric of the Pauline thought-world. Among all the other factors usually reckoned with as sources or determinants of the Apostle’s theological system, there is none that can lay equal claim to self-evidencing character of this” (Vos; 1930:60). The closely interwoven soteriological thoughts derive their pattern from the eschatological scheme (cf. Vos; 1930:60). The relationship between soteriology and eschatology in the Pauline system is important.

5. THE RELATION BETWEEN EPHESIANS AND THE OLD TESTAMENT

In Ephesians the book of Isaiah has been used by the author as part of his argument to prepare the congregation for its missional calling and task. The use of the Old Testament, specifically the book of Isaiah in Ephesians, will be examined and this requires a distinction between quotations and allusions. The term “quotation” refers to several words having been taken over directly from the Old Testament text with little or no variation⁸³. A quotation is an expression that is taken over and is traceable beyond doubt. The term “allusions” are those instances where just one or two words or one short phrase coincide with a specific OT text and where it can be shown that a direct link exists between the text and the OT. The total number of such direct links has been suggested as probably twelve or thirteen (cf. Moritz; 1996:2). The OT text can also be echoed in the NT; it reminds the reader of an event, relationship or text no matter how faint it may be. The category of “concept” has been suggested by Moritz (1996:2) as there are references in Ephesians which are neither as direct as quotations, allusions or as faint as echoes

There are about a dozen instances where a study of the underlying Old Testament tradition yields significant results. In Ephesians the Jewish Scriptures are focused on quotations and allusions (Eph 1:20-3; 2:13-7; 5:14; 5:31; 6:2f. 6:10, 14-7). The author utilises a Christian reformulation of Psalm 68:18—which originated as a deliberate Christian response to the relatively common Jewish re-appropriation of Psalm 68 for elevating the Torah—and by supplying it with a ‘midrashic’ comment which prepares the ground for following the ecclesiological section. It lends support to the proposal that the author address the exclusivity of the Jewish believers in the community. The Jewish believers elevated the Torah to a central place in the life of the community. Paul by a re-appropriation of a common reformulation of Ps 68 displaced the Torah at the centre of community life. In Ephesians two of the closest parallels from the Book of Isaiah are found in the passage in Ephesians 6:10, 14-7. This imagery originated from the Book of Isaiah (cf. Moritz; Moritz, 1995:393-396).

⁸³ “As a general rule it may be argued that when the quoting author builds an extensive argument on his appropriation of Ot material without introducing it explicitly, it can nevertheless be assumed that he expected his audience to appreciate the OT link” (Moritz; 1996:2).

6. THE RELATION BETWEEN EPHESIANS AND COLOSSIANS

1) The relationship in terms of the metaphor head and body

The letter to the Ephesians has a different point of departure than Colossians. In Ephesians the focus is on the relationship between Jesus Christ as head and the Church as his body whereas in Colossians the emphasis is placed upon the fullness of God in the sense that Jesus Christ is completely God and that the fullness of God lives in Him (Col. 1:19) (cf. Floor; 1995:17). The focus in Colossians is placed upon the cosmic Lordship of Christ (Col. 1:16-17). In Ephesians the cosmic Lordship of Christ is mentioned (Eph. 1:21) but not developed as in Colossians whereas in Colossians Christ as head of the Church is mentioned (Col. 1:18) but not developed. The focus in Ephesians is placed upon what the implications are of the Church being the body of Christ. This is important because a tendency exists to read the head and body metaphor of Colossians into Ephesians and to read the head and body metaphor of Ephesians in the light of Colossians.

2) The relationship in terms of Paul's missionary task

In Ephesians the emphasis is placed upon God's eternal plan and the equal inclusion of the the Gentiles in the promises of God. The missionary strategy of Paul is specifically set out in Ephesians⁸⁴. The role of Paul in the building up of the body of Christ is developed in Ephesians (3:2-7), the up building of the body by itself (4:1-16) and ethical dimension of the up and out building of the body (4:17-5:20). It is explained in Ephesians that Paul's involvement in the gospel mission (Eph 3:3-7) was the means by which, in the fullness of time (1:9), the risen Christ rules over the people of God (1:10) and the Church is equipped to build itself up (4:1-16). In Colossians 1:24-28 the focus is not specifically placed upon Paul's missionary task, but serves to support the authenticity of his apostleship and to confirm the authority he received from Christ with which he makes the admonishment which follows in Colossians 2 (Col 2:1) (cf. van Eck; 2007:119). The authority of Paul in Colossians is related to the overall plan of God, and therefore, it supports the argument of Ephesians (Pokorny; 1987:81).

3) The relationship in terms of OT material

⁸⁴ The emphasis in Romans in the relationship between the Jews and Gentiles is placed upon the fulfilment of God's eternal plan of bringing Gentiles to "the obedience and faith" (Ro 1:9).

The main difference between the hortatory patterns isolated in Ephesians and Colossians consists of the addition of OT material to the former (cf. Carrington; 1940:123-8). The key expressions are *put off* (Col 3:8f; Eph 4:25f; 1Pe 2:1; Jas 1:21), *new creation* (Col 3:9-15; Eph 4:22-4; 1Pe 2:22f; Jas 1:18); *watch and pray* (Col 4:2-6; Eph 6:18; 1Pe 4:7); and *stand and resist* (Col 4:12; Eph. 6:10-17; 1Pe 5:8-12; Jas 4:7b). The association with OT material in Ephesians is closely associated with the gospel (see the relation to the OT Eph 6:10-20).

In conclusion “the difference between these two letters is not primarily one in basic content or even style but in contextualization” (Moritz; 1996:220). Ephesians interacts with the Jewish traditions, traditions which the intended audience probably was expected to be familiar with (cf. Moritz; 1996:220). This expectation is absent from Colossians, but is vital for understanding the purpose for Ephesians. In Ephesians the author makes a point of using the OT material to stress that the powers have been subjected under Christ by God (1:22; 4:8).

7. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this chapter is to establish a framework for interpreting the letter. The structure of the letter facilitates the message the author intends to communicate. The purpose of the Ephesians is related to an understanding of the structure of the letter. In this chapter the themes and the chiasmic structure of the letter has been identified. This will serve as the basis for the exegesis of the letter in Chapters 4 & 5.

CHAPTER 4:

GRAMMATICAL ANALYSIS AND THE MISSION STRATEGY OF PAUL IN EPHESIANS

In the previous Chapters the hypothesis that Paul in the letter to the Ephesians presented a mission strategy for Asia Minor was tested and placed within the socio-historical context in which Paul wrote the letter. The next step is to put this hypothesis to the test on the basis of the content and argument of the letter itself. Therefore, this Chapter contains relevant exegetical material of the Ephesian letter. The exegesis as reported in this chapter does not claim to be complete, in as far as it is focused on matters pertaining to the topic that is investigated in this thesis, viz. any possible evidence in support of (or contrary) a mission strategy in the Ephesian letter.

1. THE OPENING TO THE LETTER

All the manuscripts since the end of the second century and the majority of texts since the end of the fourth century contain the subscription “to the Ephesians” (cf. Kümmel; 1975:352). It has been suggested that the letter is a circular letter and the claim that the character of the letter is that it almost lacks any concrete detail has been cited in support of the letter being intended as a circular letter. The absence of an address by the author and any apparent evidence of concrete problems in the community and the lack of any sort of personal rapport with the audience such as personal greetings has also been cited in favour of the letter being intended as a circular letter. The author's presentation of himself as an apostolic missionary (3:2ff) and his fervent prayers for the Church (3:15-23; 3:14-21), the commitment of his personal missionary task to the believers in the Church of Ephesus was no impersonal matter for the author. The author lived and breathed missions and was always seeking opportunities to testify about the Lord Jesus Christ. In the letter the author addresses a problem, a problem which is not obvious because he does so indirectly so as not to offend his audience. The author addresses the specific requirements formerly limited to a distinct group within the community, the Jews, who as the community of Israel generalized and applied uniformly to all members of the community an Old Testament covenant community identity. The author sets out in the epistle to the Ephesians to counter the perception and assertion that God's purposes are restricted to Israel. It will be demonstrated in Chapters 4 & 5 that the author of the letter had a personal involvement with the readers.

2. EPHESIANS 1:3-14 - THE PLAN AND PURPOSES OF GOD FOR JEW AND GENTILE

2.1. THE TEXT OF THE PERICOP OF EPHESIANS 1:3-14 REWRITTEN

A	1:3	Εὐλογητός ὁ θεός God (is) to be praised <u>καὶ πατὴρ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ,</u> (who is) also (the) Father of our Lord Jesus Christ ὁ εὐλογήσας ἡμᾶς the One having blessed us ἐν πάσῃ εὐλογίᾳ πνευματικῇ ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις with every spiritual blessing with regard to the supernatural world <u>ἐν Χριστῷ,</u> in Christ	praised/blessed blessed blessing	GOD THE FATHER
	1:4	καθὼς ἐξελέξατο ἡμᾶς <u>ἐν αὐτῷ</u> because He chose us in Him πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου before (the) creation of (the) world εἶναι ἡμᾶς ἀγίους καὶ ἀμώμους that we be morally pure and blameless κατενώπιον αὐτοῦ ἐν ἀγάπῃ, in His judgment in love	IN HIM chosen	
	1:5	<u>προορίσας ἡμᾶς εἰς υἰοθεσίαν</u> having decided beforehand on us for adoption διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰς αὐτόν, through Jesus Christ for Him <u>κατὰ τὴν εὐδοκίαν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ,</u> according to the desire of His will	God's decision God's will	
	1:6	<u>εἰς ἔπαινον δόξης τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ</u> to (the) praise of (the) glory of His grace <u>ἧς ἐγαρίτωσεν ἡμᾶς ἐν τῷ ἡγαπημένῳ</u> which He kindly bestowed on us in (His) beloved (Son)	←	
	1:7	<u>ἐν ᾧ</u> ἔχομεν τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν in whom we have the deliverance διὰ τοῦ αἵματος αὐτοῦ, through His death τὴν ἄφεσιν τῶν παραπτωμάτων, the forgiveness of sins <u>κατὰ τὸ πλοῦτος τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ</u> according to the greatness of His grace	IN HIM saved	
	1:8	<u>ἧς</u> ἐπερίσσευσεν εἰς ἡμᾶς, which He caused to be in abundance in us ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ καὶ φρονήσει, in all wisdom and ability to understand		
	1:9	<u>γνωρίσας ἡμῖν τὸ μυστήριον</u> τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ, having made known to us the secret of His plan	God's plan	

	κατὰ τὴν εὐδοκίαν αὐτοῦ according to His desire	God's will	
	ἦν προέθετο ἐν αὐτῷ which He planned beforehand in Him	God's decision	
B	1:10 εἰς οἰκονομίαν τοῦ πληρώματος τῶν καιρῶν, so as to be (the) plan of the fullness of the times ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι τὰ πάντα ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ. to bring together everything in Christ τὰ ἐπὶ τοῖς οὐρανοῖς the things in heaven καὶ τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς and the things on earth		JESUS CHRIST, THE SON
	ἐν αὐτῷ. in Him		
	1:11 ἐν ᾧ καὶ ἐκκληρώθημεν in whom also we were chosen	IN HIM chosen	
	προορισθέντες decided upon beforehand	God's decision	
	κατὰ πρόθεσιν τοῦ τὰ πάντα ἐνεργούντος according to the plan of the One bringing everything about	God's plan	
	κατὰ τὴν βουλήν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ according to the purpose of His will	God's will	
	1:12 εἰς τὸ εἶναι ἡμᾶς εἰς ἔπαινον δόξης αὐτοῦ so that we (may) be for the purpose of (the) praise of His glory τοὺς προηλπικότας ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ. the ones having been first to hope in Christ		
	1:13 ἐν ᾧ καὶ ὑμεῖς ἀκούσαντες τὸν λόγον τῆς ἀληθείας, in whom also you having heard the message of the truth	IN HIM evangelized	
	τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς σωτηρίας ὑμῶν, (namely) the gospel of your salvation		
	ἐν ᾧ καὶ πιστεύσαντες ἐσφραγίσθητε in whom also having believed you were sealed	IN HIM sealed	
C	τῷ πνεύματι τῆς ἐπαγγελίας τῷ ἁγίῳ, (by the Spirit of promise the Holy One.)		HOLY SPIRIT
	1:14 ὃ ἐστὶν ἄρραβὼν τῆς κληρονομίας ἡμῶν, Who is (the) guarantee of our possession εἰς ἀπολύτρωσιν τῆς περιποιήσεως, for (the) deliverance of (our) possession εἰς ἔπαινον τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ. to (the) praise of His glory		

2.1.1. Thought structure analysis remarks

(1) The Greek text must be rewritten in such a way that on each line only one verbal unit with its direct qualifications appear. For the sake of clear observation the rewritten text should be laid out typographically in such a way that the main clauses are clearly distinctive from subordinate clauses, prepositional phrases and other subordinates.

At the same time striking formal aspects of the text should be lifted out, e.g. parallelisms are written on parallel lines with corresponding components directly above/below each other. Other repetition patterns can also be highlighted.

Down below is the text of Ephesians 1:3-14 in such a rewritten form.

(N.B.: Markers and relations which are discussed later on are already indicated in this exposition).

The pericope is clearly divided into three by the repetition of the phrase εἰς ἔπαινον τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ in verses 6, 12 and 14. Accordingly, Ephesians 1:3-14 can be subdivided into 3 thought-blocks, viz. verses 3-6; 7-12 and 13-14. The three thought-blocks each have its own focus.

(2) There are various markers in the pericope that point in the direction of a threefold subdivision of the pericope 1:3-14. These markers are the following:

a) A syntactical marker is found in the series of relative clauses, repeatedly introduced by the preposition and relative pronoun ἐν ᾧ (“in whom”), each time with *Christ* as its grammatical antecedent (Christ ... in whom). This marker is used as follows:

- Ephesians 1:6-7 (ἐν τῷ ἡγαπημένῳ, ἐν ᾧ), which marks the transition from **thought-block A** to **thought-block B**;
- Ephesians 1:6-7 (ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ, ἐν ᾧ), which marks the transition from **thought-block B** to **thought-block C**;
- **Thought-block B** has a second occurrence of ἐν ᾧ, in verse 11, although other markers show that it does not mark a new thought-block; and likewise in verse 13 of **thought-block C**. For the other markers cf. sections b. and c. below.

b) A striking stylistic marker is found in the repeated phrase εἰς ἔπαινον τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ (“to the praise of his glory”) towards the end of each thought-block. In verse 6 it marks the end of **thought-block A**, in verse 12 the end of **thought-block B**, and in verse 14 the end of **thought-block C**.

c) .Especially noteworthy is the fact that the above threefold subdivision of the pericope perfectly follows a Trinitarian line of argument, as follows:

- 1:3-6 is a doxology directed at God the Father (ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ, 1:3): **thought-block A**;
- 1:7-12 sets out from God’s work of grace in his beloved Son (ἐν τῷ ἡγαπημένῳ, 1:6) and continues with God’s plan to bring together all things in Christ (ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ, in 1:10): **thought-block B**;
- 1:13-14 specifically deals with the work of the Holy Spirit in receiving the gospel (τῷ πνεύματι τῆς ἐπαγγελίας τῷ ἁγίῳ, in 1:13): **thought-block C**.

(3) On the other hand there are certain repetitions that occur throughout the entire pericope, whereby the pericope is bound together as a unit. These markers are:

a. Words and expressions referring to God's plan, his decision or his will are spread all over the pericope.

These are the words προορίζειν (verses 5 and 11), προέθετο (verses 9 and 11), ἡ βουλή (verse 11), τὸ θέλημα αὐτοῦ (verses 5, 9 and 11), and τὸ εὐδοκία αὐτοῦ (verses 5 and 9).

b. The execution of this plan of God is unfolded in the three thought-blocks of the pericope along trinitarian lines:

- God the Father chose us in Christ (ἐξελέξατο, 1:4)
- In Christ we have the deliverance from death and forgiveness of sins (ἔχομεν τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν, 1:7)
- In the Holy Spirit we are sealed for receiving the promised inheritance (ἐσφραγίσθητε, 1:13).

(4) Certain words and phrases which at first do not seem to be that significant, in hindsight from the perspective of the broad letter structure prove to be of great importance, even to be regarded as key words in the letter. These are the words μυστήριον (verse 9), οἰκονομία (verse 10) and ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι (verse 10), all mentioned in verses 9 and 10, i.e. at the structural centre of the references to God's plan within the pericope.

a. The word οἰκονομία, which in addition to verse 9 is also used in 3:2 and 3:9 of the letter, refers to the execution of God's plan (θέλημα) for humankind, as will be indicated later on.

b. In Ephesians 3:4, 9 the apostle stresses the fact that the execution of God's plan for humankind remained unknown for ages to all the generations of people. Therefore it is called a μυστήριον (*secret* or *mystery*) in verse 9, and also in 3:3, 4, 9; 5:32 and 6:19. An important missional perspective later on in the letter is that this μυστήριον was made known to the church (γνωρίσας ἡμῖν) in turn to make it known to all people. "In all of Paul's discussion of "mystery," he ends up virtually equating mystery and gospel⁸⁵, for the mystery is the truth revealed to Paul, which truth is also the gospel that was to be proclaimed" (Kaiser; 2008:296).

c. In the very centre of the execution of this revealed μυστήριον is the Person and work of Jesus Christ. This fact seems to be emphasized simply by the position that the words μυστήριον and οἰκονομία take within the pericope, i.e. in the middle section, which deals in particular with the work of Jesus Christ.

d. Finally, the Person and work of Christ is connected in verse 10 to the word ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι (τὰ πάντα ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ), which is translated as "bringing together everything in Christ". This phrase is used as a type of 'preview' to the confessional formula in the next pericope (cf. 3.4 below), viz. that Christ is "seated at God's right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion,

⁸⁵ "There are not different *mysteria*, but wider or narrower aspects of one and the same *mysterion*-God's *mysterion* in Christ (Caragounis; 1977:143). These different aspects can include the body (Church), the gospel (content), and Christ (focal point) as the *mysterion* as they are related together.

and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come”. The word ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι also reminds of the word κεφαλή in Ephesians 1:22 (“*Christ is Head of his church*”). This relation between Christ and his church is part of the miraculous execution of God’s plan, a mystery to all mankind, unless revealed to them by the preached gospel.

2.1.2. Thought-block A: God has chosen his children: Ephesians 1:3-6

2.1.2.1. Thought block analysis remarks

(1) **Thought-block A** begins with a word of praise to God (Εὐλογητὸς ὁ θεὸς) and ends with a doxological purpose (εἰς ἔπαινον δόξης τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ)> However, its actual focus is situated in the two verbs that explain why God should be praised. These are the semantically related verbs ἐξελέξατο ἡμᾶς (v.4) and προορίσας ἡμᾶς (v.5). God is to be praised because He *chose us*⁸⁶ and because He *predestined us*⁸⁷. Each of these two verbs is expanded by a phrase denoting purpose. For which purpose has God chosen us? Verse 4: εἶναι ἡμᾶς ἁγίους καὶ ἀμώμους (“so that we be morally pure and blameless in his judgement”). For which purpose has God predestined us? Verse 5: εἰς υἰοθεσίαν διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (“for adoption through Jesus Christ”). God’s chosen ones are a *covenant* people bound to God.

(2) A “**WE**” section, so the implied audience: the Jewish believers in Ephesus

(3) Does not speak directly about mission, but only an implicit suggestion: the fact that the Father chose “**US**” (1:4) and “predestined **US** to be adopted as his sons” according to “his pleasure and will” (v.5) suggests that “**WE**” did not become God’s children by physical descent (being part of ethnic Israel) but because God by his grace in his free will chose to make “**US**” his children. So, by implication: Not only the Jews but also the Gentiles can become God’s children. The decision to make Jew and Gentile God’s own children was “*according to the pleasure of the purpose of Him,*” κατὰ τὴν εὐδοκίαν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ. The preposition κατὰ and the accusative τὴν εὐδοκίαν denote the manner. It was part of God’s eternal plan and it pleased Him to execute his plan in the right time in salvation history. The plan of God was based on a decision He had made beforehand, προορίσας that it would be through Jesus Christ that He would bring Jew and Gentile to himself as his adopted sons. In the context “election needs to be seen as a doctrine of *mission*, not a calculus for the arithmetic of salvation” (Wright; 2010:72).

⁸⁶ ἐκλέγομαι^b; ἐκλογή^a, ἥς f: to make a special choice based upon significant preference, often implying a strongly favourable attitude toward what is chosen—‘to choose, choice.’

⁸⁷Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. 1996, c1989. *Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition). United Bible societies: New York

(4) The phrase “chose US before the creation of the world” suggests that God did all of this based on his plan-from-the-beginning to save Jew and Gentile.

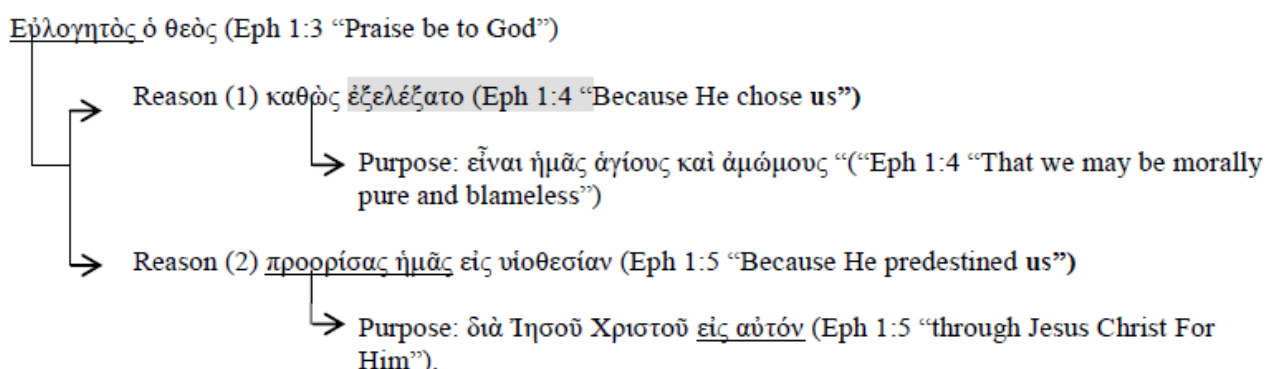
(5) In the New Covenant there is something more deeply revealed, something more fully understood about God’s mission than in the Old Covenant. Election in Ephesians is the election of a people from every nation, tribe and tongue. This community that is formed through election is chosen to participate in His redemptive work and in His mission (1:4). It is a community with a purpose.

(6) In verse 6 “the praise of his glory” occurs three times in Eph 1:3-14 emphasizing that it is a central idea in the pericope. It is the response of the believer who recognizes that salvation is an act of God. The author spontaneously breaks out in praise when he considers the incredible salvation of God. Mission is connected to “the praise of his glory” because the mission of God’s people is inseparable from the bringing of praise and glory to God. Mission is an act by which God is praised and glorified because it recognizes that the purpose for which man has been created and redeemed is to bring praise and glory to God. Israel was created for the praise of God (Isa 43:7; Ps 100:2-4). The relationship between worship and mission is that it includes doxology (cf. Wright; 2010:250).

(7) This first **thought-block** of the pericope makes the very important statement that God in the work of Christ set into action his plan for mankind by his election: He chose people to whom by his grace He granted to become his children in Christ. Not only did they (“WE”) become God’s children in Christ, but in Christ He also led them (“US”) to deliverance from death and forgiveness of sins (cf. 1:7), and by his word and Spirit lead them to the truth of the gospel and faith in the truth. Thus God’s chosen people, his church (“WE”, i.e. the church in Ephesus), became an instrument in God’s plan for making known the mystery of the gospel to all mankind. That was God’s plan from the beginning.

2.1.2.2. Schematical representation of the structure of the pericope Ephesians 1:3-6

It can be presented diagrammatically as follows:



2.1.2.3. Exegetical remarks

(1) In Ephesians 1:5-6 a relationship exists between God's passion to be glorified and His passion to be gracious (cf. Piper; 1993:35). Three times Paul says that God's redemption and the blessing of salvation is "to the praise of His glory" (NASB) (Eph 1:3, 6, 14) indicating that this is a key idea. And verse 6 makes clear that this glory is "the glory of His grace". "Election, predestination, adoption, redemption, sealing by the Spirit, working all things according to the counsel of his will – God does all this to elicit praise for the glory of his grace" (Piper; 1993:35).

2.1.2.4. The relation to the Old Testament

2.1.2.4.1. The promise of the blessing to Abraham

The promise of the blessing to Abraham realized in the inclusion of the Gentiles

The concept of blessing is inseparable from a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and is rooted and based upon this relational element. It is this relational element which the elect are called to reach out to others. "Those who are blessed are called to be a blessing beyond themselves and this is one feature that makes it so profoundly missional" (Wright; 2010:68). The relationship to the covenant is that blessing is intrinsic to the covenant relationship established by God's saving grace.

The echoes of the blessing in the promise made to Abraham

Ge 12:1-3	The inclusion of the Gentiles in the promises and blessings of God.	Eph 1:3-4

2.1.3. Thought-block B: in Christ he set his plan into action: Ephesians 1:7-12

2.1.3.1. Thought structure analysis remarks

(1) In Christ believers ("WE") were delivered (verb 1) from sin and death, for the purpose of God's plan to bring everything under Christ to be completed (purpose 1).

(2) The way in which God brings his plan to completion (purpose 1) is by making known to the believers ("to US") the secret of his plan (participle 1).

(3) In Christ the believers ("WE") were chosen (verb 2) for the purpose of God's praise (purpose 2).

(4) Continuation of the "WE" section, with implied audience: the Jewish believers in Ephesus.

(5) This section explains the execution (οἰκονομία) of God's plan-from-the-beginning in Christ:

- o When the time was ripe (“when the times will have reached their fulfillment” 1:10) He made it possible that in Christ all (nations) and everything would come together in harmony (ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι 1:10). Jesus Christ is the centre of God’s plan of οἰκονομία. He is at the same time the subject and object of God’s plan of οἰκονομία.
- o The οἰκονομία of God’s plan is that He is in the process of harmonizing, healing and restoring all that has been broken by the fall into sin through Christ. Jesus Christ is the subject of God’s plan of οἰκονομία as it is through Jesus Christ that God executes his will and plan in world history. He is the object of God’s plan of οἰκονομία because it is about Jesus Christ. Volf (2006b:108) asserts that the being of God and the actions of God flow out of who He is and therefore are inseparable. Mission is thus the actions of God in history and at the same time it is the self-revelation of God.
- o The way in which He administered (οἰκονομία) it was that He first of all made known (γνώρισας) to “**US**” (i.e. the already existing (Jewish?) believers) his long unknown plan (μυστήριον) for mankind. [What his plan for mankind is, is not said here, but in the light of 3:4-6 the plan proves to be that all peoples/ nations should share in (inherit) the covenantal promises of God that became true in Christ.]
- o The promises that came (comes?) true in Christ are mentioned in 1:7: “redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins.”
- o Once again this **thought-block** does not give direct evidence of a mission strategy that is set forward by the apostle. However, what is implicitly said, is that God, by making known this mystery to the (already existing) believers, is already executing his plan-from-the-beginning, because it now becomes the task of the (already existing) believers to spread the news to others, including the Gentiles, i.e. the news of God’s plan that also the Gentiles are have received grace in Christ to become co-heirs of his promises. Mission flows out of the working out of God’s plan of redemption in history and the revelation of the mystery. It is grounded in God’s self-revelation as the One, who loves, heals, restores and redeems mankind.
- o In the phrase το μυστήριον του θεληματος in Ephesians 1:9 the term θέλημα has in view the purpose of God. The purpose of God is related to the making known of the mystery, το μυστήριον. God the Father was pleased in the plan made beforehand in Jesus Christ, with the implication of resulting pleasure, to reveal his plan in Jesus Christ at the appropriate time in history. The revelation of the mystery is about a revelation of who God is⁸⁸. God is thus the person who takes the initiative to reveal his purpose and plan. The process of bringing all things together in heaven and on earth has started in Christ. It is a process rather than an accomplished fact. The fact that it is a process can imply that it is not a process that takes place at the exclusion of the involvement of the redeemed mankind. This does not mean that God’s plan to bring everything together in Christ is dependent upon the redeemed mankind. It is God’s plan that he executes by his grace.
- o The outworking of the οἰκονομία of God is that He arranges all things to function according to his perfect plan, in his perfect time and in his perfect manner. The incredible nature of God’s οἰκονομία is revealed in that He accomplishes his plans through human beings who are imperfect agents (cf. Eph 3:2-8).

⁸⁸ The “I AM” statements are a self-revelation of the existence of God and the relation of all life to God. But they are also missional in nature because the self-revelation of God is missions.

- o God has a universal will and plan. The universal plan of God is to restore the relationship between God and mankind and to ultimately renew the fallen creation and to bring all things under the headship and administration of Jesus Christ, thus establishing the universal kingdom (cf. Ott & Strauss; 2010:58). The stewardship of Jesus Christ of the Church and creation is instrumental in the bringing of all things together under the headship of Christ.
- o The task of οικονομία operates according to the plan and purpose of God⁸⁹. “The peculiarity of Eph 1:11 lies in the linking of the whole οικονομία of God with His βουλή”⁹⁰ The linking of the οικονομία of God with His βουλή can be understood to mean that Jesus Christ will fulfil the will of God, the task, “to bring everything together” (ἀνακεφαλαιώω) in himself. The οικονομία of God makes it necessary to know His βουλή, “will” of God. The combination of βουλή and θέλημα implies that the οικονομία and mission of God will be fulfilled⁹¹. God’s purpose and mission will always be accomplished (cf. Eph 1:11).
- o The term *missio Dei* has been used since 1952 for God’s purpose and mission⁹². Since this time there has been no consensus about the meaning of the term *missio Dei* and for this reason a common definition is needed. A suggested definition is the “the eternal plan of God which is described in the whole Bible which the True God is presently working out in the fullness of the times”. The *missio Dei* can be defined in terms of its relation to the οικονομία of God and an understanding of the term is important for a Biblical definition of the *missio Dei*. Wright (2006: 531-535) makes a valuable contribution towards such a definition in terms of the οικονομία of God when he says that the *missio Dei* should be understood as the “purposeful, sovereign intentionality” of God. This can serve also as a point of departure understanding of οικονομία.

2.1.3.2. Schematical representation of the structure of the pericope Ephesians 1:6-12

The thought structure representation of this second Thought-block is marked by the syntactical pattern of verses 6-10 which is repeated in verses 11-12. This repetition almost takes the form of a parallelism:

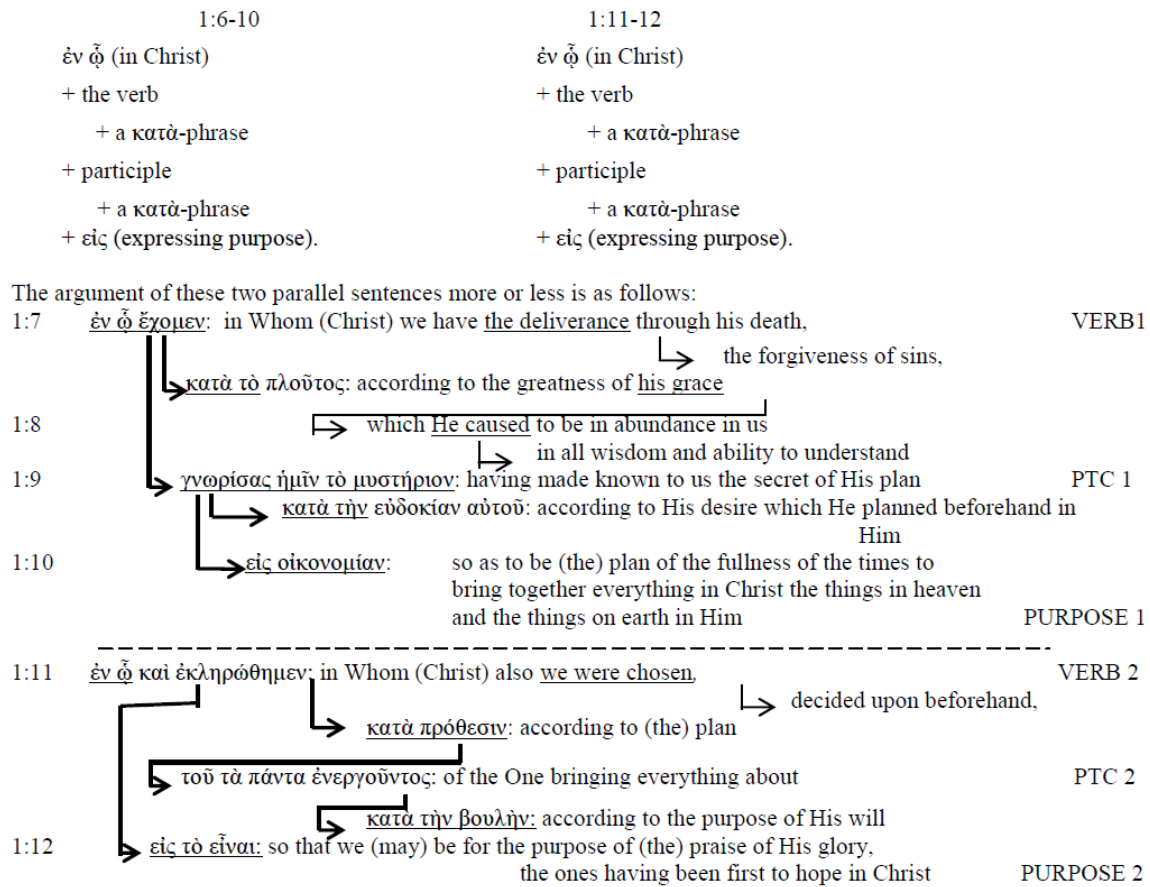
⁸⁹ βούλεσθαι denotes a decision of will based on deliberate resolve, the *consilium secundum deliberationem*. On the other hand, ἐθέλειν is understood to mean the resolution of the spirit, and βούλεσθαι as desire or inclination, as the wish of the soul.

⁹⁰ *Theological dictionary of the New Testament*. 1964-c1976. Vols. 5-9 edited by Gerhard Friedrich. Vol. 10 compiled by Ronald Pitkin. (G. Kittel, G. W. Bromiley & G. Friedrich, Ed.) . Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, MI

⁹¹ The term θέλειν denotes in Paul the weighty and authoritative discharge of office. In this form it always implies resolute will.

⁹² The term was used for the first time by George F Viscdom (1958) in his book with the title “Missio Dei”.

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2.1.3.3. Exegetical remarks

- (1) The plan of God has been revealed to “US,” τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ, this plan has been revealed to Jew and Gentile. It greatly pleased God to reveal his plan, εὐδοκίαν αὐτοῦ. This plan is worked out by God and will always be accomplished. Our election was therefore part of God’s plan.
- (2) The aorist infinitive “to bring all things into unity” points not to the past, but signifies purpose: the summing up of all things is the goal to be achieved” (O’Brien; 1999:114)⁹³.

⁹³ A Lindemann (1975:96-99) argues that the “summing up” has already occurred. He claims that the aorist infinitive points to the past.

2.1.3.4. The relation to the Old Testament

2.1.3.4.1. Redemption and Isaiah

The concept of redemption is identifiable in Ephesians 1:3-14 which looks back to Israel's bondage in Egypt and God's deliverance (Dt 15:15) and to the release from the Babylonian exile in second Isaiah (Isa 43:3; 52:3) (cf. Martin; 1991:17). The significance of these motifs is that the Exodus and exile serve as examples of God's covenant faithfulness which is the basis of redemption and the *missio Dei* (Eph 1:10).

The diagrams below depict the relationship between key Old Testament texts and Ephesians 1:3-14.

The allusion to the final fulfilment of the plan of God

Ge 3:15	The plan and purpose of God	Eph 1:10-11

The concept of redemption

Dt 15:15	Israel's bondage in Egypt and God's deliverance.	Eph 1:3-12

2.1.4. Thought-block C: sealed by the Holy Spirit: Ephesians 1:13-14

2.1.4.1. Thought structure analysis remarks

(1) Now the addressees change to “**YOU**”, i.e. all the believers in Ephesus, the church, including Jewish and Gentile believers.

(2) In this section is explained that God confirms the execution of his plan-from-the-beginning that all be joined in Christ **by the work of the Holy Spirit in the believers**.

(3) Verse 13 in a certain sense continues speaking of the manner in which God puts his plan for his chosen children into action (οἰκονομία): it happens as it happened with all of you: “**YOU** also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, **YOU** were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit”.

(4) The subtle missional focus in 1:13-14 is that it reminds the believers that even though it will be them spreading the news of God's μυστήριον, faith remains as was the case God's work, as is confirmed by the fact that they received the Holy Spirit.

(5) In this sense the Holy Spirit confirms the message that is spread by the church. As “deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession” the Spirit confirms that all God's elect, Jew and Gentile alike, by God's grace receive exactly the same inheritance of God's promises.

2.1.4.2. Exegetical Remarks

(1) The verb εὐλογησας in Ephesians 1:3 is in the aorist tense, indicating that the blessing took place the moment we were united with Jesus Christ and that all the benefits of Christ belong to the believers. The believers in Ephesus have been enriched with every spiritual blessing in Christ in the heavenly realm (Eph. 1:3). The Ephesians' were given every spiritual blessing so that they could be a blessing to the nations. "We may be tempted, then, to think that only spiritual blessings are contained in God's promise to Abraham. But of course we must take the words in their wider and fuller biblical context" (Wright; 2010:67). The term *blessing* includes fruitfulness, abundance, fullness and enjoying creation in a harmonious relationship to God the Creator.

(2) "The missional goal of the covenant has been, from the beginning, that through Abraham's descendents, God would bless all nations" (Goheen; 2011:196). There was no favourite status of Israel in the Old Testament; they were blessed in order to be a blessing. The task of Israel was to be a blessing to the surrounding nations. Israel's task was even to seek the welfare of the city and pray for the blessing of Yahweh upon the nation to where she was taken in exile (cf. Wright; 2006: 99-100). But she failed to fulfil her calling and task. The Church and every believer individually are blessed so that she may be a blessing. In this way the church and every believer is blessed so that God's original purpose will be accomplished. The blessing He has obtained for the Church and believers are those spelled out in the rest of the *berakah* and that has been transferred to the believers (cf. Eph 1:4-14).

1) θελήματος ("plan"): Ephesians 1:9

God has a purpose and goal for his whole creation. Paul called this the "whole will of God". God has called into existence a people to participate with God in the accomplishment of the divine mission (cf. Wright; 2010:24). "Mission arises from the heart of God himself, and is communicated from his heart to ours. Mission is the global outreach of the global people of God" (Stott; 1992:335).

2.1.5. Thought-block D: sealed by the Holy Spirit: Ephesians 1:13-14

2.1.5.1. Thought block Analysis Remarks

(1) Now the addressees change to "**YOU**", i.e. all the believers in Ephesus, the church, including Jewish and Gentile believers.

(2) In this section is explained that God confirms the execution of his plan-from-the-beginning that all be joined in Christ by the work of the Holy Spirit in the believers.

(3) Verse 13 in a certain sense continues speaking of the manner in which God puts his plan for his chosen children into action (οἰκονομία): it happens as it happened with all of you: “**YOU** also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. “Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit”. The means by which the Gentiles were included was through, “having heard the message of the truth, the good news of your salvation”.

(4) The subtle missional focus in 1:13-14 is that it reminds the believers that even though it will be them spreading the news of God’s μυστήριον, faith remains, as was the case with them, God’s work, as is confirmed by the fact that they received the Holy Spirit.

(5) In this sense the Holy Spirit confirms the message that is spread by the church. As “deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession” the Spirit confirms that all God’s elect, Jew and Gentile alike, by God’s grace receive exactly the same inheritance of God’s promises.

(6) God’s plan of *oikonomia* begins with a revelation of the wealth of God’s grace (1:6-7). It is once the believer has certainty about the grace of God and the sealing of the Holy Spirit that he becomes aware of the outworking of God’s plan in his/her life.

(7) The **thought-block C** (Eph 1:13-14) is connected to the subsequent prayer in which the author gives thanks to God for the salvation and inclusion of the Gentiles.

2.1.5.2. Schematic Representation of the pericope 1:13-14

In Ephesians 1:13-14 the thought structure has a striking repetition pattern as marker of its thought structure. It follows an a-b-a-b-c-pattern is, which is as follows:

relative clause (ἐν ᾧ) ... epexegetical phrase (2x)

εἰς + accusative + genitive (2x)

In the text the pattern is as follows:

a	b
<u>ἐν ᾧ καὶ</u> ὑμεῖς ἀκούσαντες τὸν λόγον τῆς ἀληθείας, <u>τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς σωτηρίας</u> ὑμῶν,	
a	b
<u>ἐν ᾧ καὶ</u> πιστεύσαντες ἐσφραγίσθητε τῷ πνεύματι τῆς ἐπαγγελίας τῷ ἁγίῳ, <u>ὃ ἐστὶν ἄρραβὼν τῆς κληρονομίας ἡμῶν,</u>	
c	c
<u>εἰς ἀπολύτρωσιν τῆς περιποιήσεως, εἰς ἔπαινον τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ.</u>	

2.1.5.3. Exegetical remarks

This Thought-block in a certain sense may be regarded as a summary of the previous two Thought Units, since it brings together from the first two units the ideas of our salvation/deliverance (σωτηρίας/ἀπολύτρωσιν), inheritance (κληρονομία), even the making known of the gospel (ἀκούσαντες ... τὸ εὐαγγέλιον), and as the previous blocks, it also ends with the doxological purpose of God's glory (εἰς ἔπαινον τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ).

However, what is new to this Thought Unit is the reference to the Holy Spirit by whom the believers (“**WE**”) are sealed (ἐσφραγίσθητε) and who is a guarantee (ἀρραβὼν) to them (“**US**”).

2.1.5.4. The relation to the Old Testament

The term “gospel” comes from Isaiah 40-66, the so-called Deutero-Isaiah, where the figure of the Joy Messenger (in Hebrew the *mebaser*) particularly comes to the fore. “The prophet Isaiah, and then especially Isa 40-66, has been identified as the primary background for the New Testament’s use of “evangel/evangelize” (Coetzee; 1995:5). The term “evangel” is already in Isa 40 a technical term (cf. Coetzee; 1995:6)⁹⁴. The content of the “gospel” the gracious and blessing presence of the Lord (Isa 40:5) “God’s, visible-made covenantal presence in the midst of his people” (Coetzee; 1995:7) (Eph 2:21) which culminates in the message “Here is your God! Here is the Lord Yahweh! (Isa 40:9, 10a). The diagram below illustrates that the gospel announced in Isa 40:9 is extended in Isa 49:22 to include the Gentile nations. “The essence of the gospel that was given to Abraham was this: “All nations will be blessed through you” (Kaiser; 2008:296).

The allusion to the Gospel in the fulfillment of the plan of God

Isa 40:9, 49:22	The inclusion of the Gentiles in the plan of God through the gospel.	Eph 1:13

⁹⁴ Gerard Friedrich (1935:706-707) brings these Old Testament roots for *euangelion/euangelizomai* as technical terms in the New Testament clearly in these words: “Für das Vorverständnis des nt.lichen Evangelionbegriffes ist Deuterjesaja und die von ihm beeinflusste Literatur am wichtigsten . . . Dabei ist der *mebaser* von grösster Bedeutung.

2.2. SUMMARY OF THE PERICOPE EPHESIANS 1:3-14

(1) God is praised because he chose/ predestined the believers (“**US**”) to be his adopted children, morally pure. He did so for the purpose of his praise.

(2) The ultimate goal of missions is the glory of God. The most crucial idea in missions is the glory of God in the church. Missions are first about the glory of God before the salvation of individuals and the nations.

(3) First of all, an obvious chain of thought that is developed throughout the three Thought Units above is a Trinitarian one: **thought-block A** (1:3-6) mainly deals with the work of the Father (He chose and predestined); **thought block B** (1:7-12) deals with the work of Christ (in whom the Father executes his plan for all things); **thought-block C** (1:13-14) deals with the work of the Holy Spirit (as supportive power to the work of the Father and the Son). This co-operation of the three Persons of the Holy Trinity is often referred to as the Divine οἰκονομία.

(4) Secondly, it has to be noted that the work of God Triune is described in the pericope with one overarching purpose: the praise of God’s glory (repeated at the end of each Thought Unit). However, a subsidiary purpose is brought forward in the second thought-block, viz. “that the plan of the fullness of the times to bring together everything in Christ be executed” (1:10). So the pericope says that God for the purpose of his glory set the plan that everything should be brought together in Christ. The plan of God has been put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfilment with the revelation of Jesus Christ. The task of οἰκονομία given to Jesus Christ is part of the fulfilment or the completeness of the kairos period of time, οἰκονομία του πληρωματος των καιρων that God has begun “to bring all things together”, ανακεφαλαιωσασθαι, “everything in heaven and on earth in Christ”. The preposition εις and the accusative οἰκονομία indicate the duration of time, “to (carry out) the task until the times will have reached their fulfilment”⁹⁵.

(5) So, taking this plan of God into account – and considering the focus that the entire Ephesian letter has on Christ – it seems that the most central place is taken by the work of Jesus Christ. This is also suggested by the fact that God’s work in Thought Units 2 and 3 is repeatedly explained as something that He brings about *in Christ* (4 times ἐν ᾧ). Of these last two thought-blocks especially thought-block 2 deals with God’s work *in Christ*. In Christ God planned to bring everything together in Christ. By and large this plan

⁹⁵ The N.I.V indicates that the summing up of all things will take place at a specific point in time, *when* the times will have reached their fulfilment. The duration of time, however, is from the time that Christ has inaugurated God’s plan until the time of the consummation.

of God seems to be missional in its very essence: “everything brought together under Christ” undoubtedly means first of all, all believers from all nations brought together under Christ.

(6) Finally, thought-block 2 speaks of the manner in which this plan of God in Christ is brought to execution – by way of the participle phrase γνωρίσας ἡμῖν τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ, κατὰ τὴν εὐδοκίαν αὐτοῦ ἣν προέθετο ἐν αὐτῷ. By making known to the believers (“US”) “the secret of his plan which He planned beforehand according to his desire” God sets into action his plan that everything will be brought together in Christ. This manner of doing also suggests a missional basis for God’s plan: In order that all nations will be brought together under Christ, He has made known to those whom He has chosen and saved “the secret of his plan” (τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ, v.9). What the secret of his plan is, is not revealed in this pericope as such; however, in Ephesians 3, as will be indicated later on this Chapter, the secret (τὸ μυστήριον) is explained as follows: “This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus” (Eph 3:6). So, in short, it means that God in Christ gave the message of salvation to his chosen ones so that they in turn, according to his plan, when the time comes, will convey the message to the nations, in order that also the nations will be brought together under Christ. This is God’s missional plan for his church. The plan of God is executed by the Holy Spirit and the gospel, the truth about mankind’s sin and the redemption secured by Jesus Christ, is the instrument for accomplishing God’s plan. It is through the preaching of the gospel that the hidden purposes of God are put into effect (v. 9). For this reason it is extremely important that the gospel is to be communicated clearly and faithfully.

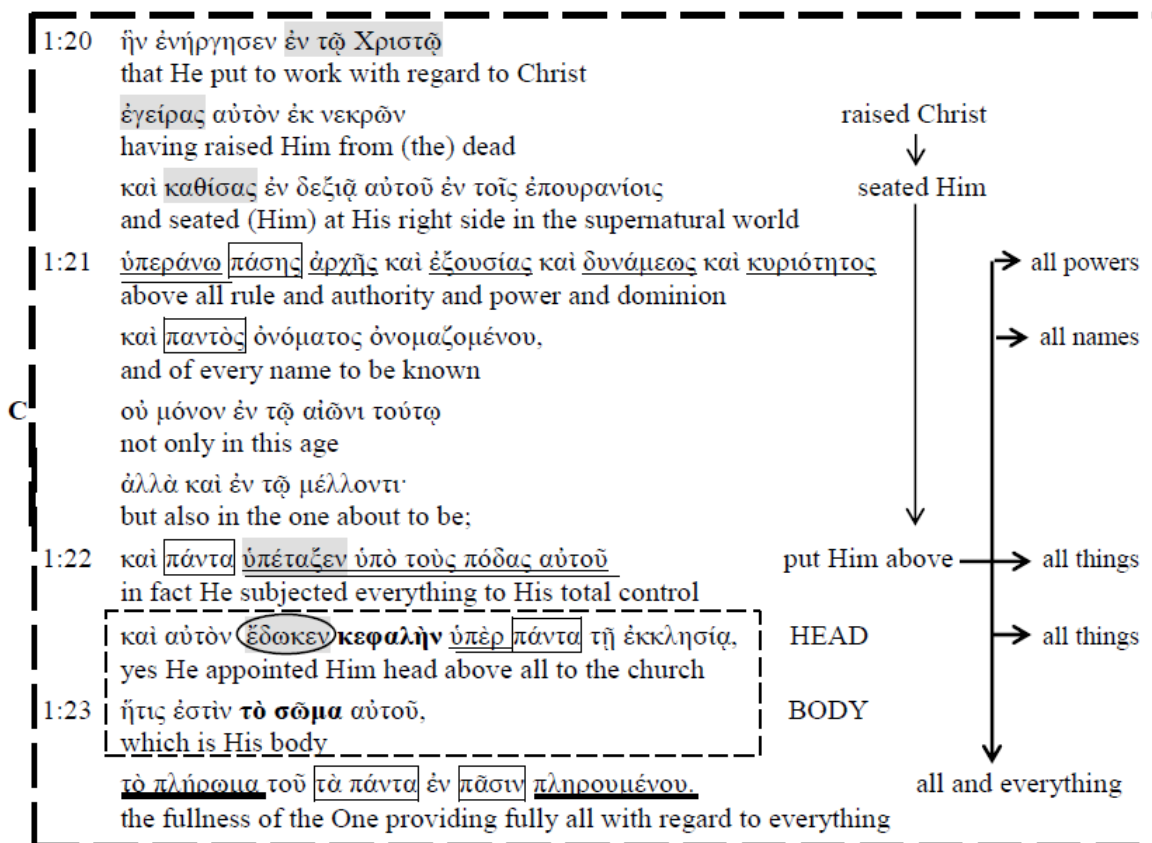
(7) In Ephesians 1:11 it is God who plans and executes his plan. The nations will be brought together under Jesus Christ because God’s sovereignty is at work executing his plan. God plans, guides and supports the advancement of his plan so that his purposes will be achieved. It is God’s resolve and decision that ensures that his plan will be accomplished. The plan of God cannot be thwarted because the fulfilment of the plan depends upon God and not upon external variables. He will provide all the resources needed for the fulfilment of his plan. The verb “ἐνεργέω” indicates that God is at work and that He is working out all things in accordance with his plan. It indicates that God’s plan will be effective and that He is faithful to carrying out his plan. The present tense of the verb refers to God’s continual activity towards the fulfilment of the plan and resolution that He has made in eternity past. God’s plan is accomplished by the irresistible progress of the gospel. “Sinful human resistance to the divine plan of salvation is overruled and used by the sovereign Lord of history to achieve his own purposes” (Köstenberger & O’Brien; 2001:267).

(8) The historical context is important because the Jews had considered themselves as part of God’s plan and heirs of the covenants of promise and that they had exclusively been chosen. Paul instructs the Jews and the Gentiles that both, Jew and Gentile have been chosen for the goal of the praise of his glory.

3. EPHESIANS 1:15-23 – GOD’S PLAN TO UNITE JEWS AND GENTILES IN CHRIST AS HEAD OF HIS CHURCH

3.1. THE TEXT OF THE PERICOPE OF EPHESIANS 1:15-23 RE-WRITTEN

A	1:15	Διὰ τοῦτο καὶ γὰρ because of this also I ἀκούσας τὴν καθ’ ὑμᾶς πίστιν ἐν τῷ κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ having heard about the faith of yours in the Lord Jesus καὶ τὴν ἀγάπην τὴν εἰς πάντας τοὺς ἁγίους and your love for all God's people			
	1:16	οὐ παύομαι <u>εὐχαριστῶν</u> ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν I do not stop thanking (God) for you μνησθῆναι ποιοῦμενος ἐπὶ τῶν <u>προσευχῶν</u> μου, making mention during my prayers	thanksgiving prayers	praying for	
B	1:17	ἵνα ὁ θεὸς τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ ὁ πατὴρ τῆς δόξης, the Father of the glory <u>δῶῃ</u> ὑμῖν πνεῦμα σοφίας may give to you (a) spirit of wisdom	wisdom (knowledge)	a	KNOWLEDGE
		καὶ ἀποκαλύψεως ἐν ἐπιγνώσει αὐτοῦ, and of revelation about (the) knowledge of Him	revelation	b	
			clear knowledge	a	
	1:18	πεφωτισμένους τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς τῆς καρδίας [ὑμῶν] the eyes of [your] mind having been enlightened	enlightened	b	
		εἰς τὸ εἰδέναι ὑμᾶς so that you (may) know	knowledge	a	
		<u>τίς ἐστὶν ἡ</u> ἐλπίς τῆς <u>κλήσεως</u> αὐτοῦ, what the hope of His calling is		calling	
		<u>τίς ὁ</u> πλοῦτος τῆς δόξης τῆς <u>κληρονομίας</u> αὐτοῦ ἐν τοῖς ἁγίοις, what (is) the greatness of the glory of His possession among God's people		inheritance	
	1:19	<u>καὶ τί τὸ</u> <u>ὑπερβάλλον μέγεθος</u> τῆς <u>δυνάμεως</u> αὐτοῦ εἰς ἡμᾶς τοὺς πιστεύοντας and what (is) the extreme greatness of His power in us who (are) believing κατὰ τὴν ἐνέργειαν τοῦ <u>κράτους</u> τῆς <u>ἰσχύος</u> αὐτοῦ. according to the working of the power of His might			POWER



3.1.1. Thought structure analysis remarks

(1) The prepositional phrase διὰ τοῦτο (“for this reason”) often serves as marker of a new pericope, related as conclusion to the argument in to the previous pericope. This is true also of Ephesians 1:15, introducing a prayer of the apostle based on God’s plan and will for his church, as revealed and put into action in and through Jesus Christ.

(2) In **thought-block B** the apostle’s prayer begins in 1:17, introduced by ἵνα. What the apostle is praying is that the Father will give (δῶν) knowledge and insight to the recipients, as is evident from the semantically related word group σοφίας (“wisdom”), ἀποκαλύψεως (“revelation”), ἐπιγνώσει (“knowledge”), πεφωτισμένους (“enlightened”) and εἰδέναι (“knowledge”) in verses 17 and 18. The knowledge that Paul prays for is about three matters, marked by the three times repeated interrogative pronoun τίς/τί in verses 18 and 19:

- Paul prays that his recipients will know that the Father not only destined them (as his children) for faith and love (1:15) but also called them to put their *hope* in Him (1:18),
- that they will know that God has set aside his children (ἀγίοις, in 1:18) to be part of his *rich and glorious possession* (or “inheritance”, κληρονομία) in Christ, and

c. That they will be knowledgeable of the great power of the Father that He put to work (ἐνέργειαν) in Christ (1:19).

d. And that the congregation will be aware of the description of the grace of God so that the believers will know what the plan of God is to reveal His grace.

The last matter, viz. the *great power*, is emphasized by a striking cluster of 4 “power”-words (ὑπερβάλλον μέγεθος τῆς δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ; τοῦ κράτους τῆς ἰσχύος αὐτοῦ). So Paul’s prayer for clear knowledge seems to be focused mainly on God’s power that He puts to work in the Person and work of Christ, for the benefit of the church (εἰς ἡμᾶς, 1:19, cf. Hendriksen, 1967:100). How God put his power to work in Christ, is expanded upon and explained in the confessional section that follows in thought-block C.

(3) Ephesians 1:20-23 (**thought-block C**) is marked by a series of divine actions by which God put his great power to work in Christ. These actions are arranged in what can be called a theological climax – **raised** from the dead, **seated** at his right hand, **placed above** everything, **appointed** as Head. This arrangement already has a confessional ring to it. Christ’s absolute authority is emphasized in verses 21-22 by the following stylistic markers:

- the polysyndetic enumeration of the mighty powers (ἀρχῆς καὶ ἐξουσίας καὶ δυνάμεως καὶ κυριότητος) above whom Christ receives authority;
- the repetition of the adjective *all* (πάσης ἀρχῆς, παντὸς ὀνόματος, πάντα);
- the word ὑπεράνω (“above”) at the beginning of verse 21, which is echoed by the phrase ὑπέταξεν ὑπὸ τοῦς πόδας αὐτοῦ (“*subjected under his feet*”) in verse 22, forms a type of *inclusio* that encloses the section dealing with Christ’s cosmic authority.

(4) The ultimate climax of the confession formula in **thought-block C** is that God the Father appointed Christ as Head of the church (cf. 1:22). This climax is supported by the continued emphatic use of the adjective *all* – ὑπὲρ πάντα (1:22) and τὰ πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν (1:23), the latter emphasized by means of paronomasia (cf. Jordaan, 2013:172). Another paronomasia is used in the words τὸ πλήρωμα ... τοῦ πληρουμένου (“*the fullness of the One who fills [all in all]*”) at the very end of the Thought-block. This phrase seems to echo the apostle’s words in 1:10: “to bring together (ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι) everything in Christ, the things in heaven and the things on earth.”

(5) However, in these last verses of the pericope the focus shifts from the cosmic authority that Christ received from God to the unfathomable relation of unity between Christ and his church, which is expressed by the head-body metaphor: “God above all appointed Christ head to the church, which is his body.” This is the ultimate expression of God’s power in Christ, which the recipients have to understand clearly (cf. Paul’s prayer for clear understanding in 1:17-18), for in the rest of the letter this head-body relationship becomes the basis of Paul’s argument.

3.1.2. Thought-block A: Paul's prayer of thanksgiving: Ephesians 1:15-16

This prayer does not have any missional focus, but does seem to coincide with the general missional purpose of the letter in as far as the apostle gives thanks to God for their “love for all God's people”, which could suggest something of an already existing missional awareness in the church of Ephesus: their willingness to extend their love to all God's people: not only Jewish but also Gentile.

3.1.3. Thought-block B: prayer for a spirit of wisdom and revelation: Ephesians 1:17-19

3.1.3.1. Thought block analysis remarks

(1) Once again a Trinitarian basis. The Trinitarian basis in Ephesians supports the idea of the purpose of the letter as missions because mission flows from the mutual relationship between Father, Son and Holy Spirit in the Trinity⁹⁶.

(2) The wisdom by the Spirit Paul prays for (v.17), in the light of the preceding Thought-block, is better insight into God's will and his plan-from-the-beginning. The wisdom and revelation by the Spirit [πνεῦμα σοφίας καὶ ἀποκαλύψεως ἐν ἐπιγνώσει αὐτοῦ] which he prays for (v.17) could also be related to reveal the μυστήριον of God's will that not only Jews but also Gentiles are included in his promises.

(3) This is supported by v.18, where he explains this wisdom and revelation as “the eyes of your mind ... enlightened so that you may know what the hope of His calling is and what the greatness of the glory of His possession is among God's people (τίς ὁ πλοῦτος τῆς δόξης τῆς κληρονομίας αὐτοῦ ἐν τοῖς ἁγίοις)”. The “riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints” perfectly fits his later description of the μυστήριον that God revealed (3:6): that the Gentiles are co-heirs of the promise.

(4) So the prayer actually supports the missional task of the Ephesian church in that it asks that the believers in Ephesus might receive better insight into God's plan that not only Jews but also a rich variety of peoples will share in the completion of God's promises in Christ.

⁹⁶ It was at the Ecumenical World Missions Conference in Willingen (1952) that mission was for the first time anchored in the Trinity of God.

3.1.4. Thought-block A: Paul's prayer of thanksgiving: Ephesians 1:15-16

3.1.4.1. Thought block analysis remarks

(1) The thought marker εἰς indicates purpose, intent, and expected result in Ephesians 1:18, “so that you may know”. The verb know, εἶδεναι, is followed by three clauses introduced by the interrogative pronoun τίς. He reminds the recipients of what they already possess, the hope of their calling of salvation. He makes an implicit invitation for them to accept responsibility for a particular task based on the hope in the first interrogative clause.

(2) A third interrogative clause in Ephesians 1:19 introduces a far greater power, the verb υπερβαλλον indicates a degree which exceeds extraordinarily a point on an implied or overt scale of extent.⁹⁷ Christians have the extraordinary power of God at work in them. It is the functioning, τὴν ἐνεργειαν, of the mighty power and strength of him τοῦ κρατοῦς τῆς ἰσχυος, that is Jesus Christ. The noun κράτος refers to strength regarded as abundantly effective in relation to an end goal, the salvation of the believer. At the same time it is also the power to overcome what stands in the way in the accomplishment of the purpose or mission of God (cf. Westcott; 1952; Lincoln; 1990).

This prayer does not have any missional focus, but does seem to coincide with the general missional purpose of the letter in as far as the apostle gives thanks to God for their “love for all God's people”, which could suggest something of an already existing missional awareness in the church of Ephesus: their willingness to extend their love to all God's people: not only Jewish but also Gentile.

3.1.5. Thought-block B: prayer for a spirit of wisdom and revelation: Ephesians 1:17-19

3.1.5.1. Thought block analysis remarks

(1) The term “the wealth of his glory” (NET), “the riches of his glory” (RSV) in Ephesians 1:19 is a reference to the kingdom of God. Jesus Christ in the letter to the Ephesians is the head over the kingdom that He has received from the Father. This distinguishes it from the headship of Christ in Ephesians which is cosmic. In Ephesians the headship of Christ is inseparably connected to a body, “the believers are His body, individually His limbs and organs, under His control, obeying His direction, performing His Word” (Bruce; 1957:201). It is the body of Christ in submission to its head that is part of the plan and purpose of

⁹⁷ In Ephesians 2:7 the same verb is rendered as “he is gracious beyond anything we can imagine”.

God and carries out the mission of God. The headship of Christ demands an unreserved allegiance to His purpose and mandate for the world-wide missionary task of the Church of Jesus Christ.

3.1.5.2. Exegetical remarks

1) Once again a Trinitarian basis.

(a) The wisdom by the Spirit Paul prays for (v.17), in the light of the preceding Thought-block, is better insight into God's will and his plan-from-the-beginning. The wisdom and revelation by the Spirit [πνεῦμα σοφίας καὶ ἀποκαλύψεως ἐν ἐπιγνώσει αὐτοῦ] which he prays for (v.17) could also be related to reveal the μυστήριον of God's will that not only Jews but also Gentiles are included in his promises.

(b) This is supported by v.18, where he explains this wisdom and revelation as “the eyes of your mind ... enlightened so that you may know what the hope of His calling is and what the greatness of the glory of His possession is among God's people (τίς ὁ πλοῦτος τῆς δόξης τῆς κληρονομίας αὐτοῦ ἐν τοῖς ἁγίοις)”. The “riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints” perfectly fits his later description of the μυστήριον that God revealed (3:6): that the Gentiles are co-heirs of the promise.

(c) So the prayer actually supports the missional task of the Ephesians' church in that it asks that the believers in Ephesus might receive better insight into God's plan that not only Jews but also a rich variety of peoples will share in the completion of God's promises in Christ.

(d) The term “the wealth of his glory” (NET), “the riches of his glory” (RSV) in Ephesians 1:19 is a reference to the kingdom of God. Jesus Christ in the letter to the Ephesians is the head over the kingdom that He has received from the Father. This distinguishes it from the headship of Christ in Ephesians which is cosmic. In Ephesians the headship of Christ is inseparably connected to a body, “the believers are His body, individually His limbs and organs, under His control, obeying His direction, performing His Word” (Bruce; 1957:201). It is the body of Christ in submission to its head that is part of the plan and purpose of God and carries out the mission of God. The headship of Christ demands an unreserved allegiance to His purpose and mandate for the world-wide missionary task of the Church of Jesus Christ. The kingdom of God is directly involved in all missionary work as seen in the Apostle Paul's preaching, as he was preaching the kingdom of God to the Gentiles (Acts 19:1-8).

3.1.6. Thought-block C: the living Jesus Christ is alive and rules the cosmos: Ephesians 1:20-23

3.1.6.1. Thought block analysis remarks

(1) Verses 20-21 give a nutshell-exposition (in the form of a confessional formula) of how God in Christ fulfilled his covenantal promises.

(2) Important to note is the universal rule of Christ “above all rule and authority and power and dominion and of every name to be known – He subjected everything to His total control” in verses 21-22. This universal rule implicitly provides the basis for preaching the gospel of Christ’s kingdom to all people of all nations.

(3) But even more significant regarding the missional task of the church, is the relation between Christ as Head of his church “which is His body, the fullness of the One providing fully all with regard to everything” (verse 23). This phrase indicates that the body of Christ has to become full. In the eyes of God Christ’s body is incomplete until all those whom He has chosen according to his plan have been incorporated into his body (=church). This idea has a very strong missional undertone. The task of the church (believers) is to preach the gospel to all nations so that those belonging to the body of Christ may be gathered and incorporated so that his body may come to its “fullness”.

(4) The author writes that since the time he heard of the real trust, confidence, reliance and self-sacrificial love, *καί την ἀγάπην*, of the Ephesians in the Lord Jesus Christ (Eph 1:15), he has had a reason to continually praise God, remembering the Ephesians in his prayers (Eph 1:16). The verb *ποιούμενος* is used with the noun as a periphrasis for the verb with the sense of “to make mention of your work or task/responsibility”. Paul is thus continually praying for the Ephesians to be able to fulfil their task, which has a missional element. The phrase *μνείαν υμῶν ποιούμενος* has the meaning that the author breaks out in praise and thanksgiving to God when he remembers the activity involving considerable expenditure of effort by the recipients (cf. Louw & Nida’ 1988: 42.41). The recipients have made considerable effort in their faith walk but also in the task that the Lord has given to them.

(5) The aim of the prayer is not merely so that the recipients may know God better. The prayer has a missional function, to extend the worship of God among the nations. The multiethnic character of the communities of Ephesus was instrumental in extending the worship of God among the nations⁹⁸. The prayer is for the Ephesians also to have the spiritual capacity of mind to be able to perceive what the spiritual riches are, *πλοῦτος*, and the amazing splendour of the inheritance. It is important for the Church and believers individually to recognize the spiritual riches they have received because without this it would not be possible to engage in missions. Missions begin with recognizing the spiritual resources one has received in Jesus Christ.

(6) The author is not praying for the recipients to receive a spirit of wisdom and revelation, but that they will know and perceive that they already possess a spirit of wisdom and revelation. It is God who

⁹⁸ “The glory of God is the revelation of God, and the glory of his grace is his self-disclosure as a gracious God. To live to the praise of the glory of his grace is both to worship him ourselves by our words and deeds as the gracious God he is, and to cause others to see and praise him too. This was God’s will for Israel in the Old Testament days (Isa 43:21; Jer 13:11), and it is also his purpose for his people today” (Stott; 1979:50).

enlightened the eyes of their hearts so that the believers who already know rationally that Christ loves them will experience His love (cf. Eph 3:14-21) (cf. Keller' 2012:60). This experience of the love of Jesus Christ is the goal of preaching and missions.

(7) The καί in Ephesians 1:22 is a marker of coordinate relations and the main idea is continued. The aorist tense is used extensively in verse 22. It indicates the in breaking of the future reality into the present of everything having been brought under the control of Jesus Christ through the resurrection and glorification of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is identified as the κεφαλὴν, one who is of supreme or pre-eminent in status, in view of authority to order or command (cf. Louw & Nida; 1988:87.51)⁹⁹.

3.1.6.2. Exegetical remarks

(1) The idiom; literally 'to cause to sit at the right hand', is an expression of assigning special importance or high status to Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ has been assigned the most important place, position and status in the cosmos. It can be translated as 'and gave him a special place of honor in the heavenly world' (Eph 1.20).

(2) The extent of Jesus Christ's position is far above every supernatural power, and rule, and ability, and ruling power and every name mentioned by name (cf. Eph 5:3). Although implicit explicitly it explains the gospel. The gospel is that Jesus Christ has been raised from the dead and seated at His right hand in the heavens – far above every ruler and authority, power and dominion, and every title given (v. 20-21). This is the content of preaching and missions.

(3) Jesus Christ's authority is for the universal church, *υπερ παντα τη ἐκκλησία*. A second relative indefinite clause is introduced by the relative pronoun *ητις*. The nominative *πλήρωμα* places emphasis upon completeness of everything. It indicates that the body of Christ is complete and thus the completion of the purposes of God.

(4) There is no reference to the spatial extension of the "aeon" of Christ through missions but a spiritual growth and extension of the "aeon" and kingdom of God though the gospel is implied and the headship of Christ over the cosmos. This implies an extension through the proclamation of the gospel. The verb *πληρουμενου* has two possible interpretative meanings, 'to proclaim, to tell fully, to proclaim completely'¹⁰⁰ or to make complete which has in view to make something total or complete in number or to fill (cf. Louw & Nida; 1988.59.33-59.43). The first possible meaning is "to proclaim, to tell fully, and to

⁹⁹ In Ephesians 5:23 the term *κεφαλή* does not have the sense of the authority to order or to command.

¹⁰⁰ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. 1996, c1989. *Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) . United Bible societies: New York

proclaim completely' (Louw & Nida; 1988. 33.199). It implies that the headship of Jesus Christ over the cosmos is proclaimed and announced. It would seem that this is the more probable meaning rather than second meaning of making complete.

(5) The fact that the verb πληρουμενου is middle (i.e. reflexive) implies that the proclamation of the headship of Christ is the activity of God and the Church and therefore involves a missional dimension; the Church itself is involved in making itself full. It does so by the proclamation the headship of Christ over the cosmos. It is the purpose and plan of God that is fulfilled rather than the Church being filled implying that the Church is an empty space filled by God. God fills the Church for himself (cf. Howard; 1974:351).

(6) The word "fill" can also denote "the whole" in the sense of measurement, that is, numerically of "full measure" and in Ephesians 4:13 it is used to denote Christian maturity. Paul emphasizes here the need for Christians to attain the whole measure of the fullness of Christ thus leaving behind the infantile wavering in disbelief (v.14). In Ephesians 3:19 and Romans 15:29, the meaning is "full blessing" in the sense of satiety or satisfaction. In Ephesians 3:19 Paul expresses his earnest supplication to the Father that they might be endowed with the width, depth, height and breadth of Christ's love to the fullest for God's glory. In the present context the idea of "*fullness*" relates to a yet unfulfilled future. It is not to be understood as "*the One who fills Himself*", which means that Christ is being filled by the Father. It can also be understood as "*the One who fills for Himself*" (Howard; 1974:351), which implies that Christ fills the church as an extension of Himself. This appears to be the intended meaning in 1:23. The text means that the Church is a natural complement to Christ as "*Head*". The church is a complement to Christ as "*Head*" in the sense that it is through the church that the victory and triumph of Christ, the fulfilment of the purpose and plan of God is worked out. At the same time the victory and triumph of Christ over the forces of darkness have a future dimension because of the now and not yet structure of the letter which means that although God's purposes for mankind has begun to be realized in Jesus Christ the restoration of creation will only take place with the parousia. The present cosmic reign of Jesus Christ is the fulfilment of the purposes and plan of God, the mission of God and the restoration of creation will be the fulfilment of the purpose and mission of God.

(7) The victory of Christ for his people has been fully accomplished. Jesus Christ has already triumphed over all the "spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places" (1:20-22a) for the believer. It is not as though Jesus Christ has made available the same power that brought Jesus Christ to this victory (Eph 1:19-23; 3:14-19) so that the believers can triumph over the forces of darkness. The historical context in Ephesus was that the believers saw the enemies, the rulers, authorities, powers and dominant forces as triumphing over them (1:21; cf. 2:2;3:10; 6:11-12; cf. Arnold; 1997:41-69). It was a matter of a worldview perspective as opposed to a cosmological battle that the believer is involved in. It is therefore important to recognize the distinction between Eph 1:9-10 and 1:20-23 that the bringing together of all things in unity under the headship and authority of Christ is a process but the victory of Christ is an accomplished fact. The distinction is relevant for missions because missions must not fall into the trap of either the believer not

taking up his or her responsibility to be involved in the process of bringing all things together under Christ, to be an agent of reconciliation, or to over spiritualize and interpret all events as a cosmological battle and struggle between the believer and the forces of darkness.

3.1.6.3. The relation to the Old Testament

3.1.6.3.1. The use of Ps 110 and 8

In Ephesians 1:20-23 one finds a combination of resurrection and exaltation motifs that have their source in Ps 110 and 8. The common assumption that Ps 110 and 8 “represents a wholesale taking over” (Moritz; 1996:21) is open to challenge. A careful study reveals that the combination of Ps 110 and 8 serves the purpose of the author’s argument. In the use of Ps 110 in Ephesians the headship of Christ over all things and for the church is a specific feature of the use of the Psalm. The “enemies” (Ps 110:1) is clearly interpreted as evil powers and principalities (Eph 2:2)¹⁰¹. In Ps 110 Yahweh is spoken of in high terms as the king. Yahweh himself exalts him to the right hand and invites him to share his rule. It is the relationship of Yahweh to the nations, that he will exercise God’s judgement over the nations and kings that is the point of focus. The combination of Ps 110 and 8 emphasizes that overall responsibility and power for the mission of God lies with the Lord. Whether these Psalms are used in Ephesians (and elsewhere in the New Testament) outside their intended scope in the Old Testament or not, is a topic for scholarly debate (cf. Moritz; 1996:21) that is not of direct importance for the present investigation. The important matter here is that the apostle by these allusions to Psalm 110 and Psalm 8 makes the point that the position that God gave to Christ, at his right hand, was the execution of his Plan which He anticipated even in the old covenant dispensation.

The implication for the situation of the hearers is that God is in control over the powers whose grip on the inhabitants of Asia Minor lead to widespread fear.¹⁰² It indicates that the Lord is the decisive instrument in the warfare against the enemies and the fulfilment of the purposes of God. It is related to the struggle and mission of the believers in Ephesians. The reason for the combination of Ps 110 & 8 is because the believers are in need of encouragement in their every day struggle and mission against the powers of their day. The believers could draw considerable comfort and motivation for mission in the fact that Christ has been appointed the head of the Church and over the powers.

¹⁰¹ The combination of Ps 110 and 8 occurs also in Heb 1:13 and 2:6-8 and are used topically by the author of Hebrews to indicate the superiority of Christ over the angels.

¹⁰² Cf. Arnold (1989:82-84), “Powers (chapter 1 and especially pp82-4).

The allusion to the Old Testament in addressing the social context of the audience and their mission

Ps 110 & 8	Yaweh exercises God's judgement and rule over the nations	Eph 1:20-23
Isa 52:7	The reign of God/ the triumph of God	Eph 1:20-23, 2:17; 6:15

3.1.6.3.2. The theology of Isaiah

Continuity exists between OT terms and the theology of Ephesians, however, “the theology of Ephesians is not understandable solely in OT terms” (Thielman; 2007:814). The OT played an important role in accomplishing the purpose of the author of Ephesians “to remind the readers that if they were “in Christ,” they joined God’s anointed king in the victory God had given to him over the enemies of his people” (Thielman; 2007:813). The relationship between the OT and the themes in Ephesians is that “in particular, the twin themes of God’s triumph “in Christ” over the forces of evil and his restoration “in Christ” of creation seem to emerge from the very Scripture whose language Paul uses” (Thielman; 2007:814).

3.2. SUMMARY OF THE PERICOPE OF EPHESIANS 1:15-23

- (1) Verses 20-21 give a nutshell-exposition (in the form of a confessional formula) of how God in Christ fulfilled his covenantal promises.
- (2) Important to note is the universal rule of Christ “above all rule and authority and power and dominion and of every name to be known ..., He subjected everything to His total control” in verses 21-22. This universal rule implicitly provides the basis for preaching the gospel of Christ’s kingdom to all people of all nations. We have received the promise of the renewal and restoration of all of creation (1:13), glimpses of which can be seen in the present dispensation in the renewal and transformation of the relationship between God and mankind.
- (3) But even more significant regarding the missional task of the church, is the relation between Christ as Head of his church “which is His body, the fullness of the One providing fully all with regard to everything” (verse 23). This phrase indicates that the body of Christ has to become full. In the eyes of God Christ’s body is incomplete until all those whom He has chosen according to his plan have been incorporated into his body (=church). This idea has a very strong missional undertone. The task of the church (believers) is to preach the gospel to all nations so that those belonging to the body of Christ may be gathered and incorporated so that his body may come to its “fullness”.

(4) The fullness of Christ in Ephesians 1:20-23 is directly connected to the Church as His body whereas in Col. 1:19 the fullness of Christ is defined in terms of the entire cosmos. In Colossians the fullness relates to all authority in heaven and on earth having been given to Jesus Christ. The fact that the Lord has all authority in heaven and on earth means that he commissions the Church to fearlessly execute His mandate for world missions (cf. Son; 1982:38). However, in Ephesians the missionary task of the Church is expanded to a different level, namely that of the body of Christ that has to come to its fullness. This perspective which is expanded upon later in the letter is already suggested in Eph 1:23, the Church, “which is His body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way”.

(5) In the framework of the Eph 1:20-23 the preaching of the kingdom in the mission to the Gentiles will involve the fact that Christ already has authority over all authorities, over the principalities and powers – both good and evil – which are under Christ’s subjugation and His sovereign Lordship. The kingdom preaching may also have been part of the missionary strategy of Paul in Asia Minor specifically how the kingdom will figure in the mission strategy that he presents to the Ephesians is investigated in the rest of the letter (Acts 19:1-8).

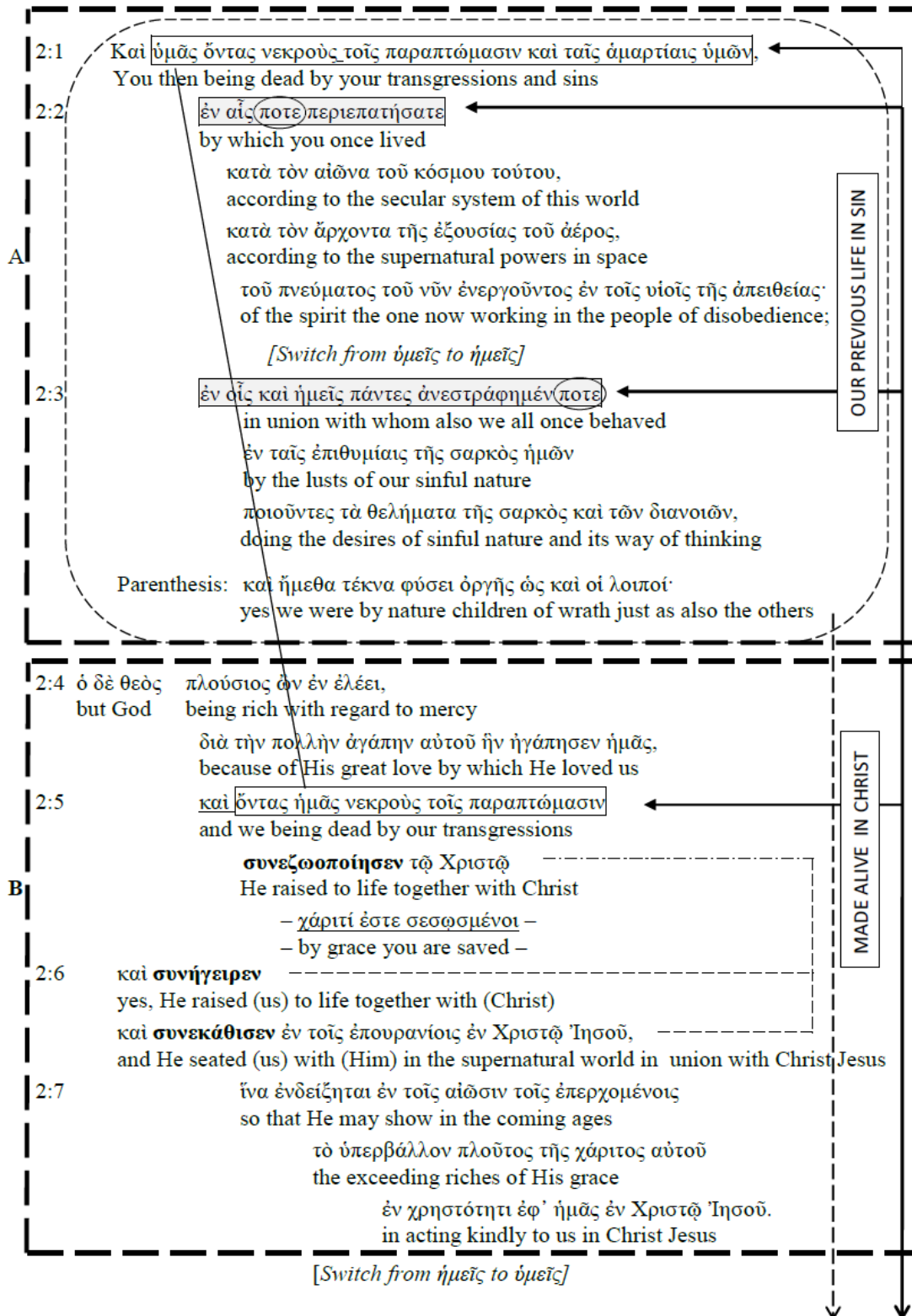
(6) Jesus Christ as head of the Church exercises all his authority and power on behalf of the Church. He confronts the principalities and powers as head of the Church.

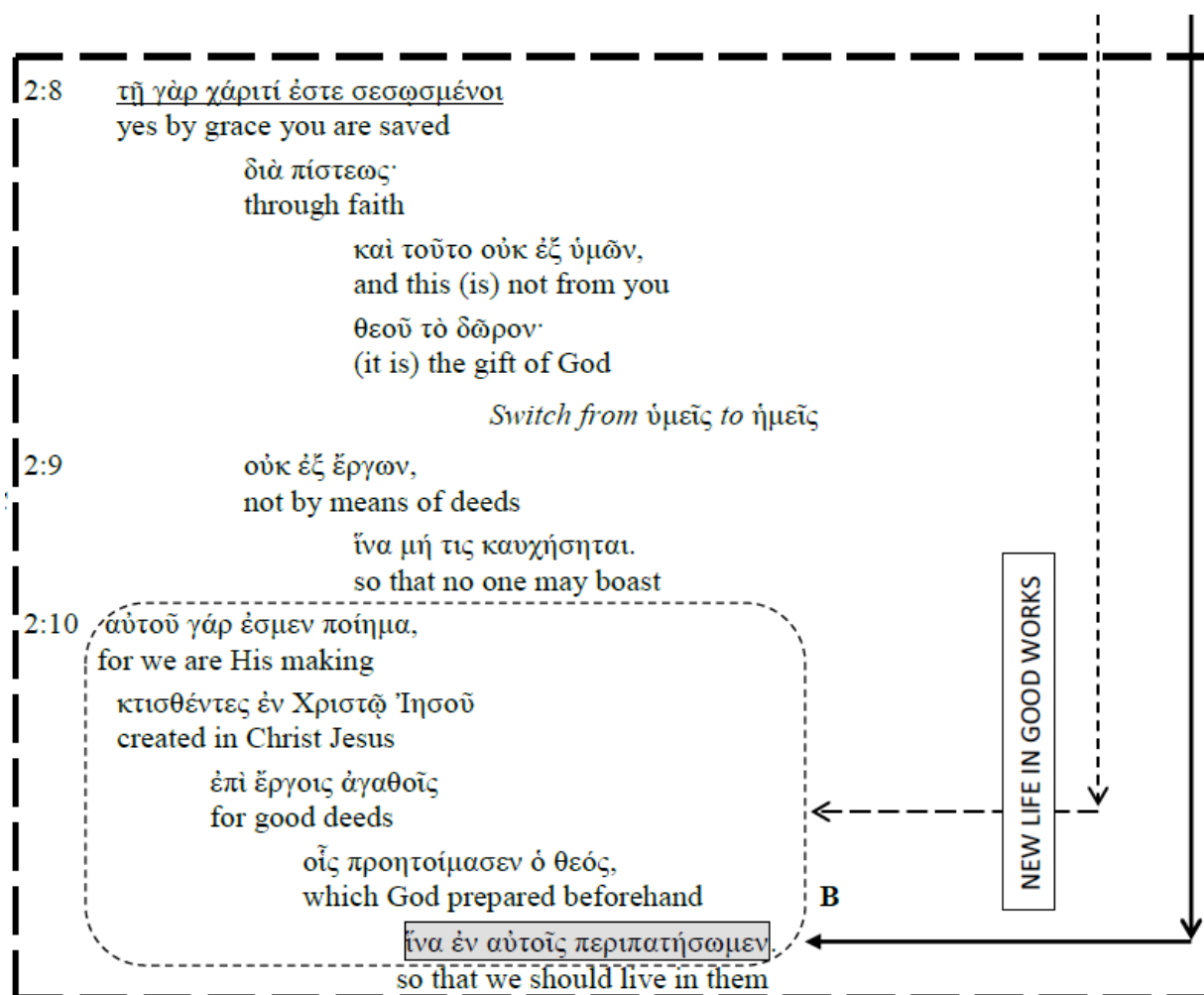
(7) It is because God has given Jesus Christ as the head of the Church that all his power is available to every believer for their salvation and their missionary task.

(8) The role of the Church is place in a missionary context using the terms “body.” and “fullness”.

4. EPHESIANS 2:1-10 – THE NEW LIFE IN CHRIST AS GOD’S PLAN OF GRACE FOR SINNERS

4.1. THE TEXT OF THE PERICOPE EPHESIANS 2:1-10 REWRITTEN





4.1.1. Thought structure analysis remarks

4.1.1.1. Stylistic markers

The most striking stylistic feature in this pericope is the anacolouthon: In verse 1, 2 and 3 the object of a clause is given, followed by a series of qualifying clauses but the rest of the main clause is absent. Only in verse 5 the main verb is found. The dative, “*by grace*” indicates that the event involves a particular quality of God, which is more than a gracious disposition, but an active demonstration of God’s favour and pleasure. It is a periphrastic construction in the passive resulting from a previous action. The emphasis is on the durative nature of the action “*through faith you are saved*” (Eph 2:5). The missional significance is that the source of mission is God’s grace. The source of all missions is the gracious gift of salvation from the Lord. All missional activity has its origin in the divine gracious initiative of God to bless mankind and

the nations. Grace is the basis of God's οἰκονομία. The pericope has little other stylistic patterns which can be regarded as structural markers. However, the following calls for attention:

a. Parentheses:

In verse 3: "And we were by nature objects of wrath, just like the rest."

In verse 5: "By grace you have been saved."

b. Repetition of sentences and phrases:

* Καὶ ὑμᾶς ὄντας νεκροὺς τοῖς παραπτώμασιν (v. 1)	}	The phrase "dead in transgressions" is repeated twice indicating an emphasis on the previous state.
καὶ ὄντας ἡμᾶς νεκροὺς τοῖς παραπτώμασιν (v. 5)		

χάριτί ἐστε σεσωσμένοι (verse 5)	}	The means of salvation is repeated twice to emphasize that salvation is from God.
τῇ γὰρ χάριτί ἐστε σεσωσμένοι (v. 8)		

These repetitions are used to allow for certain excursions on the particular sentence/phrase.

c. Repetition of words:

* περιπατήσατε/ περιπατήσωμεν, in verse 2 and again in verse 10, as it were "embraces" the pericope and suggests a possible *inclusio* pattern, introducing two matters:

- How was our former way of life? (v. 2)	}	The believer is to evaluate his spiritual state to determine whether he has true faith.
- How is our new way of life? (v. 10).		

The "former way of life" (ποτε περιπατήσατε) in verse 2 in fact is a continuation of verse 1, in which the former life is indicated as actual death. It is further expanded upon in verse 3 (cf. the repetition of ποτε, "formerly"), so that verses 1-3 may be regarded as one thought-block. This thought-block is included in the above exposition by a rounded dash-lined block, marked A.

The new way of life (ἵνα ἐν αὐτοῖς περιπατήσωμεν) in verse 10 likewise links with the surrounding *cola* in verse 10, so that the *inclusio* of the pericope in fact also features an antithesis, in which the former life of the addressees is contrasted to their new way of life.

* Related words: in verse 4 and verse 7 certain words that are etymologically and semantically related are used, words which clearly bind together the two verses. These words are

πλούσιος , πλοῦτος
ἐλέει , χάριτος, χρηστότητι
ἀγάπην , ἠγάπησεν .

All of these words refer to God's grace and love by which he changed the life of the addressees from the former to the new life they received in Christ. This demonstrates that God is the missionary God who transforms lives. Salvation is the result of God putting his plan into action. Therefore salvation is to be seen in terms of the *oikonomia* of God.

So it seems that, based on stylistic markers, the pericope features 3 main thought-blocks:

2:1-3 The former life (death) of the Ephesians

2:4-9 God's graceful work in them

2:10 The new life brought about in them by God's grace.

4.1.1.2. Syntactical markers

The pericope consists of three main clauses, spread out in the following way:

v. 1-7, with main clause:

ὁ δὲ θεὸς (v.4)  ἡμᾶς συνεζωοποίησεν τῷ Χριστῷ (v.5)

καὶ **συνήγειρεν** (v.6)

καὶ **συνεκάθισεν** ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις (v. 6)

v. 8-9, consisting of three main clauses, introduced by the explanatory particle γὰρ.

v. 10, again introduced by, γὰρ with the main clause

αὐτοῦ γὰρ ἐσμεν ποίημα 

4.1.1.3. Markers of contents

Note the switch from "**YOU**" to "**US**", and back again: Between v.2 and v.3

Between v.7 and v.8

Between v.9 and v.10.

(2) According to the above analyses the thought structure of Ephesians 2:1-10 falls into 3 smaller blocks of thought: 2:1-3, 2:4-9 and 2:10. Within the thought-structure of the pericope these three thought-blocks are arranged as three excursions from the main clause, which serve as the central main thought of the pericope. This **main thought** (represented by the main clause, spread over verses 4, 1, 5, 6) is:

God made you/us alive with Christ Jesus

and raised us up

and seated us in heaven.

This main thought is central to the believer's new identity in Christ. Missions are inseparable from the believer's identity in Christ. It is these central truths that are to be communicated in missions. The truths are to be communicated verbally as well as non-verbally.

4.1.2. Thought-block A: dead by sins: Ephesians 2:1-3

4.1.2.1. Thought block analysis remarks

(1) The **thought-block A** is bound together by a cluster of references to the practice of the transgressions of sins. It stands in a coordinate relation, indicated by the conjunction και, with ταις αμαρτιας, the moral consequences of sin, guilt. The state or condition which at a point of time, ποτέ, “when” we lived, behaved in a manner, περιεπατησατε, the aorist tense indicates that our behaviour prior to salvation is contrasted to our present behaviour. The prepositional phrase introduced by κατα τον αιωνα and indicates that we were part of another age and world system, the fallen universe. The phrase αιων του κόσμου τούτου (*aiōn tou kosmou toutou*), means that we were under a supernatural power in space (Eph 2:2) κατα τον αρχοντα της εξουσιας, the leadership, the direction, of the ruler of the world. We (slavishly) followed the ways of the world. The genitive του αερος indicates that we were inhabited and controlled by a supernatural power, ‘the spirit that works in those who refuse to believe’ (Eph 2:2)¹⁰³ νυν, now, at work in “the children of disobedience”-disobedient people” (A Semitic expression probably taken over from the LXX by Paul). (In Eph 5:6 God’s wrath comes upon those who do not obey him’). “We all conducted ourselves”, the aorist passive indicates that we were unable to change our behavior, powerless to change ourselves. “We gratified the purposes (θεληματα-Eph. 1:5; 11) of the flesh and thoughts”(σάρξ-the physical body and mind). The genitive phrase ημεν τεκνα φυσει οργης denotes quantity, value, “We were worthy of God’s wrath as also the rest” (Eph 2:3). As man is powerless to change himself it is the Spirit who makes possible faith and brings about inner transformation. Salvation is, therefore, completely the result of the purposes and plans of God. It is by means of the proclamation of the gospel that inner transformation and salvation takes place. The plan and purpose of God in salvation is inseparable from the proclamation of the gospel. And the essence of the gospel is that Jesus Christ is “far above all rule and authority, power and dominion” (Eph 1:21). The emphasis is not upon the role of the Church and individuals in the saving purposes of God, but upon the dynamic character of the gospel. The gospel is a force or agency able to accomplish salvation. It is the gospel which has a purpose towards which it moves. It is through a demonstration or manifestation of Christ’s saving activity that the gospel spread among the Gentiles in Ephesus.

(2) The “**YOU**”- addressees of these verses now seem to begin with the Gentile believers.

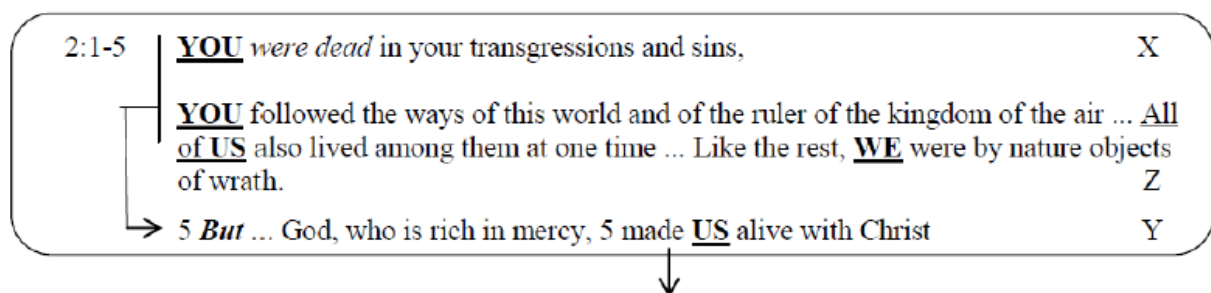
(3) The description of their previous life leaves (verse 2) no doubt that those believers that the apostle is addressing now, come from a Gentile background.

¹⁰³Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. 1996, c1989. *Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition). United Bible societies: New York

(4) But then in verse 3 he makes it clear that also the Jews (“also **WE** all”) formerly “were by nature children of wrath” – dead by their sins. So the Jewish believers have nothing to boast about regarding the Gentile believers; as a matter of fact, by nature Jew and Gentile are on the same level of sinners who have received grace. This perfectly corresponds with God’s plan that both Jews and Gentiles are objects of his grace and that both can become his children only by the fulfilment of his promises in Jesus Christ. Once again this provides the basis of Paul’s mission strategy for Ephesus

4.1.2.2. Schematic representation of pericope 2:1-5

This pattern is used in Ephesians 2:1-10, and repeated in 2:11-20, as pointed out in the schematic presentation below:



2:6-10 Expands on how in Christ **WE** received the new life.

4.1.2.3. Exegetical Remarks

(1) The words **παραπτώμασι** (v.1, 5), v. 1), **ἁμαρτίαις** are in the semantic-field of “sin, wrongdoing and guilt” (Louw & Nida; 1988: 88.289-318) and **τῆς σαρκὸς** (“sinful nature” twice v. 3), in the semantic field “psychological faculties” (Louw & Nida; 1988: 26.7): “the psychological aspect of human nature which contrasts with the spiritual nature; in other words, that aspect of human nature which is characterized by or reflects typical human reasoning and desires in contrast with those aspects of human thought and behaviour which relate to God and spiritual life” (Louw & Nida; 1988: 26.7). The purpose and mission of God is the restoration of the ability of mankind to relate to God and the spiritual life. The term **ἀπειθείας** (disobedience) is not the disobedience of breaking the law and not conforming to rules and regulations (**δογματιζεσθε**, Col. 2:20) but it is the unwillingness to submit to the authority of the Son. Prior to salvation, as a result of disobedience, the unregenerate person is under the influence and power of the spiritual powers of the world. It is the proclamation of the gospel which brings about the spiritual life. The noun **νεκρὸς** pertains to be utterly useless, futile, with the implication of total lack of purport indicating that human beings are not autonomous agents making rational decisions on their own but people driven by spiritual forces more powerful than they are. The purpose and mission of God is the restoration of the

spiritual nature. The psychological faculties, human reasoning and desires are brought into a willing submission to the authority of the Son.

(2) Excursion 1: (represented by the qualifications to the subject ὑμᾶς  ὑμᾶς in v. 1, 2, 3):

The questions below are self-reflective and have a missional dimension as they are questions that are necessitated by the pericope.

* How were you/we before you were made alive?

Without any true life - νεκροὺς

* What caused it?

Sin and transgressions.

* What was your attitude towards sin and transgressions?

You were not passive but actively you lived in it - *περιπατήσατε!*

* Under whose guidance (= ) or under whose rule did you do sin/transgress?

Under the guidance of the ruler of this world.

* How does he rule?

By leading the general powers

and the spirits (demons) who now are in those who do not fear God.

* Paul refers not only to the Ephesians but also to all other believers. Hence: "All of US" at one time were amongst those who do not fear God. Even more: we moved among them as their fellow men (= ἀνεστράφημέν

* What made us live like them?

Our own sinful desires.

* Did the sinful desires remain only in our thoughts?

No, we did exactly what our desires and thoughts told us to do.

* In what did our former way of life result?

We were worthy of God's wrath.

That was your/our condition before you/we were made alive!

The missional context is that if the Ephesians had truly experienced the transforming power of the gospel in their lives and had assurance that they were delivered from the wrath to come on the final day, that they could not ignore the desperate plight of men and women under divine judgement (cf. O'Brien' 1993:136).

The missional application is that if "the gospel is the only hope for deliverance from the wrath to come, then we should be wholly involved in bringing it into the lives of others" (O'Brien; 1993:136).

4.1.3. Thought-block B: alive by God's grace in Christ: Ephesians 2:4-7

4.1.3.1. Thought block analysis remarks

(1) These verses formulate the very essence of the kerugma of salvation to all dead sinners.

(2) Although these verses contain the message that has to be believed and preached, it does not directly speak of the missional task of proclaiming the gospel to all peoples.

(3) However, the implicit reference to the multi-national nature of the church in the phrases “richness of his inheritance” (1:18) and “fullness of his body” (1:23), seems to be continued in 2:7: “in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus” (ἵνα ἐνδείξηται ἐν τοῖς αἰῶσιν τοῖς ἐπερχομένοις τὸ ὑπερβάλλον πλοῦτος τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ ἐν χρηστότητι ἐφ’ ἡμᾶς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ). So what is said here is that the gospel of Christ (his death resurrection, etc.) eventually leads to a demonstration of how rich and varied (how wide/inclusive) God’s grace to mankind is. At most one can say that this implicit statement coincides with the missional task of the church in Ephesus to take the Gospel also to the Gentiles.

4.1.3.2. Exegetical remarks

Excursion 2: (represented by the parenthesis in verse 5, the qualification to θεοῦ in verse 4 and the final clause in verse 7)

Why did God make us alive?

The answer to this is given in two legs:

a. Firstly the cause (v.4)

b. Then the purpose (v. 7).

a. What was the cause of God making us alive?

(i) The fact that God is rich in mercy (v.4a);

(ii) The great love by which He loved us (v. 4b);

(iii) God's saving grace (v.5c).

(i) God is rich in mercy

The wealth (πλοῦσιον) of God’s grace and compassion (ἐλέον) shows that He abundantly, even above human understanding, cares for us who suffered from lifelessness.

Although this phrase does not directly refer to God’s οἰκονομία for mankind, within the broader context it provides the basis of his plan for the fallen humankind: not any merit, but nothing else than his compassion. The absolute lack of any merit emphasizes the wealth of his compassion. Hereby the Jews’ false claim on personal or collective merit before God is unmasked. .

(ii) His great love by which He loved us

This phrase is an expansion of the previous, underlining the abundance of God’s mercy and love. The love of God is emphasised in the phrase by the pleonasm διὰ τὴν πολλὴν ἀγάπην αὐτοῦ ἣν ἠγάπησεν ἡμᾶς. The pleonasm by means of an internal reflexive indicates the abundance of God's love. Noteworthy is the use of it in this context. Ἀγάπη love normally refers to love out of respect (Louw & Nida; 1988: 25:43). Yet we as sinners have nothing to present worthy of God’s respect. Therefore, God's love surpasses all human

understanding. He saved us, in spite of our absolute unworthiness, and raised us to eternal glory yes; He was willing even to give his Son as sacrifice for our sins. The fact that the verb ἡγάπησεν is used in the aorist indicative indicates that it refers to a deed of love done by God in history. From the context one realises that it can but only refer to the cross and resurrection of his Son, Jesus Christ. Thus the phrase in fact explains God's *modus operandi*, his οἰκονομία, for making sinners worthy of the life and glory He had in store for them. The believer is beautiful in God's sight by the work of Christ¹⁰⁴.

The participle phrase καὶ ὄντας ἡμᾶς νεκροὺς τοῖς παραπτώμασιν in verse 5 is repeated here from verse 2, for mainly three reasons:

- To emphasise the greatness of God's love, which shines so much more compared to the darkness of our own life of death.
 - To emphasise the necessity of us being made alive (cf. the following sentence).
 - To attach everything this was mentioned in Excursion 1 to the main clause.
- (iii) You have been saved by grace

Just as the first phrase of verse 5 ὄντας ἡμᾶς νεκροὺς τοῖς παραπτώμασιν attaches the main clause to excursion 1, the χάριτί ἐστε σεσωσμένοι attaches it to excursion 3 (cf. below).

χάριτί

Bauer¹⁰⁵: 1. Graciousness, attractiveness

2. Grace, goodwill

3. Showing of grace, or of goodwill

4. Grace, divine favour

5. Thanks, thanksgiving.

L & N¹⁰⁶: 1. Goodness, friendliness 88.66

2. Gift, present 57.103

3. Thanks. 33.350

4. Goodwill, grace. 25.89

The dative is not instrumental, but causal: Because of grace you have been saved. It means that we are saved because of God's divine favour.

¹⁰⁴ Once we gain this understanding on the inside, it revolutionizes how we relate to God, to ourselves, and to others on the outside" (Keller; 2012:47).

¹⁰⁵ Bauer, W. (1957:885-886). A Greek English lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature. Tran. Arndt, W.F. & Gingrich, F.W.

¹⁰⁶ In Ephesians 2:7 the same verb is rendered as "he is gracious beyond anything we can imagine". Louw, J.P. & Nida, E.A. 1988. Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament. New York: United Bible Societies.

the precise reason that, until the purpose is reached, there remains an element of uncertainty about whether the goal will be reached. In Eph 2:7, however, there is no uncertainty whatsoever about the outcome of the goal: Undoubtedly it shall happen in future: Hence ἵνα with the future indicative. This is a wonderful comfort that our salvation does not depend upon us, but upon God. It is a central truth that should motivate all missional efforts. The purposes and plans of God will always be accomplished and this is a motivation and encouragement to engage in missions.

The phrase τοῖς αἰῶσιν τοῖς ἐπερχομένοις

The phrase is found only once (= here) in the Pauline writings, and only twice elsewhere in the New Testament: Mk 10:30 and its parallel in Lk 18:30. In all instances it refers to the dispensation which is to come at the consummation of all things. The plural indicates the glorious variety which will be the hallmark of the coming dispensation. Although there can be doubt as to the variety, it is doubtful whether it can be deducted from the plural form of the phrase: Bauer (1957:26-27) clearly indicates that αἰῶές is used in the NT and elsewhere in plural form without specific reference to plurality.

☎📖🕒 ⚙️⚡️🔱 L & N:

a. A very long time, endless time, eternity	67.17-64.
b. Dispensation, era.	67.143
c. The world system.	41.38
d. Universe	1.2

☎📖🕒 ⏳⚡️🔱⚡️⚡️⚡️⚡️ L & N:

a. Come, appear, arrive	15.83
b. Come closer,	
happen	13.119
c. Attack.	39.47

☎📖🕒 ⚡️⚡️⚡️⚡️⚡️⚡️⚡️ L & N:

a. Goodness, benevolence	88.10
b. Friendliness, generosity.	88.67

Whereas πλούσιος ὧν ἐν ἐλέει referred to the fact that God gave generously, and πολλὴν ἀγάπην referred to the love which God bestowed on us in Christ, and χάριτί referred to his divine goodwill,

χρηστότης refers to the goodness which is characteristic of the Divine being.

As He revealed His love in Christ, He reveals his goodness to us in Christ Jesus.

Take note how God reveals Himself in His actions towards His chosen ones: The fact that we will live in eternity as saved people, does not reveal something about ourselves, but will witness to God's grace and

His divine goodness. Our presence on the new earth under the new heaven in itself will be a song of praise to His grace and goodness! This song of praise to God's grace and goodness will be sung by people from every tongue, nation and ethnic group (Rev. 7:9-10).

Excursion 3 (represented by the repetition of the parenthesis in verse 8a, and every qualification thereof in vv.8 and 9)

The phrase διὰ πίστεως is a new element added to the already mentioned τῇ γὰρ χάριτί ἐστε σεσφωσμένοι, and as such it is strongly emphasised. Furthermore, it is placed strikingly in final position in the sentence. This reveals that the author intended to draw special attention to the words διὰ πίστεως. The words take a central place in Excursion 3 by indicating the way by which God bestowed his life-giving grace upon us: By way of faith!

Excursion 3 is attached to the main clause in exactly the same manner as excursion 1: by means of repetition of the sentence/phrase, and also by means of expansion of the sentence/phrase. The thoughts are structured in the following manner:

Main thought: God has made us alive when we were dead.
 Excursion 2: Why? Because of his mercy and love and grace and goodness.
 Excursion 1: But in which way were we "dead"? In our sins and trespasses.
 Excursion 3: How did his grace reach us? Through faith.

καὶ τοῦτο

To what does καὶ τοῦτο refer? To the salvation ("The salvation is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God" AV83) or to faith ("Faith is not from yourselves, it is a gift of God" AV33)?

The argument that τοῦτο is neutrum and hence does not refer to πίστεως (feminine), is not valid: Cases of a neutrum demonstrative pronoun referring to nouns in the masculine or feminine, are abundant in the NT, even with writers of excellent Greek. The pronoun τοῦτο quite probably refers to πίστεως, for the following reasons:

(1) διὰ πίστεως is the new (surprising?) element brought into the pericope. The matter of faith is introduced into the pericope only here in verse 8. Hence the demonstrative τοῦτο should be taken with the new word, recently brought into the limelight.

(2) If οὐκ ἐξ ἑργῶν is taken as a further qualification to τῇ χάριτί it means that χάριτί is qualified in three ways:

through faith		
not through yourself		
not through works.		

antithesis

It seems like a fine threefold thought structure, but then a problem is created with regard to the *καὶ τοῦτο*: For in such a case the *καὶ τοῦτο* would have made sense only if placed *before* *διὰ πίστεως*. In other words, it then should have been:

By grace you have been saved, and *that is* through faith,
not from yourselves . . . not by works . . .

Faith is instrumental in salvation. Good works are the fruit of faith and not requirement for salvation. They naturally accompany faith and give evidence that the faith is from God. In missions the emphasis should be placed upon true faith rather than upon works. Good works will naturally follow as converts truly understand faith.

4.1.4. Thought block C: the new life received from God: Ephesians 2:8-10

4.1.4.1. Thought block analysis remarks

(1) Note the toggle between “**YOU**” and “**WE**” in these verses.

(2) The emphasis on the fact that **WE (YOU)** are saved by grace, is in line with something that is emphasized by Paul in the letter from various sides, viz. that we are not saved from any inherent value we have in ourselves, such as ethnic descent or relations. We are saved purely by grace. So the Jews do not have any reason to boast in themselves. Jewish and Gentile believers take an equal place before God’s grace.

YOUR SALVATION IS ENTIRELY THE WORK OF GOD - NOT OF MAN!

* **By his grace** He has saved you.

* **Through faith** - faith which is not of yourselves

but was given by Him.

* **Not by your works.**

About your works you could possibly have boasted.

But even that possibility of boasting has been ruled out.

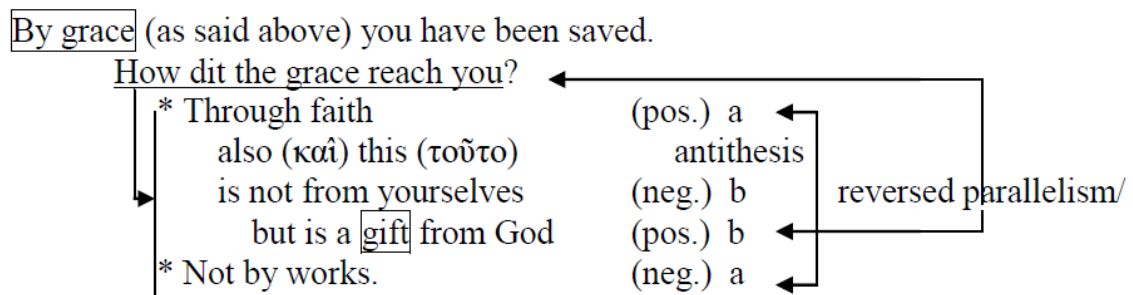
(3) The fact that we are “God’s workmanship, created for good works” (2:10) means that none of us became God’s children on our own merit; our good works do not come from ourselves, whether Jew or Gentile. The good works are not an end in themselves but a means by which the person who performs the works is transformed by the Holy Spirit. The purpose and plan of God is about transformation, the transformation of the person who performs the good works. It is from a certainty of God’s grace that God will guide believers into good works. These good works will result in praise and glory of God.

(4) This last idea of being created by God for good works also links with the “new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness” (4:24) which is the result of God’s saving grace in Christ, the new life He has given to us, and not a precondition that God set for us for becoming his children. As a matter of fact, the new self into which God has (re-)created us brings a responsibility to each believer to live according to the new life which we have received from God.

(5) In the light of the subsequent pericope (2:11-22), in which the so-called superiority of Jews over Gentiles is refuted, one can say that 2:1-10 begins the argument by making it clear that all believers, whether Jew or Gentile, were saved from death on no other grounds than only by God’s grace and granted a new life in Christ, with a new responsibility to live as the new self which God has created us to become.

4.1.4.2. Schematic Representation of the pericope Ephesians 2:8-10

The verses 8 and 9 as written in the Greek can be represented as:



4.1.4.3. Exegetical Remarks

4.1.4.3.1. Word Study

☎📖① αὐτοῦ γάρ . . . (verse 10)

The particle γάρ introduces an explanation of the directly preceding statement. The statement formulated in (iii) above, viz. that our salvation did not take place through our own works, is now built out: Why not through our own works?

The reason which is given is the following:

☎📖① αὐτοῦ γάρ ἐσμεν ποίημα (verse 10)

The figure of speech known as disjunction is employed here very effectively. The words ποίημα and αὐτοῦ which logically speaking should stand directly next to each other (ποίημα αὐτοῦ) are set apart in a very striking manner, and in addition αὐτοῦ is placed in the limelight right at the beginning of the sentence.

The result is a strongly emphasised αὐτοῦ: "For we are HIS workmanship!" The αὐτοῦ undoubtedly refers back to     in verse 8. We are GOD'S workmanship.

In the phrase αὐτοῦ ποίημα  κτισθέντες ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ

   ποίημα

Bauer, L&N (1988:42.30): product of what has been made (in the NT exclusively the product of divine creation)

Bauer, L&N (1988:42.35): to create something from nothing (used exclusively with reference to God).

The two phrases thus refer to the same matter, but the first (with ποίημα) focuses on the product, the second (with κτισθέντες) focuses on the action. The first sentence (as indicated above) also puts emphasis on WHOSE product we are: We are the workmanship of GOD! The second brings to light HOW God has made us: ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ!

By comparing Scripture with Scripture the meaning of κτισθέντες ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ becomes clear.

2 Cor 5:17: "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation."

Gal 6:15: "For in Christ neither circumcision nor un-circumcision means anything; what counts is a new creation."

Therefore the words "created (by God) in Christ Jesus" should be taken as meaning that God makes those whom He incorporates into Christ Jesus into new people. Such is the new creation of God which happens in the life of each believer - already in this life. The new creation of God in Christ Jesus has already been stated in the main clause (main thought) of the pericope: *God has made us alive with Christ . . .*

We, who formerly were lifeless because of the sins we lived in

whereby we were heading for eternal death,

were raised by God from that sinful life with and given new life in Christ,

and in Christ he created us into new people

- people whose life is no more marked by sin and death

but by the good works of God.

Hence the ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ states the basis of the rebirth, but also the power from which the reborn are living. We therefore were not only raised with Christ, but we also live in Him. Of course this is an implicit reference to the work of the Holy Spirit.

This topic, stated in Ephesians 2 in principle (as indicative), is again taken up in 4:22-24, but then as imperative:

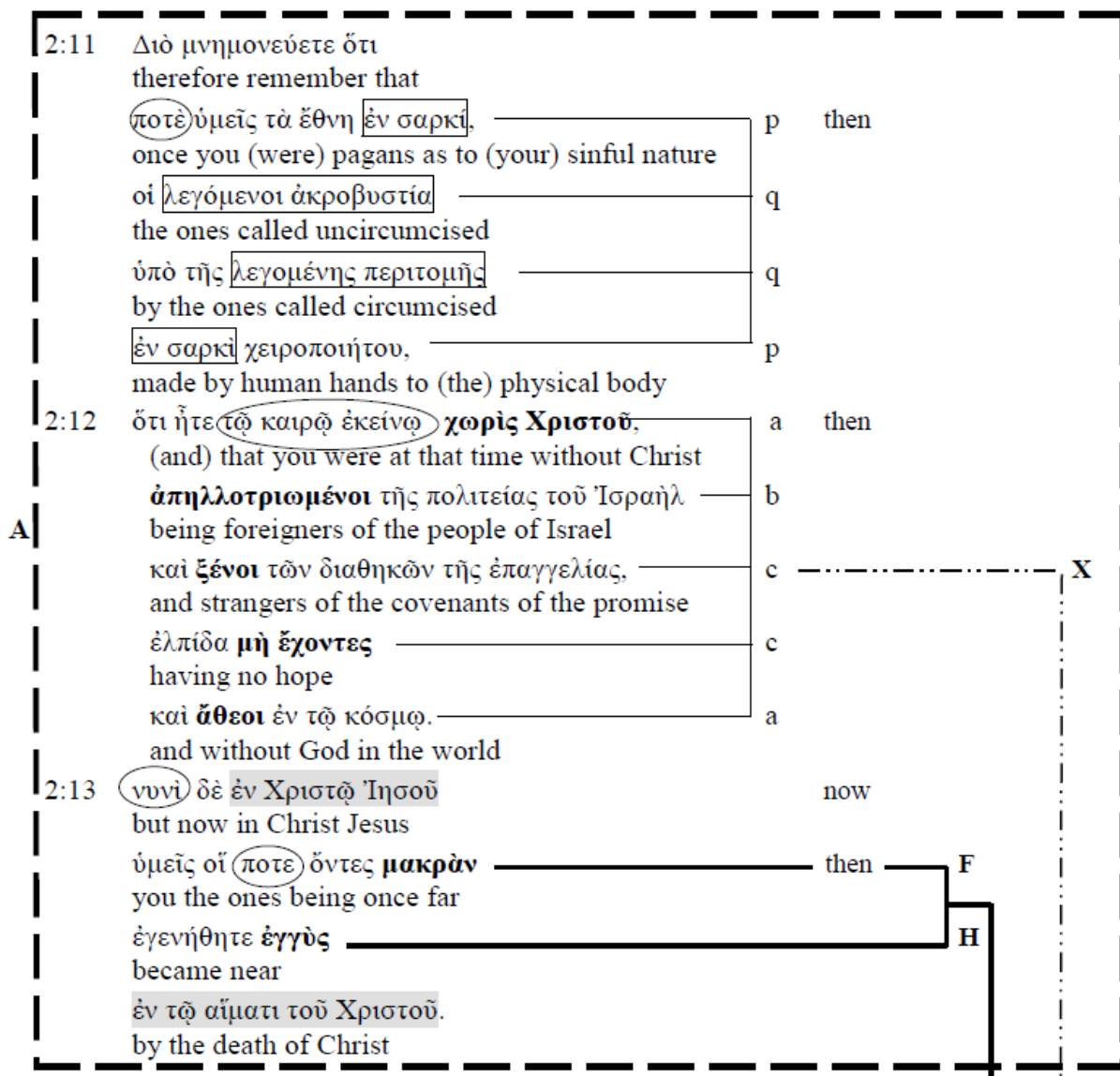
With regard to your former way of life, you must put off your old self . . . to be made new in the attitudes of your minds and put on your new self, *created to be like God* in all righteousness and holiness.

   ἐπὶ ἔργοις ἀγαθοῖς

Ἐπὶ followed by the dative here means "with a view to ..." or "with the purpose of ...", thus giving an answer to the question: With which purpose did God (re-)create the believers? Answer: With a view to good works.

5. EPHESIANS 2:11-20 – GOD’S PURPOSE TO UNITE ALL BELIEVERS IN CHRIST AS HOUSEHOLD OF GOD

5.1. THE TEXT OF THE PERICOPE EPHESIANS 2:11-22 RE-WRITTEN



2:14. Αὐτὸς γάρ ἐστιν ἡ εἰρήνη ἡμῶν, ← m
 yes He himself is our peace
 ὁ ποιήσας τὰ ἀμφοτέρωθεν ἐν p q
 the One having made both one
 καὶ τὸ μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ λύσας,
 and having broken down the dividing wall of separation
 τὴν ἐχθρὰν → n
 the hostility
 ἐν τῇ σαρκὶ αὐτοῦ.
 by His physical body

2:15 τὸν νόμον τῶν ἐντολῶν ἐν δόγμασιν καταργήσας,
 having ended the law of commandments by rules
 ἵνα τοὺς δύο κτίσῃ ἐν αὐτῷ εἰς ἓνα καινὸν ἄνθρωπον p q
 so that He can create the two in Him to be one new person
 ποιῶν εἰρήνην ← m
 making peace

Y

2:16 καὶ ἀποκαταλλάξῃ τοὺς ἀμφοτέρους p
 and (that) He can reconcile them both
 ἐν ἐνὶ σώματι q
 unto one body
 τῷ θεῷ
 to God
 διὰ τοῦ σταυροῦ,
 through the cross
 ἀποκτείνας τὴν ἐχθρὰν ἐν αὐτῷ. → n
 having removed the hostility by it

2:17 καὶ ἐλθὼν εὐηγγελίσατο εἰρήνην ← m
 and having come He he proclaimed as good news peace
 ὑμῖν τοῖς μακρὰν F
 to you the ones far away
 καὶ εἰρήνην τοῖς ἐγγύς· H
 and peace to those near

2:18 ὅτι δι' αὐτοῦ ἔχομεν τὴν προσαγωγὴν
 because through Him we have access
 οἱ ἀμφοτέροι p
 we both
 ἐν ἐνὶ πνεύματι q
 by one Spirit
 πρὸς τὸν πατέρα.
 to the Father.

2:19	ἄρα οὖν οὐκέτι ἐστὲ ξένοι καὶ πάροικοι so then you are no longer strangers and foreigners	c	
	ἀλλὰ ἐστὲ συμπολίται τῶν ἁγίων but you are fellow citizens of God's people	b	
	καὶ οἰκεῖοι τοῦ θεοῦ, and family members of God	a	
2:20	ἐποικοδομηθέντες ἐπὶ τῷ θεμελίῳ τῶν ἀποστόλων καὶ προφητῶν, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets		p ↓
	ὄντος ἁκρογωνιαίου αὐτοῦ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ its cornerstone being Christ Jesus		q ↓
2:21	ἐν ᾧ πᾶσα οἰκοδομὴ συναρμολογουμένη in Whom (the) whole building joined together		r ↓
	αὕξει εἰς ναὸν ἅγιον ἐν κυρίῳ, grows into (a) holy temple in (the) Lord		s ↓
2:22	ἐν ᾧ καὶ ὑμεῖς συνοικοδομεῖσθε in Whom also you are built together		t ↓
	εἰς κατοικητήριον τοῦ θεοῦ into (a) dwelling place of God		s ↓
	ἐν πνεύματι. by (the) Spirit.		t

5.1.1. Thought structure analysis remarks

5.1.1.1. Markers and pericope division

(1) The thoughts in the pericope are arranged in a pattern that resembles an *inclusio*, marked by X-Y-Z in the exposition above: It begins with our former life far from God (marked X) and ends in our new life close to God, as members of his household (marked Z). The transition from X to Z happened in the reconciling work of Christ by which He brought the two into one body (marked Y). The work of Christ (section Y) is also included by the repetition of the contrasting word-pair μακράν and ἐγγύς in verses 13 and 17 respectively.

This X-Y-Z-arrangement of thought already suggests a division of the pericope into three thought-blocks.

(2) Verses 11-13 are also marked by the following:

- The chiastic arrangement p-q-q-r and a-b-c-c-a of the Judaizers' view of the Gentiles in verses 11 and 12;
- The striking antithesis of ποτε - νυνὶ δέ in verses 11 and 13.

These thought patterns serve as markers to confirm that verses 11-13 can be taken as a separate thought-block within the pericope.

(3) Verses 14-18 are marked as a second separate thought-block by the following:

- The contrasting word-pair εἰρήνη (peace) and ἐχθρά (hostility), repeated in parallel manner from verse 14 to verse 17 (marked by m-n-m-n-m);
- The contrasting numbers “two” (δύο, ἀμφοτέροι) and “one” (ἓν), repeated in various forms from verse 14 to verse 18 (marked p-q-p-q-p-q-p-q). In this respect it is noteworthy that the number “one” is joined with different nouns, as it were, in a climactic order: “one” (verse 14) > “one new man” (verse 15) > “one body (of Christ)” (verse 16) > “one Spirit” (verse 18).

(4) Verses 20-22 are bound together as a third thought-block by a cluster of words semantically related to the metaphor of a building (cf. p-q-r-s-t, s-t in the exposition above). This cluster is arranged once again in a climactic order, cf. “foundation” (verse 20) > “cornerstone” (verse 20) > “(the bricks) joined together” (verses 21, 22) > “temple, dwelling of God” (verses 21, 22).

(5) The imagery in Ephesians 2:11-22 is that of covenant imagery, as Paul reminds his readers in the church of Ephesus of the transformation that has taken place in their status with God (cf. Wright; 2006:340).

5.1.1.2. The relation to the previous pericope

The stylistic pattern of parallelism is used very effectively when this new pericope is compared to the previous one. The repetition is found in the pattern of:

- X your former life
- Y but now changed in Christ
- Z how Christ changed it.

5.1.2. Thought block A: Jew and Gentile equal members of the New Covenant: Ephesians 2:11-13

5.1.2.1. Thought block analysis remarks

(1) Although the circumcision was a covenantal sign introduced by God Himself, the Jews, contra to its true meaning, transformed circumcision into an external social and religious barrier keeping “insiders” and “outsiders” apart. In this sense circumcision became a man-made (“done in the body by the hands of men”) barrier (2:11-12). The way in which the Jews, and also the Judaizing Christians in Ephesus, viewed circumcision, it actually became an obstacle for God’s plan, for the μυστήριον that Jew and Gentile alike will inherit the fulfillment of God’s covenantal promises in Christ.

(2) The way in which the Judaizing Christians in Ephesus regarded circumcision is described in 2:12. According to them those not circumcised (the Gentiles) were (in rearranged order):

- “excluded from citizenship in Israel” (ἀπηλλοτριωμένοι τῆς πολιτείας τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ), and hence
- “foreigners to the covenants of the promise” (ξένοι τῶν διαθηκῶν τῆς ἐπαγγελίας), and accordingly
- “separate from Christ” (χωρὶς Χριστοῦ), and eventually
- “without hope and without God in the world” (ἐλπίδα μὴ ἔχοντες καὶ ἄθεοι ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ).

Thus: “outsiders” from the viewpoint of the Judaizing Christians.

Note, however, that Paul arranged these items in a different order, in a chiastic pattern (cf. the structural exposition in 4.6.1.1 above):

a	separate from Christ (χωρὶς Χριστοῦ)	
b	excluded from citizenship in Israel (ἀπηλλοτριωμένοι τῆς πολιτείας τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ)	
c	foreigners to the covenants of the promise (ξένοι τῶν διαθηκῶν τῆς ἐπαγγελίας)	
a	without hope and without God (ἐλπίδα μὴ ἔχοντες καὶ ἄθεοι)	

In the a-parts, as is indicated the true despair of the Gentiles (and all sinners, for that matter) is described: without belief in Christ (as granted by God’s grace, cf. 2:1-10) they were without hope and without God. It resembles something of a “vertical” separation. In the b-parts a “horizontal” separation is described (strangers to Israel and their covenantal privileges), which according to the Jews was the true reason for separation from God. It is what is sometimes called a “double structure, the vertical relationship being that with God and the horizontal relationship being interethnic” (Moritz; 1996:36-37). By this chiastic arrangement Paul seems to say to the Jewish Christians: Prerequisite for coming “near” to God is not citizenship of Israel and their ceremonies, but being united in Christ by faith (not being “separate from Christ”). The covenantal privileges of the Jews (referred to in the b-parts) are as a matter of fact worthless if not imbedded into that which is expressed in the a-parts, i.e. being in Christ by faith, and hence in Him receiving access to God.

(3) In contrast to the distortion of God’s plan by the Jews and the Judaizing Christians, Paul in verse 13 states the execution (cf. οἰκονομία in 1:10) of God’s plan in Christ.

5.1.2.2. Schematic representation of the pericope ephesians 2:11-13

2:11-13	Formerly YOU who are Gentiles by birth and called “uncircumcised” by those who call themselves “the circumcision” ... YOU were <i>separate</i> from Christ, <i>excluded</i> from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, <i>without</i> hope and <i>without</i> God in the world.	X
13	<i>But</i> now in Christ Jesus YOU who <i>once</i> were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. For He himself is OUR peace ...	Y
2:14-22	Expands on how in Christ WE were brought near and united.	Z

(4) Another feature of these two pericopes is that the Gentiles, who at the beginning of each pericope are “outsiders” (addressed as “you”) compared to the Jewish Christians as “insiders” (referred to as “we”), each time in Christ are drawn into the circle of the “insiders” so that at the end they are included in the “we”-sections (cf. US and OUR [upper case] above).

5.1.2.3. Background

In Ephesus the Judaizing teachers were less of a threat. There was a great growth in the number of Gentiles in the body of Christ (Acts 19:17-20, 26) and the Jewish Christians might have despised the newly converted Gentile believers. It has been suggested that the Gentiles despised the Jewish believers in their midst (cf. Kaiser; 2008:294) but this was less of a threat than the rejection of the Gentile Christians by the Jewish believers. It was the Jewish believers who had separated themselves from the Gentiles and excluded them in Eph 2:12. The danger of identifying the term “alienation” (Eph 2:19; 4:18) with a Gentile audience is that the term alienation is used for Gentiles who were disaffected and cut off from enjoying what they had produced and from the political seat of power, an understanding that was popularized by Karl Marx (*apellotriomenoi*). The Jews had set up a fivefold alienation of the Gentiles, “all Gentiles were Christless, stateless, promiseless, hopeless, and Godless (2:12). Gentiles were those who were “far away/once off” (2:13) (Kaiser; 2008:294). In Eph 2:11-13 it is the Gentiles who were cut off from God and the “covenants of promise” (Eph 2:12), that is, Israel. The Jews had considered themselves to be “near” to God (Dt 4:7; Ps 148:18). It is therefore firstly the Jewish Christians who are being addressed and then the Gentile believers.

5.1.2.4. Exegetical remarks

(1) The block communicates the idea that an astronomical change has occurred in redemptive history, a new age has broken in (Eph 2:2, 11-12). A new stage in the outworking of God’s plan through the unification of believing Jews and Gentiles, Israel and the nations in the church, the new body, has been revealed. The thought marker διό denotes the fact that the inference of what follows is self-evident, that it is imperative to μνημονεύω, to keep their minds in a place where it can function as a conscious motive effecting thinking and behaviour. It is a divine call to Israel in the Old Testament to remember the Lord’s past redemptive acts specifically the deliverance from slavery in Egypt. The marker ὅτι indicates the content which calls for self-reflection “*that at one time you (pl), were Gentiles in σάρξ (sinful nature) by those called the circumcised (the Jews)*” (Eph. 2:11). The Gentile nations were at one time discriminated against by being called ἀκροβυστία, “*the uncircumcised*” by περιτομή, “*the circumcised*”. This distinction

was χειροποίητος, “*man-made*”. Circumcision was not intended to be a marker of ethnicity, but a marker of the inner commitment it expressed¹⁰⁷. The relationship between the Old and New Covenants is implied here by circumcision. Continuity exists in the covenantal relationship of God with all his children, Jew and Gentile, and in all contexts. Each subsequent historical-cultural-political context revealed something more about God’s nature and relationship with his people culminating with Jesus Christ, the fullest revelation of God. In Ephesians God reveals himself in terms of his covenant nature and relationship in terms of:

- God’s ultimate plan for the whole creation – the restoration of creation
- God’s providential care of all creation
- God’s love for all the nations, specifically in Ephesians.

These themes occur in Ephesians and Romans and are part of the covenant renewal by which God’s people have been called back to their ministry and missional task.

(2) The prepositional ἐν is used to denote “*time when*” or “*place in*” or “*manner how*” in the prepositional phrase ἐν τῷ καιρῷ (Jordaan, 2013:135). In the context it indicates “*time when*”, that a new time period has begun with the appearance of Christ.

The thought marker νυνὶ δέ (Eph 2:13; Ro 3:21; 1Co 12:18; 2Co 8:11; Col 1:22; Phm 9; Heb 8:6; 1Co 5:11) is a key word in the turning point of God’s historic work of redemption indicating that something new has happened. Note: the νυν in νυνὶ δέ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ is not temporal but revelation-historical, referring to “now that Christ has come and died for all our sins on the cross”. It has in view the coming of Jesus Christ into the world, indicating that a change of stupendous proportions has occurred. The Son of God has appeared. It indicates that a turning point in redemptive history has occurred, Jesus Christ, the necessary focus of saving faith, has broken into human history. It is in accordance with the purpose of God that from this point in time onwards that Jesus Christ is the centre of all God’s saving work. Saving knowledge of Jesus Christ is the sole means of salvation.

(3) By the redemptive work of Christ the insider status of the righteous Jew and the outsider status of the godless Gentile have been broken down. The missional significance is that a congregation that is exclusively inwardly focused may re-create the righteous and godless dichotomy along ethnic, social, economic, political, gender or other lines between insiders and outsiders . The results are defensiveness, a critical spirit, racial or cultural ethnocentricity to bolster a sense of righteousness. The reason for the re-institution of this division is a failure of individuals and congregations to be continuously renewed in its experience of the transformational grace of the Spirit (Eph 2:1-10)¹⁰⁸.

¹⁰⁷ Once we gain this understanding on the inside, it revolutionizes how we relate to God, to ourselves, and to others on the outside” (Keller; 2012:47).

¹⁰⁸ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. 1996, c1989. *Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.). United Bible societies: New York.

5.1.2.5. Word Study

(1) “Reconciliation”

The letter to the Ephesians has a unique role in the Pauline corpus in that it reconciles the Jewish eschatological hope with the eschatological hope of the new age, also referred to as the age of the kingdom of God, “the time of God’s rule” (Isa 11:4-5) and the final consummation when sin and sickness would be done away with (Joel 2:28-30). The “New” Covenant (Jer 31:31-34; 32:38-40) age, or the Messianic age, has been inaugurated when the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the Church as the sign of the new age¹⁰⁹. An eschatological people of God have been formed, “He has created in himself one new man out of the two” (Eph 2:15), reconciling the Jews (Eph 1:12; 2:11) and Gentiles (Eph 1:13, 2:11, 3:1)¹¹⁰ into a new multi-ethnic community. But the reconciliation in Ephesians is more than an ethnic reconciliation, it is also a reconciliation between people of God of the Old Testament eon (Eph 2:19; 3:6), the Saints (Eph 1:15, 18; 6:18) and the people of God of the New Testament eon, which includes the Ethne (the “nations”- Eph 3:6, 8) into an eschatological community to form the one body of Christ (Eph 1: 23; 2:16; 3:4; 4:16), the universal church (Eph 1:22; 3:21; 5:23).

5.1.2.6. The relation to the Old Testament

5.1.2.6.1. The Gentile missions not simply a continuation of the mission to Israel

A tendency exists to interpret Ephesians 2:11-13 in terms of the promises of the restoration of Israel. The Church is interpreted as the restored Israel. In the New Testament the concept of mission, however, is more than simply the restoration of Israel implying that the Church is the restored Israel that is to continue the missional calling of Old Testament Israel. A discontinuity exists in that the New Testament mission moves out to “the ends of the earth” (Ac 1:8). The nations have not simply come to share in Israel’s covenant privilege because this results a mudding of the water. The continuity exists in terms of promise-plan of God. The continuity is that the Gentile mission was more than an add-on to the mission of Israel and at the same time it was a new mission. The mission to the Gentiles had always been an essential part of what God wanted to do and in this lies the continuity rather than in the continuation of the mission given to Israel.

¹⁰⁹ The combination of Ps 110 and 8 occurs also in Heb 1:13 and 2:6-8 and are used topically by the author of Hebrews to indicate the superiority of Christ over the angels.

¹¹⁰ Cf. Arnold (1989:82-84), “Powers (chapter 1 and especially pp82-4).

5.1.2.6.2. The New Covenant community

The language of Ephesians 2:11-13 is the language of covenant inclusion. It is the language of economic inclusion in the land and social structures of God's redeemed community in the world, the church. The criteria for covenant membership in pre-exilic Israel were for a household to own land (sharing in the inheritance of Yahweh's land). The foreigner could have no stake in the land since it was divided exclusively among the tribes, clans and households of Israel. In the New Testament the promises of Genesis 12:1-2 are applied to the Church. Paul addresses the Jewish exclusivist views in Ephesians that were based on the three central pillars of Judaism, the Torah (Eph. 2:15), the temple (Eph. 2:22) and the land. Paul applies the promises that were exclusively made to the descendants of Abraham to all people in Christ.

5.1.3. Thought-block B: Jew and Gentile a new humanity: Ephesians 2:14-18

5.1.3.1. Thought block analysis remarks

(1) In verses 14 and 18 is described how God's plan for both Jewish and Gentile Christians was put into action in Christ:

- Verses 14 and 15a: In Christ the barrier of hostility that the Judaizing Christians put up between them and the Gentiles was broken down (his death on the cross was the end [fulfillment] of the regulations of the law [i.e. circumcision]). God did more than break down barriers, He created *Shalom*. "Shalom is not a gift that the Lord gives apart from himself; rather, He himself is Shalom" (Eph 2:14) (Kirk; 1999:62). Shalom means to "be in a right relationship with the God of the covenant, when God, having no cause to judge or rebuke his people, is delighted with every aspect of the community's life" (Kirk; 1999:63).
- Verse 15b: In Christ the two (both Jewish and Gentile Christians) are made into a new man – one body (of whom Christ, according to 1:22, is the Head).
- Verse 16: By Christ's death at the cross both – united into the new body – are reconciled with God, putting the hostility caused by our sins to an end.
- Verse 18: Through Christ we both (Jews and Gentiles) in one Spirit have access to the Father.

It seems that the above 4 aspects of God's plan in Christ are given as "corrective" to the 4 separation-principles (*abba*) of the Jews as described in the 1st thought-block: circumcision as barrier – broken down; Gentiles separated from Jews – made into one body; without hope – reconciled with God; without God – access to God.

ALSO: In the Judaizing view (1st thought-block) the Holy Spirit had no place. In the "corrective" of the 2nd block there is a definite Trinitarian basis: In Christ – reconciled with God – access in the Spirit.

(2) The prominence of Christ as the active Person throughout the pericope (Αὐτὸς γάρ ἐστιν ... ὁ ποιήσας ... λύσας ... καταργήσας ... ἵνα τοὺς δύο κτίσῃ ... καὶ ἀποκαταλλάξῃ ... ἀποκτείνας ... εὐηγγελίσαστο – printed in bold below) and the result of Christ’s work is described in terms of a repeated pattern of contrasting word-pairs, as can be seen in the following presentation of the thought-structure (cf. 4.6.1.1 above):

5.1.3.2. Schematic representation of the pericope Ephesians 2:14-18

14	For he himself is our <u>peace</u> , who has made the <u>two</u> ; <u>one</u>	m ¹ peace p ¹ two q ¹ one
15	and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations, so that he created out of the <u>two</u> in himself <u>one new man</u> ,	n ¹ hostility p ² two q ² one new
	man thus making <u>peace</u> ,	m ² peace
16	and in this <u>one body</u> reconcile both of them to God through the cross, them	q ³ one body p ³ both of
	by which he put to death their hostility.	n ³ hostility
17	He came and preached peace to you who were far away and <u>peace</u> to those who were near.	m ³ peace m ⁴ peace
18	For through him we both; by <u>one Spirit</u> have access to the Father .	p ⁴ we both q ⁴ one Spirit

5.1.3.3. Background

The Church of Ephesus may have been at risk of identifying too exclusively with one culture and nation, the Jewish culture and nation. This group of Christians was creating barriers against Gentile Christians by the exclusive use of Jewish cultural symbols, such as language. In the letter to the Ephesians the author locates Christian identity in the believer’s confession (Eph 1:2-23; 4:4-7; 1Co 12:3) as a means of self-understanding. “The universality of the gospel, which relativises all other definitions of identity and claims to loyalty, does not replace or suppress people’s identity; neither is it a recipe for uniformity. It is meant to create a community marked by a mutuality of relationship where people have to find their identity in partnership with others who are different from them” (Sugden; 1996:4).

5.1.3.4. Exegetical Remarks

(1) The contrasting word-pairs emphasize that Christ by his cross substituted hostility with peace (cf m-n above) and made two into one (cf. p-q above). However, the climax of it all is that Christ brought peace (reconciliation) with God, so that the two by one Spirit has access to the Father (underlined in bold). In verses 11-12 the “horizontal” separation was interpreted by the Jews as a “vertical” separation; now in verses 14-18, it proves that horizontal peace and unity (between Jews and Gentiles) is determined by the vertical peace and unity (between believers and God).

(2) The peace and unity between the two (Jews and Gentiles) are explicitly described in terms of “one new man” (v.15) and “one body” (v.16), evidently linking with the main theme of the letter, i.e. the church as the body of Christ. So once again the peace and unity between the two are found nowhere else than them being part of the one church, incorporated in Christ. This gospel was preached (εὐηγγελίσατο) by Christ “to you who were far away and those who were near” (v.17).

(3) Once again the idea of “outsiders” and “insiders” is continued in verse 17, but in verse 18 it is dissolved in “we both” (ἔχομεν ... οἱ ἀμφοτέροι) – emphasizing that the two (“you ... they”) through Christ have become one (“we”) sharing one Spirit (ἐν ἐνὶ πνεύματι).

(4) Christ preached (εὐηγγελίσατο) all of this not as much in words as by bringing it about through his self-sacrifice. However, the apostle explicitly uses the verb εὐαγγελίζω (“evangelize”), probably thereby urging all that hear it to spread this good news of peace and reconciliation in Christ to sinners both “far” and “near” (cf. Hendriksen, 1967:136).

(5) Thus this thought-block once again is in support of the apostle’s mission strategy for the Jews and Gentiles in Ephesus and its surroundings. It explains, contrary to the Judaistic idea of separation of Jew and Gentile by the law, God’s plan of peace and reconciliation between the two in Christ. God’s plan is that this message of Christ’s work has to be preached (εὐηγγελίσατο) to all people (Jews and Gentiles alike).

5.1.3.5. Word study

1) μνημονεύετε (“Remember”): Ephesians 2:11

The call to “remember” is an exhortation and imperative. The call to “remember” served to evoke past history. The Jewish recipients would have understood it as a remembrance of the history of Israel and the covenant faithfulness of God. Israel’s history was based upon the covenant faithfulness of God and defining historical events such as the Exodus which gave to the nation of Israel a national identity. The formation of a community in which Jew and Gentile were equal recipients of the covenant grace of God required that it had to be rooted upon the covenant faithfulness of God. The call to “remember” with the Gentile recipients would have evoked a different historical past. The Gentiles were “without God” and

therefore had no relationship with God. The call to remember might have had the effect that it motivated the Gentiles to contemplate the grace of God and share the gospel of God's grace with outsiders. The Jewish recipients had to review their historical past in light of the revelation of Jesus Christ. The Jewish religions worldview which divided the world into two classes of people, the Jew and non-Jew could no longer be maintained. Jew and Gentile united together had to flesh out a shared history, a history based upon a new identity in Christ (Eph. 2:1-10) which brought with it new social responsibilities, values and consciousness.

2) μεσότοιχον ("dividing wall"): Ephesians 2:14

In Ephesians 2:14-15 the dividing wall of hostility is imagery of the temple balustrade which separated the Court of the Gentiles and the Court of the Women in the Jerusalem temple (cf. Martin; 1991:35). "The fence with its warning inscription ("No man of another race is to enter within the fence and enclosure around the temple") served to remind the non-Jews that they had to keep their distance from Israel's sacred shrine" (Martin; 1991:35). The communication situation is consistent with the interpretation that the author is addressing the Jewish Christians attitude of cultural and spiritual superiority¹¹¹. It is equally possible that the wall that set up hostility is a covert allusion to the Mosaic Law and its interpretation. The attitude of the Jews was that the Gentile nations were unfit to hear the gospel (cf. Piper; 1993:137).

It was the Torah that perpetuated the Jewish attitude of exclusiveness and created a distance between the Jew and the Gentile. "The Torah both defined Israel's covenant status and made it impossible for non Jews to enter" (Martin; 1991:36). Although Christianity had separated from Judaism it was still prone to many of the Jewish attitudes. The letter to the Ephesians addresses these attitudes. We can assume that the result was that the Jewish Christians in Ephesus became more active in the spread of the gospel to the nations as they were no longer prohibited by the Torah to have contact with the Gentile nations (cf. Acts 10). In their new relationship Jew and Gentile alike had been set free from the obligation of the Torah, so that, by removing what stood in the way of faith, Christ had made it possible for Gentiles to enter into their rightful inheritance in the blessing of Abraham (cf. Gen. 12:3; Gal. 3:14). It has to be kept in mind that it is not the Torah but the use of the Torah for separation and segregation, to protect Israel's minority identity against the remarkable power of Hellenistic culture which has been abolished. "In fact, Paul undoubtedly agrees with other Christian readers of Israel's Scripture that observing the command of the Torah is the moral

¹¹¹Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. 1996, c1989. *Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition). United Bible societies: New York.

marker of a covenant-keeping community: not to displace the singular importance of the Christ event in God's redemptive plan, but as an essential expression of God's victory over sin" (Robinson & Wall; 2012:28).

3) εἰρήνη ("peace"): Ephesians 2:14, 15, 17

The εἰρήνη is found in a person, Jesus Christ, "For He is our peace" (Eph. 2:14), our place of rest and shalom. "It is a place where life flourishes fully- spiritually, physically, and socially. It is a place where physical life and health are sustained and where our most intimate love-relationships are nurtured" (Keller; 2012:41). Jesus Christ is our peace in that He has taken our place and experienced the exile for us – the alienated state that the human race deserves the alienation from God, our true selves, one another, and the creational environment. In Jesus Christ we have found a place of rest, a home and have become members of God's household (cf. Eph. 2:19). The home and exile theme is an inter-canonical theme that binds the Old and New Testaments together¹¹². The theme explains the gospel from beginning to end, but as a single theme it does not give the full picture of the Bible's story line. In Ephesians we also find the themes of the kingdom (Eph. 5:6, 1-14) and Yahweh and the covenant (Eph. 5:21-33).

4) ἕνα καινὸν ἄνθρωπον ("new humanity"): Ephesians 2:15

It is the new humanity, the ontological change, which is Christ-living-in-his-body, the church, which provides both the sphere in which the Christian's morality is defined and the motive power by which Christians are able to live together in the one family of God, the body of Christ (Eph. 2:15). The Gentiles would have had to become Jews before the cross. The cross created one "*new person*", the church. "The whole point of Ephesians 2:11-22 is that the "*new person*" is distinct from the nation Israel. Gentiles do not become Jews but rather Jews and Gentiles become "*one new person*" (Hoehner; 2002: 447). The creation of a new mankind represents the fullness of God's redeeming work accomplished in Christ. The creation of a new mankind involves the restoration of human dignity that has been marred by the consequences of sin. The mission of the church is not merely the proclamation of the message of personal salvation but the responsibility of guarding human dignity and the nurturing of the image of God in men and women (cf. Gen. 1:28). Mission is a restoration of human dignity in Ephesians 2:15 and has to be distinguished from the understanding of liberation theology that focuses on the plight of the poor, oppressed, and marginalized instead of the restoration of the image of God in mankind. The Church is the new humanity because it does not exist for itself. For this reason "the church may never cease to call, to

¹¹² D.A Carson (1996:80-81) has advocated the approach of identifying Biblical themes (e.g. covenant, kinship, sanctuary) that runs through every stage of history and each part of the canon, climaxing in Jesus Christ. He advocate for Scripture to be read through *inter-canonical themes*.

invite, to draw everyone to Christ” (Van Engen; 1996:112). The Church is to understand itself as “a completely open fellowship, with its doors always spread wide open, with its members’ minds and hearts open to all” (Van Engen; 1996:112). It is as the Church understands itself in the light of the revelation of Jesus Christ that it will function as the “new humanity” in society.

5) ἀποκαταλλάξις (“reconciliation”): Ephesians 2:16

The term ἀποκαταλλάξις is clearly focused on the importance of what Christ has done to effect the reconciliation. The total significance of the reconciliation Christ has accomplished is expressed in terms of a cosmic as well as a redemptive dimension. For this reason “the clear meaning of reconciliation has much to do with missions” (Son; 1982:39). The reconciliation that the believer has received is not a mere assent and acknowledgement as Barthian universalism would imply, but rather it is a radical transformation of one’s whole life to be brought under the Lordship of Christ (Luke 18:13; Acts 2:41).

6) ναὸν ἅγιον (“holy temple”): Ephesians 2:21

The temple argues Beale (2004:5-31) was designed to nourish Israel in its missionary identity and role to spread God’s glorious presence throughout the cosmos. It was “to serve as a motivation to Israel to be faithful witnesses to the world of God’s glorious presence and truth, which was to extend outwards from their temple” (Beale; 2005:19). The “holy temple” is identified with a spiritual temple, the dwelling place of God. Mission and evangelism “is not primarily a matter of words or deeds: it is a matter of presence, the presence of mankind and the presence of God in the midst of His People” (Martin-Achard; 1962:79). The Holy Spirit is instrumental in building the Church into a missional community. One of the primary functions of the temple was to be a house of prayer (cf. Balentine; 1993:295). The role of the Church is thus to be “a house of prayer” for the nations.

The word study demonstrates that unity is not an end in itself but a sign manifesting the will and work of God that transcends the Church. “The saints and their mutual love are a sign and a servant of God’s purpose for the all world” (Barth; 1974:462).

5.1.3.6. The relation to the Old Testament

5.1.3.6.1. Those “outside” (far) and “within” (near)

The diagram explains that it is the enmity of man against God due to the fall and the ensuring depravity (Gen. 3:14) which was torn down through the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. The removal of the enmity made it possible for peace and reconciliation to be attained. In Ephesians 2:14-17 reconciliation is appropriated for the Jews and the Gentiles alike. This reconciliation began at Pentecost (Acts 2:37-38)

when Peter exclusively addressed Jews¹¹³ but already the extension of the promise to Gentiles was in embryo form. “The promise is for you and your children”, the Jews, “and for all who are far off”, the Gentiles. The allusion to the language of “far away” and “near” in Isaiah 57:19-20 is not to be interpreted as referring exclusively to Jews at home and in the dispersion, but as those who are prepared to worship the God of Israel both “outside” (far) and “within” (near) (cf. Moritz; 1996:33). The concept of “far” and “near” also has to do with the relationship of the congregation to those outside as those “far” and “near” include Israelites and non-Israelites. It is therefore not merely the boundaries within the congregation that have been broken down in terms of the Old Testament concept of the people of God but the idea is introduced that the church is an organism which should continually grow in missional expression of its essential nature (cf. Van Engen; 1996:105).

5.1.3.6.2. The mission of the Church

The mission of Israel in the Old Testament is fulfilled in the mission of Christ. The Church therefore participates in the redemptive work of Christ and in His mission (cf. Eph 1:4). The verses 57:19 and 59:17 “leave no doubt that the Prophet used such geographical notions to convey YHWH’S desire to bring home or gather those who bear his name” (Isa 43:6f; 49:5f.12, 22; 51:11; 54:7; 56:6-8; 60:4f.9, 13) (Moritz; 1996:46). Missions are about the gathering in of God’s people from among the nations. In Eph 2:17 the term “peace” or Shalom (Isa 52:7) means “much more than peace in the sense of the absence. It primarily indicates the *blessed state of full harmony* between men and God” (Coetzee; 1995:7). “Similarly, Isa. 57:19, which Paul uses in 2:13-17, can be understood as a reference to the future peace of the nations and Israel with God, a common theme in Isaiah generally (2:2-4; 11:10; 19:24-25; 45:12, 22; 51:4-5; 52:10; 55:5; 56:6-7; 60:11; 66:18-23) (Thielman; 2007:814). The inclusion of the Gentiles in the plan of God is not identifiable with the notion of the eschatological pilgrimage of the nations to Israel.

5.1.3.6.3. The inclusion of the Gentiles in the people of God

The inclusion of the nations in God’s plans “captures a thought that is characteristic of Isaiah’s theology” (Moritz; 1996:45-52; cf. Thielman; 2007:817). The contra argument was made that in Ephesians 2:13, 17 the author was relatively uninterested in the question of how the inclusion of the Gentiles with God’s

¹¹³ In Acts 2:5 “there were staying in Jerusalem God-Fearing Jews from every nation under heaven”. It is confirmed by the way in which Peter addresses his hearers, “Fellow Jews” (Acts 2:14), “Men of Israel” (Acts 2:22), “Therefore let all Israel” (Acts 2:36).

people fulfilled the prophetic expectations of Isaiah (cf. Lincoln; 1982:44-47; 1990:178). The use of Isa 57:19 as an *inclusion* implies that the text was important to Paul's thinking as he wrote about reconciliation of people to one another and of both to God (cf. Thielman; 2007:817). The double peace of Isaiah has in view the herald's glad proclamation of the good news. In Isaiah 52:7 it is the messenger who proclaims the peace and the message of salvation.

5.1.3.6.4. The inclusion of the Gentiles in the blessings of the new covenant

Isaiah 52:7 concentrates all the saving richness and blessings of Yahweh's coming to his people into one word: shalom, peace¹¹⁴. "The very nature of "gospel" is that it is good news that simply has to be announced" (Wright; 2007:193) which is based on its roots in Isaiah 52:7. "Peace" is part of the good news-exactly as Isa 52:7 announced" (Wright; 2010:192).

The allusion to the removal of the enmity through the cross

Ge 3:14	The plan and purpose of God	Eph 2:16
Isa 57:19, 59:17	The nations are included in God's plan (the colouring in of the picture)	Eph 2:13, 17
Isa 52:7	Shalom/peace	Eph 2:17

5.1.3.6.5. The new mankind

Paul is indebted to the language of Isaiah for the merging of Jews and Gentiles "into one new humanity" (Eph 2:15). It is clear from the language of Isaiah in Ephesians that this is a concept distinctive of Isaiah's theology (cf. Theileman; 2007:818). The "new humanity," however, is not to be seen as equivalent and synonymous to the concept of "the new creation". God's re-creational work is becoming visible in and through the church. In the Church the re-creational work of God becomes visible therefore wherever this is served by the mission of the Church the re-creational work of God becomes more and more visible. The re-creational work of God can be illustrated by the image of a beam of light that has penetrated a canopy of a cloud covered sky that obscures the sunlight, the truth of the gospel and revelation of Jesus Christ, from the people below. It is as this light becomes more and more visible through the Church that the reign of God and his re-creational work within his kingdom become more visible. The new humanity is a concept which

¹¹⁴ "The image of the messenger who "proclaims peace" took deep root in Jewish hopes and informed New Testament understanding of the work of Christ" (Wright; 2010:182).

is taken up elsewhere in the Pauline corpus. It has to be distinguished from the concept of the new creation. The new creation is an important theme in the letter generally (2:10; 3:9; 4:13; 22, 24). The new creation motive in Isaiah is very subtle (cf. Theilman; 2007:814).

The concept of the new humanity

Isa	New mankind and community- the Church	Eph 2:15

5.1.3.6.6. The Exodus motif

The relationship between Ephesians and Isaiah is also in terms of the new exodus motif. The new exodus imagery is found in Isa 40-55¹¹⁵. The new exodus presents the redeeming death of Jesus through the lens of the exodus in the gospels¹¹⁶. It is neither spiritualization, politicization nor an economic action for justice. The imagery is that of Jesus as the redeemer who rescues his people and fulfils the “exodus” achieved for national Israel under Moses. In Ephesians the concept of redemption (Eph 1:7) alludes to the new exodus. The relevance for missions of the new exodus is that “exodus-shaped redemption demands exodus-shaped mission” (Wright; 2010:102). The implication is that “our commitment to mission must demonstrate the same broad totality of concern for human need that God demonstrated in what he did for Israel. And it should also mean that our overall mission and objective in mission be consistent with the motivation and purpose of God as declared in the exodus narrative” (Wright; 2010:102; Wright; 2006:271-272). The relevance of the new exodus for mission is that it is a model of redemption and part of the biblical foundation for the holistic understanding of mission (cf. Wright; 2010:102).

It is important to recognize that the cross has not replaced the exodus but is a fulfilment of the exodus (cf. Wright; 2010:111). The cross in Ephesians 2:16 is thus an allusion to the exodus. The final fulfilment of the exodus still lies ahead even though redemption has been accomplished at the cross.

The allusion to the new Exodus imagery

Isa 40-55	The New Exodus through the cross of Christ	Eph 1:7; 2:16

¹¹⁵ “Mark uses the new exodus imagery of Isaiah 40-55 in his understanding of the life accomplishment of Jesus” (Mark 1:3; 4:35-5:13) (Wright; 2010:103).

¹¹⁶ “The clearest reference to the exodus in the Gospels comes when Jesus met with Moses and Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration” (Wright; 2010:103). The Greek word *exodus* is translated “his departure” by most English versions and the allusion obscured.

5.1.4. Thought block C: Jew and Gentile members of God's household: Ephesians 2:19-22

5.1.4.1. Thought block analysis remarks

(1) In verses 19-22 is described how the Gentile believers, who according to the Judaists were outsiders, far from God and removed from his promises, have come near to God, united in the one body of Christ. This description is done by means of two metaphors: that of a family, and that of a building.

(2) In the family-metaphor the shift from those that were far (outsiders, separated) to those that were near (insiders, family) is described climactically (or in concentric circles, if you prefer): ξένοι (total strangers) > πάροικοι (foreigners with visiting rights) > συμπολῖται (with full citizen rights) > οἰκεῖοι (intimate members of the household) τοῦ θεοῦ.

(3) “The double sense of the Greek word οἶκος (household, house) makes it natural for the apostle, by an easy transition, to change his metaphor from family-life to architecture” (Hendriksen, 1967:141). Again the metaphor is developed along a climactic line, starting with the foundation of the apostles, then the cornerstone of Christ, then “the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord” (this point of the metaphor seems to relate to both Jews and Gentiles created into one new man, v.15).

(4) As was the case in **the thought-block** 2:14-18 (cf. 4.2.2 above) also this last thought-block climactically ends in the believers (united in Christ) having access to God. This is done in verse 22: “And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.”

5.1.4.2. Background

In the standard Jewish view the Torah was referred to as being a light to aliens and proselytes. In Jewish thinking the obligation was upon aliens and foreigners to convert to Judaism and to join the synagogue. The onus was upon the outsider to join the community. Paul advocates a missional strategy in which the community reaches out to the alien and foreigner. Paul addresses the Jewish concept of community in Ephesians 2:19. He goes beyond the Jewish attitude of the second temple-period which encouraged social interaction with Gentiles via the synagogue towards a community that welcomes aliens and foreigners as equal members of the covenant community.

5.1.4.3. Word Study

1) συνοικοδομεῖσθε (“built together”): Ephesians 2:22

The Church is depicted as a οἰκοδομή, a structure that grows. The growth of the Church is in terms of quality and quantity as God adds the elect to the body of Christ. The noun οἰκοδομή plays on words and indicates that the Church is a building that God is constructing (2:20-22). The building up of the Church is strived through in the life of each member of the body. The natural consequence is growth. “As God’s household, a holy temple (2:19, 21), the Church continues to grow geographically, culturally, numerically, ethnically, and socially. And herein lies the mystery concerning the Gentiles that was revealed to Paul as a servant of the Gospel” (Eph 3:2-12) (Van Engen; 1996: 113).

2) κατοικητήριον (“dwelling place”): Ephesians 2:22

In Ephesians 2:22 mission takes place in the context of the church as building God’s temple. “Mission may then be compared to building the dwelling place of God and inviting the nations to come home” (Wright; 2006:340).

5.1.4.4. The relation to the Old Testament

5.1.4.4.1. The restoration of Israel

In the Old Testament the restoration of Israel is linked with witness to the nations. It is specifically in the restoration context of Isaiah where the ministry of the Servant is to Israel (Isa 43:1-7; 49:6) and this, in turn, benefits the nations (Isa 43:8-12) (Turner; 1996:300-301). Turner views the allusions of Isa 32:15; 43:10-12; and 49:6 as pointing to Israel’s restoration. But it is equally possible that the restoration may have in view the dispensation of the Church age after the coming of Jesus Christ who sets up the Church in Ephesians 2:11-13 rather than a restoration of national Israel.

5.1.4.4.2. The presence of God

The presence of God is not as a bare force but as a living force, vital and personal (cf. Motyer; 2005:69). It is in the community of Jew and Gentile as one people that God’s vital and personal presence and powerful working in and through the Church is seen. This is important because “the evangelization of the world is not primarily a matter of words or deeds: it is a matter of presence” (Martin-Achard; 1962:79).

The concept of the presence of God among his people

Ex 39-40; Col. 1:27	God lives in and among his new covenant people	Eph 2:21-22.

5.2. SUMMARY OF THE PERICOPE EPHESIANS 2:11-22

So the pericope 2:11-22 seems to be in the very heart of the missional foundation of what Paul is driving at in this letter.

(1) In the pericope the false exclusiveness practised by the Jews and Jewish Christians is refuted in a very strong argument. This already forms the basis of the message that the church in Ephesus has to spread to the believers in Asia Minor – a message which in the following pericope is attached to the μυστήριον of God.

(2) In the pericope Paul emphasizes the fact that in Christ Jew and Gentile believers are put in a new relationship, united in the body of Christ, as ‘t were created into one new man. The metaphor of Christ being the Head of his body, the church, has already been imported in Ephesians 1:22-23 and is taken up again in 2:15 in the phrase ἓνα καινὸν ἄνθρωπον. This sets the basis for the mission strategy for the church – not only to proclaim to the Gentiles that in Christ they are also incorporated into his body, the church, but also to welcome the Gentiles as such into the unity of his body. The Gentiles are welcomed into all dimensions of the life of the community, including participation in the mission of God.

(3) Paul in 2:18-22 also stresses the fact that all believers, separated from God by their sins, are reconciled with Him in Christ, close to Him, as children are close to their Father in one household – even a temple, a dwelling place for the Father by the Spirit. This new status of Gentile believers not only had to be accepted by the Jewish Christians, but also formed the basis of the message that they in their mission had to proclaim. Their message had to go beyond the (horizontal) reconciliation between Jews and Gentiles. In their mission they had to proclaim the (vertical) reconciliation with God. From the latter flows the earlier: united with Christ, both Jews and Gentiles become one body without any separation or hostility; in Christ both Jews and Gentiles have access to God as their Father – as brothers and sisters in one family (household, οἰκεῖται). Thus the mission strategy in Asia Minor would be to welcome all new believers, regardless of their background, as brothers and sisters in God’s household.

(4) Paul saw by its very existence as a multicultural community united in Christ that the Church could be the manifestation of God’s “open secret” in all its wisdom and be a testimony to the reconciling work in Christ. The purpose of the prayer is to empower the readers so that they will be reminded that God’s Spirit indwells them and that they make grasp the revelation of the love of Christ, the “breadth and length and height and depth” that will motivate them to live a transformed life and share the Gospel with outsiders. This is so that they will be “filled with all the knowledge of God” (v. 14-19).

6. EPHESIANS 3:1-13 – GOD’S ETERNAL PURPOSE AND PLAN REVEALED THROUGH PAUL TO THE CHURCH

6.1. TEXT OF THE PERICOPE EPHESIANS 3:1-13 RE-WRITTEN

B	3:10	τίς <u>ἡ οἰκονομία</u> <u>τοῦ μυστηρίου</u> what (is) the stewarding of the open secret τοῦ ἀποκεκρυμμένου ἀπὸ τῶν αἰώνων the one having been hidden since all time ἐν τῷ θεῷ τῷ τὰ πάντα κτίσαντι, concerning God the creator (of) everything.	So that the CHURCH receives from Paul God’s further <u>stewarding</u> plan (οἰκονομία) for the <u>mystery</u> – – the <u>mystery</u> hidden for all time in God’s sovereignty.	c ¹ d f
	3:11	ἵνα γνωρισθῇ νῦν (so) that may be made known now ταῖς ἀρχαῖς καὶ ταῖς ἐξουσίαις ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenlies διὰ τῆς ἐκκλησίας through the church	Also the CHURCH makes known the the revealed mystery to the world – to authorities on earth and above.	c ²
	3:12	ἡ πολυποίκιλος σοφία τοῦ θεοῦ, the diversified wisdom of God κατὰ πρόθεσιν τῶν αἰώνων according to (the) prophecy of the ages ἣν ἐποίησεν ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ τῷ κυρίῳ ἡμῶν, which He carried out through Christ Jesus our Lord	The contents of the revealed <u>mystery</u>: God’s diversified wisdom, prophecied in the OT, and then executed in Christ.	g
	3:13	ἐν ᾧ ἔχομεν τὴν παρρησίαν in Whom we have the boldness καὶ προσαγωγὴν ἐν πεποιθήσει and (the) right to approach (Him) with confidence διὰ τῆς πίστεως αὐτοῦ. through faith in Him	In Christ we have courage and the boldness to approach to God in faith.	
	3:13	διὸ αἰτοῦμαι μὴ ἐγκακεῖν therefore I ask (you) not to become discouraged ἐν ταῖς θλίψεσιν μου ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν, about my sufferings for you ἥτις ἐστὶν δόξα ὑμῶν. which is your honour.		

6.1.1. Thought structure analysis remarks

6.1.1.1. Markers and pericope division

(1) From the above structure analysis of this pericope it proves that the apostle structured his argument in two main thought-blocks, in which the thoughts are arranged in parallel sequence, marked as A-B-C-D-E and a-b-c-d-e in the above presentation of the text. Both thought-blocks deal with the putting to action of God’s plan (ἡ οἰκονομία) of revealing the mystery hitherto unknown (τὸ μυστήριον ὃ οὐκ ἐγνωρίσθη). The

difference between the two sections is that they deal with two different instruments to whom God made known the stewarding of the mystery (οἰκονομία τοῦ μυστηρίου), and gave the task of stewarding it:

- In the first thought-block Paul, who for this purpose received his apostolic ministry (διακονία) from God, was tasked with the stewardship of making known the mystery of God's grace to the church.
- In the second thought-block the church, which for this purpose was instructed by the apostle, was tasked with the stewardship of making known the mystery of God's wisdom to all.

The two thought-blocks may be compared as follows:

<u>First thought-block (3:1-3:8)</u>	<u>Second thought-block (3:9-13)</u>
A The οἰκονομία was given to Paul (A ¹) – as a ministry (διακονία) (A ²).	a The οἰκονομία was made clear (given) to the church (a ¹), to make it known to all (a ²).
B The μυστήριον was revealed to Paul through a revelation by God.	b The (οἰκονομία τοῦ) μυστηρίου made clear to the church by Paul's writings (c ¹) and preaching (c ²).
C Paul's task: to make known the μυστήριον (C ¹), and to preach to the Gentiles (C ²).	c The task of the church: to make known the μυστήριον to all authorities and powers.
D The μυστήριον was never known before	d The μυστήριον was never known before.
E The contents of the μυστήριον: In Christ also Gentiles receive God's promises.	e The contents of the μυστήριον: God's diversified (multi-faceted) wisdom in Christ.

(2) The key words οἰκονομία ("stewarding", verses 2 and 9) and μυστήριον ("mystery", verses 2, 4 and 9) mark the beginning of each of these two thought-blocks. The combination οἰκονομία τοῦ μυστηρίου in verse 9 marks the beginning of the second thought block, and draws special attention to the second thought-block, i.e. the church's stewardship of God's plan.

(3) This links to the threefold division:

- The stewardship of the gospel given to Paul: Ephesians 3:1-2.
- Jew and Gentile recipients of the promise: Ephesians 3:3-7.
- The stewardship of the gospel committed to the Church: Ephesians 3:8-13.

6.1.2. Thought-Block a: the stewardship of the gospel given to Paul: Ephesians 3:1-2

6.1.2.1. Thought block analysis remarks

(1) The intention of Paul with the mention of his imprisonment is to strengthen by his example the Church so that they may be encouraged to testify to Christ more courageously. The intention of Paul is that his imprisonment will give confidence in the Lord to the Church. It is through Paul's witness in prison that the believers are galvanized into speaking the word of God with greater boldness and without fear. Paul was

not in prison as a political or civil wrong-doer; instead his detention was a demonstration or manifestation of Christ's saving activity and thus contributed to the spread of the Gospel. In Philippians 1:13-14 we learn that "others within the Christian fellowship had been given fresh stimulus for the work of evangelism (v. 14) (Köstenberger & O'Brien; 2001:192). The imprisonment of Paul strengthened the confidence of the believers and resulted in "they have been encouraged to testify to Christ more courageously" (Köstenberger & O'Brien; 2001:192) in Philippi. It is reasonable to assume that Paul was aware of this fact and that he wrote about his imprisonment to encourage the Church. It is reasonable to assume that his imprisonment would have had a similar effect on the believers in Ephesus. "As Paul writes to his Philippian friends he expresses no surprise that these believers should engage in active outreach for the Gospel" (Köstenberger & O'Brien; 2001:192). In Ephesus, it would seem, Paul expected the believers to engage in active outreach for the Gospel.

(2) The stewardship (οικονομία) that Paul received from God (verse 2), made him a servant (διάκονος) (verse 7), which probably refers to Paul's official appointment in the apostolic ministry. Paul's apostolic ministry was to make known the mystery of God's plan both in writing (r¹) and in preaching (r²). Paul continues to address the Gentiles in Ephesians 3:2 for whom he received τὴν οἰκονομίαν τῆς χάριτος, "*the gospel ministry of the grace of God*". The genitive τῆς χάριτος could be taken as a genitive of source (from God's grace the apostle received this οἰκονομία), but much rather it is an objective genitive: The object of the apostle's ministry is the (preaching of the) grace of God. The genitive τοῦ θεοῦ is a genitive of source, the source of the grace is God who appointed Paul. The antecedent of the passive participle τῆς δοθείσης μοι could be τῆς χάριτος (God's grace was granted to Paul) but from the context it is clear that τὴν οἰκονομίαν is much rather the antecedent – the apostle is speaking about the ministry that he received from God. The Aorist tense of δοθείσης indicates he was appointed for this ministry in the past – probably with reference to the time of his conversion: At his conversion Paul received from God the responsibility of this οἰκονομία. The church, on the other hand, does not have such an official διακονία, but still has the task to make known the mystery of God's plan to all mankind. In both cases (Paul and the church) it remains God working through them as instruments (cf. the "divine" passive ἀπεκαλύφθη (verse 5) and γνωρισθῇ (verse 9). This is the very essence of the οἰκονομία of God's plan, viz. that through human instruments (first the apostles, then the church) He makes known the mystery that everybody in Christ shares in God's promises. Paul makes mention of his imprisonment as an imprisonment for Christ and in relation to his task of stewardship (οἰκονομία). The grace, which has in mind the task of οἰκονομία is given to Paul, "*to me for you*", means that the grace he received was not only for himself. The grace of God, the task of οἰκονομία was entrusted to Paul. "It is the gift of an assignment. To serve in the salvation of the nations-this is the grace experienced by Paul, rather than the consciousness of his own salvation" (Barth;1974:359).

Paul's role was to participate in the *oikonomia* of God, in the plan of God to sum up all things in Jesus Christ (Eph 1:10) and to unite all things in the cosmos under Christ. His task was therefore in essence missional.

In Ephesians 3:2 the term *οικονομία* has several interpretation possibilities:

- a. Paul's activity as steward- his missional task.
- b. Paul's office given to him by God's grace – objective sense, an office or assignment given to him by God.
- c. The administration of the grace given by God to Paul.
- d. God's plan or God's planned economy
- e. God's administration or carrying out of his plan.
- f. Strategy –subjective sense, something which is entirely within the mind of God himself.-Paul was responsible for the development of a missional strategy to involve the Church in outworking of the *οικονομία* of God.
- g. A combination of some of the above.

The genitive *τῆς χάριτος* in Eph 3:2 can either be interpreted as an adjective genitive or a genitive of content. It would seem that it is a genitive of content giving a description of the gospel to the Gentiles which was made known by revelation. It is thus to be interpreted as God carrying out the Gospel revelation, once hidden, now made known. It is thus God who implements his plan of the proclamation of the Gospel to the Gentiles. In Eph 3:2 the term *οικονομία* does not simply mean "Heilsplan" but "the carrying out of the mystery". It corresponds to Ephesians 1:10 where *οικονομία* has in mind the divine execution of the plan instead of the plan itself. The term *οικονομία* therefore means "the carrying out of God's plan" rather than "the plan of salvation" in Ephesians. In the carrying out of God's plan, Jesus, Paul and the Church are the instruments by whom God executes his plan. In Ephesians 1:10 the author uses the word *οικονομία* in relation to God's activity of administration of the cosmos whereas in Eph 3:2 it is used of Paul's task of the administration of the gospel and in Eph 3:9 it is used of the administration activity of the Church¹¹⁷. The meaning of the word *οικονομία* has a nuanced meaning:

- a) Eph 1:10- *οικονομία* is the execution of God's plan used in relation to Jesus Christ's activity – Jesus Christ executes God's plan through the work of the Trinity.
- b) Eph 3:2 *οικονομία* is the execution of God's plan in relation to Paul's activity.- Paul is an instrument for the carrying out of God's plan and he does so by proclaiming the gospel.
- c) Eph 3:9 *οικονομία* is the execution of God's plan in relation to the Church's activity.

(3) The term *οικονομία* is used by Paul in a manner of speaking about his commission which is exactly that used for dispatching commercial agents (Goodrich; 2012:133). Goodrich (2012:133) indicates that Paul's

¹¹⁷The interpretation of the term *οικονομία* runs counter to the expectation of a unified usage of the term in Ephesians (cf. Lincoln; 2000:174). "Yet it should not be thought unusual for the writer to use the term in one way when it is more clearly connected with God's activity (1:10; 3:9) and in another way when it is more closely connected with Paul's apostleship" (Lincoln; 2000:174).

repeated reference to his commission suggests that he occupied a subordinate position. The term primarily indicates sending for a purpose or task as Paul uses it in the context of the proclamation of the gospel to Gentiles, missions, and it only secondarily implies the meaning of a subordinate rank. Paul's use of the metaphor of *oikonomia* carries certain social and structural implications (cf. Goodrich; 2012:132), but Paul does not exploits these implications. He gives to the term a new context and use to shape the ecclesiology and ethics as missional. It is indicated by the use of the relationship of *οικονομία* with *μυστήριον* (1 Cor. 4:1; 9:17; Col. 1:25; Eph. 3:2)¹¹⁸. Horsley (1998:56) asserts that “the wealth they acquired and influence they wielded did not give the “managerial” slave or freedperson any dignity or standing in society. As literary sources, particularly satire, indicate quite clearly, the more wealthy and powerful the slave or freedperson, the more contemptuous he would be in the eyes of honourable people”. Paul, however, gave to the *oikonomos* and to the task of *οικονομία* a dignity and standing in God's economy. The fact that women, slaves and children could engage in the activity of *οικονομία* and serve a role in God's economy (cf. Eph 3:9; 5:21-6:9) indicates that in Paul's use the task of *οικονομία* and the *oikonomos* was not governed by the legal and social status of the term in Greco-Roman culture. It is this re-interpretation of the task of *οικονομία* in relation to God that gave to it a value that transcended the social status of the surrounding culture. It is the role of *οικονομία* in God's economy that gave to the task of proclaiming the gospel, in and outside the community prominence.

6.1.2.2. Background

The Jewish mind-set of separation and segregation from the Gentiles is most clearly seen in the decrees passed in the first century to prevent defilement and pollution from pagans (cf. Maccoby; 1999:10-12; 153-56)¹¹⁹. In the context in which Paul proclaimed the gospel there was a movement towards separation and segregation. The preservation and protection of the minority Jewish ethnic identity influenced the religious landscape. “The compromise of some Jews with pagan culture brought forth reactionary accusation and bitter recrimination from the factions in Israel” (Goheen; 2011:71).

Luke in Acts 20:20-24 gives an account of Paul's farewell speech to the elders of the Church of Ephesus at Miletus. In his speech Paul esteems the completion of the task of *οικονομία* given to him by the Lord Jesus Christ more highly than he did his own life (Ac 20:23). He defines *οικονομία* as “the task of testifying to

¹¹⁸ Goodrich (2012:133-139) correctly argues that the *oikonomos* image casts Paul and his apostles as free and voluntary servants and that the concept of *οικονομία* indicates that Paul stands and acts in service of a higher will and is fully at the disposal of his will.

¹¹⁹ The houses and all the belongings of Gentiles were regarded as impure and therefore Jews could not fellowship with Gentiles in house churches.

the gospel of God's grace" (Ac 20:24) and thereby indicates that it is about the preaching of the gospel. The task included warning, teaching, and growth in spiritual maturity.

6.1.2.3. Exegetical remarks

(1) The office of διάκονος and ἀποστόλος

Paul received his apostolic ministry or office directly as a result of God's plan (cf. Reumann, 1967:163).

The office of διάκονος of the Church functioned within the οἰκονομία of God (cf. Reuman; 1967:163).

Diakonos is a servant who wants to do the will of his master. Servanthood is essential to missions. A

διάκονος is a person who does not concentrate on his own needs but on the needs of others. Paul received

grace in order to serve others. Paul's approach to missions as a *diakonos* was to identify him with other

human beings for their own good (cf. Fleming; 1989:38). Paul's ministry as a διάκονος was the ministry of building up of the Body of Christ

(2) Paul employs both the terms of διάκονος and οἰκονομία for himself, but they are not synonyms. The

term ἀποστόλος emphasizes his commission, authority and mission from God through revelation (cf.

Reuman; 1967:167). The apostolic ministry consists in serving as the foundation of the church (cf. Eph

2:2). The term οἰκονομος, on the other hand, emphasizes the special calling of Paul marked out by great

humility and grace. Paul is involved in the administration or the carrying out of the mystery to the Gentiles.

The οἰκονομος fulfilled an important role in the mission of God. "Most examples of οἰκονομία terminology in Paul occur in the proximity to the word μυστήριον" (cf. Reuman; 1967:157). The task of the οἰκονομος

was therefore specifically the revelation of the μυστήριον (1 Cor. 4:1; 9:17; Col. 1:25; Eph. 3:2) and it was used in later epistles to point out God's administration of the world and salvation (Eph. 1:10; 3:9; cf. 3:2 &

Col. 1:25). The administration of God's plan becomes more articulated in the later epistles, the pastoral epistles.

(3) It was Paul's office as ἀποστόλος of the Gentiles that laid upon him the necessity to fulfill the task of an

οἰκονομος. The contracts between the apostolic office and task of οἰκονομία is that the task is based upon

insight into God's plan. Paul voluntarily fulfilled the task of an οἰκονομος, a steward in God's house or

household (1 Cor. 9:17). The task of the οἰκονομος, unlike the office of the ἀποστόλος, was not based upon

positional authority but upon the voluntary discharge of the task. The role of the οἰκονομος was therefore

not synonymous with the role of the steward in the Greek household which was based upon hierarchical

structures of authority. Commentators have usually compared οἰκονομία with the office of οἰκονομος in

Greek households. Paul's understanding of the role and task of the οἰκονομος is both similar and

completely different from that of Luke. The requirement of the οἰκονομος in God's household was that of

showing the church that each of its members is entrusted with a missionary task. Paul identifies himself as

a slave who is to manage well his masters resources. In Paul the task of the οἰκονομος was to manage the

revelation of God whereas in Luke the task of the οἰκονομὸς was to manage the estate on behalf of a patron. Paul's task is to make men see what the carrying out of the mystery has been by God the creator (cf. Reuman; 1967:164). The reference is to God's activity of carrying out his plan and not just to the plan of God. For both Paul and Luke it is the Lord who will judge the faithfulness of the οἰκονομὸς but the task of οἰκονομία for Paul involved the skill and qualification to interpret the mysteries of God. The role of the οἰκονομὸς for Paul was to help the Church to understand the mystery of Christ (Eph. 3:4), to reveal the purpose and plan of God, his eschatological activity. Today the task of the missionary is based upon revealed insight into God's plan usually for a specific ethnic or people group.

(4) Paul did not view himself as the exclusive οἰκονομὸς in the οἰκονομία of God as he does when he speaks of his office as ἀποστόλος (cf. Reuman; 1967:161). This implies that there is a continuation of the task of οἰκονομία by the Church. "But note that he does not use the term οἰκονομὸς in the list of general appointments and functions in the church (either 1Co 12:27ff. or in Ch. 14)" (Reuman; 1967:161). The term οἰκονομία has in mind the gospel ministry of Paul and the Church.

(5) The use of οἰκονομία in Ephesians in Ephesians 3:2-7 does not function to legitimize the apostolic authority of the author. It serves to pass over missional responsibility when the apostolic leadership role was taken over by the Church and more stable teaching and ruling ministries (cf. Eph 4:11). It is διακονία, the "work of the ministry" which was transferred to the Church leadership (Eph 4:11). The term οἰκονομία is identifiable with the work of missions. It indicates mission-related work and assignments. It is not every co-worker of Paul and believer who were gifted to communicate the gospel cross culturally (1Co 12:28-29; Eph 4:11). Many of Paul's co-workers only served in a temporary capacity as messengers and co-workers with Paul and for this reason their work was "the work of the ministry" (Eph 4:12). The idea that every one of Paul's co-workers was a missionary blurs the important distinctions in God's gifting and calling of specific servants to full-time pastoral ministry and missions and the work of the ministry of the laity which is generally termed "the work of the ministry".

(6) Reumann (1958:349) proposed that Paul probably adopted the title "stewards of the mysteries of God" from the Greco-Roman religious context. In his later work Reumann abandoned his own proposal in favour of the phrase "stewards of the mysteries of God" being a Semitism borrowed from Second Temple Judaism, a theory that continues to carry some currency in modern scholarship (cf. Goodrich; 2012:14-15). Reumann (1992:16) writes that, "οἰκονομος was brought over as a loanword in Semitic languages" in Isaiah. "The official *over the household* was nothing unique to the ancient Israelites; it was common

throughout the entire Near East” (Reumann; 1992:16)¹²⁰. This agrees with the many Jewish expressions found in Ephesians. Benjamin Gladd (2008:172) proposed that Paul’s *oikonomos* metaphor was a familiar image in Jewish apocalyptic. “But Gladd’s proposal fails to convince, since, as he himself admits, the Greek phrase is found nowhere in Jewish literature or anywhere else in Greco-Roman antiquity” (Goodrich; 2012:15).

(7) The plan of God is put into action in God’s perfect time. God’s plan takes place at the exact moment in history determined by God. There is a *kairos* time in God’s salvation historical plan when certain parts of the plan become effective (cf. Robichaux 2009:44).

6.1.2.4. The relation to the Old Testament

The term *οἰκονομία* occurs twice in the OT. These two occurrences are found in Isa 22:21 in which the message is that it is God who commits authority and gives to certain individuals the task of stewardship. It is Yawheh in the old covenant and Christ in the new covenant who commits authority for a task.

The allusion to God who commits authority and the task of stewardship human beings

Isa 22:21	The authority for the task is given by God	Eph 3:2, 9

6.1.3. Thought block B: Jew and Gentile recipients of the promise: Ephesians 3:3-7

6.1.3.1. Thought block analysis remarks

(1) In Ephesians 3:5 the author claims that the truth that he explains was hidden from previous generations.
 (2) The parallels B-C and q-r speak of the “chain” of revelation that is found at some other places in the New Testament (e.g. Rev 1:1-2): God made known the mystery to the apostle by revelation > then the apostle made known the mystery to the church by writing and preaching > so that the church makes known the mystery to the world (by word and deed).

¹²⁰ Layton (1990:649) has examined possible Mesopotamian and Epgyptian origins for this term, which appears in Genesis 37-50 and 2 Kings and Isaiah and concludes that “the Israelite office of royal steward” was patterned “after the administrative traditions of Canaanite city-states”.

(3) The fact that in both thought-blocks is emphasized the fact that the mystery was unknown to the people in previous times (cf the parallel D-d) brings forward the fact that God has set into action the execution of his plan now (vñv, verses 5 and 10), i.e. only in the fullness of time, with the coming of Christ.

(4) The contents of the mystery preached by Paul and the mystery preached by the church seem to differ (cf. the parallel E-e). Paul preached the revealed mystery that in Christ both Jews and Gentiles equally shared in God's promises (verse 6). The mystery that the church has to make known to the world is the diversified (multi-faceted, πολυποικίλος) wisdom of God (v. 10). However, the difference is only superficial. The *multi-faceted* wisdom of God includes the fact that God in his wisdom chose to gather his church not from one nation only (the Jews) but from all nations (Gentiles). This is exactly the revealed mystery that was preached by Paul. Why does Paul put it in these terms (God's wisdom)? Probably because he is speaking of God's (wise) plan, i.e. he is actually referring to the οἰκονομία of God. It has been suggested that part of the mystery of the inclusion of the Gentiles is that they received a new identity and a new state. "This is part of a divine mystery in which God included them" (Mbenna; 2011: 66). The mystery is not merely that God called Paul in spite of his unworthiness to announce the gospel, the great mystery, but that He calls each and every believer in spite of their inadequacy and unworthiness to announce the mystery. "The mystery was not about the Church itself, or that the Gentiles would be part of that Church, for the incorporation of the Gentiles into the "people of God" had long been part of the promise-plan of God (Ge 12:3; 2 Sam. 7:19; Ps 2:8; Isa 42:6 & Am 9:11-12) (Kaiser; 2008:295). The mystery involved the missionary movement for the inclusion of the Gentiles into the body of Christ and then the participation of the Gentiles in the plan of God.

(5) The "in Christ" (Eph 3:6) phrase occurs in the context of the joint participation of the Gentiles or nations in the covenant promises and the promise of the Holy Spirit as the sign of the covenant. "The covenant privilege has been universalized through Jesus" (cf. Eph 3:6) (Wright; 2006:340). A triple expression is used as a literary technique to emphasize the complete inclusion of the Gentiles within the identity of the new people of God.

a)-Co-heirs

b)-Co-body

c)-Co-sharers

The Gentiles have become equal participants in God's covenant and promises through the gospel (Eph 1:13). Salvation is opened to the Gentiles "through the Gospel". The proclamation of the Gospel to outsiders and the reception of the Gospel in faith are part of God's plan of salvation. It is as the Gentiles respond to the Gospel that the divine plan of salvation is manifest.

(6) The proclamation of the Gospel is inseparable from the person who proclaims the message. The successful mission of Paul who proclaimed the message to the Gentiles is mentioned (Eph 3:7). Paul identifies himself as a servant of the Gospel. It is the power of God that is at work through Paul that has resulted in a Paul's world-wide mission. The ministry and mission of Paul can only be performed in

accordance with the divine grace bestowed upon him, which flows over him from God's mighty power. The success of Paul's mission is a demonstration of God's mighty power and not a human being with his abilities. Paul set out a very important missional perspective that it is only as the tool of God's grace working in him that the divine plan of salvation is accomplished through him. Paul has a desire to preach the Mystery of the Gospel openly (Eph 6:19) and is hopeful that its recipients will catch something of his passion for the spread of the Gospel.

(7) Paul understood mission as a participation in God's initiative and plan. "In Ephesians 3:1-13 Paul makes it clear that his missionary calling to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles is integral to God's redemptive plan" (Köstenberger & O'Brien; 2001:166). Paul's mission then is the outworking of Christ's own mission (cf. Köstenberger & O'Brien; 2001:170). The mission of every believer is also an outworking of Christ's own mission. The believer, by taking the light of the gospel to the nations, is continuing the mission of Jesus Christ. Paul did not suggest that believers needed to engage in the "same wide ranging, apostolic ministry in which he has been involved; but each in his own way and according to their personal gifts" (Köstenberger & O'Brien; 2001:196). Paul develops this idea further in Ephesians 4.

6.1.3.2. The relation to the Old Testament

6.1.3.2.1. Paul's mission grounded in Isaiah

Isaiah is frequently used by Paul in relation to his apostolic ministry of the gospel with its missionary outreach¹²¹. Isaiah influenced Paul's missional material in Romans.¹²² Paul understood himself to be an eschatological emissary to the nations and was influenced by Isaiah 66:19. "He too was a survivor sent (Isa 66:19) to those who had not heard of Yahweh's salvation" (Köstenberger & O'Brien; 2001:172). The book

¹²¹ It is used extensively to ground mission in the gospels, especially Luke-Acts promise-fulfilment scheme. In the synoptic gospels key passages are Isa 5:1-2, 6:9-10, 29:13, 34:4, 40:3 and 56:7. Luke is influenced by Isa 26:19, 29:18 and 35:5-6. In Acts the quotations and allusions to Isaiah in Ac 7:49 (Isa 66:1-2), Ac 8:34-45 (Isa 53), Acts 22:37 (Isa 53:12), Acts 13:34 (Isa 55:3), Ac 13:47 (Isa 49:6) support and ground Luke's missional vision. The book of Luke ends with a quotation of Isa 6:9-10.

¹²² Ro 9:29 (Isa 1:9), Ro 9:33 (Isa 8:14), Ro 9:27-28 (Isa 10:22-23), Ro 15:12 (Isa 11:10), Ro 11:26-27 (Isa 27:9), Ro 9:33/10:11 (Isa 28:16), Ro 9:27-28 (Isa. 28:22), Ro 11:8 (Isa 29:10), Ro 14:11 (Isa 45:23), Ro 2:24 (Isa 52:5), Ro 10:15 (Isa 52:7), Ro 15:21 (Isa 52:15), Ro 10:16 (Isa 53:1), Ro 3:15-17 (Isa 59:7-8), Ro 11:26-27 (Isa 59:20-21), Ro 10:20-21 (Isa 65:1-2).

of Isaiah also had a significant influence upon the mission's theology of Paul in Ephesians¹²³. In Ephesians 3:7-8 and Ro 15:21 Paul's own outreach to those who had never heard the gospel was a fulfilment of Old Testament expectation (Isa 52:15). Paul drew on Isaiah for his missionary commission in Ephesians 3:2 in God's salvation historical plan.

6.1.4. Thought-block C: the task of the church to make the gospel: Ephesians 3:8-10

6.1.4.1. Thought block analysis remarks

(1) In Ephesians 3:8 (E²), Paul claims that he is "*the least of all the saints*" and therefore totally undeserving of the task and privilege to proclaim the gospel. Paul hereby indicates that he is merely the channel, a medium for the grace of God by the use of "*for you*". "Paul understood his life was an open ended channel through which God's grace was flowing on to find its way into the lives of others yet unreached" (Culpepper;1979:555). Mission is about the understanding that the carrier of the message is only a channel who is totally undeserving of the task and privilege. The mission of Paul was to universalize the covenant privilege through Jesus Christ (cf. Eph 3:6). The gospel is inseparable from the kingdom of God because it is through the preaching of the gospel as a testimony to the nations that the end will come and the kingdom of God will be manifested.

(2) The meaning of the phrase "the manifold wisdom of God *should be made known* to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms" (Eph 3:9) implies that the Church has a task. Paul says that the church has to make known the mystery "to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenlies" (ταῖς ἀρχαῖς καὶ ταῖς ἐξουσίαις ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις) for a specific reason. Instead of simply saying that they have to spread the gospel to all people, or to the world he uses language that relates the task of the Church to the carrying out of the plan of God¹²⁴. It is through the Church making known the Gospel that God carries out his plan. The secret of God is revealed to the Church not only for the Church but it is revealed for the benefit of the whole world (cf. Barth; 1974:376). Hendriksen (1967:158) refers to some commentators understanding the phrase of to whom the revelation is to be made known as a reference to the (good) angels in heaven, and others understanding it as reference to the fallen (evil) angels. He also quotes Greijdanus (1949:72), who

¹²³ "Isaiah features more prominently than any other OT writing in Ephesians 2" (Moritz; 1996:23). There are three references to Isaiah 57-60 in Ephesians 2, Isa 57:19 (Eph 2:17).

¹²⁴ Wallace (1996:434) rightly suggests that the text implies that "God's wisdom should be displayed by what the Church collectively does, rather than via its mere existence" (Hoehner; 2002:460).

says that both good and evil forces are included. I tend to agree with Greijdanus, for my feeling is that the phrase is meant to call the reader's attention to a similar phrase earlier on in the letter, viz. 1:20-22, which speaks of Christ "seated at his right hand in the heavenly realms, 21 far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. 22 And God placed all things under his feet". So, what Paul probably had in mind was to emphasize the fact that the church's message to the world eventually results in a proclamation of Christ's cosmic rule, as confessed in 1:21-22. It is as if Paul is saying: When the church proclaims the mystery of God's plan, namely that in Christ all people (Jews and Gentiles alike) share in God's promises, their proclamation becomes a call to all people that they confess Jesus Christ as Ruler (Head) of the entire cosmos (cf. the vertical dimension of the mystery). This view seems to be supported more or less by George (2002), Schnakenburg and Johnson. Barth (1974:596) writes "Ephesians itself urges the Church to fulfil its cosmic mission". The people of God have been given the task of making the gospel known to the whole *universum* (cf. Roberts; 1996:113) with the result that the elect will confess that the name of Jesus Christ is supreme above every name and God will be glorified. The task of the Church and every saint is therefore to carry out the work of service, the mission of the Church, for the praise and glory of God.

(3) The Church is the instrument of God through which He accomplishes his plan of οἰκονομία. At the same time the Church is not the centre of the οἰκονομία of God, Jesus Christ is the central focus of God's plan. The role of the Church is to point away from itself to God and Jesus Christ as God's plan for all of creation. The Church fulfils its missionary function to the extent that it does so. Missions do not have its origins in the Church but in God (cf. Wright; 2003: xi). The manifold wisdom of God is revealed in that He uses the Church which consists of sinful human beings to reveal His splendour and glory. The intention of the author is to captivate his readers so that they will be infused with the same missional drive and passion that he has. It is the sense of the complete un-worthiness of Paul for the task and his inadequacy for the work to which he has been called and the sufficiency of Christ for the task that intends to bring home to his readers.

(4) The relationship between the work of God in the human being and the human being's own decisions is a mystery. God accomplishes his plan not in spite of man's will but through the faculty of the human will. It is a mystery that God acts totally independently of mankind and yet it is through men that God accomplishes his will and plans.

(5) Mission is not something additional or accidental or non-essential but it is at the very centre of God's relationship to the world. It is a Church that is missional that knows and experiences its reason to exist.

6.1.4.2. Exegetical remarks

(1) As suggested by the phrase ἡ οἰκονομία τοῦ μυστηρίου in verse 9, the entire pericope sets forth the mission strategy for Ephesus and Asia Minor. The apostle makes it clear that in fact it is nothing else than God's plan of action to employ people to whom He gives the stewardship (i.e. ἡ οἰκονομία) to make known his μυστήριον to all people. The μυστήριον that is revealed is clearly explained as the message that not only Jews but also Gentiles in Christ equally partake in God's grace and his promises. With regard to the people employed by God: first God employed Paul to whom he gave the apostolic ministry (διακονία) to preach this revealed mystery and thus gather God's church also among the Gentiles; second also the church was employed to make known this revealed mystery to the world. Paul does not use ὥς ("as") to compare a complete lack of knowledge in previous generations with the present revelation. He uses it to describe a comparison of degree: the mystery was not made known in former generations "to the extent" that it has now been revealed (cf. Caragounis; 1977:102). It can be inferred that although the OT prophets saw God's plan they did not see the plan of the inclusion of the Gentiles with the same clarity as the NT apostles and prophets (cf. Thielman; 2007:818). It is the specific nature of the mystery that they did not see with the same clarity as the NT apostles and prophets. Although in Ephesians 3:9 "the mystery hidden for the ages and generations" is not compared to the present revelation, the comparison of 3:5 presupposes that in the previous generation that it was not revealed to the same extent as to the apostles. The absence of the grammatical marker ὥς ("as") missing in 3:9 is therefore not significant. The importance of this is that the revelation given to Paul is not a new revelation and the mission of the Church stands upon the shoulders of the mission of Israel. The mystery was rooted in the Old Testament promise-plan of God but there were also aspects of the mystery that were brand- new as well (cf. Kaiser; 2008:296).

(2) Paul when reflecting upon the grace of God is overwhelmed at the great privilege given to him as a missionary of proclaiming God's great kindness in the Lord Jesus Christ. The experience of Paul being overwhelmed implies that he recognizes that it is the grace of God that has been lavished upon him in a wonderful way. The preaching of the Gospel for Paul and the inclusion of the Gentiles within the sphere of blessing and the reception of the riches of God in Christ by Jew and Gentile are true wealth for Paul. Paul may have seen his preaching of the gospel to be taken as a promise that God will gather "all nations and tongues" to Jerusalem (Isa 66:19). It is unfathomable for Paul that through the proclamation of the Gospel all the treasures of the wisdom and knowledge hidden in him (Christ) (Col. 2:2-3) are revealed and that the nations are included in God's plan. The Gospel of Christ came by revelation of the vast treasure houses of *the riches of Christ* which had not been explored and the depths of which had not been plundered. God is not comprehended by those who submit themselves to humankind's intellectual or technical control (cf. O'Brien; 1999:242). The "unsearchable riches of Christ" has to be constantly appropriated and applied to the realities of human life in community and society at large (cf. Kirk; 1999:68). Central in missions is the

element of wonder, awe and respect which Paul makes known to his recipients to motivate them in the hope that they will also experience the unsearchable riches of Christ in the salvation of the unsaved.

(3) καὶ φωτίσαι [πάντας] τίς ἡ οἰκονομία τοῦ μυστηρίου can be translated as “to enlighten as to what is the stewarding of the open secret”. It is to reveal what is God’s further plan for stewarding of the revelation of the mystery. It involves to enlighten the way in which God has chosen to work out his purpose. The enlightenment is inextricably linked with the apostle Paul’s ministry. The task of the apostle Paul was not merely to make known to all what his role was in the administration of the mystery but what the role of the Church was in the administration of the mystery. The Church made up of Jew and Gentile is the means through which the revelation is made known (cf. Lincoln; 1990:186). The mystery is disclosed in the Church and through her, but to whom the message is made known has been disputed, whether it is to hostile powers or angelic beings present in worship. The focus, however, is not upon cosmic audience but recalls through the “now” the content of God’s open secret, the mystery, is made known and the means by which it is accomplished (3:6). The emphasis is placed less upon the content of the promise that Gentiles are “fellow-heirs in one body” and more upon the means by which it was accomplished, in Jesus Christ through the gospel. The open secret, mystery, is not simply that nations¹²⁵ have become joint-heirs and joint-body and joint-sharers of the promise but the way in which they have become part of God’s people “in Jesus Christ through the gospel”. The focus is upon the out working of the divine plan of God, “in Christ” in whom the nations have been included and this is the mystery. The prepositional phrase, “through the gospel”, reveals the instrumental role of the gospel (cf. 1:13). The role of the gospel, as it is related to God’s purposes is that it is the instrument by which God’s plan is accomplished. The mystery then is how through the gospel the nations have been included in the promises of God rather than simply the truth “that Gentile Christians have been incorporated into the same body as Jewish believers” (O’Brien; 1999:235).

(4) This requires a certain type of leadership, leadership that can be typified as servant missionary leadership and it is the reason that Paul refers to his task of τὴν οἰκονομίαν τῆς χάριτος τοῦ θεοῦ (3:2) himself as διακονος (3:7). Paul conceives of his office as apostle as having the dimensions of a servant role with the task of οἰκονομία τοῦ μυστηρίου (3:9), the revelation of the mystery. In Ephesians as in 1 Corinthians 9:17 Paul is concerned with the task and commission entrusted to him to preach the gospel to the Gentiles. It is the practices of his administration of the gospel rather than a certain office of management of the gospel that Paul has in mind in Ephesians. Paul conceives of his servant type of leadership as διακονος, “servant leadership” as “speaks of how we order our priorities, how we handle our workload, how much time we have for people, how we shape our family life, what attitudes we express

¹²⁵ The Authorised Version is followed which translates τὰ ἔθνη as “the nations”. The translation of τὰ ἔθνη as “the Gentiles” would require the binary pair, Jew and Gentile which is not present.

toward others, what openness and authenticity we show with others, how we resolve conflicts, what we choose as our standards of living, how we exercise self-discipline” (Van Engen; 1996:235). The task of *oikonomia* has specifically to do with the proclamation of the gospel mystery to the Gentiles and the revelation of God’s plan to the Church. Both διδάκονος and τὴν οἰκονομίαν are qualified by genitives, τῆς χάριτος τοῦ θεοῦ (3:2, 7). The servant leadership style of Paul and the task of *oikonomia* are part of the grace of God given to Paul, that is, part of his function as an apostle (3:8).

(5) The term for preaching used in Ephesians 3:8 is εὐαγγελίσασθαι (“gospelize”) which is generally used for the proclamation of the gospel message outside of the body of Christ¹²⁶. “It is well-known that the gospel within the Pauline corpus signifies not only the content of what is preached, but also the act or process of proclamation” (O’Brien; 1993:113). It is supported by the use of “the unsearchable wealth of Christ” which has in mind the “deep mysteries in God’s plan of salvation by which his purpose is to have mercy on all, both Jew and Gentile” (O’Brien; 1999:242). It is the reason that O’Brien (1999:242) identifies Paul preaching with his work as a missionary (cf. O’Brien; 1999:242). The verbal form is used one other time in Ephesians 2:17 where Jesus, by means of his messengers, are to proclaim peace to all ethnic groups depicted by Jew and Gentile (cf. Hoehner; 2002:453).

(6) In verse 9 Paul writes that the mystery “was kept hidden in God, who created all things.” This reference to God as Creator sets a revelation-historical framework for the plan that God had from the beginning for his creation. In the Creator’s administration of things “Heilsgeschichte” and creation are linked up (Reumann; 1967:164). Within the Ephesian letter itself Paul’s reference to the Creator and creation here in verse 9 calls to mind a similar reference in 1:4: “God chose us in Christ before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.” The work of God’s predestination before the creation now comes into view again in Ephesians 3:9 almost by way of an *inclusio* of Chapters 1-3, with the further statement that God’s plan for his creation had been kept hidden through the ages until Christ came into the world. Paul then reveals to his readers that it is through the stewardship of the mystery, the preaching of the Gospel, that God chooses to accomplish his purpose (Eph 3:9). As Paul has fulfilled his commission of preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ, so it is through the proclamation of the Gospel that unbelievers are brought into a relationship with God through Jesus Christ. The preaching of the Gospel to outsiders is therefore the means by which the riches of Christ are manifested. “The preaching of the Gospel covers a range of activities from primary evangelism and planting of Churches to the ongoing building of Christians and the establishment of settled congregations” (O’Brien; 1999:299).

¹²⁶ “Often the verb “to announce the gospel” is employed specifically with the “gospel,” or some element of it, as its direct object (1Co 15:1; 2Co 11:7; Gal 1:11, 23; cf. Ro 10:15) (O’Brien; 1999:241).

(7) The task of οἰκονομία was specifically given by Jesus Christ to Paul and Paul in turn commits it to the Church of Ephesus (Eph 3:10) and specifically Timothy (1Ti 1:3-4). It is the Lord who guides the expanding movements of the Church. The Lord guides the Church to develop its own missional strategy. The Lord Jesus Christ is behind the execution of His Church's mission in the world. This gives a real confidence in which the Church can proclaim the gospel fully reliant upon the leading and power of the Holy Spirit. The term *oikonomos* is defined by Goodrich (2012:15) as the "accumulation, administration, and dispensing of resources". This is consistent with the proposal that in Ephesians 3:8-9 it is οἰκονομία that Paul dispenses to the Ephesians.

(8) Paul opens the way for Churches to be an independent instrument of active missions (Eph 3:10). Churches are to deliberately engage in missions as a function of their relationship with God. Prior to Ephesians Paul set out the model for Church congregations to render support to his mission. Churches supported Paul's mission by prayer and financial support of his travelling companions and thus became partners with him as one who under God fathered communities and therefore merits their continuing fellowship (cf. O'Brien; 1993:115)¹²⁷. In Ephesians individual Churches under the guidance of the Spirit are to be involved in the active advancement of the gospel.

6.1.5. Thought-block D: the faithfulness of Jesus Christ: Ephesians 3:11-13

6.1.5.1. Thought block analysis remarks

(1) The message that is to be proclaimed is the whole counsel of God. It is the message that God's eternal purpose has been accomplished in Christ Jesus (Eph 3:11). The missionary calling of Paul lays the basis for the missionary calling of the Church. The Church has a place within the missionary purpose of God. The believers to whom the letter of Ephesians was circulated had to carry on the work of Paul and so be involved in the saving purposes of God. The focus in Ephesians 3 is upon the fulfilment of the divine purposes instead of upon men and women ought to be doing. It is the divine work and plan of God that is stressed although the evangelistic endeavours of the Church are implied. The emphasis is upon the gospel working powerfully in the lives of believers (cf. Eph 4:20-6:10) and spiritual maturity and personal growth, producing good deeds of Christ like character (Eph 2:10) rather than an increase in the number of converts. The emphasis is placed upon the rapid spread of the Gospel with the result that God is glorified (Eph 1:6,

¹²⁷ Bowers (1991:89-111) argues that Paul did not envisage his Churches as being independent instruments of active mission. "Bowers later concedes that in the apostle's letters there are references to an active outreach for the spread of the gospel and the founding of new believing communities" (O'Brien; 1993:111).

12; 3:21). It is noteworthy that Paul spontaneously breaks out in praise to God when he considers the fulfilment of the plan and purposes of God. It is as though Paul cannot contain himself. This response is missional as the end goal of all missional activity is the praise of God.

6.1.5.2. The relation to the Old Testament

6.1.5.2.1. The promise to Abraham

The promise to Abraham of being a blessing to the nations (Ge 12:1-3) defines Israel's relation to the nations but also the relation of the Church to the nations. It is through Israel that God would bring blessing to all the nations of the earth. God chooses and calls Israel, one nation, for the purpose of blessing all the nations. The blessing given to the church and each believer individually has been given to the Church for it to be a blessing to the nations.

6.1.5.2.2. The inclusion of the Gentiles

It has been suggested by Wright (2006:493) that the triple expression of the inclusion of the Gentiles within the identity and title of Israel in Eph 3:6 owes something to Isa 19:24-25 (cf. Wright; 2006:493). The converting love and power of God will turn the nations into friends so that they can also share in healing, blessings and worship of the Lord.

The concept of the fulfilment of the Abrahamic promise to bless the nations

Ge. 12:1-3	Blessing to the nations	Eph 1:3-4
Isa 19:24-25	The Gentiles share in the covenant promise	Eph 3:6

In the diagram below of Ephesians 3:9 there is an echo of Philippians 2:9-11: "Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

The echo of the exaltation of Christ above every person, power and principality

Phil 2:9-11	The exaltation of Jesus Christ the mystery	Eph 3:9

In the above diagram the echo of Philippians 2:9-11 sheds light on Ephesians 3:9 in that it is the exaltation of Christ that has been hidden from the beginning of the world in God.

6.2. SUMMARY OF EPHESIANS 3:1-13

Paul resumes his discussion of the theme of *οἰκονομία* in Ephesians 3 introduced in 1:10 which O'Brien has suggested contains the central idea of the letter¹²⁸. He expands upon the concept of the *οἰκονομία* and explains his role in the *οἰκονομία* of God. The verses Ephesians 3:2 and 9 & 10 are central verses in the pericope of Ephesians 3:1-13.

In Eph 3:2 the term *οἰκονομία* does not simply mean "Heilsplan" but "the carrying out of the mystery". It corresponds to Ephesians 1:10 where *οἰκονομία* has in mind the divine execution of the plan instead of the plan itself. The term *οἰκονομία* therefore means "the carrying out of God's plan" rather than "the plan of salvation" in Ephesians. In the carrying out of God's plan, Jesus, Paul and the Church are the instruments by whom God executes his plan. In Ephesians 1:10 the author uses the word *οἰκονομία* in relation to God's activity of administration of the cosmos whereas in Eph 3:2 it is used of Paul's task of the administration of the gospel and in Eph 3:9 it is used of the administration activity of the Church¹²⁹. The meaning of the word *οἰκονομία* has a nuanced meaning:

- a) Eph 1:10- *οἰκονομία* is the execution of God's plan used in relation to Jesus Christ's activity
- b) Eph 3:2 *οἰκονομία* is the execution of God's plan in relation to Paul's activity.- Paul is an instrument for the carrying out of God's plan and he does so by proclaiming the gospel.
- c) Eph 3:9 *οἰκονομία* is the execution of God's plan in relation to the Church's activity.

It is suggested by the phrase *ἡ οἰκονομία τοῦ μυστηρίου* in verse 9, that the entire pericope sets forth the mission strategy for Ephesus and Asia Minor. The apostle makes it clear that in fact it is nothing else than God's plan of action to employ people to whom He gives the stewardship (i.e. *ἡ οἰκονομία*) to make known his *μυστήριον* to all people. The *μυστήριον* that is revealed is clearly explained as the message that not only Jews but also Gentiles in Christ equally partake in God's grace and his promises. With regard to the people

¹²⁸ O'Brien (1996:58-65), Moritz (1991:96), Caragounis (1977:143) argue that Ephesians 1:10 contains the central idea and message of Ephesians. The emphasis argues Lincoln (1981:34) is on a universe centred and reunited in Christ.

¹²⁹ The interpretation of the term *οἰκονομία* runs counter to the expectation of a unified usage of the term in Ephesians (cf. Lincoln; 2000:174). "Yet it should not be thought unusual for the writer to use the term in one way when it is more clearly connected with God's activity (1:10; 3:9) and in another way when it is more closely connected with Paul's apostleship" (Lincoln; 2000:174).

employed by God: first God employed Paul to whom he gave the apostolic ministry (διακονία) to preach this revealed mystery and thus gather God's church also among the Gentiles; second also the church was employed to make known this revealed mystery to the world. The preaching of the Gospel for Paul and the inclusion of the Gentiles within the sphere of blessing and the reception of the riches of God in Christ by Jew and Gentile are true wealth for Paul. Paul may have seen his preaching of the gospel to be taken as a promise that God will gather "all nations and tongues" to Jerusalem (Isa 66:19). It is unfathomable for Paul that through the proclamation of the Gospel all the treasures of the wisdom and knowledge hidden in him (Christ) (Col. 2:2-3) are revealed and that the nations are included in God's plan. It is though the Gospel that the vast treasure houses of *the riches of Christ* which had not been explored and the depths of which had not been plundered is revealed.

The task of the apostle Paul was not merely to make known to all what his role was in the administration of the mystery but what the role of the Church is in the administration of the mystery. The Church made up of Jew and Gentile is the means through which the revelation is made known (cf. Lincoln; 1990:186). The mystery is disclosed in the Church and through her but to whom the message is made known has been disputed, whether it is to hostile powers or angelic beings present in worship. The focus, however, is not upon cosmic audience but recalls through the "now" the content of God's open secret, the mystery, is made known and the means by which it is accomplished (3:6). The emphasis is placed less upon the content of the promise that Gentiles are "fellow-heirs in one body" and more upon the means by which it was accomplished, in Jesus Christ through the gospel. The open secret, mystery, is not simply that nations¹³⁰ have become joint-heirs and joint-body and joint-sharers of the promise but the way in which they have become part of God's people "in Jesus Christ through the gospel". The focus is upon the out working of the divine plan of God, "in Christ Jesus" in whom the nations have been included and this is the mystery. The prepositional phrase, "through the gospel", reveals the instrumental role of the gospel (cf. 1:13). The role of the gospel as it is related to God's purposes is the instrument by which God's plan is accomplished. The mystery then is how through the gospel the nations have been included in the promises of God rather than simply the truth "that Gentile Christians have been incorporated into the same body as Jewish believers" (O'Brien; 1999:235).

Paul conceives of his office as apostle as having the dimensions of a servant role with the task of οἰκονομία τοῦ μυστηρίου (3:9), the revelation of the mystery. In Ephesians as in 1 Corinthians 9:17 Paul is concerned with the task and commission entrusted to him to preach the gospel to the Gentiles. It is the practices of his administration of the gospel rather than a certain office of management of the gospel that Paul has in mind

¹³⁰ The Authorised Version is followed which translates τὰ ἔθνη as "the nations". The translation of τὰ ἔθνη as "the Gentiles" would require the binary pair, Jew and Gentile which is not present.

in Ephesians. Paul conceives of his servant type of leadership as *διακονος*, “servant leadership” as “speaks of how we order our priorities, how we handle our workload, how much time we have for people, how we shape our family life, what attitudes we express toward others, what openness and authenticity we show with others, how we resolve conflicts, what we choose as our standards of living, how we exercise self-discipline” (Van Engen; 1996:235). The task of *oikonomia* has specifically to do with the proclamation of the gospel mystery to the Gentiles and the revelation of God’s plan to the Church.

The term for preaching used in Ephesians 3:8 is *εὐαγγελίσασθαι* (“gospelize”) is generally used for the proclamation of the gospel message outside of the body of Christ¹³¹. “It is well-known that gospel within the Pauline corpus signifies not only the content of what is preached, but also the act or process of proclamation” (O’Brien; 1993:113). It is supported by the use of “the unsearchable wealth of Christ” which has in mind the “deep mysteries in God’s plan of salvation by which his purpose is to have mercy on all, both Jew and Gentile” (O’Brien; 1999:242). It is the reason that O’Brien (1999:242) identifies Paul preaching with his work as a missionary (cf. O’Brien; 1999:242). The verbal form is used one other time in Ephesians 2:17 where Jesus, by means of his messengers, are to proclaim peace to all ethnic groups depicted by Jew and Gentile (cf. Hoehner; 2002:453).

In verse 9 Paul writes that the mystery “was kept hidden in God, who created all things.” This reference to God as Creator sets a revelation-historical framework for the plan that God had from the beginning for his creation. In the Creator’s administration of things “Heilsgeschichte” and creation are linked up (Reumann; 1967:164). Within the Ephesian letter itself Paul’s reference to the Creator and creation here in verse 9 calls to mind a similar reference in 1:4: “God chose us in Christ before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.” The work of God’s predestination before the creation now comes into view again in Ephesians 3:9 almost by way of an *inclusio* of Chapters 1-3, with the further statement that God’s plan for his creation had been kept hidden through the ages until Christ came into the world. Paul then reveals to his readers that it is through the stewardship of the mystery, the preaching of the Gospel, that God chooses to accomplish his purpose (Eph 3:9). As Paul has fulfilled his commission of preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ, so it is through the proclamation of the Gospel that unbelievers are brought into a relationship with God through Jesus Christ. The preaching of the Gospel to outsiders is therefore the means by which the riches of Christ are manifested. “The preaching of the Gospel covers a range of activities from primary evangelism and planting of Churches to the ongoing building of Christians and the establishment of settled congregations” (O’Brien; 1999:299).

¹³¹ “Often the verb “to announce the gospel” is employed specifically with the “gospel,” or some element of it, as its direct object (1Co 15:1; 2Co 11:7; Gal. 1:11, 23; cf. Ro 10:15) (O’Brien; 1999:241).

The task of οἰκονομία was specifically given by Jesus Christ to Paul and Paul in turn commits it to the Church of Ephesus (Eph 3:10) and specifically Timothy (1Ti 1:3-4). It is the Lord who guides the expanding movements of the Church. The Lord guides the Church to develop its own missional strategy. The Lord Jesus Christ is behind the execution of His Church's mission in the world. This gives a real confidence in which the Church can proclaim the gospel fully reliant upon the leading and power of the Holy Spirit. Paul opens the way for Churches to be an independent instrument of active missions (Eph 3:10). Churches are to deliberately engage in missions as a function of their relationship with God. Prior to Ephesians Paul set out the model for Church congregations to render support to his mission. Churches supported Paul's mission by prayer and financial support of his travelling companions and thus became partners with him as one who under God fathered communities and therefore merits their continuing fellowship (cf. O'Brien; 1993:115)¹³². In Ephesians individual Churches under the guidance of the Spirit are to be involved in the active advancement of the gospel.

¹³² Bowers (1991:89-111) argues that Paul did not envisage his Churches as being independent instruments of active mission. "Bowers later concedes that in the apostle's letters there are references to an active outreach for the spread of the gospel and the founding of new believing communities" (O'Brien; 1993:111).

7. EPHESIANS 3:14-21 – THE PURPOSE AND PLAN OF GOD TO BRING GLORY TO GOD THROUGH THE CHURCH

7.1. THE TEXT OF THE PERICOPE EPHESIANS 3:14-21 RE-WRITTEN

3:14	Τούτου χάριν because of this κάμπτω τὰ γόνατά μου πρὸς τὸν πατέρα I bend my knees to the Father	}	A ¹
3:15	ἐξ οὗ πᾶσα πατριὰ ἐν οὐρανοῖς καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς ὀνομάζεται from Whom every nation in heaven and on earth takes its name		
3:16	ἵνα δῶ ὑμῖν κατὰ τὸ πλοῦτος τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ that He may give to us according to the greatness of His glory <u>δυναμει κραταιωθῆναι διὰ τοῦ πνεύματος αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸν ἔσω ἄνθρωπον</u> to be strengthened with power by His Spirit in the inner being	}	B
3:17	<u>κατοικῆσαι τὸν Χριστὸν διὰ τῆς πίστεως ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν.</u> that Christ (may) dwell through faith in your inner selves <u>ἐν ἀγάπῃ ἐρριζωμένοι καὶ τεθεμελιωμένοι</u> as to love strengthened and well founded		
3:18	ἵνα ἐξισχύσητε that you may be fully able <u>καταλαβέσθαι</u> σὺν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἁγίοις to grasp with all God's people τί τὸ πλάτος καὶ μήκος καὶ ὕψος καὶ βάθος, what (is) the width and length and height and depth		
3:19	<u>γινῶναι</u> τε τὴν ὑπερβάλλουσαν τῆς γνώσεως ἀγάπην τοῦ Χριστοῦ, and (that you may) know the love of Christ much greater than knowledge <u>ἵνα πληρωθῆτε</u> εἰς πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ θεοῦ so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God		
3:20	Τῷ δὲ δυναμένῳ ὑπὲρ πάντα ποιῆσαι Now to the One being able to do above all ὑπερεκπερισσοῦ ὧν αἰτούμεθα ἢ νοοῦμεν far above what we ask or think κατὰ τὴν δύναμιν τὴν ἐνεργουμένην ἐν ἡμῖν, according to His power working in us	}	A ²
3:21	αὐτῷ ἡ δόξα to Him the glory ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ in the church καὶ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ and in Christ Jesus εἰς πάσας τὰς γενεάς for all generations τοῦ αἰῶνος τῶν αἰώνων, ἀμήν. forever and ever amen		

7.1.1. Thought structure analysis remarks

7.1.1.1. Markers and thought-block division

The structure of the above pericope is marked by syntactical markers.

(1) The pericope begins with a statement that is linked to the previous pericope by the phrase τούτου χάριν (3:1 and 3:14). The statement introduces Paul's prayer to the Father, by which the entire pericope receives its character of a prayer. This introductory statement in 3:14, 15 can be regarded as the first thought-block of the pericope: Τούτου χάριν κάμπτω τὰ γόνατά μου πρὸς τὸν πατέρα ἐξ οὗ ἡ πᾶσα πατριὰ ἐν οὐρανοῖς καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς ὀνομάζεται ("Because of this I bend my knees to the Father from whom every nation in heaven and on earth takes its name").

(2) Verses 16-19 together form the second thought-block, marked by the three times repeated conjunction ἵνα:

3:16 ἵνα δοῦν ὑμῖν κατὰ τὸ πλοῦτος τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ...

3:18 ἵνα ἐξισχύσητε καταλαβέσθαι...

3:19 ἵνα πληρωθῆτε εἰς πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ θεοῦ.

The first two of these three clauses also contain infinitive phrases each time denoting a purpose or result, whereas the third ἵνα-clause (verse 19b) in itself denotes a consecutive clause, indicating the expected result of the outcome of the prayer.

All in all, however, the three ἵνα-clauses in this thought-block present the contents of the prayer that Paul introduced in the first thought-block.

An important arrangement of thoughts is found in verses 16 and 17 of this thought-block, where the work of the Spirit and of Christ are arranged in a chiasmic parallelism, as follows:

a ¹	b ¹	c ¹
<u>δυνάμει κραταιωθῆναι διὰ τοῦ πνεύματος αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸν ἔσω ἄνθρωπον</u>		
(to be strengthened with power by His Spirit in the inner being)		
b ²	c ²	a ²
<u>κατοικῆσαι τὸν Χριστὸν διὰ τῆς πίστεως ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν, ἐν ἀγάπῃ ἐρριζωμένοι ...</u>		
(that Christ may dwell through faith in your inner selves , rooted in love ...)		

In both sentences above God's work is described in parallel phrases as his work **in our inner selves** (marked c¹ and c²). Secondly, his work by his Spirit in the first sentence finds a parallel in the indwelling of Christ in the second (marked b¹ and b²). Finally, the power by which works (δυνάμει) in the first sentence seems to find its parallel in the second sentence in Christ's love (ἐν ἀγάπῃ) in which the believers are rooted.

(3) Syntactically the third thought-block (3:20-21) is marked by the statement at the beginning of verse 12, with an elliptic ἐστίν as verb: αὐτῷ ἡ δόξα (“to Him the glory”). The elliptic statement αὐτῷ ἡ δόξα is the typical formula for a doxological prayer in the New Testament (cf. by example Rom 16:27).

7.1.1.2. Exegetical remarks

The prayer in Ephesians 3:14-21 concludes Chapter 1-3, which can be regarded as the first, confessional section of the letter, and as such takes up a number of themes from the previous pericopes and makes them, part of this conclusive prayer.

7.1.2. **Thought-block A: prayer for the transformed life of the community to be manifested: Ephesians 3:14-15**

7.1.2.1. Thought block analysis remarks

The prayer in Ephesians 3:14-21 is for the transformed life of the community and for it to grow in it's calling to be a sign of the kingdom. The prayer has the aim to grow the community in its comprehension, experience and expression of the love of Christ in and outside the Church. The second personal pronoun ὑμῖν (Eph. 3:16) indicates that the prayer was addressed to the community. The author of Ephesians breaks out in worship, κάμπτω, and prayer for a second time. He spontaneously begins to pray expressed by a Semitic idiom, literally ‘the knee bends’ or ‘... bows’.¹³³ He does so after having reflected upon the task of the church in the plan and purposes of God (3:1-13). In Ephesians 3:1 Paul is a prisoner τούτου χάριν, because or for the reason that he has advocated that Jew and Gentile are equal members of the household of God (cf. Eph. 2:11-22).

7.1.2.2. Background

The author of Acts attributes Paul's imprisonment for he advocates that Jew and Gentile are equal members of the covenant. Paul is accused of defiling the temple area and the holy place by bringing Trophimus, a Gentile from Ephesus into the temple (Acts 21:28-29). The crowd in Jerusalem listens to Paul as he makes

his defence until he speaks about his commission to the Gentiles given to him by the Lord, “Go; I will send you far away to the Gentiles” (Acts 22:21).

In Ephesians 3:14 the reason for Paul’s prayer is so that the Church would fully comprehend its role in the plan of God and that it is the unique instrument for the revelation of God’s multifaceted wisdom (cf. Eph. 3:10) that Jew and Gentile are co-heirs, members of the same body, and partners of the promise in Jesus Christ through the gospel. (Eph. 3:6).

The prayer is directed to God as Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (Eph. 3:14). The Father is the source from or out of who, indicated by the marker ἐκ, a genitive of source, every nation under heaven and upon the earth are named. The giving of a name by God to all the nations indicates that all the nations are family members of God’s household and possess all the rights and responsibilities belonging to a family. The phrase ἐν οὐρανοῖς καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς (“in heaven and on earth”) indicates that relationship between the two spheres, heaven and earth, has been established through Christ through whom God has become the Father of all people, families, tribes and nations (cf. Eph. 1:10). The unification of these spheres is through Christ who brings together all things in heaven and on earth, together under Himself as the one head (cf. Eph. 2:6). The unity involves more than the unification of two disconnected domains, it includes “all things,” τὰ πάντα (1:10), within these spheres. “All things” includes the spiritual and human beings and all created things. Unification involves the restoration of the original creational order, harmony, unity, purpose and proper functioning of all things in creation. The bringing together of all things includes the restoration of relationships which have been marred, damaged and destroyed as a result of the fall of mankind. It is the bringing together, by God, of mankind into the divine family.

The relationship between God in Trinity, the perfect and complete family (cf. 2:19), and redeemed earthly families (3:15), is through Jesus Christ. “God now communicates with his new family only through their new head, Jesus Christ. In him this new family is held together; on him all its members depend; to him they owe their submission. In their relationship to him lie all peace, union and agreement among themselves. This is what Paul means by God “reconciling” or “summing up” and so “gathering all things together” in Christ. The new family that has come into existence is all the families of the earth, unified by the Christ event. The prayer indicates the full cosmic scope of the unity. It is through the task of οἰκονομία that “all things” in these spheres are being brought together in Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:10). The missional significance is that it indicates that all ethnic, tribal, language groups and nations have been brought together and unified in one family, the family of God (cf. Eph 2:19).

7.1.3. Thought-block B: prayer for the gospel to be applied to the heart: Ephesians 3:16-19

7.1.3.1. Thought block analysis remarks

(1) The content of the prayer is introduced by the thought marker, ἵνα. It indicates the content of discourse and is followed by a subjunctive δῶ, as is appropriate for noun clauses introduced by ἵνα. It expresses a confident assertion that the glorious power or glorious might of Jesus Christ has been deposited (Louw & Nida; 1988:57. 217) in the life of the recipients. The verb κραταιωθῆναι denotes more particularly the outer aspect of the divine strength, to invigorate (cf. Simpson & Bruce; 1975:). In this prayer however, an invigoration of the “inner man” (τὸν ἔσω ἄνθρωπον) is requested. Paul prays “that the One who, as 1:19 has shown, is himself the Source of power in all its various manifestations, may grant to the Ephesians that, in accordance with the measure of God’s glory, they may be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inner man” (Hendriksen, 1967:171). This invigoration of the inner man is expanded by the idea of the indwelling of Christ in the hearts of the believers, once again taking of a theme from the previous chapter (2:19-22). The verb κατοικῆσαι is in the infinitive and is used as a type of apposition to explain the previous infinitive κραταιωθῆναι. It explains that “the divine strength of God dwells permanently in you through the Holy Spirit”, διὰ τοῦ πνεύματος αὐτοῦ. It is the Holy Spirit that continually gives inner strength and power for the Church to execute its mission in the world. It is as Jesus Christ through His Spirit reigns in the hearts of a person (Eph. 3:16) and in the Church (Eph. 4) and in the Christian household (Eph. 5, 6), that the Kingship of Jesus Christ is established and his kingdom has broken into this world. According to verse 17 the invigoration through the Spirit is literally Jesus Christ who dwells in the recipients, κατοικῆσαι τὸν Χριστὸν. He dwells “in the heart through faith in him”, διὰ τῆς πίστεως ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν. It is in love that the recipients are strengthened and a foundation established ἐν ἀγάπῃ ἐρριζωμένοι καὶ τεθεμελιωμένοι. In this respect the thought parallelism in verses 16 and 17 is important. From the parallel it seems highly probable that the indwelling of Christ in the hearts of people leads to the powerful work of the Spirit in their inner selves. Vice versa, the power by which the Holy Spirit works in the inner person is directly related to the love of Christ, in which they are rooted and grounded. These two participles ἐρριζωμένοι (“rooted”) and τεθεμελιωμένοι (“grounded”) are passive, once again to be understood as “divine” passives, referring to God’s work: God has planted and grounded his church in the love of Christ, which is the power basis of the work of the Spirit in the hearts of the believers. The words ἐρριζωμένοι (“rooted”) and τεθεμελιωμένοι (“grounded”) suggest a twofold metaphor: that of a tree and that of a building (cf. Hendriksen, 1967:172). This same metaphor-combination is used by Paul in 1 Corinthians 3:9. The building metaphor in Ephesians 3:17 probably links with Ephesians 2:20-22, where Christ is indicated as the foundation of the church, which becomes a dwelling-place of God in the Spirit. The parallels between these two passages (Eph 2:20-22 and 3:16-17) are obvious and serve to emphasize the unity of the church in Christ through the Spirit.

(2) The believers are rooted and grounded in the love of Jesus Christ. This statement is followed by a purpose clause introduced by the marker ἵνα, “so that you may be completely able or fully able”. The verb ἐξισχύσητε is subjunctive, being part of a purpose clause introduced by ἵνα. The infinitive καταλαβέσθαι is

prolative to ἐξισχύσητε, and has the meaning of “to comprehend or to grasp” (cf. 1 Cor. 9:24)¹³⁴ “together with the saints the breadth and length and depth and height of God’s love”. This phrase “the breadth and length and depth and height” refers to the immeasurable dimensions of God’s infinite love (cf. Hendriksen, 1967; 173). At the same time it is a reminder of the cosmic rule of Christ, who has a position above “all authority, power and dominion, not only in the present age, but also in the one to come” (1:21) and the wisdom of God that “has to be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms” (3:10), whereby is indicated a parallel between the infinite power of Christ over the entire cosmos, and his infinite love for the church of which He is the Head (cf. Eph 1:22-23).

(3) The idea of the believers’ being able to *understand* or *grasp* is continued in verse 19 indicated by γινῶναι τε – a marker of a close relationship between sequential events.¹³⁵

(4) The verb γινῶναι is in the infinitive and a continuation of the purpose clause introduced by ἵνα. In verse 19, however, the knowledge is taken to a new climax, since the love of Christ, ἀγάπην τοῦ Χριστοῦ, is characterized as τὴν ὑπερβάλλουσαν τῆς γνώσεως, i.e. surpassing all human understanding (Louw & Nida; 1988:32.16). The purpose clause is introduced by the third repetition of the thought marker ἵνα, “so that you may be made complete with all the totality of God” οἰκονομία (ἵνα πληρωθῇτε εἰς πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ θεοῦ). The noun and genitive πλήρωμα τοῦ θεοῦ indicates that the prayer of the author is for the recipients to be made complete in the knowledge of the love of God. His prayer is for the totality of the love of God to be made complete in the recipients (cf. Col. 2:9). The author’s intention is for the Ephesians not to just know the fact of Christ’s love but to have the ability to grasp the infinity and wonder of God’s love (Eph. 3:18-19). The subjunctive, πληρωθῇτε, indicates that the desire of the author is that the Ephesians will know God, more specifically know Jesus Christ. The way in which they are to know Jesus Christ is γινῶναι τε τὴν ὑπερβάλλουσαν τῆς γνώσεως ἀγάπην τοῦ Χριστοῦ, “know the extraordinary knowledge of the love of Christ”. The missional significance is that the gospel is brought home to the hearts of the believers (cf. Keller; 2012:69), and the orientation of their hearts is transformed by love. It is the knowledge of the extent of the love of God, a love that surpasses knowledge that transforms the whole inner being and compels the believers into missions.

(5) In brief, Ephesians 3:16-19 has the following missionary significance: Missions begin with personal transformation that is based on the knowledge of the extent of the incomprehensible love of God. Love

¹³⁴ In John 1:5 has two possible meanings, “overwhelm” or “overpower” and “understand” (cf. Louw; 1982:40-41). It is “because a play on words is characteristic of John’s style, it is possible that the author intended both meanings” (Wolvaart; 1999:63).

¹³⁵ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. 1996, c1989. *Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.). United Bible societies: New York

alone, however, may not see the missionary task in the way that God does (cf. Piper; 1993:156). The missionary task in the way God sees it is not necessarily the salvation of the maximum number of individuals. The context of Ephesians 3:14-15 indicates that the missionary task as God may see it is the salvation of people from every tribal and ethnic group. “God’s call for missions in Scripture cannot be defined in terms of crossing cultures to maximize the total number of individuals saved. Rather, God’s will for missions is that every people group be reached with the testimony of Christ and that a people be called out for his name from all the nations” (Piper; 1993:157). It is personal transformation in the life of the missionary that brings about personal transformation in the people group to whom the missionary is sent. The transformed life is demonstrated in the missionary giving expression to the love for us in Christ in crossing cultural barriers to demonstrate the love for others. The task of the missionary is thus not as much the transformation of others, but rather self-transformation which will result in the transformation of others. It is thus not merely the preaching of the gospel, but the inner transformation that the gospel has had upon the person proclaiming the message that is instrumental in bringing the nations into an equal status of salvation (cf. Eph. 3:6-8).

7.1.4. Thought-block C: prayer for Jew and Gentile to take responsibility for the task: Ephesians 3:20-21

7.1.4.1. Thought block analysis remarks

In Ephesians 3:20-21 God is praised because He is “able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us.” Since it speaks of God’s “work within us”, it seems to recall Ephesians 2:10, which speaks of God’s work of recreation in the believers: αὐτοῦ γάρ ἐσμεν ποίημα, κτισθέντες ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (“For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus “). God has recreated the believers in Christ for a specific task. This task is explained in Ephesians 3:11 as making known the mystery to the world κατὰ πρόθεσιν τῶν αἰώνων ἣν ἐποίησεν ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ τῷ κυρίῳ ἡμῶν (“according to his eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus”). The execution of this task is the fulfillment of God’s purpose of the ages, his πρόθεσιν τῶν αἰώνων, in Christ Jesus. Now in verse 20 God’s eternal purpose which He accomplished in Jesus Christ is referred to as his immeasurable work (ποιῆσαι ὑπερεκπερισσοῦ) which He executes by his power that works in us (δύναμιν τὴν ἐνεργουμένην ἐν ἡμῖν). The link with verse 11, as pointed out above, places this work of God in us within a missional framework. The purpose of his work in us, also his work of recreation, is so that we may be instrumental in making known the mystery in this world. So it proves that the prayer is for Christians to “become radiant and attractive witnesses – more willing and confident to talk to others about their faith” (Keller; 2012:80).

In Ephesians 3:21 there are two dative phrases both introduced by the same preposition ἐν. The first ἐν-phrase, ἡ δόξα ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ (“*to him be glory in the Church*”), may indicate the location or sphere where the glory of God is most visible: in the Church. In this clause, however, the ἐν-phrase may also express an agent and an instrument by whom/which the glory of God in society is revealed. If taken in the latter sense, the clause ἡ δόξα ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ is placed within the framework of missions, as a reference to the church that is instrumental in executing their God-given task (according to his οἰκονομία), to his glory.

In the second dative phrase, ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, the preposition ἐν may also indicate location, or relation. The implied meaning is that the revelation of God’s glory in (by) the Church happens in relation or relationship to Jesus Christ. The glory of God is revealed in the Church and by the Church. The Church is the instrument of God by which He is glorified in its intimate relation to Jesus Christ. The glorification of God in and by the church should also be seen in the context of God’s work of recreation in verse 20. As a result of God’s re-creative work the Church is revealed as a new community of Jesus Christ, a new society in this world (3:10). The contrast between the Church and the world serves the glory of God. This contrast, when viewed within the larger framework of Ephesians 3, is especially revealed in a Church of Jew and Gentile who love one another, instead of living in mutual distrust and hatred as it happens in the world. The Church is the future society breaking into the present world in and through the Church (cf. Eph. 3:10). The church has been called to an extraordinary position and vocation. The vocation of the church is to bring glory to God in Jesus Christ in society and throughout all generations. But it must be remembered that the task or mission of the Church is not fundamentally and primarily about something “we” do – a human task of the Church but the outworking of God’s plan, his *oikonomia* (Eph. 1:10).

7.2. SUMMARY OF THE PERICOPHE EPHESIANS 3:14-21

Paul equips the Church and each believer individually for the fulfilment of the task of the proclamation of the gospel to the nations. In the rest of the letter Paul practically works out how the Church and the believers individually are to be equipped and have been empowered to spread the gospel. Paul begins In Ephesians 3:20-21 with God as the source of the equipping of the Church and praises him because He is “able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us.” He prays for a revelation to be given to the Church and individual believers of God’s work within them and that every believer has been given a task. The Church has a role in the re-creational work of Jesus Christ by making the mystery known in the world. In doing so the Church glorifies Jesus Christ. The Church as a new community of Jesus Christ, a new society in this world glorifies God by its existence

(3:10). The contrast between the Church and the world serves the glory of God. This contrast, set within the framework of Ephesians 1-3 is practically developed in Ephesians 4-6.

7.3. SUMMARY OF THE RELATION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT IN EPHESIANS 1-3

7.3.1. The promise of the blessing to Abraham realized in the inclusion of the Gentiles (Eph 1:3-4).

The promise that Abraham would be a blessing to all the peoples on the earth is echoed in Eph 1:3-4 indicating a continuance with the Old Testament origins of mission. The inclusion of the Gentiles in the plan of God through the gospel (Eph 1:13) is the realization of the promise.

The term “gospel” comes from Isaiah 40-66 indicating the influence of Isaiah upon Ephesians.

7.3.2. The use of Ps 110 and 8 (Eph 1:20-23)

A careful study of the combination of Ps 110 and 8 as a source in Eph 1:20-23 reveals that it serves the purpose of the author’s argument, the headship of Christ over all things. The important matter is that the apostle by these allusions to Psalm 110 and Psalm 8 makes the point that the position that God gave to Christ, at his right hand, was the execution of his Plan which He anticipated even in the old covenant dispensation.-The plan of God for mission to the nations is presupposed in Ps 100 and 8. The reason for the combination of Ps 110 & 8 is because the believers are in need of encouragement in their every day struggle and mission against the powers of their day. The believers could draw considerable comfort and motivation for mission in the fact that Christ has been appointed the head of the Church and over the powers.

7.3.3. The Gentile missions not simply a continuation of the mission to Israel (Eph 2:11-13)

The nations have not simply come to share in Israel’s covenant privilege because this results a mudding of the water. The continuity exists in terms of promise-plan of God. The continuity is that the Gentile mission was more than an add-on to the mission of Israel and at the same time it was a new mission. The mission to the Gentiles had always been an essential part of what God wanted to do and in this lies the continuity rather than in the continuation of the mission given to Israel.

7.3.4. The New Covenant community (Eph 2:11-13)

The language of Ephesians 2:11-13 is the language of covenant inclusion. It is the language of economic inclusion in the land and social structures of God's redeemed community in the world, the church.

7.3.5. The restoration of Israel (Eph 2:11-13)

In the Old Testament the restoration of Israel is linked with witness to the nations (Isa 43:1-7; 49:6) and benefits the nations (Isa 43:8-12). The texts in Isaiah (Isa 43:1-12; 49:6) have in view the dispensation of the Church age after the coming of Jesus Christ who sets up the Church in Ephesians 2:11-13 rather than a restoration of national Israel.

7.3.6. The inclusion of the Gentiles in the people of God (Eph 2:13, 17)

The verses 57:19 and 59:17 were used to convey that YHWH'S desire to bring home or gather those who bear his name in exile and among the exiles (Isa 43:6f; 49:5f.12, 22; 51:11; 54:7; 56:6-8; 60:4f.9, 13) and Paul extends the idea to those outside the Church in Eph 2:13 & 17. The double peace of Isaiah has in view the herald's glad proclamation of the good news. In Isaiah 52:7 it is the messenger (Eph 2:13) who proclaims the peace and the message of salvation (Eph 2:17). It is the messenger, the Servant who proclaims the peace and the message of salvation. In the NT Christ is messenger and the disciples and apostles, the ministry servants and each believer are heralds of the glad proclamation of the message.

7.3.7. The new mankind (Eph 2:15)

The "new humanity" (Eph 2:15) is God's re-creational work becoming visible in and through the church. The Church is God's community for the revelation of his re-creational work and thus it serves the mission of God (Eph 1:10). It is clear from the language of Isaiah in Ephesians that this is a concept distinctive of Isaiah's theology (cf. Theileman; 2007:818).

7.3.8. The New Exodus (Eph 2:16)

In Ephesians the concept of redemption (Eph 1:7) alludes to the new exodus. The cross in Ephesians 2:16 is thus an allusion to the exodus. The final fulfilment of the exodus still lies ahead even though redemption has been accomplished at the cross. It is important to recognize that the cross has not replaced the exodus but is a fulfilment of the exodus (cf. Wright; 2010:111).

7.3.9. Those “outside” (far) and “within” (near) (Eph 2:17)

“The promise is for you and your children”, the Jews, “and for all who are far off”, the Gentiles (Isa 57:19-20), has to do with the relationship of the congregation to those outside as those “far” and “near” include Israelites and non-Israelites. It indicates those who are prepared to worship the God of Israel both “outside” (far) and “within” (near) (cf. Moritz; 1996:33). The purpose of the use of Isa 57:19-20 is to redraw the ethnic boundaries in the congregation and the relationship of the community to outsiders. It indicates that the author made use of Isaiah for the relation of the Church to society.

7.3.10. The good news of release from captivity

The influence of Isaiah on Paul’s thought in Eph 2:17 and 6:15 is that Yahweh comes to his people to bring about shalom, peace. It is a fulfilment of Isaiah 52:7 quoted in Ro 10:15 in Ephesians is extended to the individual believers who bring the good news and proclaim peace, good news, salvation and God reigns (Eph 6:15). In the context in Isa 52:7 it refers to those who bring the exiles the good news of their imminent release from captivity. The individual believers bring the good news of release from the captivity to sin.

Isaiah 52:7 is used to support the missional purpose of the author because it is used “to remind the readers that if they were “in Christ,” they joined God’s anointed king in the victory God had given to him over the enemies of his people” (Thielman; 2007:813).

7.3.11. The use of οἰκονομία in Isaiah (Eph 3:1-2)

The term οἰκονομία occurs twice in the OT. These two occurrences are found in Isa 22:21 in which the message is that it is God who commits authority and gives to certain individuals the task of stewardship. It is Yahweh in the old covenant and Christ in the new covenant who commits authority for a task.

7.3.12. Paul’s mission grounded in Isaiah (Eph 3:3-7)

Isaiah is frequently used by Paul in relation to his apostolic ministry of the gospel with its missionary outreach. The book of Isaiah had a significant influence upon the mission’s theology of Paul in Ephesians. In Ephesians 3:4-5 and Ro 15:21 Paul’s own outreach to those who had never heard the gospel was a fulfilment of the Servant expectation in the Old Testament (Isa 52:15). Paul drew on Isaiah for his missionary commission in Ephesians 3:2 in God’s salvation historical plan.

The use of Isaiah in Ephesians by the author has a very specific purpose. It served the purpose of his missional strategy.

7.3.13. The use of Old Testament in Ephesians 1-3

In Ephesians the author uses Isaiah to remove barriers in the community so that the Jew and Gentile could be one people before God (Isa 57:19-20; 59:17) a community of Jew and Gentile, a united community, who would be able to proclaim the gospel (Isa 52:7; Eph 6:15). The double peace of Isaiah has in view the herald's glad proclamation of the good news. In Isaiah 52:7 it is the messenger, the Servant in Eph 2:13 who proclaims the peace and the message of salvation and in Eph 2:17 it is the believers who are the messengers of the good news. It is the messenger, the Servant who proclaims the peace and the message of salvation which each believer, Jew and Gentile, were to be heralds of and proclaim. The message that was to be proclaimed was that "in Christ" Jew and Gentile are equal recipients of the grace and blessings of God (Eph 1:3-4) and the gift of the Holy Spirit and an inheritance (Eph 1:13-14) and together become a "new mankind" (Eph 2:15). The message of the Church is that Christ is head over everything (Eph 1:20-23) and that when the times will have reached their fulfilment that all things will be brought together under one head (Eph 1:10).

7.4. CONCLUSION REGARDING CHAPTERS 1 TO 3 OF EPHESIANS

7.4.1. God's plan: Ephesians 1:10

The gospel is central to the accomplishment of God's *oikonomia* as the proclamation of the gospel inside and outside the Church is the means by which God accomplishes his purpose of bringing all things together in Christ (Eph 1:10). It is the gospel that fulfils the goal of the mystery itself. Unity is the result of the proclamation of the gospel and therefore it is "inappropriate to claim that the content of the mystery in Ephesians is defined solely in terms of God's acceptance of the Gentiles and their union with Jews on an equal footing in Christ" (Eph 3:3-4) (O'Brien; 1999:110). In Ephesians different aspects of God's *oikonomia* is worked out in which the mystery is the content (Eph 1:9-10; 3:3-4; 5:32; 6:19). The claim has been made that unity is the central idea of the letter, but unity is the content of God's plan, an application that Paul makes in the working out of the *oikonomia* of God. Unity is the visible manifestation of the working out of the *oikonomia* of God. God's grand purpose is said to be "in Christ" (1:10) and God's plan and *oikonomia* always has its focus the relation "in Christ" (1:11-13; 20; 2:6-7; 2:13-15; 21-22; 3:6, 11-12; 21; 4:15, 21; 32; 5:8; 6:1; 10, 21). It is by the preaching and teaching of the gospel inside and outside of the Church that revelation of the mystery is made known (Eph 3:8-9; 4:11-13; 6:19). The revelation of the mystery of the gospel is the means by which the plan of God is fulfilled and unity is brought about, ethnic (Jew and Gentile), relational (husband and wife, father and children), social (master and slave), gender (male and female), and cosmic (heaven and earth). And so the proclamation of the gospel creates unity. In Ephesians the strategy of God (1:10; 3:2; 9) to make known the mystery, always has its focus "in Christ" and this strategy is worked out through the letter.

The plan of God consists of different phases. Each of these phases of the plan is a profound mystery and is revealed and fulfilled one after the other in the fullness of time. The central idea is the execution of God's plan which is executed according to the will and good pleasure of God (Eph 1:11) and climaxes in that all things will be united under Jesus Christ as Head in his body so that harmony will be restored in the cosmos again (Eph 1:20-23). In Ephesians 3 the particular phase of God's plan places the Pauline mission at centre stage. The Pauline Churches are expected to do their part to spread the Gospel (Eph 3:8-10) within their sphere of influence and this is the second phase of God's plan. It is God's plan of action for executing his purpose with respect to mankind and the cosmos that Paul has been given a responsibility to practically administer (Eph 3:2-8). But Paul does not have the full revelation of the mystery of God's will and purpose and is, therefore, only responsible for the part of the plan entrusted to him by God. The Church and his co-workers also have a role to play in the practical working out of God's plan because to them God has also entrusted a responsibility. Paul's own mission to the Gentiles becomes the mission of the Church. The

mission that was given to Israel becomes the mission of the Church and the nations are called to be united to the Christ to form the universal Church of Jesus Christ. The inclusion of the nations, every ethnic group, in the Church demonstrates the multi-coloured and rich wisdom of God (3:10). The incorporation of all ethnic groups into the Church is part of the administration, working out, of God's plan (1:10), a plan that is part of God's eternal, unchanging, purpose (3:11). The completion of the plan is dependent upon God who works out his eternal plan throughout the ages. In the present age of grace (Eph 2:1-10) Paul is given the task of *oikonomia* to make known a fuller revelation of the mystery of God, the mystery of Jesus Christ and that through incorporation "in Christ" the nations are equal heirs with Israel in the promise made "in Christ" through the gospel. The nation or ethnic groups are included in the promise through the preaching of the gospel to the various nations and ethnic groups. In the working out of the plan (*oikonomia*) of God, He has chosen to make use of Paul, Jewish and Gentile Christians, the Church, in the fulfilment of the mission to the nations. The means through which God's plan is accomplished is by the preaching of the mystery of the gospel by believers. It is through the proclamation of the Gospel by individual believers that the mystery, all the treasures of the wisdom and knowledge of Christ, the riches of Christ, are revealed to the nations. The working out of God's plan requires a certain type of leadership, leadership that can be typified as servant missionary leadership, *diakonia* in view (Eph 3:7). The management of the spread of the gospel is part of the task of *oikonomia* given to Paul (Eph 3:9). For this task Paul has received the gift of the grace of God which functions through the working of the power of the Holy Spirit (Eph 3:8). Paul considered it his task to enlighten all men as to what is the *oikonomia* ("stewardship") of the mystery (Eph 3:9), to enlighten the Church to its task.

The verses Ephesians 3:2 and 9 & 10 are central verses in the pericope of Ephesians 3:1-13.

7.4.2. The carrying out of the mystery: Ephesians 3:1-13

In Eph 3:2 the term *οἰκονομία* does not simply mean "Heilsplan" but "the carrying out of the mystery". It corresponds to Ephesians 1:10 where *οἰκονομία* has in mind the divine execution of the plan instead of the plan itself. The term *οἰκονομία* therefore means "the carrying out of God's plan" rather than "the plan of salvation" in Ephesians. In the carrying out of God's plan, Jesus administers God's plan and Paul and the Church are the instruments by whom God executes his plan. In Ephesians 1:10 the author uses the word *οἰκονομία* in relation to Jesus activity of administration of the cosmos whereas in Eph 3:2 it is used of Paul's task of the administration of the gospel and in Eph 3:9 it is used of the administration activity of the Church. The meaning of the word *οἰκονομία* therefore has a nuanced meaning:

- a) Eph 1:10- *οἰκονομία* is the execution of God's plan used in relation to Jesus Christ's activity – Jesus Christ
- b) Eph 3:2 *οἰκονομία* is the execution of God's plan in relation to Paul's activity. - Paul is an instrument for the carrying out of God's plan and he does so by proclaiming the gospel.

c) Eph 3:9 οἰκονομία is the execution of God's plan in relation to the Church's activity- the Church is the instrument for carrying out God's plan.

It is suggested by the phrase ἡ οἰκονομία τοῦ μυστηρίου in verse 9, that the entire pericope sets forth the mission strategy for Ephesus and Asia Minor. The apostle makes it clear that in fact it is nothing else than God's plan of action to employ people to whom He gives the stewardship (i.e. ἡ οἰκονομία) to make known his μυστήριον to all people. The μυστήριον that is revealed is clearly explained as the message that in Christ not only Jews but also Gentiles equally partake in God's grace and his promises. With regard to the people employed by God: first God employed Paul to whom he gave the apostolic ministry (διακονία) to preach this revealed mystery and thus gather God's church also among the Gentiles; secondly also the church was employed to make known this revealed mystery to the world. The preaching of the Gospel for Paul and the inclusion of the Gentiles within the sphere of blessing and the reception of the riches of God in Christ by Jew and Gentile are true wealth for Paul. Paul may have seen his preaching of the gospel to be taken as a promise that God will gather "all nations and tongues" to Jerusalem (Isa 66:19). It is unfathomable for Paul that through the proclamation of the Gospel all the treasures of the wisdom and knowledge hidden in him (Christ) (Col 2:2-3) are revealed and that the nations are included in God's plan. It is through the Gospel that the vast treasure houses of *the riches of Christ* which had not been explored and the depths of which had not been plundered is revealed.

The task of the apostle Paul was not merely to make known to all what his role was in the administration of the mystery but what the role of the Church is in the administration of the mystery. The Church made up of Jew and Gentile is the means through which the revelation is made known (cf. Lincoln; 1990:186). The mystery is disclosed in the Church and through her but to whom the message is made known has been disputed, whether it is to hostile powers or angelic beings present in worship. The focus, however, is not upon cosmic audience, but recalls through the "now" the content of God's open secret, the mystery, is made known and the means by which it is accomplished (3:6). The emphasis is placed less upon the content of the promise that Gentiles are "fellow-heirs in one body" and more upon the means by which it was accomplished, in Jesus Christ through the gospel. The open secret, mystery, is not simply that nations have become joint-heirs and joint-body and joint-sharers of the promise, but the way in which they have become part of God's people "in Jesus Christ through the gospel". The focus is upon the out working of the divine plan of God, "in Christ Jesus" in whom the nations have been included and this is the mystery. The prepositional phrase, "through the gospel", reveals the instrumental role of the gospel (cf. 1:13). The role of the gospel, as it is related to God's purposes, is the instrument by which God's plan is accomplished. The mystery then is how, through the gospel, the nations have been included in the promises of God, rather than simply the truth "that Gentile Christians have been incorporated into the same body as Jewish believers" (O'Brien; 1999:235).

Paul conceives of his office as apostle as having the dimensions of a servant role with the task of οἰκονομία τοῦ μυστηρίου (3:9), the revelation of the mystery. In Ephesians as in 1 Corinthians 9:17 Paul is concerned

with the task and commission entrusted to him to preach the gospel to the Gentiles. It is the practices of his administration of the gospel rather than a certain office of management of the gospel that Paul has in mind in Ephesians. Paul conceives of his servant type of leadership as *διακονος*, “servant leadership” as “speaks of how we order our priorities, how we handle our workload, how much time we have for people, how we shape our family life, what attitudes we express toward others, what openness and authenticity we show with others, how we resolve conflicts, what we choose as our standards of living, how we exercise self-discipline” (Van Engen; 1996:235). The task of *oikonomia* has specifically to do with the proclamation of the gospel mystery to outsiders.

The term for preaching used in Ephesians 3:8 is *εὐαγγελίσασθαι* (“gospelize”) which is generally used for the proclamation of the gospel message outside of the body of Christ. “It is well-known that gospel within the Pauline corpus signifies not only the content of what is preached, but also the act or process of proclamation” (O’Brien; 1993:113). It is supported by the use of “the unsearchable wealth of Christ” which has in mind the “deep mysteries in God’s plan of salvation by which his purpose is to have mercy on all, both Jew and Gentile” is fulfilled (O’Brien; 1999:242). It is the reason that O’Brien (1999:242) identifies Paul’s preaching with his work as a missionary (cf. O’Brien; 1999:242). The verbal form is used one other time in Ephesians 2:17 where Jesus, by means of his messengers, is to proclaim peace to all ethnic groups depicted by Jew and Gentile (cf. Hoehner; 2002:453).

In verse 9 Paul writes that the mystery “was kept hidden in God, who created all things.” This reference to God as Creator sets a revelation-historical framework for the plan that God had from the beginning for his creation (Eph 1:4). In the Creator’s administration of things “Heilsgeschichte” and creation are linked up (Reumann; 1967:164). Within the Ephesians’ letter itself Paul’s reference to the Creator and creation here in verse 9 calls to mind a similar reference in 1:4: “God chose us in Christ before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.” The work of God’s predestination before the creation now comes into view again in Ephesians 3:9 almost by way of an *inclusio* of Chapters 1-3, with the further statement that God’s plan for his creation had been kept hidden through the ages until Christ came into the world. Paul then reveals to his readers that it is through the stewardship of the mystery, the preaching of the Gospel, that God chooses to accomplish his purpose (Eph 3:9). As Paul has fulfilled his commission of preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ, so it is through the proclamation of the Gospel that unbelievers are brought into a relationship with God through Jesus Christ. The preaching of the Gospel to outsiders is, therefore, the means by which the riches of Christ are manifested. “The preaching of the Gospel covers a range of activities from primary evangelism and planting of Churches to the ongoing building of Christians and the establishment of settled congregations” (O’Brien; 1999:299).

The task of *οικονομία* was specifically given by Jesus Christ to Paul and Paul in turn commits it to the Church of Ephesus (Eph 3:10) and to Timothy (1Ti 1:3-4). It is the Lord who guides the expanding movements of the Church. The Lord guides the Church to develop its own missional strategy. The Lord

Jesus Christ is behind the execution of His Church's mission in the world. This gives a real confidence in which the Church can proclaim the gospel fully reliant upon the leading and power of the Holy Spirit. Paul opens the way for Churches to be an independent instrument of active missions (Eph 3:10). Churches are to deliberately engage in missions as a function of their relationship with God. Prior to Ephesians Paul set out the model for Church congregations to render support to his mission. Churches supported Paul's mission by prayer and financial support of his travelling companions and thus became partners with him as one who under God fathered communities and therefore merits their continuing fellowship (cf. O'Brien; 1993:115). In Ephesians individual Churches under the guidance of the Spirit are to be involved in the active advancement of the gospel.

In conclusion the task of *oikonomia*, participation in the working out of the plan of God, is not limited to a select few individuals to whom is given the responsibility to steward the mystery of the gospel but a task given to each and every believer in Christ. The task of *oikonomia* given to Paul was to equip every believer for the task of the work of the ministry. The ingathering of the nations was greater than Paul's own contribution and meant that the Church and believers individually had to make a deep commitment to the powerful advance of the gospel. In order to truly experience the saving power of the gospel in the nations the Church and the individual believers have to wholly commit to the furtherance of God's saving purposes.

The author of Ephesians develops the *oikonomia* of God in the letter. He demonstrates how God's *oikonomia* is practically worked out in the Church (Eph 2:11-22).

7.4.3. The phases of God's plan

The essence of God's plan is that those whom He has chosen according to his divine plan of predestination (Eph 1:5, 11) shall be brought together into this one body of Christ (Eph 2:15, 16), even though they are different in background, culture and nationality (whether Jew or Gentile, cf. Eph 2:11-22).

Before the coming of Christ this plan of God remained hidden from the world through the ages (*a mystery*, cf. ἡ οἰκονομία τοῦ μυστηρίου in Eph 3:9). But since Christ as Head has appeared to make the church, his body, complete (1:23), the mystery has to be made known to the world. For the purpose of making known this mystery God has set his plan into action, i.e. God's οἰκονομία. This plan seems to be put into action in various "phases".

- The first "phase" of his οἰκονομία was to give to Paul and the apostles the ministry (διακονία) of making known to the world this mystery of God's grace in Christ (Eph 3:2-7). Paul's special assignment was to take the gospel to the Gentiles (Eph 3:8).

- The second “phase” is that those to whom the apostles have made known the mystery, i.e. the church, in turn has to make known this mystery to all the world (Eph 3:10-13). The structure which makes this possible is developed further in first Timothy.

In conclusion the task of *oikonomia*, participation in the working out of the plan of God, is not limited to a select few individuals to whom is given the responsibility to steward the mystery of the gospel but a task given to each and every believer in Christ. The task of *oikonomia* given to Paul was to equip every believer for the task of the work of the ministry. The ingathering of the nations was greater than Paul’s own contribution and meant that the Church and believers individually had to make a deep commitment to the powerful advance of the gospel. In order to truly experience the saving power of the gospel in the nations the Church and the individual believers had to wholly commit to the furtherance of God’s saving purposes.

7.4.4. The use of the Old Testament in Ephesians and missions

The author uses the Old Testament in Ephesians to demonstrate that the mission to the nations was prophesied in Isaiah. The Jewish Christians would have identified and recognized Paul’s use of Isaiah in Ephesians. In Luke, Isaiah is used to indicate that the Gentiles would become “servants of the Lord” (Isa 54:17) indicated by the use of the plural “servants” (Isa 63:17; 65:8-9, 13-15; 66:14) instead of the singular “Servant” (Isa 1-53) in the role of the spread of the gospel. The Jews and Gentiles were to be messengers of the message that when the times will have reached their fulfilment that all things will be brought together under one head (Eph 1:10), Christ as the one head over everything (Eph 1:20-23), a new covenant community has been created (Eph 2:11-13) and Jew and Gentile have been united (Eph 2:13, 17), those “outside” (far) and “within” (near) (Isa 57:19-20) have been united “in Christ” in a “new mankind” (Eph 2:15). The community has been restored and ethnic boundaries in the congregation and the relationship of the community to outsiders have been re-drawn (Isa 43:1-12; 49:6)¹³⁶. Paul’s own outreach to those who had never heard the gospel (Eph 3:4-5) was a fulfilment of the Servant expectation in Old Testament (Isa 52:15).

The final conclusion of the exegesis of Ephesians 1-3 can be concretely summed up as Paul’s own *oikonomia* (Eph 3:2) is related to the *oikonomia* of God (Eph 1:10). It can be concluded that “Paul’s own mission was intimately related to the saving purposes of God in which the gospel of the Lord was central” (O’Brien; 1993:139). The *oikonomia* of Paul (Eph 3:2) is related to the *oikonomia* of the Church (Eph 3:9).

¹³⁶ “nations ... peoples assemble” (Isa 43:9). “You are my witnesses” (Isa 43:10) indicates that they will be witnesses. The servant is used in the singular and refers to the community of Israel and the Church. The idea of being witnesses is repeated indicating emphasis, “you are my witnesses” (Isa 43:12).

It can be concluded that the Church is to be committed and involved in the saving purposes of God by the proclamation of the gospel. The individual members of the Church are to be committed and involved in the saving purposes of God. In this way God's gracious plan is worked out (Eph 1:10).

The importance of Ephesians for missions is that it stands in a continuum with the great commission entrusted by God to his disciples (Mt 28:18-20) and practically sets out the task that has been given by Jesus Christ to the Church through Paul.

CHAPTER 5:

AN EXEGESIS OF MISSION PASSAGES IN EPHESIANS IN EPHESIANS

4-6

In the previous Chapter it was concluded that the apostle Paul based his mission strategy for Ephesus on the revealed mystery which he, as apostle, received from the Lord and preached to the church, that is, that Christ is the Head of the church, and that the church is his body. This revealed mystery, when accepted in faith, is confessed by the church as truth, as formulated in Ephesians 1:22-23. In chapters 2 and 3 of Ephesians Paul *inter alia* explains the impact this conviction has on the believer's view on missions. He points out that the conviction that the church is Christ's body directly implies that all God's children, chosen by Him according to his plan for mankind, are united in this one body. Therefore, the church's mission is to make known this mystery to all people, so that God's chosen children may be united into this one body of Christ. Furthermore, this mission of the church should be executed from the conviction that all believers, regardless of race, gender and background, are one in Christ by faith. All of this were pointed out in some way or other in Ephesians 1 -3, being the rather reflective part of the letter in which the apostle presents the principle basis for the more practical matters that he deals with in the last three chapters of the letter.

Against this background it can be expected that the apostle, when dealing with matters pertaining to the mission of the church, will focus in Ephesians 4 – 6 on the practical execution of the church's mission. Therefore the exegesis of Ephesians 4 – 6, as reported in this chapter, is focused on possible evidence in support of (or contrary to) practical matters pertaining to a mission strategy for the church in Ephesus.

1. THE GENERAL STRUCTURE OF EPHESIANS

It has been suggested that in the two-section structure of the letter, 1:1-3:21 and 4:1-6:20, the one section presents an articulation of the new identity of the Gentiles and all of its divine origins, and the other presenting the code of conduct for the new people (Mbennah; 2013:74). It would seem, however, that section one of the structure focuses on the plan and purpose of God and the inclusion of the believer in God's grand plan and the second section on the practical outworking of God's plan. The transformation or new identity of the believer is part of God's grand plan; Ephesians 2:1-10 dealing with the new identity of the believer and Ephesians 2:11-22 the new identity of the Church in God's plan. The mission of the Church flows from the new identity of the Church (Eph 3:1-13) and is an expression of the love in the Trinity (Eph 3:14-21).

The exegesis in this chapter is structured according to the pericope division as identified in Chapter 3: 4:1-16. the role of the individual believer and church in the plan of God

4:17-5:20. the boundaries set to the church community as body of Christ

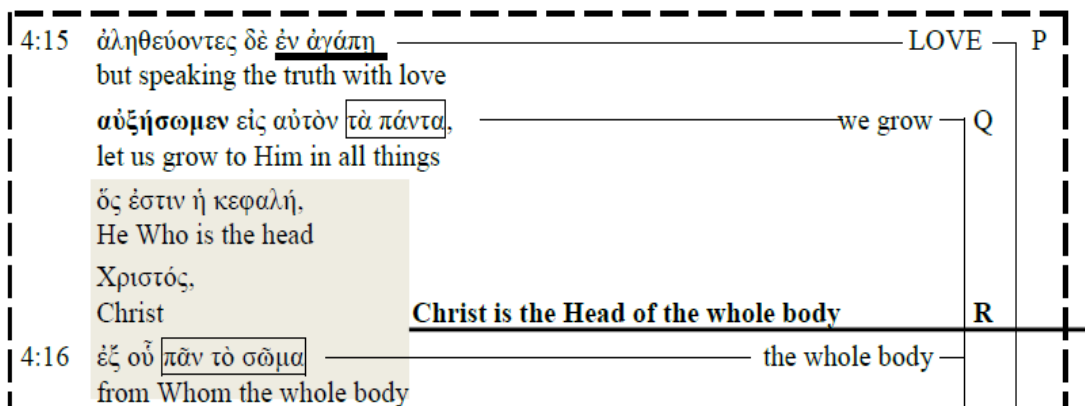
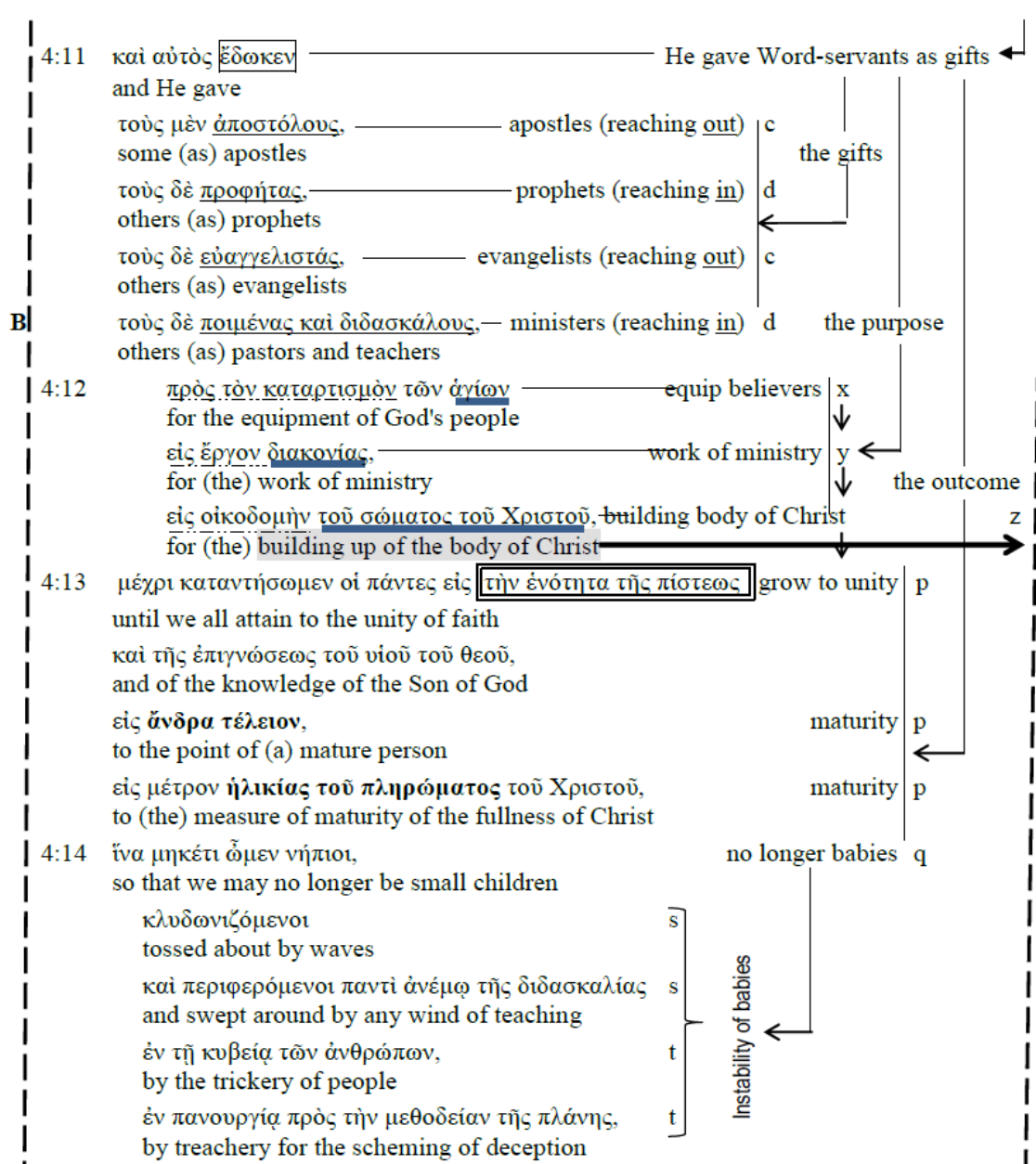
5:21-6:9. the household relationships within the community

2. EPHESIANS 4:1-16: THE ROLE OF THE INDIVIDUAL BELIEVER AND CHURCH IN THE PLAN OF GOD

2.1.1. The text of the pericope ephesians 4:1-16 re-written

4:1	Παρακαλῶ οὖν ὑμᾶς, ἐγὼ ὁ δέσμιος ἐν κυρίῳ I then encourage you, I the prisoner because of (the) Lord, ἀξίως περιπατῆσαι τῆς κλήσεως ἧς ἐκλήθητε to live worthy of the calling to which you were called	a b calling
4:2	μετὰ πάσης ταπεινοφροσύνης καὶ πραΰτητος, with all humility and gentleness μετὰ μακροθυμίας, ἀνεχόμενοι ἀλλήλων ἐν ἀγάπῃ, with patience bearing with one another with love	
4:3	σπουδάζοντες τηρεῖν <u>τὴν ἐνότητα τοῦ πνεύματος</u> ἐν τῷ συνδέσμῳ τῆς εἰρήνης· unity doing your best to keep the unity of the Spirit by the bond of peace	
4:4	<u>ἐν σῶμα</u> καὶ <u>ἐν πνεύμα</u> , one body and one Spirit	one ... one
A	καθὼς καὶ ἐκλήθητε just as also you were called	b calling
	<u>ἐν μιᾷ ἐλπίδι</u> in one hope	one
	τῆς κλήσεως ὑμῶν· of your calling	a calling
4:5	<u>εἷς κύριος</u> , <u>μία πίστις</u> , <u>ἐν βάπτισμα</u> , one Lord one faith one baptism	one ... one ... one
4:6	<u>εἷς θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ πάντων</u> , One God and Father of all,	one
	ὁ ἐπὶ <u>πάντων</u> καὶ διὰ <u>πάντων</u> καὶ ἐν <u>πᾶσιν</u> who (is) above all and during all and unto all	vs. all

4:7	Ἐνὶ δὲ ἐκάστῳ ἡμῶν <u>ἐδόθη ἡ χάρις</u>	He gave a gift
	blessing now was given to each one of us	
	κατὰ τὸ μέτρον <u>τῆς δωρεᾶς</u> τοῦ Χριστοῦ.	His gift
	in relation to the measure of the gift of Christ	
4:8	οὖν λέγει, Ἀναβὰς εἰς ὕψος ἠχμαλώτευσεν αἰχμαλωσίαν,	ascend
	therefore it says ascended to world above He captured captivity	
	<u>ἔδωκεν δόματα</u> τοῖς ἀνθρώποις.	OT: He gave a gift from Above
	He gave gifts to the people.	
4:9	τὸ δὲ Ἀνέβη.	
	Now the (statement) He went up	ascend
	τί ἐστίν, εἰ μὴ ὅτι	
	what is it except that	
	καὶ κατέβη εἰς τὰ κατώτερα [μέρη] τῆς γῆς;	decend
	He also went down into the lower [parts] of the earth?	
4:10	ὁ καταβὰς αὐτός ἐστιν	decend
	the One having gone down is (the) same also (as)	
	καὶ ὁ ἀναβὰς ὑπεράνω πάντων τῶν οὐρανῶν,	ascend
	the One having gone up far above all the heavens	
	ἵνα <u>πληρώσῃ τὰ πάντα</u> .	
	so that He may cause anything to happen	



C	συναρμολογούμενον καὶ συμβιβασζόμενον	-----	joined together	b
	joined together and united			
	διὰ πάσης ἀφῆς τῆς ἐπιχορηγίας	-----	supporting parts	b
	by every ligament of support			
	κατ' ἐνέργειαν ἐν μέτρῳ ἑνὸς ἐκάστου μέρους	-----	working parts	b
	according to (the) working in measure of each one part			
	τὴν αὕξησιν τοῦ σώματος	ποιεῖται	the body's growth	Q
	brings about the growth of the body			
	εἰς οἰκοδομὴν ἑαυτοῦ ἐν ἀγάπῃ.		LOVE	P
	for (the) building up of itself in love.			

2.1.2. Thought structure analysis remarks

Paul uses the particle οὖν (“therefore”) in this part of his letter to indicate turning-points in his argument. Together with the particle, Paul repeatedly uses the concept περιπατέω (“to walk”- Eph 4:1, 17; 5:2, 8, 15) (Hoehner; 2002:500). The ethical teaching in Ephesians demonstrates the way in which the Christian Church is to participate in the mission to the nation. The letter to the Ephesians fulfils the Old Testament promise that the nations would come to worship the one true God.

2.1.2.1. Markers and pericope division

A prominent stylistic feature of the pericope is the various clusters of semantically related or opposite words.

(1) Verses 1-6 are marked by the clusters “calling” (κλήσεως, ἐκλήθητε, arranged in an a-b-b-a pattern) and “unity/one” (ἐνότητα, ἓν, εἷς, 8 times), for which reason it can be considered as a thought-block within the pericope. In Ephesians 4:1-6 the unity in the congregation is grounded in the unity within the Trinity, the unity between Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

(2) Verses 7-14 feature the word-cluster “gifts” (ἐδόθη, δωρεᾶς, ἔδωκεν, δόματα, ἔδωκεν). The gifts are given from above, as indicated in verses 8-10 by the quotation from Psalm 68 (cf. the interesting toggle between “ascend” and “descend”). Verses 11-13 contain a further exposition of the gifts, marked by three word-clusters, as follows:

- The gifts themselves, viz, various preachers of the Word, are named as a cluster, arranged in a crosswise order c-d-c-d (verse 11);
- the purpose of the gifts, arranged in cluster in more or less climactic order $x > y > z$, with *the building up of the body of Christ* as climax (verse 12); and

- The outcome or result of the work of the gifts is explained in a cluster using the contrast between *a grown, mature man* on the one hand and *νήπιοι* (“*babies*”) on the other hand as metaphor. This contrasting pair is arranged in the pattern p-p-p-q (verse 13).

In verse 14 the metaphor of *babies* (*νήπιοι*) is explained as the inability to stand firm against false teaching, once again making use of a metaphor, viz. the waves of the sea tossed around by the wind.

The series of word-clusters in verses 7-14 are so tightly knit that these verses can graciously be taken as one thought block within the pericope.

(3) Verses 15-16 form the third thought block of the pericope, in which the main elements are arranged as a palindrome A-B-C-B-A. In the centre of this structure is the basic confessional statement of the entire letter, viz. *Christ is the Head of the whole body* (marked as C). This statement is enclosed by the surrounding statements of the growth of the body (B-B) thoroughly joined in unity (b-b-b). Finally the growth of the body is imbedded in *ἐν ἀγάπῃ* (“in love”), in an *inclusion pattern* (A-A).

The following thought-blocks have been identified:

- a) 4:1-6: Unity and the call to witness
- b) 4:7-14: The task to prepare God’s people for service
- c) 4:15-16: The Church built up for its task and calling

2.1.2.2. Stylistic Markers

The stylistic markers link the indicative section of the letter (Eph 1-3) with the paracletic section (Eph 4-6) as structural markers. They serve a second purpose to develop the central idea of the plan of God (1:9-10) which climaxes in the revelation of Jesus Christ as Head of the cosmos and Church (1:20-23). The plan of God (1:9-10; 3:2, 9-10) is practically developed and worked out by means of the particle *οὕτως* (Eph 4:1, 17; 5:1, 7; 16; 6:14). This plan is realized through the church and every believer (3:10; 4:1-5:20).

2.1.3. Thought block A: unity and the call to witness: Ephesians 4:1-6:

2.1.3.1. Thought block analysis remarks

(1) The relationship between Ephesians 4 and the plan of God

In Ephesians 4-6 the overarching structure is a description of how God’s plan, which is described in Ephesians 1-3, is realised in the life of the church and of every believer (Hoehner 2002:vii, 62, 66-69). The execution of the plan of God for the church described in Ephesians 3 is practically worked out in Ephesians 4-6. The church is one in the one God and it must preserve this confessional unity which is the basis of its missional witness to the world. The unity in the church grows when believers are equipped for their service

with the special gifts that Christ bestows on his body, so that everyone can fulfil his/her function with a view to the edification and maturing of the body, the building up and the building out of the Church.

(2) Calling of the believer

The term “calling” is used three times in Eph 4:1-3, κλήσεως ἧς ἐκλήθητε (v. 1), ἐκλήθητε (v. 4) and κλήσεως (v. 4). The calling arises out of the *oikonomia* of God (Eph 1:10¹³⁷).

(3) The call to a missional lifestyle: Ephesians 4:1

a. The pericope begins with an earnest invitation, παρακαλέω, to become involved and part of the mission of God. The calling is “the link between the theology and ethics of the epistle” (Culpepper; 1979:553). The calling of the Church cannot be separated from the action that defines the meaning of calling (cf.

Culpepper; 1979:553).

b. The Church is to understand that the basis for her ministry (calling) and presence in the world is explicitly and characteristically missionary in nature.

c. The customary manner, περιπατέω, in which the calling to missions is to be exercised, is expressed as “with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love” (Eph 4:2). It refers to living a certain lifestyle that is worthy of the gospel of Jesus Christ in accordance to one’s call. The aorist is ingressive, indicating that the believer is to change his or her conduct from what it has been was previously” (Hoehner; 2002:504). In Ephesians 4:1-3 imperative participles are used, “ανεχομενοι ἀλλήλων ἐν ἀγάπῃ, (“be patient with one another in self-sacrificial love”), σπουδαζοντες, (“be eager to keep the unity”) to describe the manner of life.

The manner in which the believers are to live out their calling is indicated by the preposition μετὰ, μετὰ πάσης ταπεινοφροσύνης καὶ πραΰτητος¹³⁸ (“with all humility and gentleness”) and μετὰ μακροθυμίας (“with patience/long-suffering”) before ανεχομενοι ἀλλήλων ἐν ἀγάπῃ so that without patience/long-suffering self-sacrificial love would not exist at all. This is in accordance with the believers call¹³⁹.

d. It is individuals in the community but more specifically the church community itself that is called in this thought block to live a life “worthy of the calling to which they have been called” (Eph 4:2). The noun ἄξιος pertains to being fitting or proper in corresponding to what should be expected.¹⁴⁰ The sentence ἀξίως

¹³⁷ The calling is imperative and is based on the fact that the believers have already been called into the blessings of salvation (Eph 1:3-14), blessings that are intended to draw others to Christ.

¹³⁸¹³⁸ The attitude of humility and gentleness was necessary because of the differences between Jew and Gentile not to destroy but to keep the unity that was already in the one body of Christ.

¹³⁹ The background is the unity between Jew and Gentile in the body of Christ which requires patience toward one another to function as the body of Christ in missions.

¹⁴⁰ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. 1996, c1989. *Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.). United Bible societies: New York

περιπατῆσαι τῆς κλήσεως ἧς ἐκλήθητε (Eph 4:1) can be translated as “live a life that corresponds to the standard (God) set when he called you”(TvA). The believers life should be worthy of the Gospel of Christ (cf. Hoehner; 2002:504).

(4) The corresponding attitudes: Ephesians 4:2

a. The preposition μετά with the genitives “humility”, ταπεινοφροσύνης, “gentleness/compassion”, πραοτητος and “patience”, μακροθυμίας (Eph 4:2) has been identified as missional attitudes (cf.; 2009:403)¹⁴¹. Openness, mutual tolerance and respect, although not occurring in the context, have also been identified as missional attitudes which can be grouped together (cf. George; 2002:403). These are part of living out the calling to which “**YOU**” were called.

b. The attitudes to be fostered are attitudes of lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering bearing with one another in love (Eph 4:2). The community is exhorted not just to tolerate one another but not to forsake the troublesome ones and to bear with them in love. These virtues are a demonstration of the oneness of the body (of Christ) in the Spirit to which the community is transformed by the resurrection life of Jesus Christ.

(5) The central missional practice: Ephesians 4:3

a. The missional practice: “making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph 4:3) has been identified (cf. George; 2002:404). “The Church is called to be a unifying community with unifying missional practices” (George; 2002:404).

b. An essential part of the calling of the church is to live as the unity, based on the confession of faith, and with the work of the Holy Spirit as source of the unity. The Holy Spirit works through the community’s witness to heal the broken creation, broken relationships and to extend the salvation that Jesus Christ accomplished on the cross. The visible “unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” is a witness to the world that there is “one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all” (Eph 4:4-6). Unity is a faithful witness to the world. The church is, therefore, instructed to make every effort, to be diligent, to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph 4:3). Living in such unity gives witness to the world of the communal transforming power and grace of God. The evidence of this unity is a unity that is organic and moves beyond a merely structural unity which has to do with power, hierarchy, and uniformity of organizational forms and functions.

c. The oneness of the Church is a oneness bonded by the Spirit of God who gathers the Church. It is as the Church is continually renewed by the awakening power of the Holy Spirit that the Church is strengthened

¹⁴¹ The missional attitudes of respect, compassion and humility are identified by S Key George (2002), “*Called as Partners in Christ’s Service: The Practice of God’s Mission.*”

in its identity as one. Missional practices strengthen the oneness of the Church and affirm the Church in its identity as the One Body of Christ. The calling of the Church (4:1-2) is to bring the Body of Christ more and more to its intended fullness according to God's plan. It can be illustrated by the image of a child who has been given a picture to colour. The outlines have already been drawn in but it is the role of the child to colour in the picture. In the same way God has established the lines of the picture, His purpose and plan, and the Church is involved in colouring in the picture.

2.1.3.2. Background

It is his speech on behalf of the gospel, the fulfilment of the task given to him by God for which he had been imprisoned (cf. Col 4:4, Eph 6:19-20; Php 1:18b-26). Paul is in chains and on trial for his life, fearlessly proclaiming the gospel. The imprisonment mentioned in Philippians 1:19-20 corresponds to that of Ephesians 4:1. Paul is imprisoned as a direct result of preaching the gospel and that knowledge has spread "throughout the whole palace guard" (Php 1:13). Calling is expressly connected with lifestyle, the way in which a person lives in Philippians, "Only, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ" (Php 1:27a), and it has in view the same ethical lifestyle to which *walk* (Eph 4:1) refers. It would seem that the imprisonment referred to in Philippians and Colossians is the one and same as in Ephesians, adding weight to the interpretation of "calling" (Eph 4:1) as a vocational call to missions. Paul's imprisonment clearly presupposes the presence of some danger or personal risk for believers in Ephesus and the particular threat envisaged appears to be connected not with their adherence to Christianity alone, but with the open proclamation of the gospel to outsiders. It is in fact the proclamation of the true gospel which produces the threat and danger.

2.1.3.3. Exegetical remarks

2.1.3.3.1. Word Study

παρακαλέω (Eph 4:1)

There are several interpretive possibilities for the word παρακαλέω ("calling") in Ephesians. It can be used as a soteriological term and has in view the experience of God's transforming grace, the saving activities of God. This call identifies a person as a child of God. It has to be distinguished from the meaning of calling as commission, to share in God's service. The context could also have both meanings in view, conversion-commission in one single meaning. A third meaning is applicable in contexts where Paul refers to his own calling. Paul's call has his conversion and commission rolled into one (cf. Woods; 2001:37). Does the word "calling" in 4:1 have the meaning of the task assigned each person in service of the kingdom of God? The

missional call to live “worthy of the calling you received” (4:1) has to be distinguished from calling according to God’s saving purposes or effectual calling, “called to one hope” (4:4-6), the calling to a glorious future in Christ in which believers share. The phrase “*calling to one hope*” has a soteriological framework. It is the call out of darkness, hopelessness, into the marvellous light of Christ, an “effectual calling” which has to be distinguished from a calling to service and action for the benefit of one’s neighbour (Eph 4:1). It is apparent from the context (Eph 4:1-3) that Paul is giving a testimony that his imprisonment is a consequence of “walking worthy of the calling” (v.1). The use of “call” in Ephesians 4:1 has to be distinguished from Ephesians 1:18 in which it refers to the believer’s call of God to salvation (cf. Hoehner; 2002: 265). The language of “chosen”, “adopted”, indicates that it is soteriological in Eph 1:18.

1) Ephesians 4:4-7

The confession of faith identified all the believers together as a community. It gave to them a sense of belonging together and a shared identity. The sense of belonging came from the common confession that echoes Deuteronomy 6:4-5, the *Shema*. The confession in Ephesians aims to refute the notion that the Jewish and Gentile Christians ethnic groups worshipped different manifestations of God. It is the new covenant that gives to Jews and Gentiles their common identity as the one people of God. J. Gerald Janzen (1987:280-300) suggests that “one” has the sense of “integrity” – that is, God’s action cannot be turned or deflected from its goal, God is unchangeable and therefore his intentions and plans are also unchangeable. Mission requires an internal cohesion which is fostered through the covenant in order for the ministry to the outside to be unified and up-building.

2.1.4. Thought block B: the task to prepare God’s people for service: Ephesians 4:7-14

2.1.4.1. Thought block analysis remarks

2.1.4.1.1. Central themes

The following central themes can be identified:

- 4:8-10: The Descend and Ascend of Christ
- 4:11-12: The gifts of the offices
- 4:13-16 The maturity of the body of Christ and ἐνεργεῖν

1) The Descend and Ascend of Christ: The Incarnational Character of mission

In the block, Ephesians 4:8-10 which focuses on the ascent and descent of Jesus Christ and the equipping and giving of gifts to the church which flows out of this movement. The ascent and descent of Jesus Christ is the grounds for the incarnational mission of the church. Incarnational mission “involves being under the

authority of Christ (we are sent, we do not volunteer); renouncing privilege, safety, comfort and aloofness, as we actually enter other people's world's, as he entered ours; humbling ourselves to become servants, as he did" (Stott; 1992:265). "Incarnational mission profoundly defines the *character* of mission, which in turn impacts our understanding, our method, and our commitment in mission" (Ott & Strauss; 2010:104). The ascension and descension of Christ therefore serves as a model for incarnational mission.

a) Gifts

The interpretation of Ephesians 4:11-12 as indicating church offices that merely selected persons have been called to be apostles, prophets, evangelists, and teachers and pastors overlooks that every member of the church, argues Frost and Hirsch (2003:170), is gifted in one of the five mentioned areas and is to exercise their gifts. Apostolic gifting is associated with the extension of the church, church planting, crossing frontiers, and embracing significant movements beyond itself. Prophetic gifting is associated with the ability to discern currents trends, movements, and the spirit of the times and warn the community. The interpretation of the passage then is not to define the various offices but the identification and use of gifts are identifiable in believers. The endowment of a gift of grace as Christ apportioned enables each Christian to participate in God's mission. These gifts were not given indiscriminately but to the Church for its ministry and mission (Eph 4:11). It would seem that rather than being five mentioned areas every member of the church has gifts, certain persons that are given to the church who function in one of these areas of gifting to equip the believers to use their gifts.

b) The maturity of the body of Christ and ἐνεργεῖν

The building up is accomplished by the apostles and prophets and the evangelists, shepherds and teachers (4:11). It is the Saints who are to perform and carry out the work of ministry out and do the work of building out (4:12). It is the Saints who have been equipped by the gifted persons who are to spread the gospel. The gifted persons or offices were given to the church for the immediate purpose of preparing all the saints to minister for the building out of the body of Christ. The process of equipping continues until the goal of the believers being mature to the full measure of the fullness of Christ is reached (4:13). The building up therefore has two sides, the internal building up of the body so that it can accomplish its task in the world, the apostles and the evangelists worked outside and the prophets and shepherd inside. A distinction is made between the role of the offices that build up the body and cause it to become mature and those that build out the body of Christ; that extend the kingdom of God. The preaching function is intended to build the body up whereas the proclamation of the mystery of the gospel is intended to grow the body. Although all preaching involves the revelation of the mystery the building up of the body of Christ is concerned with sanctification and the building out of the body with justification (acceptance by God). It is the same power that operated within the Apostle Paul in order for him to be able to serve the gospel to people that also operates in all believers enabling each single part of the body to grow in love (4:16) and every believer to be able to minister the gospel. It recalls God work which He works out in everything

according to his will (1:11) (κατὰ πρόθεσιν τοῦ τὰ πάντα ἐνεργοῦντος) through the power that He put to work (ἐνεργεῖν) in Christ (1:19) which is the same power that works (ἐνεργεῖν) in us, the Jew and Gentile (3:20) and all believers. The Saints have received the same riches of the grace of God given to the Apostle Paul to be able minister the grace of God. It is as the believers continue to live through the grace of God and thus reveal the mystery of God's plan to all who see them living (together) in their victory over the evil powers and their own sinful desires (Eph 2:1-7; 3:10) that the body of Christ is built up and out (4:13-16).

2) Ephesians 4:10

The thought marker ἵνα introduces a purpose clause, “to complete all things”, ἵνα πληρώσῃ τὰ πάντα (Eph 4:10). The ascension of Jesus Christ above all things is in order to complete all things. Jesus Christ completes all things by giving purpose, meaning and significance to all of creation – an echo of Ephesians 1:9-10, where God's plan for the universe “which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect at the fullness of the times (εἰς οἰκονομίαν τοῦ πληρώματος τῶν καιρῶν) – to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ”. The relationship to Ephesians 4:11 indicates that it is to be understood as the way in which the gifts given to everyone functions effectively, i.e. through the equipping of the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. The focus is the unique and special gift of grace that each person has received and the role of the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers in the nurturing of the gifts.

3) Ephesians 4:11

In Ephesians 4:11 “Every Christian should be passionately committed to the creation and expansion of kingdom communities locally and globally and applying his or her gifts in some manner to that end. But not every Christian is commissioned and sent to create such communities where they do not exist” (cf. Acts 13:1-3; Rom 10:15) (Ott & Strauss; 2010: 224). Although Paul does not expect every Christian to be an evangelist, in the strict sense of the word he does argue that all are called to be active witnesses – that is, to have a missionary heart and lifestyle (cf. Mohrlang; 2013:142). Believers “as Christ's representatives in the world, are to live in a way that brings honour to the gospel and to do nothing that would detract from their witness” (Mohrlang; 2013:142).

It is not every co-worker of Paul and believer that was gifted to communicate the gospel cross culturally (Eph 4:11; 1Co 12:28-29). Many of Paul's co-workers only served in a temporary capacity as messengers and co-workers with Paul and for this reason their work is termed “the work of the ministry” (Eph 4:12). The idea that every one of Paul's co-workers was a missionary blurs the important distinctions in God's gifting and calling of specific servants to full time pastoral ministry and missions and the work of the ministry of the laity which is generally termed “the work of the ministry”.

a) τῶν ἀποστόλων καὶ προφητῶν (“the foundation of the Apostles”): Ephesians 4:11

The purpose of Ephesians 4:7-13 is identifying the task of the local leadership, which was part of the *oikonomia*, the task given to the apostles and prophets. The gifts are distributed organically throughout the whole body by the exalted Christ (4:7-8). The role of the four servants in 4:11 is to fulfil the ministry given to them to equip the whole Church to serve and fulfil the missionary purpose of God.

b) The relationship between Ephesians 2:20 and 4:11

The term “apostle” in Ephesians 4:11 is not used in the sense of an apostle, a special person with emphasis upon his authority and position as in Ephesians 2:20 where the focus is placed on the pioneering work of an apostle as a missionary. Paul as an apostle was a pioneer missionary sent out to plant churches in unreached territory to erect the foundation of a building, and to lay the foundation of the Church. Although we no longer have apostles like Paul today there are people who are sent out to plant churches. They do not have the authority and position of an apostle to relay the foundation of the church but they function in the tradition of apostles such as Paul because they plant churches in unreached places. Their work stands in a certain continuity with the pioneering missionary work of the apostles but it has to be distinguished from the work of the Apostles in the early church who primarily had to lay the foundation of the church (Eph 2:20). In Ephesians 4 the term “apostle” in this context literally means “a sent one”, someone who is sent from A to B as representative of the church to perform a specific function, such as planting churches. The task of the special ministries mentioned in 4:11 is to be servants in the ministry of equipping the Church and the saints for the ministry that has been entrusted to them (3:9-10). They equip the Church and every believer to carry out the work of service in the fulfilment of the mission given to the Church.

4) ἔργον δωροφορία (Eph 4:12)

Paul sets out the Church’s missionary task by teaching believers to bring them to full maturity in Christ. Paul saw his missionary task not only as planting of the Church but also as nurturing the planted Churches. For this reason “it is clear that the nurture of emerging churches is understood by Paul to be an integral feature of his missionary task” (Köstenburger & O’Brien; 2001:180). The prepositional phrase introduced by a marker of purpose εἰς ἔργον δωροφορία shows how “διακονία” becomes a force which conditions the organism of the body of Christ in its entirety with the result that the Christian community is to be understood as ‘a living instrument of service (Dienst organismus) in the world’ (Collins; 1990:13). The ministries of the Church are for perfecting, making adequate training, τον καταρτισμόν of the Saints which is part the ministry task, ἔργον δωροφορία, for the purpose of the building up of the body of Christ, εἰς οἰκοδομήν του σωματος του χριστου The “work of ministry”, ἔργον δωροφορία, “is not only part of this teaching process within the Church but every believer has a role in the dispensing of the word, to dispenses heavenly knowledge outside of the Church (Eph. 3:7; Col. 1:7, 23, 25). It is the ordained who carry out traditional functions (Eph 4:11) but they are not more “διακονία” or ministerial than the non-ordained. The “work of ministry” in Ephesians 4:12 is the work in which the Saints can participate. The responsibility for

transferring the mystery to believers is the responsibility of apostles and shepherds (“pastors” being taken as part of these; Eph 4:11) and prophets and evangelists who transfer the mystery outside the Church. And the responsibility to transfer the truth to unbelievers is the responsibility of every believer. The term ἔργον in 4:12 is related to the term in the indicative section of the letter, 1-3. God works out (ἔργον) everything according to his will (1:11), through the power that He has put to work (ἔργον) in Christ (1:19) – which is the same power that works (ἔργον) in us (3:20). The work of the ministry is an outworking of God’s ἔργον and the same power that worked in Christ is at work in the believer for the accomplishment of the work of the ministry. The three prepositional phrases in 4:12 introduced by πρὸς and εἰς indicate purpose. They refer to Christ and must be seen as drawing out different aspects of God’s ultimate purpose for the church in relation to Christ (cf. Peterson; 2000:199). These prepositional phrases indicate that the work of the ministry of the offices and every believer is part of the plan (oikonomia) of God.

πρὸς τὸν καταρτισμὸν τῶν ἁγίων (“for the equipping of the saints/believers”)

εἰς ἔργον διακονίας (“for the work of ministry”)

εἰς οἰκοδομὴν τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ (“for the building up of the body of Christ”)

The building up of the body of Christ has two dimensions, the building up in terms of internal growth and maturity .and the building up in terms of growth by the adding of the elect to the body of Christ¹⁴². The work of the saints includes both the internal and external spheres. The ἔργον διακονίας is the task committed to the believers, the “special” ministers equip the gifted members for their own ministry (cf. O’Brien; 1999:301-305; Hoehner; 2002:550). The ἔργον διακονίας of the saints is based on every believer is given a gift (v. 7). The believers are to function effectively in and outside the Church¹⁴³

Ephesians 4:13: The internal building up of the Church

It is God’s purpose that all believers should reach maturity and be filled with Christ. The goal is used with an indefinite temporal clause with an idea of purpose. The prepositional phrases introduced by εἰς refer to Christ and draws out different aspects of God’s ultimate purpose for the Church in relation to Christ (cf. Peterson; 2000:199). It indicates the goals of the work of the ministry and building up of the body of Christ, unity of faith and fuller knowledge of the Son of God and complete maturity. The goal is perfection and maturity and has in mind experiential and mental knowledge of Jesus Christ. It implies that fullness is related to growth. The τέλειος is that the body of Christ will attain to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. The goal of the maturity of every believer in Christ provides the scope of Paul’s mission. “In relation to admonition and teaching believers to bring them to full maturity in Christ, it is clear that the

¹⁴³ Hoehner (2002:550) identifies the believers as ministering effectively in the Church. Growth in size and Church as organism is meant (cf. O’Brien; 1999:305) indicating that the ministry is to take place in and outside the church.

nurture of emerging churches is understood by Paul to be an “integral feature of his missionary task” (O’Brien; 1993: 4; Bowers; 1987:197). “Proclaiming the gospel meant for Paul not simply an initial preaching or with it the reaping of converts; it included also a whole range of nurturing and strengthening activities which led to the firm establishment of congregations” (O’Brien; 1993: 43). For Paul then mission involved much more than conversion but also a growth in Christian maturity to perfection. The expression εἰς ἄνδρα τέλειον in Ephesians 4:13 speaks of attaining the measure of the full stature of Christ and picks up language from the statement in 1:23 about the church being his body, the fullness of him who fills all, and from the prayer in 3:19 about being filled with all the fullness of God (cf. Peterson; 2000:200).

2.1.4.1.2. Word study

(1) αἰχμαλωσία (‘captivity’)

The gathering of Jew and Gentile into one body, the Church, is the consequence of Christ’s triumph over the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms. In Eph 4.8 it has been suggested that αἰχμαλωσία (‘captivity’) is added redundantly to αἰχμαλωτεύω due to Semitic usage (Louw & Nida; 1988.55.24). The author, however, is intentional with the use of repetition, ‘He led captive those taken captive’ (Witness Lee; 1985:874). The captives may be Satan and his evil angels or sinners. It would seem to indicate that those who were captured by sin and death were saved by Jesus Christ’s death, resurrection and ascension. Jesus Christ took captive those who had fear of Sheol or Hades (cf. Ps. 49:14-15). It therefore has a missional purpose to inspire confidence in God.

(2) Διάκονος (“ministry/service”)

“The word “διακονία” itself occurs relatively frequently in the N.T, but the precise phrase “ἔργον διακονία” occurs only here” (Roels; 1962:193). In the context of Eph 4:12 the word “διακονία” has in view more than the official activity within the church (cf. Roels; 1962:194). It has in view the organic “building up of the body of Christ” (Eph 4:12). In this sense it has the meaning of a *servant who acts on behalf of others* (cf. Flemming; 1989:17)¹⁴⁴. “The emphasis is on serving as an action, doing something for somebody” (Flemming; 1989:17).

It has in view the use of a variety of gifts by the Saints in “the work of the ministry” (Eph 4:12). It does not have in view a vaguely general “spiritual service” but the exercise of particular gifts which Christ has given to each of the Saints for the role of the church in the redemptive mission of God. It was by emphasizing the

¹⁴⁴ The *New American Standard Bible* translates *diakonos* most often with *servant* instead of “deacon” (see 2 Cor. 6:4; Col. 1:25; 1 Tim. 3:12).

importance of the individual believer and his gifts (Eph 4:13) that Paul sought to ensure that the work of mission was not regulated to a few selected individuals within the church. It was the regulation of the work of mission to a relatively few selected individuals within the church, in the past, which led not only to the loss of mission activity on the part of each member, but also more seriously to a loss of mission consciousness on the part of the individual member (cf. Roels; 1962:195). Paul did not regard mission as the work of specially gifted individuals and so artificially divorced the believers “special activity” from his ordinary existence. Mission is part of the ordinary functioning of the believer in society which the believer does through serving others. The service is the natural response of a believer which flows out of a comprehension and deep appreciation of God’s redemptive act.

Paul’s ministry as a *diakonos* was the ministry of building up of the Body of Christ, to equip them as evangelists, shepherds and teachers so that they would be able to build others up to minister and the Body of Christ would grow (Eph 4:12-13).

(3) ἐδόθη ἡ χάρις κατὰ τὸ μέτρον (Eph 4:7)

It is possible to interpret ἐδόθη ἡ χάρις κατὰ τὸ μέτρον (Eph 4:7) as to every member of the congregation grace is given; more specifically a gracious gift is given. The term μέτρον is used to express the diversity and manifoldness of the gifts of grace allotted to different persons. The diversity of gifts is to serve the unity of the Church. The final goal of giving of the gifts of grace is the goal that the various gifts must serve unity — μέτρον is used in the sense of full measure to indicate this (Eph 4:7, 13).

(4) πρὸς τὸν καταρτισμὸν τῶν ἁγίων εἰς ἔργον διακονίας (Eph 4:12)

The purpose of the special charismata given to the church is to cause the church to become mature and perfect in Jesus Christ (Eph 4:13). The purpose is unity and knowledge towards a particular object, knowing Jesus Christ. The special charismata are also given to the church to equip it for the task, the mission, given it by God (Eph 4:12). The close relationship of the gifts with the purpose clause, “to prepare God’s people for works of service” (Eph 4:12), indicates that the reason for the giving of the gifts to the saints is also for ministry. The gifts are given to prepare the saints for ministry, inwardly and outwardly (cf. section 5 above). The body of Christ grows more and more to its fullness by each person using his or her gifts and engaging in the work of the ministry “until we reach unity in faith and in knowledge of the Son of God and become more mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ (cf. Eph 1:23, 2:15-16, 4:13, 12-16). Missions are essential for the body of Christ to grow into maturity.

(5) τῇς δωρεᾶς τοῦ Χριστοῦ (Eph 4:13)

The measure by which each person would be measured is the sphere of missionary activity which God has assigned according to the gift of grace given to each person. That is, the believer will be measured in terms

of the capacity and gifts that he has received and whether he has utilized these for the cause of Christ and thereby has grown into the fullness, the complete stature, of Jesus Christ (Eph 4:13)¹⁴⁵. This measure is not human; it is applied by God. The source of the gifts is Jesus Christ, as indicated by the genitive of source in the phrase τῆς δωρεᾶς τοῦ Χριστοῦ. It is the inner dwelling of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit that produces and supplies the gifts.

(6) Jesus Christ, however, did more than merely set them free from captivity; He gave gifts to those whom He set free from captivity. The gifts are the abilities or capacities for various services and gifted persons – apostles, prophets, evangelists and pastors and teachers (Eph 4:11-12).

o The *apostles* specifically refer to the Twelve and Paul, appointed by the Lord to take the gospel of Jesus Christ to the world and to lay the foundation of the church (Eph 2:20) (cf. Hendriksen, 1967:196). Since their work forms the basis of all missions, it is appropriate that they are named first of all the servants of God's Word that the Lord gave as gifts to his church.

o *Prophets* are mentioned here in the restricted sense of "occasional organs of inspiration" that had to preach God's word in the church at a time when the Canon was still in the making. They are mentioned in Ephesians 2:20 with the apostles as foundation of the church (cf. also Eph 3:5). While the apostles were appointed mainly for establishing the church (i.e. the foundation of missions), the prophets were given rather for the benefit of the already existing church (cf. Acts 13:1; 15:32).

o The *evangelists* were travelling missionaries (Hendriksen, 1967:196), who were given to take the gospel to the world for the expansion of the church.

o *Pastors and teachers* should be taken as one group, designated for building up the church by ministering the Word and shepherding the flock in the local churches.

These gifts are arranged in Ephesians 4:11 in crosswise order (c-d-c-d, cf. the thought structure analysis in 5.2.1.1 above). This arrangement probably confirms that missions and maintenance are intertwined in the church, as they are two sides of the same coin, since both are needed for building up the body of Christ. In Ephesians 4:12 there is a movement from the specific work of Christian leaders, those mentioned in v. 11 who are given "for the equipment of the saints" to that of the whole body of Christ. The work of the ministry, *diakonia*, is the work of the entire body of Christ. Apostles and prophets "when they are listed together with evangelists and pastor-teachers, the impression is given that *building* (cf. *oikodome*, v.12) the body of Christ involves both growth in size through evangelism and growth to maturity through teaching and the exercise of love" (Peterson; 2000:199). Mission is therefore the work of the whole body of Christ, the work of every member of Christ's body.

¹⁴⁵ The measure is the fullness or completeness of Christ is a reference to the character of the person (Eph. 4:13). I see an application of the principle of Luke 16:10-12 which is fundamentally about faithfulness and the character of the person.

(7) In **the thought-block B** Ephesians 4:11-14 the focus of the author is not the continuation of specific offices in the church (i.e., the offices of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher) but that every member of the church is gifted in one of the five mentioned areas (cf. Frost & Hirsch; 2003:170). The organic functioning of the apostolic, prophetic, evangelistic, pastoral and teaching gifts are in view. It is the functioning of the gifts that brings about unity, a harmony and well functioning organism. For this reason the role of the specific offices is to identify and nurture the gifts they have in others. The Spirit continuously gives these gifts to the body and calls people with particular gifts to serve the saints. The focus is that God equips believers in the body of Christ with gifts by the Holy Spirit for the building up and out of the body of Christ. “The corporate, Spirit-empowered leadership described in Ephesians transcends clergy-laity difference. In the missional community all are ordained to ministry in their baptism; all receive the same vocation to mission; and all are gifted in various ways for mission as they participate in the twofold journey of the reign of God that is both inward and outward” (Gudder; 1998:200). The gifts of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher given to the church are given to enable the church to carry out its fundamentally missional purpose in the world. It is to announce and demonstrate the new creation and new covenant life in Jesus Christ. The underlying argument of Paul is the way leaders form and equip missional communities to be demonstrations of the radical new reality of Christ’s reign in the world (Eph 4:13; cf. Eph 1:20-23). A body that is growing is a Church in which the gifts of evangelism, teaching and pasturing are identified and nurtured in others. A healthy body is one in which members of the body demonstrate the apostolic and prophetic gifts prophetically, means that each member is able to discern God’s voice in everyday life situations. It can be explained by the analogy of the relationship of parents to children. The goal of the parents is to nurture independence in the child, a sense of responsibility and maturity for the child to function independently of the parents.

(8) The building up of the church is the work of God Himself. He is the builder of his church and all other aspects of the building process stand in the light of this aspect, the primary and final acts of God, the Father. The growth in unity is discernible because it is a growth in true faith and the knowledge of the Son of God and a stature measured by Christ’s fullness (Eph 4:13). The growth in true faith and the knowledge of the Son of God is the goal of missions. The goal is the perfect man which is the result that will be attained in the eschaton¹⁴⁶. The goal of mission is the one same goal of arriving at maturity rather than an outwardly measurable success. The goal is εἰς ἄνδρα τέλειον, εἰς μέτρον ἡλικίας τοῦ πληρώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ (“a mature person, attaining to the measure of Christ's full stature”). The end phrase of this sentence, “*attaining to the measure of Christ's full stature*”, suggests that the imagery of the church as

¹⁴⁶ See Barth & Lincoln. In Hawthorne G. & Martin, R. (eds), 1993. “Dictionary of Paul and His Letters”; Downers Grove: IVP.

Christ's body is still the underlying notion in verse 13. The body of Christ is built up by steady ministry of truth of the Word, so that it grows away from the unsteadiness of babies (*"then we shall no longer be children (νήπιοι) tossed about by the waves and carried about by every wind of teaching"*, verse 14). If the church is not steadily built up on the "inside" to rest on sound doctrine and faith, it cannot effectively go out to the world preaching the gospel so that the body of Christ may grow further to completeness. If the Church does not move outwards it implies that inwardly it has not reached maturity.

(9) The individual believer is to evaluate his overall objective and motivation in mission in terms of whether it is consistent with the motivation and purpose of God, the plan of God. The reason is that God's redeeming purpose is to be at the centre of the mission which the believer is called to participate in. Every believer is saved for a purpose and has a role and part in the unfolding of God's plan in and through the Church.

(10) The Triune God grants the gifts of the Spirit and the new life but gifts such as knowledge, gifts of grace and spiritual gifts and talents are given to the believers for them to use in order to reap the benefits of those very gifts. The benefit that arises from these gifts requires that the believer grows in the exercise of these gifts.

2.1.5. Thought block C: the church built up for its task and calling: Ephesians 4:15-16

2.1.5.1. Thought block analysis remarks

(1) "εἰς οἰκοδομὴν τοῦ σώματος τοῦ χριστοῦ" ("for the building up of itself in love"): Ephesians 4:16

In the context it has implication of the "building up" of the congregation (i.e. 1 Cor. 14:5, 12), where it is the body of Christ that is built up. The individual members of the body are built up for "works of service". (Is it as the individual members are built up that the body is built up or is it as the individual members perform works of service that the body of Christ is built up?).

(2) Roels (1962:186) recognizes that gifts were given to individuals in the body of Christ and that these gifts have been given for the entire church "for certain express purpose" (cf. Roels; 1962:186). He does not, however, explore the purpose and reason that gifts were given to the church. It is the contention of this thesis that the express purpose of the gifts is to equip the church to be a community with a specific communal identity, to be a witnessing community. The phrase εἰς οἰκοδομὴν in Eph 4:16 is used "for the activity of establishing and maintaining community identity" (Matt. 16:18; Rom 14:19; 15:2, 20; 1 Cor. 3:9; 8:1; 10:23; 14:4, 17; 1 Thess. 5:11; 2 Cor. 10:8; 13:10) (cf. Johnson; 1986:121). The maintaining of the communal identity is a task of leadership, the task of the oikonomos and central to this identity is the preaching of the gospel.

(3) In the previous **thought block B** the building up of the church is limited to those given as *charismata* to the church, so that the individual believers can come to unity in Christ and to maturity in terms of faith and knowledge of the Son of God. In this third **thought block C**, however, the entire congregation is to be involved in the building process, with a focus upon the functionality of each person in the body of Christ fulfilling his work and task – κατ' ἐνέργειαν ἐν μέτρῳ ἑνὸς ἐκάστου μέρους. The equipping of the gifts of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers is so that each person can fulfil his calling and task. The task of missions is understood as the calling of everyone (cf. Eph 4:1). Every believer is endowed with the Spirit and grace and a gift for serving Christ and witnessing in the world (Eph 4:7-8). It is through the service, *diakonia*, and witness of each person that the Holy Spirit renews society (Eph 4:17-5:9).

(4) Palindrome arrangement (A-B-C-B-A) of this **thought block C** Ephesians 4:15-16 places Christ as Head, from whom the church as body grows up as the centre of the argument. Taken with 4:12, where the growth of Christ's body to fullness is also emphasized, it is clear that the argument of pericope as a whole is still operating within the framework of the confession of Christ as the Head, and the church as his body (cf. Eph 1:23). Whereas the first 3 chapters of the letter have in view the principle of Christ as Head and the church as his body in unity, this pericope introduces the more practical side of the principle, viz. how the body of Christ is built up and grows to make his body complete.

(5) The building up takes place in and through self-sacrificial love, agape love, ἐν ἀγάπῃ (Eph 4:16). Cf. the *inclusio*-pattern of **the thought- block C** Ephesians 4:15-16, whereby all activities towards the growth of the body are demonstratively placed within the framework of the love of Christ. It has been suggested that the purpose of the letter concludes the central theme of love, namely God's love for the human being and believers' love for each other (cf. Hoehner; 2002:106). The unity of the Head and his body and the giving of gifts towards growth are not a formal, loveless matters, but are based on the love of the Head for his body (cf. 5:25). Likewise the calling of the church, including to missions, can be obeyed faithfully only when executed in love. This is God's plan for his church, a community of love that reaches out in love to concretely express the love of Christ in and to the world.

(6) The significance of this section for missions is that it announces key aspects of the church as it confronts the society around it. The essential life and task of the church does not involve a strategy or resource based management, as the Church is not simply a pool or place of finding resources, human or financial, but a community of love based upon faithfulness to the commission received from Jesus Christ the Lord. Paul's role in the plan of God was not simply to make the Church attached to him, that is, to focus upon his own leadership role in God's plan, but to guide the church to submit itself to God's leadership, a leadership under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The missional strategy of Paul was to develop an organic type of leadership which was not based upon hierarchy but a relational leadership. This type of leadership is expressed concisely as, "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ" (Eph 5:21) which is a maxim that governs the subsequent pericope, Ephesians 5:20-6:9. In the pericope Ephesians

4:14-16 the entire Church is moved towards a goal, the goal of being a community that is faithful to the commission it has received from the Lord¹⁴⁷.

(7) Ephesians 4:15

“Building the church to maturity is achieved by God’s people, not by pastors or teachers” (Timmis & Chester; 2009:56). The purpose of the gifts of the Spirit is for both the internal building up of the church but also for it to be a missional community, a community that uses its gifts to express its identity in the world. The gifts given to the community by Christ are not given for self-indulgence or exclusively for the internal building up the body of Christ.

The suggestion that unity is the purpose of the letter appears initially to be consistent with Eph 4:12-13 but when the wider context is considered it becomes apparent that it is inconsistent with the flow of the passage. Mbennah (2009:43) has identified maturity as the main idea of the passage. His argument is that the main idea is that immaturity leads to instability but maturity leads to the proper and effective functioning of the body, the Church (cf. Mbennah; 2009:43). Maturity is a theme in the passage (Eph 4:12-14) but it is a subsidiary purpose of the pericope 4:1-16 and block 4:12-14. If the broader context is considered, it becomes apparent that the idea of maturity is related to the giving of gifts (Eph 4:7-11), and the broader idea is the proper growth and effective functioning of the body, the church (Eph 4:15-16). Maturity is the main idea of Eph 4:13. But the purpose of maturity is the proper growth and effective functioning of the body, the church (Eph 4:15-16) and building out of the church. The Saints are equipped to do the work of *diakonia*, to be servants so that the body of Christ may be built up (Eph 4:12) but also built out.

(8) Ephesians 4:16

The language of “making the most of time” (NRSV) is borrowed directly from the commercial vocabulary of the marketplace (Gr. *Agora*)” (Martin; 1991:66). The verb is *exagorazomenoi*, which means literally snapping up chances of a bargain that are available. Paul saw the marketplace as a place of opportunity where believers had to be alert for opportunities as they interacted with pagans. It was through exercising moral activities and choices that they had an opportunity to demonstrate a Christian ethic. The idea of stewardship of time which is a priceless commodity from God highlights the importance of the theme of stewardship in the letter (1:10; 3:2, 6). The call is for the Ephesians to steward their time by investing their energies in activities that provide evangelistic opportunities to spread the gospel. “Part of his strategy was to establish a pattern of ministry in the churches that would in many respects duplicate his own, enabling

¹⁴⁷ In the focus of the community upon a communal goal there is an echo of the Great Commission of Matt. 28:18-20.

God's people to promote "the body's growth in building itself up in love" (Eph 4:16) and to move together towards God's ultimate goal for them in Christ" (Peterson; 2000:201).

2.1.5.2. Background of Ephesians 4:17-19

The Gentile Christian converts, have entered into a new group and the requirements of belonging to the new group required a change in the conduct as part of this group (Eph 4:17-19) which is a theme in the subsidiary purpose of unity. The idea of being made new, in mind, attitude, character, "created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness" (Eph 4:24) is the central message of the periscope Eph 4:17-32.

2.1.5.3. The purpose of Ephesians 4:1-16

The purpose of Ephesians 4:1-6 is to establish the confession upon which the unity of the congregation is based. This confession is related to the confession in Ephesians 1:20-23 that Christ is the head. The purpose of Ephesians 4:7-16 is not simply about believers learning to exercise their varying gifts of ministry within the church but the equipping of the church for confessional based ministry. The overall purpose of Ephesians 4:1-16 is to overcome the limitation of ministry to professional, clergy-shaped leadership models which are an essential shift toward a missional leadership (cf. Gudder; 1998:200). It is about the empowerment of local leadership to join the apostles and prophets in doing the work of the ministry and building up the body (Eph 4:12). The purpose of Ephesians 4:1-16 is the proper functioning of each believer in the community in which each member uses his gifts to build up the community.

The emphasis in the pericope Eph 4:1-16 is "upon the equipping of the saints for the proper exercise of their individual tasks in order that the church may reach the perfection of Christ (Eph 4:13) for which it strives" (Roels; 1962:184). Each believer has to use his individual gifts for the final completion of the redemptive mission of God. The believer is commissioned to use his gifts for the building up of the church; the building up of the church is not the goal of the church but it serves the purpose of the body to function effectively as a witnessing community. The perfection of Christ (Eph 4:13) is the goal of the church, which has to be distinguished from the purpose of the church. Unity and maturity are twin goals of the church, which God has brought into existence through the exaltation of Christ (Eph 4:1-16). The ethical section which follows (Eph 4:17-5:20) is based upon these goals of unity and maturity. The missional activity which is implied here is not limited to a special class of evangelists and missionary proclaimers, but it is ascribed generally to the brothers and sisters.

2.1.5.4. The relation to the Old Testament

The application of Christ's triumphal ascension to the equipping of the Saints for ministry

Ps. 68:18	God's triumph over evil and the giving of gifts to men	Eph 4:8

2.1.5.4.1. The giving of a gracious gift(s)

The giving of a gracious gift implies a reason. The thought marker *διό* is a relatively emphatic marker of reason, usually denoting the fact that the inference is self-evident. It is best translated as “*for this reason*”. The reason for the giving of gifts is as a result of the ascension of Jesus Christ. The ascension and enthronement of Jesus Christ follow the movement in Ps. 68:15-16 to Mount Zion. Christ's ascension to heaven after He became flesh and descended, is implied in this quotation and also that Jesus Christ after his victorious resurrection and ascension gave gifts to his church who received it as spoils of the victor¹⁴⁸. The quotation of Psalm 68:18¹⁴⁹ is very significant in this regard because it has in view the victorious king on the battlefield receiving gifts, authority and power from and over those who have been conquered. Christ's ascension was the establishment of God's kingdom and the grounds for the distribution of the gifts, authority and power (Eph 4:7). The giving of gifts to the saints is the realization of God's victory through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ.

The use of the gifts by the church in Eph 4:8-13, by its allusion to Ps 68, is a call to use one's gift to the praise and glory of God, specifically in the context of mission. The author of Ephesians utilised a piece of tradition which was mediated to him not via general Jewish ethical teaching (as many commentators assume), but via early Christian adaptation of specific Old Testament motifs (cf. Moritz; 1995:393-396).

2.1.5.4.2. The relationship between Christ and the Torah

¹⁴⁸ The spoils were taken away by force as in Luke 11:22 τὰ σκῦλα αὐτοῦ διαδίδωσιν ‘he divides up the booty he has taken’.

¹⁴⁹ Psalm 68:18 is the only direct Old Testament quotation in Ephesians, introduced by a proper quotation formula. The quotation is adapted in Eph 4:8 (cf. Moritz; 1996:80). In its original context Ps. 68:18 alludes to the victory celebrations which followed a particular military success.

In Ephesians 4:8-10 the author reminds his readers of his understanding of the relationship between Christ and Torah. He does this by utilising a Christian reformulation of Psalm 68:18—which originated as a deliberate Christian response to the relatively common Jewish re-appropriation of Psalm 68 for elevating the Torah—and by supplying it with a ‘midrashic’ comment which prepare the ground for following the ecclesiological section (cf. Moritz; 1995:393-396). He made nuanced allusions to Ps 37 and 68 of the words of thanksgiving and rejoicing in God’s triumph over evil (cf. Waltke & Houston; 2010:32).

2.1.5.4.3. The eschatological age has dawned

The intention was to demonstrate that gifts were given to the church because of the dawn of the eschatological age (Eph 4:7-8). The ascension of Jesus Christ has resulted in God giving grace to each person in the church to the measure of His gift (Eph 4:7). The author may have had in mind the OT use of Ps. 68 as hymn celebrating the triumphal march of Israel’s God from Mount Sinai to Mount Zion. Interwoven in it is a prayer that this mighty display of God’s power be continued until all God’s people are rescued and secure and all the kingdoms of the earth bring tribute to the God of Israel. This then is a missional theme. The hearers or readers would have understood that the use of Psalm 68 indicated that the eschatological age had dawned which would have motivated them to engage in missions. The cry, “Praise be to the Lord/God” looks forward to the continuing triumphs until the redemption of his people is complete and his kingly rule is universally acknowledged (cf. Eph 1:19-23), the vision which inspired their missional outreach. The church is called to fulfil the mission given to Israel. It is, however, not the same mission given to Israel. The church is called to praise the Lord in the light of Ps 68 and to use its gifts (Eph 4:7-8) so that the knowledge of God’s might and power, and the submission of all the kingdoms of the earth to the rule and reign of Christ is demonstrated through the use of the gifts and God’s ultimate victory proclaimed.

2.2. SUMMARY OF EPHESIANS 4:1-16

The execution of the plan of God for the church described in Ephesians 3 is practically worked out in Ephesians 4-6. The plan of God (1:9-10; 3:2, 9-10) is practically developed and worked out by means of the particle οὖν (Eph 4:1, 17; 5:1, 7; 16; 6:14). This plan is realized through the church and every believer (3:10; 4:1-5:20). Every believer has received a call and this call is part of the execution of the plan of God. The manner in which the believers are to live out their calling is indicated by the preposition phrase μετὰ

πάσης ταπεινοφροσύνης καὶ πραΰτητος¹⁵⁰ (“with all humility and gentleness”) and μετὰ μακροθυμίας (“with patience/long-suffering”) before ανεχομενοι ἀλλήλων ἐν ἀγάπῃ so that without patience/long-suffering self-sacrificial love would not exist at all. This is in accordance with the believers call¹⁵¹. The confessional unity of the Church is the basis of its missional witness to the world (Eph 4:4-7). The evidence of this unity is a unity that is organic and moves beyond a merely structural unity which has to do with power, hierarchy, and uniformity of organizational forms and functions. The calling of the Church (4:1-2) is to bring the Body of Christ more and more to its intended fullness according to God’s plan. It can be illustrated by the image of a child who has been given a picture to colour. The outlines have already been drawn in but it is the role of the child to colour in the picture. In the same way God has established the lines of the picture, His purpose and plan, and the Church is involved in colouring in the picture. It is apparent from the context (Eph 4:1-3) that Paul is giving a testimony that his imprisonment is a consequence of “walking worthy of the calling” (v.1) in order to encourage the Church. The church has gifts, certain persons that are given to the church who function in one of these areas of gifting to equip the believers to use their gifts (Eph 4:11).

The building up is accomplished by the apostles and prophets and the evangelists, shepherds and teachers (4:11). It is the Saints who are to perform and carry out the work of ministry out and do the work of building out (4:12). It is the Saints who have been equipped by the gifted persons who are to spread the gospel. The gifted persons or offices were given to the church for the immediate purpose of preparing all the saints to minister for the building out of the body of Christ. The process of equipping continues until the goal of the believers being mature to the full measure of the fullness of Christ is reached (4:13). The building up therefore has two sides, the internal building up of the body so that it can accomplish its task in the world, the apostles and the evangelists worked outside and the prophets and shepherd inside. A distinction is made between the role of the offices that build up the body and cause it to become mature and those that build out the body of Christ; that extend the kingdom of God. The preaching function is intended to build the body up whereas the proclamation of the mystery of the gospel is intended to grow the body. Although all preaching involves the revelation of the mystery the building up of the body of Christ is concerned with sanctification and the building out of the body with justification (acceptance by God).

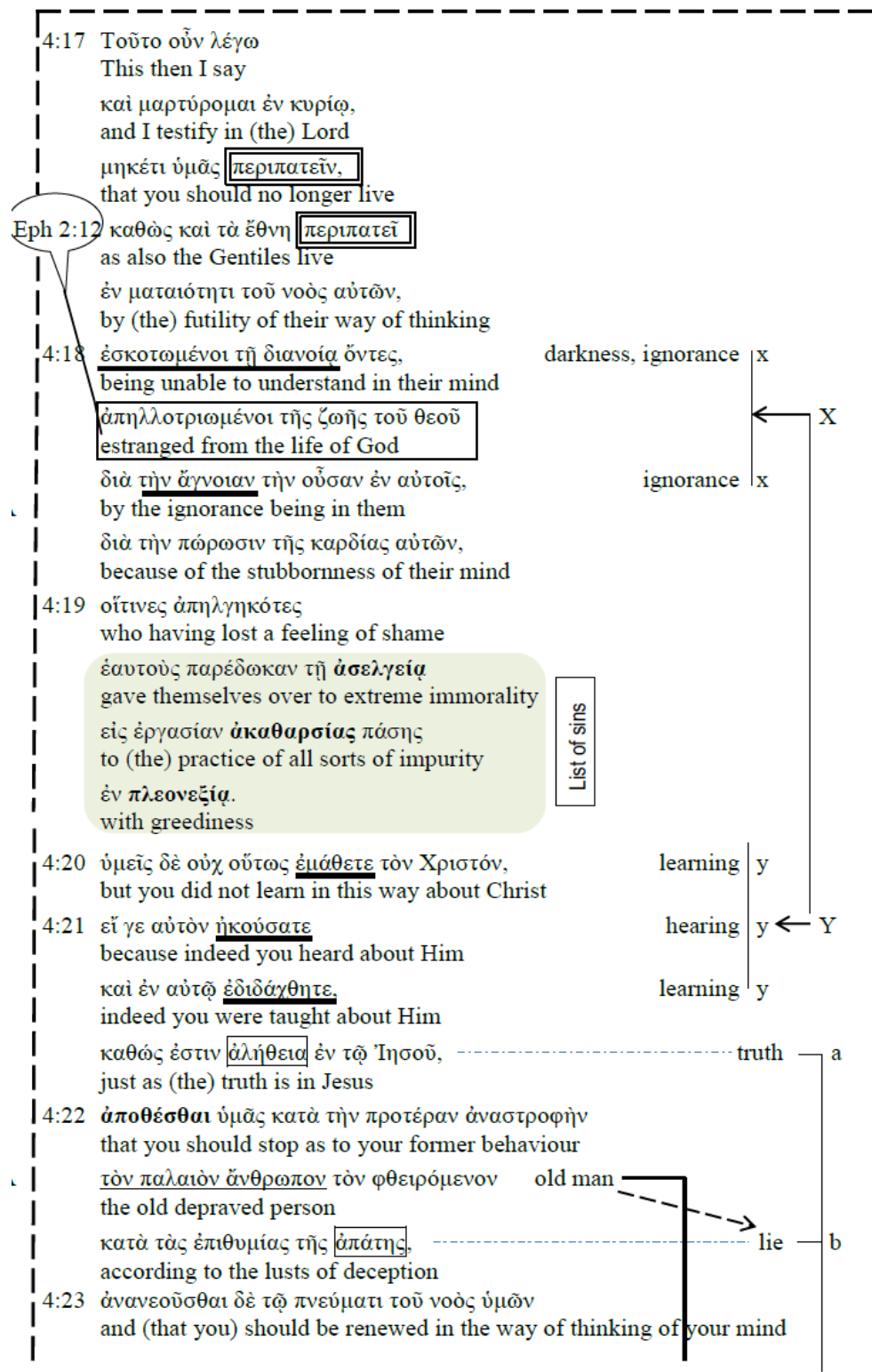
¹⁵⁰The attitude of humility and gentleness was necessary because of the differences between Jew and Gentile not to destroy but to keep the unity that was already in the one body of Christ.

¹⁵¹ The background is the unity between Jew and Gentile in the body of Christ which requires patience toward one another to function as the body of Christ in missions.

Paul did not regard mission as the work of specially gifted individuals and so artificially divorced the believers “special activity” from his ordinary existence. Mission is part of the ordinary functioning of the believer in society which the believer does through serving others. The service is the natural response of a believer which flows out of a comprehension and deep appreciation of God’s redemptive act.

3. EPHESIANS 4:17 – 5:20: THE BOUNDARIES SET TO THE CHURCH COMMUNITY AS BODY OF CHRIST

3.1. THE TEXT OF EPHESIANS 4:17 – 5:20 REWRITTEN



4:24 και ἐνδύσασθαι τὸν καινὸν ἄνθρωπον **new man**
 and (that you) should put on the new person
 τὸν κατὰ θεὸν κτισθέντα
 the one created with regard to God
 ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ
 in righteousness
 καὶ ὁσιότητι τῆς ἀληθείας. ----- truth ----- a
 and holiness of the truth

4:25 Διὸ ἀποθέμενοι τὸ ψεῦδος ----- lie ----- b
 therefore having stopped with the lie

Eph 4:16 λαλεῖτε ἀλήθειαν ἕκαστος μετὰ τοῦ πλησίον αὐτοῦ, ----- truth ----- a
 you must each one speak (the) truth with his neighbour
 ὅτι ἐσμὲν ἀλλήλων μέλη.
 because we are members of one another

4:26 ὀργίζεσθε καὶ μὴ ἁμαρτάνετε·
 be angry yet do not commit sin
 ὁ ἥλιος μὴ ἐπιδυέτω ἐπὶ [τῷ] παροργισμῷ ὑμῶν,
 do not let the sun go down on your anger

4:27 μὴδὲ δίδετε τόπον τῷ διαβόλῳ.
 and do not give the devil (a) chance

4:28 ὁ κλέπτων μὴκέτι κλεπτέτω,
 let the one stealing no longer steal

B μᾶλλον δὲ κοπιᾶτω
 but let him instead work hard
 ἐργαζόμενος ταῖς [ιδίαις] χερσὶν τὸ ἀγαθόν,
 doing good (work) with his [own] hands
 ἵνα ἔχη μεταδιδόναι τῷ χρείαν ἔχοντι.
 so that he may have to share with the one having need

4:29 πᾶς λόγος σαπρὸς ἐκ τοῦ στόματος ὑμῶν μὴ ἐκπορευέσθω,
 do not let any harmful word come out from your mouth
 ἀλλὰ εἴ τις ἀγαθὸς
 but only what (is) good
 πρὸς οἰκοδομὴν τῆς χρείας,
 for building up as is needed
 ἵνα δῶ χάριν τοῖς ἀκούουσιν.
 so that it may cause (a) blessing to the hearers

B Eph 1:13 καὶ μὴ λυπεῖτε τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον τοῦ θεοῦ,
 and do not sadden the Holy Spirit of God
 ἐν ᾧ ἐσφραγίσθητε
 by Whom you were sealed
 εἰς ἡμέραν ἀπολυτρώσεως.
 for (the) day of deliverance

4:30

List of sins

List of good works, vs. sins

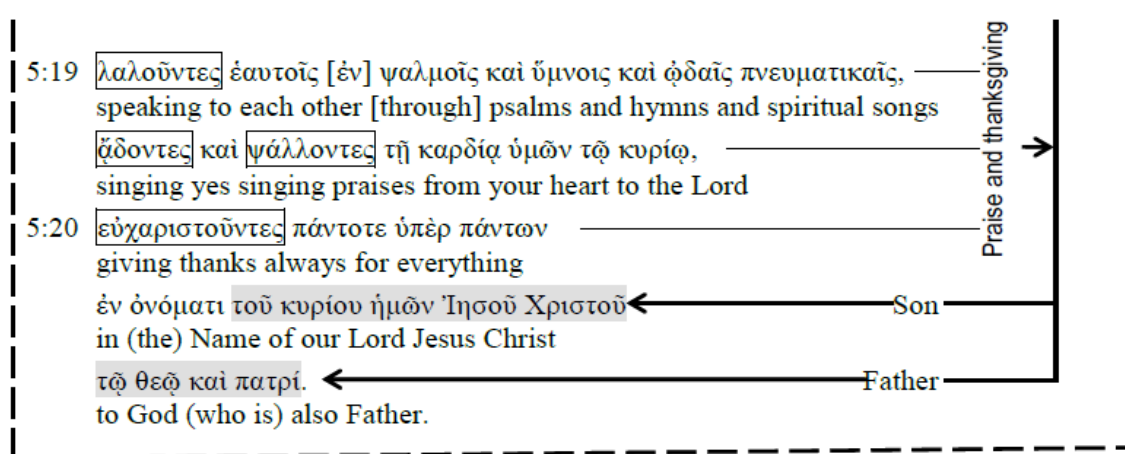
	4:31 πᾶσα πικρία καὶ θυμὸς καὶ ὀργὴ καὶ κραυγὴ καὶ βλασφημία all bitter resentment and fury and anger and screaming and slander ἀρθήτω ἀφ' ὑμῶν σὺν πάσῃ κακίᾳ. let it be totally removed from you together with all evil	List of sins
C	4:32 γίνεσθε [δὲ] εἰς ἀλλήλους χρηστοί, εὖσπλαγχοι, [and] be kind (and) compassionate to one another χαριζόμενοι ἑαυτοῖς, forgiving one another καθὼς καὶ ὁ θεὸς ἐν Χριστῷ ἐχαρίσατο ὑμῖν. just as also God in Christ forgave you. 5:1 γίνεσθε οὖν μιμηταὶ τοῦ θεοῦ ὡς τέκνα ἀγαπητὰ be then imitators of God like beloved children 5:2 καὶ περιπατεῖτε ἐν ἀγάπῃ, and live in love καθὼς καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς ἠγάπησεν ἡμᾶς just as also Christ loved us καὶ παρέδωκεν ἑαυτόν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν προσφορὰν καὶ θυσίαν τῷ θεῷ and gave Himself for us as (an) offering and sacrifice to God εἰς ὁσμὴν εὐωδίας. to be (a) fragrant odour.	Imitators of God's and Christ's love
D	5:3 πορνεία δὲ καὶ ἀκαθαρσία πᾶσα ἢ πλεονεξία μηδὲ ὀνομαζέσθω ἐν ὑμῖν, and let sexual immorality and all impurity or greed not even be mentioned among you καθὼς πρέπει ἁγίοις, as it befits God's people 5:4 καὶ αἰσχροτήης καὶ μωρολογία ἢ εὐτραπεία, nor indecent behaviour or foolish talk or vulgar speech ἃ οὐκ ἀνήκεν, which is not proper ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον εὐχαριστία. but instead thanksgiving 5:5 τοῦτο γὰρ ἴστε γινώσκοντες, ὅτι for this you must know understanding that πᾶς πόρνος ἢ ἀκάθαρτος ἢ πλεονέκτης, every sexually immoral person or defiled person or greedy person ὃ ἐστὶν εἰδωλόλατρης, that means (an) idol worshipper οὐκ ἔχει κληρονομίαν ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ θεοῦ. has no possession in the Kingdom of Christ and of God 5:6 Μηδεὶς ὑμᾶς ἀπατάτω κενοῖς λόγοις· Let no one deceive you with foolish words διὰ ταῦτα γὰρ ἔρχεται ἡ ὀργὴ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπὶ τοὺς υἱοὺς τῆς ἀπειθείας. for by these things comes the anger of God on the persons of disobedience 5:7 μὴ οὖν γίνεσθε συμμέτοχοι αὐτῶν· Do not then be partakers of them	List of sins a b a b punishment warning punishment warning x y x y

E

5:8	ἦτε γάρ ποτε <u>σκοτός</u> , for you were once darkness	darkness	b
	νῦν δὲ <u>φῶς</u> ἐν κυρίῳ· but now (you are) light in (the) Lord	light	a
	ὡς τέκνα <u>φωτός</u> <u>περιπατεῖτε</u> behave like children of the light	light	a
5:9	ὁ γὰρ καρπὸς τοῦ <u>φωτός</u> ἐν πάσῃ ἀγαθωσύνῃ καὶ δικαιοσύνῃ καὶ ἀληθείᾳ for the result of the light leads to total goodness and righteousness and truth	light	a
5:10	δοκιμάζοντες τί ἐστὶν εὐάρεστον τῷ κυρίῳ, examining what is pleasing to the Lord		
5:11	καὶ μὴ συγκοινωνεῖτε τοῖς ἔργοις τοῖς ἀκάρποις τοῦ <u>σκοτούς</u> , and do not associate with the useless deeds of the darkness	darkness	b
	μᾶλλον δὲ καὶ ἐλέγχετε. but instead indeed rebuke (them)		
5:12	τὰ γὰρ <u>κρυφῇ</u> γινόμενα ὑπ' αὐτῶν αἰσχρὸν ἐστὶν καὶ λέγειν, for what happens in secret by them is disgraceful even to mention	hidden	
5:13	τὰ δὲ πάντα ἐλεγχόμενα ὑπὸ τοῦ <u>φωτός</u> φανεροῦται, and everything rebuked by the light becomes known	light	a
5:14	πάν γὰρ τὸ <u>φανερούμενον</u> <u>φῶς</u> ἐστίν. for anything made known represents light.	light	a
	διὸ λέγει, Ἐγείρε, ὁ καθεύδων, Therefore it says: The one sleeping wake up	made known	
	καὶ ἀνάστα ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν, and raise to life from the dead		
	καὶ <u>ἐπιφάσει</u> σοὶ ὁ Χριστός. and Christ will shine upon you.	light	a

F

5:15	Βλέπετε οὖν ἀκριβῶς πῶς <u>περιπατεῖτε</u> therefore pay strict attention how you behave		
	μὴ ὡς <u>ἄσοφοι</u> ————— unwise — b		
	not as unwise		
	ἀλλ' ὡς <u>σοφοί</u> , ————— wise — a		
	but as wise		
5:16	ἐξαγοραζόμενοι τὸν καιρὸν, taking advantage of the time		
	ὅτι αἱ ἡμέραι πονηραὶ εἰσιν. because the times are evil		
5:17	διὰ τοῦτο μὴ γίνεσθε <u>ἄφρονες</u> , ————— unwise — b		
	because of this do not be unwise		
	ἀλλὰ <u>συνίετε</u> τί τὸ θέλημα τοῦ κυρίου. ————— wise — a		
	but understand what the will of the Lord (is)		
5:18	καὶ μὴ μεθύσκεσθε οἴνῳ, ἐν ᾧ ἐστὶν ἀσωτία, and (do) not get drunk with wine because that is recklessness		
	ἀλλὰ πληροῦσθε ἐν <u>πνεύματι</u> . ← Holy Spirit		
	but be filled with (the) Spirit		



3.1.1. Thought structure analysis remarks

3.1.1.1. Markers and pericope division

In the structural division of the Ephesians' letter this is the longest pericope. However, in spite of shorter thought blocks that can be pointed out, there are also, as indicated below, certain themes running throughout 4:17 – 5:20 that compels the exegete to take these verses as one pericope.

(1) Although the pericope is subdivided into 6 separate thought-blocks, it is bound together firmly by the repetition of the word *περιπατεῖν* at the beginning of almost every thought block (4:17; 5:2; 5:8; 5:15). This repetition is an indication that, in spite of different themes that are touched upon in the course of the pericope, it has one underlying theme that remains from beginning to end, namely the readers' *περιπατεία* ("behaviour") in practical life.

Another repetition closely linked to Paul's instructions about the readers' behaviour, is the list of sins against which Paul warns in 4:19 (thought-block A), in 4:26-28, 31 (thought-block B) and in 5:3-5 (thought-block D). The sins are put in contrast to the good works that should be part of the readers' life (cf. 4:28-29; 5:4).

(2) The first **thought-block A (4:17-25)** is marked by two separate and yet related antithetic word-clusters. The first is the contrast between their former life of *ignorance* (ἐσκοτωμένοι τῇ διανοίᾳ, ἄγνοια in 4:18) and their life they lead now in *knowing* (ἐμάθετε, ἠκούσατε, ἐδιδάχθητε, in 4:20-21). The second is the contrast between *truth* (ἀλήθεια in 4:21, 24, and 25) and *lie* (ἀπάτης in 4:22, and ψεῦδος in 4:25).

These two contrasting pairs seem to be in support of another equally prominent antithesis in the thought block, namely between the old man (τὸν παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον, to be taken off by the believers) and the new man (τὸν καινὸν ἄνθρωπον, to be put on by the believers).

This thought-block is also marked by “*reminders*” of themes in previous pericopes, by which not only the thought block itself, but also the entire pericope is linked to Paul’s foregoing arguments:

- It begins in 4:17 with the warning “that you should no longer live as also the Gentiles live”, which contains an echo of the words “your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world” in Ephesians 2:1.
- A stronger echo occurs in verse 18, where the phrase “excluded from the life of God” (ἀπηλλοτριωμένοι τῆς ζωῆς τοῦ θεοῦ) reminds the reader of Ephesians 2:12, “excluded from the citizenship of Israel” (ἀπηλλοτριωμένοι τῆς πολιτείας τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ).
- Much more obvious is the phrase τὸν καινὸν ἄνθρωπον in verse 24, which, although used in a different sense, is a striking repetition of ἓνα καινὸν ἄνθρωπον in Ephesians 2:15.
- Finally the phrase “we are members of one another” (ἐσμὲν ἀλλήλων μέλη) in verse 25 vaguely echoes the words “the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament” in 4:16. This confirms that there is a correlation between Ephesians 2 and 4.

(3) The composition of **thought-block B** is marked by a list of sins that is placed prominently as an *inclusio* at its beginning (4:26-28) and at its end (4:31). It is put in direct contrast to the list of good works, placed in the middle part of the thought-block, in 4:28-30). The contrast between sins and good works is placed in perspective by yet another “*reminder*” of an earlier discussion in the letter, i.e. the fact that the believers are *sealed by the Holy Spirit* (ἐσφραγίσθητε τῷ πνεύματι τῷ ἁγίῳ), in 1:13 and again here in 4:30. Thus a life in sin is characterized in verse 30 as *saddening the Holy Spirit*.

(4) A dominant feature that marks **thought-block C (4:32-5:2)** is the repeated exhortation to be *imitators of God and Christ in love*. The repetition is not morphological, but rather semantic, as found in the phrases καθὼς καὶ ὁ θεὸς (“just as God”, in 4:32), μιμηταὶ τοῦ θεοῦ (“imitators of God”, in 5:1) and καθὼς καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς (“just as also Christ”, in 5:2). The idea of *love* is carried by the statements that we are *beloved* (ἀγαπητά, 5:1) children of God and that Christ *loved* (ἠγάπησεν, 5:2) us. Therefore, the believers are encouraged to be *compassionate* (εὐσπλαγχνοί, 4:32) to one another.

(5) Similar to thought-block B, **thought-block D (5:3-7)** sets off with a list of sins against which the readers are warned (5:3-5). Similar to thought-block B, the list of sins is contrasted to good works, represented by the exhortation towards *thanksgiving* (εὐχαριστία, 5:4) placed in the middle so that it is enclosed by the list of sins. The special feature of this thought block, however, is that the warning against

sins is directly related (in a parallel x-y-x-y arrangement) to God's punishment for those who lead a life of sin: they will not receive God's Kingdom (5:5), but his anger instead (5:6).

(6) The prominent marker of **thought-block E (5:8-14)** is the frequent repetition of the opposites *light* (φῶς, ἐπιφάσκει, marked with an 'a' in the exposition above) and *darkness* (σκότος, marked with a 'b'). These two opposites are supported by references to that which is *hidden* (κρυφῆ, 5:12) and that which is *made known* (τὸ φανερούμενον, 5:14).

(7) The final **thought-block F** of this pericope (**thought-block F, 5:15-20**), once again introduced by περιπατεῖτε (cf. 5.3.1.2 (1) above), is marked by the opposites *unwise* (ἄσοφοι, ἄφρονες) and *wise* (σοφοί, συνίετε), arranged in parallel sequence (b-a-b-a) in verses 15-17.

The last part of the thought block (and of the entire pericope, for that matter) consists of a strong exhortation to *praise and thanksgiving* (λαλοῦντες, ᾄδοντες, ψάλλοντες, εὐχαριστοῦντες) in verses 19 and 20. The object of the praise and thanksgiving is the Triune God, is seen in the references to the Holy Spirit (5:18), the Son Jesus Christ (5:20) and God the Father (5:20).

3.1.1.2. Background of pericope 4:17-5:20

A Jewish contingent existed in the Church that had not completely forsaken its traditions and sought to impose Jewish ethical standards upon the community. The author endeavours to forge a Christian ethic which has its roots in Jewish ethics¹⁵² and includes Gentile cultural and ethical issues (4:17-19, 28) but anchoring the Christian ethics in the Trinity and specifically in Christ (4:32).

3.1.1.3. Broad Exegetical remarks of the pericope 4:17-5:20

(1) The purpose of Ephesians 4:17-5:20 is to explain missional ethics. Missional ethics is the ethical obedience that the redeemed in Christ are called to as an appropriate response to their election, redemption and covenant (cf. Wright; 2006:387). Christians are called to righteous action as their covenant obligation. Mission *per se* is not a covenant obligation, but a natural outflow of a life that demonstrates the righteous action of the covenant. It is a response to the grace of God (Eph 2:1-10) that places an ethical demand and responsibility upon the redeemed as a natural response to their relationship with God (cf. Wright; 2006:387). "Mission flows from the inner dynamic movement of God in personal relationship" (Wright;

¹⁵² Examples of language with a Jewish ethical connotation are ἀκαθαρσία-"uncleanness" 4:19, ὀργίζεσθ-"wrathful/wrath" 4:26/5:6, βλασφημία-"blasphemy" 4:31, προσφορὰν καὶ θυσίαν τῷ θεῷ-"offering and sacrifice to God" 5:2, ἀκαθαρσία-"unclean man" 5:4, ἀπειθείας-"disobedience" 5:6.

2006:63). The *mission Dei* or mission of God is, therefore, not merely God's involvement with the whole historical process but also includes our role in God's mission¹⁵³. The transformed living or missional ethics, which is a response to election (Eph 1) is not merely pleasing to God, it is also a matter of observation by outsiders (cf. Wright; 2006:387). The purpose of the block is to create an awareness that the Christian life is lived out in the wider community.

(2) The function of Ephesians 4:17-5:20 is to conceptualize the missionary ethics. The indispensability of hearing the gospel for salvation is seen in Ephesians 4:17-20. The ethical behaviour of believers are an integral part of the covenant and the universal mission of God (Eph 4:25-5:10). Missional ethics gives authenticity to the preaching of the message. The climax of the combination of God's redemption with human ethical response is a God centred missional motivation (cf. Wright; 2006:388).

3.1.2. **Thought block A: the old life transformed into a new life: Ephesians 4:17-25**

3.1.2.1. Thought block analysis remarks

(1) The **though block A** begins with the thought marker οὖν implying the conclusion of a process of reasoning. The maturity of the community is related to a separation in thinking between the converts, the Gentiles, and the surrounding and pervasive pagan culture (Eph 4:17). It is specifically addressed to the Gentiles in the church community and they are exhorted "to no longer behave as the remaining pagans", μηκέτι ὑμᾶς περιπατεῖν, καθὼς καὶ τὰ ἔθνη περιπατεῖ. The author urges the recipients in the Lord, μαρτύρομαι ἐν κυρίῳ, to continually maintain the distinction between themselves and the surrounding pagan cultural environment. This change in the practical behaviour of the Gentile converts directly stems from the new life they received by faith as a new creation in Christ (cf. 2:4-10), so that their former life was put away once and for all (cf. 2:1-3). In Ephesians 4:22 the infinitive ἀποθέσθαι is aorist, which is probably used in ingressive sense, indicating the beginning of an action or situation. The aorist infinitive ἀποθέσθαι indicates that the Gentile converts, when putting off their old life, undergoes a decisive change of identity (cf. Wallace; 1996:605). The verb denotes that the readers have taken off, literally stripped off, their old identity once and for all. Simultaneously the ingressive use of the aorist implies that the "putting off" of the old person is not a single incident. It is the beginning of an activity, to the believer a lifelong commitment. Yet, in principle it is regarded as a *fait accompli*. There is thus no turning back, because it is an ontological

¹⁵³ It is a distorted theology that the *missio Dei* means that the believers have no role to play in the mission of God (cf. Wright; 2006:63).

change that has occurred. The Ephesians' old identity has been laid aside and they have received a new identity and have become a new mankind – a *καὶνὸς ἄνθρωπος* (cf. 2:15; 4:24).

(2) Background of Ephesians 4:17

The church of Ephesus did not erect barriers of belonging. It is the reason that the author insists on the Lord, “that you must no longer live as the pagans do, in the futility of their thinking” (Eph 4:17). The community was intended to be a place of nurturing, growth, truthful and loving relationships in which every person and outsiders were welcomed to the gathering of God's people. In the old covenant dispensation the separation of Israel from the nations resulted in exclusivity. In the new covenant dispensation the separation of the Church from the world is for the purpose of the Church being a witness to the world and an open and inviting fellowship. The Church in the new covenant dispensation is a network of transformational relationships before being a gathering or a place of worship.

(3) The new identity

The new identity and character is continuously being renewed by the Holy Spirit. The verb *ἀνανεοῦσθαι* indicates that the believers are to allow the Holy Spirit to continuously root them in their new identity. It is the Holy Spirit who causes the believer to express the new identity. The infinitive functions as an imperative, indicating that it is an exhortation to the believer and the passive indicates that it is the Holy Spirit which brings this about. The corresponding verb with *ἀποθέσθαι* (“put off”) is *ἐνδύσασθαι* (“put on”), and it relates to the verb “create” indicating that it is the new identity which is continually demonstrated. The aorist passive infinitive indicates that it is a past event with continuing results. The experiential dimension of “putting off” and “putting on” is based on the “already” and “not yet” eschatological framework of the letter. In the Christian life believers already experience the life and power of the kingdom of God but not yet fully; that still awaits the future (cf. Eph 1:20-23). In missions a tension exists between an experience of the life and the power of the kingdom of God and the not yet of the full realization of the life and power of his kingdom.

(4) Transformation of identity

This change of identity in the converts would probably have been enormous from the perspective of the Gentile community. It all began with a new way of thinking. The thinking of the *ἔθνη* was in a state of futility or aimlessness (*ἐν ματαιότητι τοῦ νοῦς αὐτῶν*, 4:17) so that even the Jewish indictment of the Gentiles was that their thinking was aimless (cf. Safari & Sterns; 2:106: 1974-76). The picture of the heathen (i.e., non-Jewish) world depends in part on previous Jewish thinking (Wisd. 14:22-23; *Ep. Arist.* 152; *Sib. Or.* 3:220-35; Philo, *Vita Cont* 40-7) (cf. Best; 2003:276-77). In writing Ephesians Paul also had in mind the Jewish Christians who had an anti-Gentile tradition that dictated to them their behaviour to Gentiles as opposed to Gentiles who are now Christians to inform them about a Jewish, anti-Gentile tradition. In Ephesians 4 “v. 17c-19 contains a litany of standard accusations of the day by Jews about

Gentiles” (Slater; 2012:115). It presupposes that the author was aware of the discrimination of the Jews towards the Gentiles and was probably himself Jewish (cf. Slater; 2012:116).

The minds of the pagan Gentiles were also darkened (ἐσκοτωμένοι τῇ διανοίᾳ ὄντες, 4:18) by ignorance (ἄγνοια, 4:18). Although the original change was in the inner self of the converts, it inevitably resulted in visible changes in their lifestyle. A direct result of the ignorance and stubbornness of the inner self (Eph 4:18; cf. 2:12; 19) was that the pagan Gentiles continued to be in a state of alienation from the life of God: “Some, having lost all feeling of shame, gave themselves over to vice” (οἵτινες ἀπηλγνότες ἑαυτοὺς παρέδωκαν τῇ ἀσελγείᾳ, Eph 4.19). The surrounding pagan culture was given over to sensuality and the indulgence of every kind of impurity with a continual lust for more.

Missions require an awareness that outsiders continue to be in a state of alienation from the life of God through the ignorance and the stubbornness in them. The motivation for Paul’s missionary activity was that there were those who have not yet heard the gospel and are in darkness (cf. Rom 10:14-21). It is not merely individuals that are darkened and alienated from God but entire nations that are without the gospel. The message of the gospel is the means of salvation. The missional significance is that it is necessary for the gospel message to be proclaimed to the nations.

On the other hand, this futile pagan life, alienated from God, was put behind the converts (2:1-3, 12). They had experienced what may be called the indicative of salvation (*heilsindikatief*) in Christ. At the same time they are reminded in 4:21 that “the truth in Jesus is that they should put off their former behaviour” and should be constantly renewed in their way of thinking (4:23). So the indicative of salvation in Christ leads to an imperative in the new life of the believer. In verse 24 this relation between indicative and imperative is explained in a striking manner: We “have to put on the new person” (imperative), but once we are clothed with this new person, we know that it is God who created it (indicative). Although not explicitly stated, this urgent exhortation would have had a direct and important bearing on a mission strategy for Ephesus and Asia Minor. A new and changed life in practical matters, obviously distinct from the life typical to the pagan community, would serve as a strong witness to the surrounding community. So the imperative to lead your life according to the new identity that you received from God in Christ becomes part of the mission strategy in which the Ephesians’ church was involved. Non-believers will be guided to Christ when they perceive the believers’ new life. The first step of all missions is that the missionary should practice what he preaches. This basically seems to be the function of the pericope 4:17 – 5:20 within Paul’s mission strategy for the Ephesians.

(5) Transformation from ψεῦδος and ἀπάτη to ἀλήθεια

The transformation from the old to the new person, according to Paul in Ephesians 4:22-25 is a transition from a life of lies and deception (ψεῦδος and ἀπάτη) to a new life in truth (ἀλήθεια), which becomes visible in the new person speaking truth (4:25). It is characterized by a transformed existence in the world which is based upon the righteousness of Christ instead of legalism. The Christians are therefore exhorted to live “according to the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness” (Eph 4:24) a righteousness which has been obtained in Christ. It is to the extent that the believer ignores or forgets his identity (Eph 4:17-19) that Christian ethics are reduced to fundamental moral principles such as “absolute honesty” (Eph 4:25-6), provision for the needy (Eph 4:28), and forgiveness (Eph 4:32; 5:2) which does not flow out of a transformed identity. Christianity is reduced to moral habits when separated from the transformed identity and righteousness of Christ.

3.1.2.2. Exegetical Remarks

3.1.2.2.1. Word study

(1) ἐμάθετε (“learning”): Ephesians 4:20

The term ἐμάθετε has in mind learning about Christ. It is knowledge of the unique and central place and work of Jesus Christ in the sovereign plan of God. It has the meaning in the context of learning to know the person of Jesus Christ (“learning a person”) (Hoehner, 2004:594; Fowl, 2012:150). It has a missional relevance because Paul in Ephesians 4:17-19 describes the lifestyle and way of life which the believer has to break with. The focus is on the lack of knowledge and understanding as well as the emptiness of life of the previous lifestyle (cf. Petrenko, 2011:163,164). The learning of Christ has in view both the learning that takes place at conversion, and also the daily growth by increased knowledge of him (cf. Hoehner; 2002:595). “The inceptive aorist points to the time of conversion” (Hoehner; 2002:594). The believers have not only learned about Christ at the time they heard the gospel but they continue to learn and experience an intimate knowledge of Jesus Christ. In the centre of this pattern of learning is hearing.

4:20	ἐμάθετε	learning	y
4:21	ἠκούσατε	hearing	y
4:21	ἐδιδάχθητε,	learning	y

The word εἰ is a conditional conjunction that implies that the Ephesians had heard about Christ¹⁵⁴. The aorist points to the time of conversion as it does in 4:20 (cf. Hoehner; 2002:595). The goal of the learning is not merely to grow in factual knowledge, but it is to know Christ personally (cf. Hoehner, 2004:594). This knowledge of Christ has a transforming effect because it changes the way a person lives. It is the new behaviour which flows out of the transformed life that had a transforming effect on society.

The rest of ethical commands that follow in Ephesians 4 flow out of this personal knowledge of Jesus Christ (cf. Eph 4:21; 5:1, 2).

3.1.2.3. Summary of the thought-block Ephesians 4:17-25

It is as the church and all believers know their identity in Christ that they are regenerated children of God so that they would be in their very being to the praise of the glory of God (1:6). The ethical behaviour of the believers is an expression of their identity in Christ. This identity does not come from what they do but their relationship to God in Trinity. The identity of the believer which oscillates between past identity (2:1-3), that which they are no more (2:4-7), and their new identity in Christ, that which they are now, is constantly being renewed (4:21-24) so that they become increasingly what they are, that is their new identity in Christ is manifested to the praise of the glory of God. Mission is thus not merely involved in conversion of individuals but is equally to be involved in the renewal of the identity of believers so that their new identity in Christ is strengthened.

¹⁵⁴ It presupposes Ephesians 3:2 and that they had heard of the mystery and οἰκονομίαν given to Paul. It is through Paul's preaching of the gospel and faithful discharge of to the ministry given to him that the Ephesian's have heard about Christ.

3.1.3. Thought block B: the continuation of transformed behaviour: Ephesians 4:26-31

3.1.3.1. Thought structure analysis remarks

(1) ὁ κλέπτων μηκέτι κλεπτέτω (Eph 4:28)

In Ephesians 4:28 it is apparent that stealing was a cultural problem. The adverb μηκέτι, indicates an extension of time up to a point but not beyond (cf. Louw & Nida; 1988: 67.130). The paronomasia ὁ κλέπτων μηκέτι κλεπτέτω indicates a strong negation of an activity (Jordaan, 2013:172). The use of the present participle κλεπτων indicates that Paul is referring to crimes that may still have been taking place in Ephesus. It is confirmed by the use of μή with the present imperative κλέπτετω, which is normally used for a command to stop doing something (Jordaan, 2013:73). From Paul's defence before the citizens of Ephesus (Acts 19:37) it seems that the citizens of Ephesus were familiar with temple robbery and the desecration of the temple. Paul may have had his personal experience and the knowledge of the existence of temple robbery in Ephesus in mind when he wrote to the Ephesians.

(2) In Ephesians 4:29 talks that break down are to be replaced by talk and conversation that build up the body. The focus of such conversation is the building up of others in their area of need. The up building is encouragement for the fulfilment of the task given by God to the believer. It is to infuse others in the body of Christ with a missionary zeal. "Paul speaks of a confessional stance that is founded on God's love, mutual love, and on edifying missionary zeal" (Barth; 1974:444).

The task of the body is to spur one another on to fulfil the task (οἰκονομία), which God has given to each believer and in this requires a transformation of culture and cultural values.

3.1.3.2. The relation to the Old Testament

3.1.3.2.1. The identity and lifestyle of the believer

In Ephesians 4:30 the indicative statement of Isaiah is turned into an imperative warning (cf. Moritz; 1996:92). The allusion to the Holy Spirit in Isa 63:10 is a probable allusion and at best reminiscence (cf. Moritz; 1996:87). Stephan alludes to Isa 63:10 in his defence against the Jewish religious authorities and practically accused them of resisting God to such an extent that God turns and fights against them (cf. Moritz; 1997:92). The readers of Ephesians rooted in Jewish Scriptures may have recognized this. The prophetic reminder of Isa 63:10 may have caused his Jewish readers to question whether they had not brought a curse upon themselves for disregarding the covenant which God vowed to bring upon the people of Israel (cf. Lev 26:17). It is, however, impossible to ascertain whether the allusion in Ephesians is used by the author in this way (cf. Moritz; 1996:92). The Holy Spirit is grieved when the identity and lifestyle of

the believer do not correspond because it hampers the witness of the believer. It contradicts his or her testimony of salvation.

An allusion to the grieving of the Holy Spirit

Isa 63:10	The indicative that the Holy Spirit was grieved is transformed into an imperative not to grieve the Spirit by unethical behaviour.	Eph 4:30

3.1.4. Thought block C: the continuation of transformed behaviour: Ephesians 4:26-5:2

3.1.4.1. Thought structure analysis remarks

The practical ethical exhortations of Ephesians 4:25-31 for the believers to distinguish their behaviour from the surrounding culture as being-in-Christ was naturally worked out in the network of social relationships the believers were involved in. “The patterns included love of truth; honest purpose in daily work, with an altruistic concern for others in need; sincere speech” (Martin; 1991:60).

(1) The exhortation in 4: 28 is not to grow weary in labour and effort. A contemporaneous action takes place, that is “while working” with a person’s skills, physical abilities, for the purpose of providing something to share with others. The concept of sharing was characteristic of a missionary community. The early church in Jerusalem was a community which shared its possessions with the result that the church grew rapidly in number, fellowship and love and in depth. The motive for work is thus not merely to provide for oneself, but for taking care of the needs of others, and thus missions. It is living out the gospel and mirroring Jesus Christ’s humility, mercy, forgiveness, that gives concrete evidence of the Lord’s power and presence in a person’s life.

(2) Transformed ethical behaviour

The motivation for the transformed ethical behaviour which has a missional orientation is that as God has generously forgiven us in Christ we are to generously forgive others. The imperative, “live a life in love”, *περιπατεῖτε ἐν ἀγάπῃ* is co-ordinated with the imperative *γίνομαι*. A comparison is made in both Ephesians 4:32 and 5:2, but the subject in 4:32 is God in Jesus Christ, Trinitarian and in 5:2 it is simply Christological, Jesus Christ. “The comparison implies that the recipients are to be imitators of God and it is emphasized that the way that they are to offer themselves to God (5:1) is through the imitation of the sacrificial example of Jesus Christ (5:2). The sacrificial way of Jesus expressed in his love for us is not only

the means of salvation, but it is also the missional example of the way we are to live for the sake of others (cf. Rom 12:1-2)¹⁵⁵.

3.1.5. Thought block D: imitators of God and Christ in love: Ephesians 5:3-7

3.1.5.1. Thought Structure Analysis Remarks

The conjunction *δέ καί*, “*and then*” is a marker of closely-related events and indicates a continuation of the thoughts of the previous thought block. The requirement for being a sacrificial offering is that there must not be even mention of any immorality, greed (to possess more than is needed) as appropriate for God’s people. The reason, it would seem, is that it would discredit the communities’ missional witness to the world. Contrary to the behaviour that befits God’s people (*πρέπει ἁγίοις*, 5:3), Paul in Ephesians 5:4 describes behaviour, “what is (really) not proper” (*ὃ οὐκ ἀνῆκεν*), but yet happens (cf. the a-b-a-b pattern in the exposition; cf. also (Blass & Debrunner; 1961:181). Paul does not have in view behaviour that is unethical and prohibited but improper for a believer’s witness and testimony. The behaviour that is in view is coarse jesting, the dexterity of turning a discourse to wit or humour that ends in deceptive speech. The reason that the behaviour is improper is specifically because it demonstrates no visible distinction between the new self and the old self. The inner transformation that has taken place in the believer necessitates a new way of relating to the pagan culture that the believer once shared (cf. Eph 4:17-23). The conjunction *ἀλλά* in 5:4 indicates an emphatic phrase marking a contrast, “but instead (of doing these things) to express gratitude (to God for blessings)”. Gratitude is identified as the basic structural feature of the Christian missional ethic. The absolute necessity for maintaining a moral distinction between the believer and values of the pagan culture is indicated by the participle added to a finite verb and used to strengthen the verbal idea (cf. Blass & Debrunner; 1961:218).

The following verse, Ephesians 5:5, is introduced by the markers *τοῦτο γὰρ ἵστε* which functions as a clarification for the content of Ephesians 5:4. The clarification is that the person who falls back into the immoral conduct of the former life, will indeed bring God’s punishment over himself, for “no immoral, impure or greedy person has any inheritance in the kingdom of God”. A similar warning of punishment follows the warning in verse 6: “Let no one deceive you with vain speech, because of such things God’s wrath comes on the sons of disobedience”. The warning is intended to safeguard the believers from

¹⁵⁵ In Romans 12:1-2 the evidence of the transformation of the mind is the willingness to offer ourselves as living sacrifices to God.

disregarding their share in the possession of the eternal inheritance. The Semitic expression, “*sons of disobedience*” recalls the language of Ephesians 2:1-3 and their previous state in which they were dead in their transgressions and sins and followed the ways of this world.

The exhortation in Ephesians 5:7 is intended to prevent the recipients from forfeiting the partnership in the promise through Jesus Christ by participating in the sinful lifestyle of unbelievers. The Ephesian’s are exhorted not to become partners with the false teachers, possibly the Nicolaitans, but there are no indications of this, who taught that believers had the spiritual liberty to practice idolatry and immorality. The Gentiles have become ‘partners in the promise made through Christ Jesus,’ συμμέτοχα τῆς ἐπαγγελίας ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ with the Jews (Eph 3.6) and therefore cannot become partners with false teachers or pagan Gentiles again. They cannot be in a relationship with those who speak empty words. The concluding particle οὖν (“*therefore*”) in verse 7 marks the conclusion of a process of reasoning and the second series of paranses, (Eph 5:1-7). The idea stated in the negative, “do not be partners with them” (5:7) implies that the author had in mind a positive partnership for the sake of the spread of the gospel. This partnership is different from the use of the term in Philippians (1:4) where it is used in a broad sense to include, but not limited to the financial help and co-operation the Philippians gave to Paul.

3.1.6. Thought-block E: transformed from darkness to light: Ephesians 5:8-14

3.1.6.1. Thought Structure Analysis Remarks

(1) The key markers to **thought block E** is the repeated reference to light (φῶς), as opposed to *darkness* (σκότος) – cf. the b-a-a-a-pattern in verses 8-9 and again b-a-a-a in verses 11-14 (5.3.1.1 above). The purpose of Ephesians 5:8 is to indicate that the believer’s lives have been illuminated or transformed by the Holy Spirit. And it is because they have experienced inner transformation, they have become light in the Lord that they should not return to their former way of life, which was in total darkness. That this *light-darkness* antithesis refers to a transformation from their former lives into their new life, is confirmed by the use of the particles νῦν δέ in verse 8. *Light* and *darkness* are naturally used metaphorically in this thought block. How should the metaphor be understood?

- *Darkness* is representative of gloom, oppression and sin. This meaning of the metaphor is provided in the course of the thought block itself, in verse 11, where the believers are exhorted not to “associate with people who do worthless things that belong to darkness” (μὴ συγκοινωνεῖτε τοῖς ἔργοις τοῖς ἀκάργοις τοῦ σκότους), and again in verse 12 where the works of darkness are associated with “what is disgraceful even to mention” (αἰσχρόν ἐστιν καὶ λέγειν).

- *Light*, on the other hand, is defined in relationship with the Lord, ἐν κυρίῳ (5:8). A life conducted (περιπατεῖτε, 5:8) in light leads to total “goodness and righteousness and truth” (ἐν πάσῃ ἀγαθωσύνῃ καὶ δικαιοσύνῃ καὶ ἀληθείᾳ, 5:9) and is pleasing to the Lord (5:10). In verse 9 goodness and righteousness and truth is called the “fruit of the light” (καρπὸς τοῦ φωτός), which reminds of the *fruit of the Spirit* in Galatians 5:22. This similarity in expression suggests that *light* as metaphor may be associated with the work of the Holy Spirit. No wonder that in the Textus Receptus the reading of Ephesians 5:9 were changed from καρπὸς τοῦ φωτός (“fruit of the light”) to καρπὸς τοῦ πνεύματος (“fruit of the Spirit”) (cf. Fee; 1993:717).

- The believers are to test the genuineness (of the fruit), δοκιμαζόντες, with the aim of finding out what is pleasing to the Lord (Eph 5:9) and should not be involved in some joint activity with people who do worthless things, belonging to the darkness (5:11). The reason is that it would discredit their Christian witness and testimony. The exhortation therefore has a missional application.

- The metaphor of light and darkness alludes to the concise moment of turning away from a self-centred life to one centred in God. The metaphor occurs in the ethical section and therefore has in mind the ongoing growth process to Christian maturity.

(2) Instead of associating with the worthless deeds of darkness, the believers should *rebuke or correct* (ἐλέγχετε) them (cf. 5:11). The imperative ἐλέγχετε indicates the responsibility of the church’s missions to point out the wrongdoing so that the useless works of darkness may become evident. Missions, therefore, include pointing out useless works which are not the fruit of salvation, but of false erroneous beliefs, so that in being rebuked (ἐλεγχόμενα) everybody may recognise such works as being of the darkness (5:13). The verb ἐλεγχόμενα is a present passive participle. The passive may again be taken as a “divine passive”, so that it indicates that it is God who shows and convinces others of their faults (Eph 5:13). In missions it is ultimately God who convinces of the fruitlessness of certain works and the underlying erroneous beliefs. The missionary has to recognize the limitations of his responsibility and the sovereignty of God in exposing fruitless actions.

(3) Finally, the quotation in 5:14 also has a missional undertone, as indicated by the thought marker διό (“therefore”) the quotation is from Isaiah 60:1-3. Its purpose is to awaken the believer to be aware of the danger of sin and of the contrast between light and darkness, and specifically to understand what God’s purposes are for humankind and Christians. The phrases “stand up out of the dead,” (ἀνάστα ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν, 5:13) is an exhortation that the believers are to awake out of their lethargic and utterly fruitless or useless state. It can be typified as an exhortation to missional action. Note: The context of Isaiah 60:1-5 is the influx of the Gentiles into the Church (cf. Hag. 2:7; Zec 14:14; Rev 21:26). It has been suggested that the first line of the hymn was words that were sung to the newly baptized as he or she stood up from the water (cf. Ficher, 1973:141; Pokony, 1965:120; Schnakenburg; 1991:234). The function of the hymn was, therefore, that it either exhorted existing believers to awake from a state of lethargy or it confirmed newly

converted believers in their faith. The main thrust of the hymn was not the act of baptism. It is supported by Moritz (1996:115) who says, “It is highly likely that the hymn alluded to the conversion aspect in a believer’s life, there is nothing to suggest that the author of Ephesians was interested in any baptismal overtones it may or may not have had”. The exhortation is to live a life of faith either immediately after conversion or to remind the believer about his or her conversion and so to encourage the believer to recapture the excitement and enthusiasm that accompanied conversion. It has also been suggested that the main thrust of the hymn was simply “to remind the readers that the past is left behind and that they must continue to expose themselves to the light of Christ” (Moritz; 1996:115).

3.1.6.2. The relation to the Old Testament

3.1.6.2.1. The adaption of Isaiah

“A number of early interpreters of Ephesians suggests that 14b amalgamates a variety of verses taken from Isaiah” (Isa 9:1; 26:19-21; 51:9-17; 52:1 and 60:1) (Moritz; 1996:100). It would, however, seem that only Isaiah 26:19 and 60:1f are serious candidates based on the LXX version (cf. Noack; 1962:52). “Ephesians 5:14b preserves an early Christian hymn which in turn was heavily influenced by the wording of Isa. 26:19 and 60:1f” (Moritz; 1996:115). Grammatically Isaiah is a narrative genre whereas Ephesians consists of imperatives. The indicatives of Isaiah are adapted as imperatives for a new exhortatory setting¹⁵⁶. The author of Ephesians inserts “Christ” instead of “Lord,” as a Christological transfer from Yahweh to “Christ”. The light/darkness metaphor in Ephesians 5:8-14 is transformed by the use of the term ἐπιφάσκει instead of the term used in Isaiah 60:2 to encapsulate the transformation for God’s people. It indicates that fulfilment of the promise of the shining light and exhorts “the dead” to come afresh under the influence of God’s light in the context of darkness. “The author of Ephesians may have incorporated this hymnic text on the grounds that it captures poignantly what corresponds not only to the ethical thrust of Isa 26:10 and 59:9-17” (Moritz; 1996:104) but also captures missionary idea of the letter.

The allusion to the new life and conversion

Isa 26:10; 60:1f	The believers are to come afresh under the influence of God’s truth.	Eph 5:14

¹⁵⁶ This is characteristic of the way in which Isaiah is employed in Ephesians. Ps 68:19 is adapted in Eph 4:8 for a new audience and Isa 63:10 which is an indicative statement in Isaiah is adapted into a warning or imperative.

3.1.7. Thought block F: live the new life wisely to the glory of God: Ephesians 5:15-20

3.1.7.1. Thought Structure Analysis Remarks

(1) The introductory thought marker οὖν (“therefore,” Eph 5:15) of this final thought block also forms the introduction to the final exhortation of the pericope. As pointed out at the beginning of the pericope discussion (5.3.2.1 above) the Ephesians 4:17-5:20 as a whole deals with the practical life of the Ephesians which should be conducted in such a manner that it will actually serve as missions-by-example. So it makes perfect sense that this final and concluding thought block sets out with the exhortation “Think about how accurately you live” (Βλέπετε οὖν ἀκριβῶς πῶς περιπατεῖτε, 5:15).

(2) The exhortation is expanded by the phrase “do not live like unwise people, but likewise people” (περιπατεῖτε, μὴ ὡς ἄσοφοι ἀλλ’ ὡς σοφοί, 5:15). The paronomasia ἄσοφοι-σοφοί in this phrase draws attention to the fresh perspective that the apostle, at the very end, wants to add to their understanding of their practical conduct within a pagan society. Wisdom is qualified as “to make good use of opportunity” or “working urgently” (ἐξαγοραζόμενοι τὸν καιρὸν, 5:16). The addition of the ὅτι-clause “because the days are evil” makes perfect sense if understood in a missional context. The motivation for making use of every opportunity is because the light of the gospel has to be proclaimed in an evil environment. This missional perspective is strengthened by the subsequent exhortation: “Do not be unwise, but understand what the Lord’s purpose is” (Eph 5:17). This exhortation is preceded by διὰ τοῦτο, indicating reason, so that the wise believer will understand what God’s purpose with the “evil days” is. The phrase τὸ θέλημα τοῦ κυρίου indicates the purpose of the Lord (Louw & Nida; 1988:30.59) and is an echo of what Paul wrote earlier on in Ephesians 1:9. In Ephesians 1:9-10 God’s hidden purpose (τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ) was described in terms of his plan for mankind (οἰκονομία). As discovered by the investigation of subsequent pericopes, these terms prove to have a direct bearing on the mission and the strategy of gathering the church that Paul describes in the letter. So, the use of this phrase in Ephesians 5:17 show that the believers, in discerning the Lord’s purpose, will be able to make use of every opportunity. The focus is upon recognizing opportunities which are in the plan and purpose of the Lord. The wise person recognizes and uses these opportunities for the spread of the gospel. The foolish person, however, misses opportunities to witness for God in a pagan environment because he is unaware of God’s purpose and will. The wise person is able to discern the times and knows that the days are evil whereas the foolish person is unaware of the urgency of the situation.

(3) The concluding verses of the pericope, 5:18-20, brings forward the perspective on the practical περιπατεῖα of their new life in Christ as a witness to the surrounding pagan community. In the society drunkenness (μέθυσις) was a common practice. But the believers had to set an example to the community of not being full of wine (μεθυσκόμενοι οἴνῳ), but being filled with the Spirit (5:18). The contrast is

between a community led by the Spirit and walking or living in the light and thus a community living wisely and a community intoxicated by the world¹⁵⁷. The noun ἀσωτία in Eph 5:18 may be rendered as ‘*what one does without being able to think about it*’ or ‘*what one does when the mind is absent*.’¹⁵⁸ The focus of the verb ἀσωτία is behaviour which shows lack of concern or thought for the consequences of an action¹⁵⁹. The contrast with πληρουσθε implies that being under the control of the Spirit is demonstrated by behaviour that considers the consequences of actions. The freedom that the Holy Spirit brings is not a freedom to act recklessly. The phrase ἀλλά πληρουσθε ἐν πνεύματι can be translated as, “*be controlled by the Spirit*” rather than “*be filled with the Spirit*” (N.I.V). In the immediate context the verb “*be controlled*” is followed by a series of participles, speaking (v.19), singing (v.19), making music (v.19) and giving thanks (v.20). The author shows how believers can be controlled by the Spirit in practical ways (Eph 5:19-20) and in human relationships (Eph 5:21-6:9).

The four participles indicate a life controlled by the Spirit:

- a) speaking truthfully (v.19),
- b) singing (v.19),
- c) making music (v.19) and
- d) giving thanks (v.20).

Yet the perspective that comes from 5:18-20 goes further than only the practical matter discussed above. These verses also serve as a reminder that the new life in Christ, when wisely conducted, results in the entire Christian community praising of the glory of God Triune. Therefore, these last verses are imbedded in references to the three Persons of the Divine Trinity: “controlled by the Spirit” (πληροῦσθε ἐν πνεύματι, 5:18), “in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (ἐν ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, 5:20) “to God who is Father” (τῷ θεῷ καὶ πατρί, 5:20). This “Trinitarian” ending reminds of the almost similar “Trinitarian” opening of Ephesians 4-5, where the unity of the body of Christ was described in terms of “one Spirit, one Lord, one God and Father of all” (ἐν πνεῦμα ... εἷς κύριος ... εἷς θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ πάντων, 4:4-6). The missional significance is that missions are a form of worship that is for the glory of God. The goal of mission is to re-establish the worship of God amongst the nations of the world. It is the goal of Jesus Christ to glorify God the Father and it is the Father’s goal that Jesus Christ be glorified by the nations.

¹⁵⁷ “Paul is not so much telling them not to get drunk – that is assumed under walking in the light and thus walking wisely – as he is urging them continually to live in/by the Spirit” (Fee; 1993:720).

¹⁵⁸ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. 1996, c1989. *Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.). United Bible societies: New York.

¹⁵⁹ In Acts 19:36 the town clerk warns the crowd to calm down and not to do anything “*without thinking*” or “*without counting the cost*.” The lifestyle of the prodigal son in the foreign land is depicted as reckless behaviour as he lived without being concerned (Luke 15:13).

The purpose of God when He made the nations was for him to be glorified by praises from the diversity of nations. This will be accomplished when all things have been summed up under Jesus Christ (1:10).

3.1.7.2. Concluding general remarks from the exegesis of the pericope – identity

There is still an important matter stemming from the exegesis of this pericope that has to be discussed, because of its importance for missions as a whole. This is the matter of Christians' identity. Paul's insistence that the Gentile converts in Ephesus should leave behind the sinful behaviour that was part of the Gentile community from which they came, did not imply that they should also change their national identity. So the matter of the dual nature of the Christian identity appears on the horizon.

In the first century world identity was determined by the categories of kinship, household, clan or tribe. In this view an individual was entirely destined by his or her social kinship situation and always identified with his or her family roles. The Pauline Christian movement had frequent collisions with the household structure. In order for the Pauline Christian movement to be understandable, the individuals would have to make decisions about their social identity. The Pauline model was that an individual could join a household or family structure and not on the basis of kinship hierarchy. It is because of the frequent collisions with Greco-Roman household structures that Paul sets out the Christian believers' relationship to the household in Ephesians. The identity in Christ was the most important identity and negotiation between a person's identity as a believer and kinship hierarchy necessitated that the household identities had to be found their identities as hierarchically subordinate to the identity in Christ (cf. Roitto; 2008:147). The maintenance of a Christian identity and sense of belonging to the household of God required certain self-understanding and positioning to Greco-Roman household structures. This included:

(1) Boundary markers

The Christian community had to give attention to its ethical boundary markers. The ethical teaching of Paul in Ephesians serves to give the Christians community a distinctive way of life. The loss of the Jewish boundary markers (e.g. the marker of circumcision in Judaism) in Ephesians is compensated by detailed ethical boundary markers. In Ephesians 4:17-5:20 Paul firms up the boundaries between the Christians community and the outside world and makes his readers aware of the need to do so. The parameters of the identity of the community are set out so as to safeguard against assimilation. The purpose of erecting boundaries is not to set up again a wall (Eph 2) but to ensure that the Christian community is able to maintain its identity as it seeks to communicate the gospel and alternative behaviour to those outside the Christian community. The author does not seek for members of the community to remove themselves from social relationships with pagans or from the dominant cultural ethos, but to bring a stark contrast through the way that the community lives so that the contrast between darkness and light becomes visible. The Christian social relationships that need to be exemplary are the relationships within the household (Eph

5:21-6:9). In fact, the community could not avoid contact with immoral people, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters; otherwise they would have to leave the world (cf. 1 Cor. 5:10).

(2) Identity

a) Individual identity

It is as the community expressed its life outwardly that it experienced the renewal, vitality, equipping and empowering of the Spirit and the affirmation of its identity. “Conscious acts of Christian witness depend to a large extent upon the life of the person giving the witness in those moments not devoted to such witness” (Roels; 1962:196). The pagans are insensitive, unable to experience the grief their actions cause (Eph 4:19). At the centre of their being they have no sensitivity or feeling for God and others. They do not have a moral sense of right and wrong, the ability to discern. And so their lives are based upon performance, producing, and working in order to gain a sense of purpose and meaning. They are thus controlled by all consuming ambitions (Eph 4:19). In as far as these matters characterized the converts’ former identity, they now receive a new identity (Eph 4:22). They have been regenerated and changed once and for all.

b) communal identity

Ephesians shows a concern for the identity and integrity of the community. Paul’s polemic gives voice to a community’s struggle to define itself as a Jew-Gentile, multi-ethnic community, against an older, more powerful, and antagonistic tradition, Judaism. The use of the term *ekklesia* in Ephesians shows a constant concern for the identity and integrity of the community. The struggle for the self-identification of the Ephesian community was particularly hard, since it was caught in a tension between particularity and universality. It was a community that was forced to work out its particular identity in confrontation with a particular form of Judaism, Hellenistic Judaism, which appropriated for it symbols of Judaism. It is to the extent that the Ephesians understood who they were “in Christ”, hence the continual necessity of identification with Christ in Ephesians, and the accomplished work of Christ as a personal experiential reality that they were compelled to trust, obey and serve Him through missions. Elliott goes on to affirm that ‘the individual as well as the corporate way of identifying with *was virtually equivalent to salvation itself*’.¹⁶⁰ This phenomenon could be defined as ‘corporate identity’ (Jub 31:14; T. Levi 4:2; 1QH 7:29-30; 11:9-14).¹⁶¹ Elliott (2000:346) is not claiming that there is a ‘group consciousness of salvation’ but ‘corporate identity’.

(3) The Insider/Outsider and Inclusive/Exclusive community

A superficial reading of the text may lead to the premature conclusion that the author is seeking to erect a barrier to separate those inside from those outside the community. The intent of the author is to affirm the

¹⁶⁰ Elliott, *Survivors*, 346 (author’s italics).

¹⁶¹ See Elliot’s references on corporate personality in 1 *Enoch* (*Survivors*, 347 n. 115, author’s italics).

communal identity and witness of the community. It was as if the community had at its core the identity of being “in Christ”, that it was united to Christ through faith, it could draw people into the community and treat them as though they were part of the community without compromising or losing its sense of identity. The community could then draw outsiders into its fellowship without expecting that their behaviour would change before they would be able to share in the fellowship of the community. Their maintenance of the distinction between those inside and outside the community was not through external criteria, but through the inner witness and working of the Holy Spirit. In this way outsiders were drawn into fellowship without being made to think or feel that they were outside of the community, having to pass certain requirements before they could enter into fellowship with the members of the community. The intention of the author was not to form an exclusive community, but an interactive community whose identity was “in Christ”. The atonement created a new inclusive community, a cross-national community, which unlike Judaism was not based on the notion of an exclusive concept, Jewish ethnic identity.

(4) Warning against idolatry

The warning against idolatry in Ephesians 4:17 is missional and significant (cf. Wright; 2006:86). The reason that idolatry has missional relevance is because idolatry diminishes the glory of God. The warning to the people of God against idolatry is a continuation of the Old Testament warning against idolatry. “Part of Paul’s purpose in writing thus is to remind believers of the moral and spiritual darkness of idolatry, to warn them against ever going back to it and to encourage them to live the distinctively holy life of the redeemed” (Wright; 2006:186). The mission of God requires that God’s own people should preserve the purity of exclusiveness of the worship of the living God, and resist the syncretism that surrounded them. “More is at stake in keeping God’s people away from idols than their own spiritual health. God’s own mission for the sake of the nations is on the line” (Wright; 2006:187). The warning against idolatry, then, is not just for the benefit of God’s own people, but ultimately, through them, for the benefit of the nations (cf. Wright; 2006:187).

3.2. SUMMARY OF THE PERICOPE EPHESIANS 4:17 – 5:20

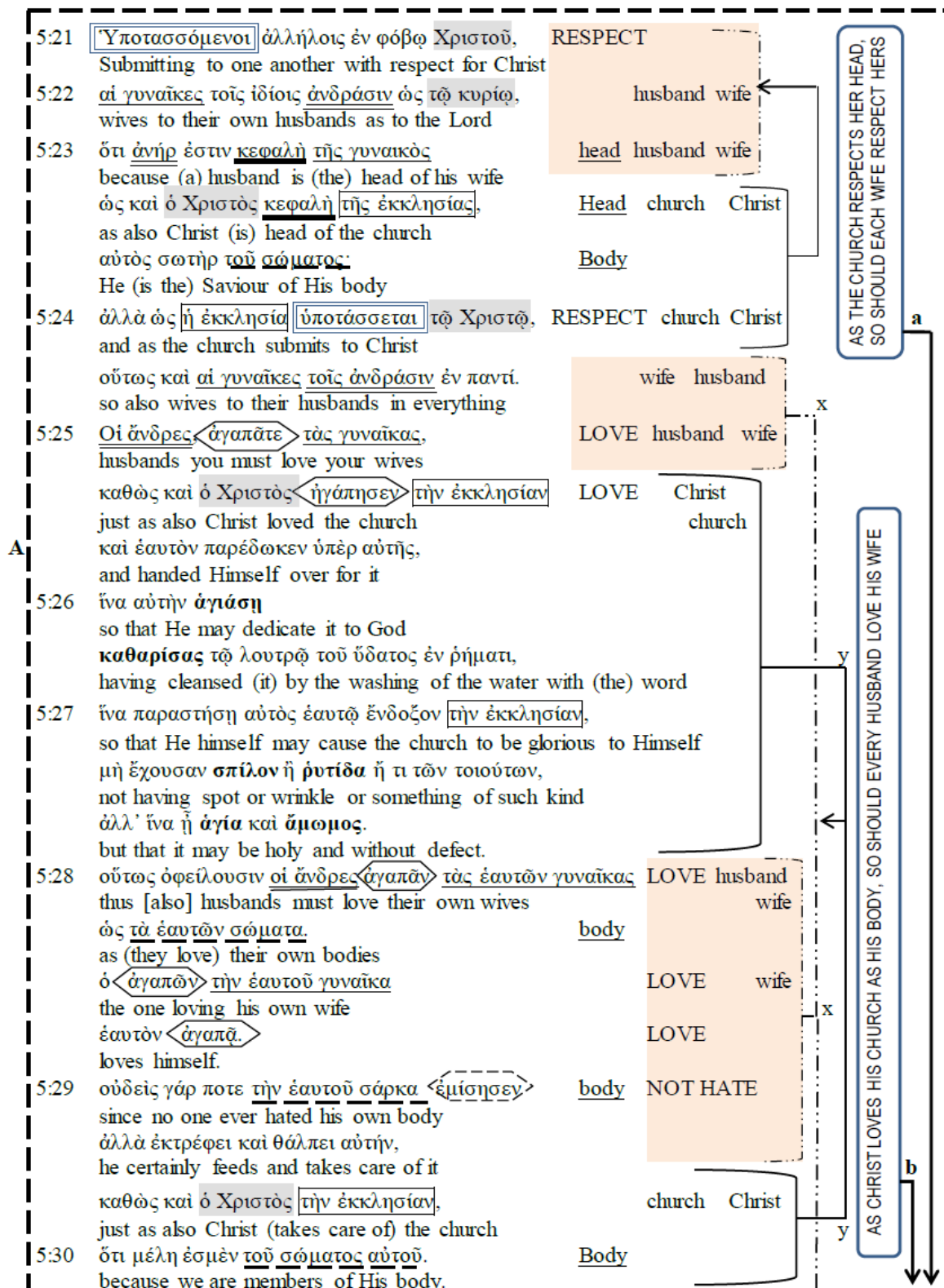
The whole of the created order, the universe, will be re-created and united to Jesus Christ. God’s *oikonomia*, ordering and administration of the universe, has an active sense of his ordering, arranging and implementing of the mystery, his revealed purpose. The term *oikonomia* rather than being the content of the purpose or saving plan refers to the manner in which the purpose of God is being worked out in human history. In Ephesians 4:7-5:20 the purposes of God are worked out through transformation, transformation of relationships, the self, and the old self to the new self, and culture. Jesus Christ is the focal point, not simply the means, the instrument, or the functionary through whom transformation takes place (cf. O’Brien; 1999:112). It is the reason that the phrase “in Christ” appears prominently in 4:17-5:20. It

indicates Christ's eschatological relationship to personal beings and every part of the working out of the *oikonomia* of God. Relationships are transformed and in some way brought into the unifying purpose of God indicated by "in Christ". The missional lifestyle that accompanies the proclamation of the gospel is indicative of the transformation and the working out of the purposes of God.

The missional ethical lifestyle (Eph 4:17-5:20) is not to be seen as being separate from the verbal proclamation of the gospel (Eph 2:1-10). The missional ethics of Ephesians 4:17-5:20 is an ethical response to three key concepts found in Ephesians, election (Eph 1:4-5), redemption (Eph 1:7-8) and covenant (Eph 2:11-13). In the pericope Ephesians 4:17-32 the central verses 22-24 function as a hinge on which the ethical admonition turns (cf. Martin; 1991:59). Missional ethics is God's people living in God's way, in God's place under God's rule in the sight of the nations. The ultimate purpose of God's plan as worked out in 4:17-5:20 is to make the believers conscious of the way they live their lives because it is through their ethical lifestyles that they lead those outside the body to faith and certainty. It is the household that in which the ethical contrast between those inside and those outside are most clearly visible that serves as an inviting body, where people that are without God and far from Christ can come to the certainty that they are part of the body. It is thus not ethics itself, but ethics as practiced by a community as an expression of its communal identity which filters down to every household that serves to invite outsiders to join the body. The unity of the body in the Spirit, a congregation controlled by the Spirit is a community that demonstrated the new life in Christ. The contrast between a community led by the Spirit and walking or living in the light, thus a community living wisely and a community intoxicated by the world is tangibly visible and expressed by the metaphor of light and darkness (Eph 5:16). It is a community that acts "in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (ἐν ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, 5:20) and testifies to a relationship "to God who is Father" (τῷ θεῷ καὶ πατρί, 5:20) and the internal working of the Holy Spirit. It is a conscious and self-reflective community that does not act without being able to think about it' or acts in a way 'one does when the mind is absent (Eph 5:18). It is a community that acts wisely, wisdom is qualified as "to make good use of opportunity" or "working urgently" (Eph 5:16). The wise person or congregation recognizes and uses these opportunities for the spread of the gospel. He or the Church recognizes opportunities which are in the plan and purpose of the Lord. The phrases "stand up out of the dead," (ἀνάστα ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν, 5:13) is an exhortation that the believers and the Church are to awaken out of their lethargic and utterly fruitless or useless state. For this reason every believer is to "think about how accurately you live" (Eph 5:15).

4. EPHESIANS 5:21 – 6:9 THE HOUSEHOLD RELATIONS WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

4.1. THE TEXT OF EPHESIANS 5:21 – 6:9 REWRITTEN



5:31	ἀντὶ τούτου καταλείψει ἄνθρωπος [τὸν] πατέρα καὶ [τὴν] μητέρα because of this (a) man shall leave [his] father and [his] mother καὶ προσκολληθήσεται πρὸς τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ, and he will be joined to his wife καὶ ἔσονται οἱ δύο εἰς σάρκα μίαν. and the two will become to be one body.	husband wife body	x
5:32	τὸ μυστήριον τοῦτο μέγα ἐστίν· This mystery is great ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω εἰς Χριστὸν καὶ εἰς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν. I speak about Christ and about the church indeed.	MYSTERY: Christ church	
5:33	πλὴν καὶ ὑμεῖς οἱ καθ' ἓνα, nevertheless also you each one individually ἕκαστος τὴν ἑαυτοῦ γυναῖκα οὕτως ἀγαπάτω ὥς ἑαυτόν, everyone must love his own wife as much as himself ἡ δὲ γυνὴ ἵνα φοβῆται τὸν ἄνδρα. and so as a result the wife should respect her husband.	husband: LOVE wife: RESPECT	b a
6:1	Τὰ τέκνα, Children, ώ�πακούετε τοῖς γονεῦσιν ὑμῶν [ἐν κυρίῳ] obey your parents [in (the) Lord] τοῦτο γάρ ἐστιν δίκαιον. because this is right	OBEY children parents	a b in the Lord
6:2	τίμα τὸν πατέρα σου καὶ τὴν μητέρα. honour your father and your mother ἣτις ἐστὶν ἐντολὴ πρώτη ἐν ἐπαγγελίᾳ, which is (the) first commandment with (a) promise	RESPECT parents	b
6:3	ἵνα εὖ σοι γένηται that it may be well with you καὶ ἔσῃ μακροχρόνιος ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς. and (that) you may be long on the earth.		
6:4	καὶ οἱ πατέρες, and fathers, μὴ παροργίζετε τὰ τέκνα ὑμῶν do not provoke your children to anger ἀλλὰ ἐκτρέφετε αὐτὰ ἐν παιδείᾳ καὶ νουθεσίᾳ κυρίου. but bring them up in (the) instruction and teaching of (the) Lord	NOT PROVOKE parents children	b a of the Lord
6:5	Οἱ δοῦλοι, Slaves, ώ�πακούετε τοῖς κατὰ σάρκα κυρίοις obey your masters according to (the) physical nature μετὰ φόβου καὶ τρόμου with fear and trembling ἐν ἀλότῃ τῆς καρδίας ὑμῶν with sincerity of your mind	attitude (positive) attitude (positive)	y y

C		ὡς τῷ Χριστῷ, as (you obey) Christ	obedience to Christ	→	MASTER-SLAVE RELATIONS DETERMINED BY THEIR RELATION TO THE ONE LORD, JESUS CHRIST
	6:6	μὴ κατ' ὀφθαλμοδουλίαν not according to eyeservice	attitude (negative) --- x		
		ὡς ἀνθρωπάρεσκοι like people-pleasers	attitude (negative) --- x		
		ἀλλ' ὡς δοῦλοι Χριστοῦ but like slaves of Christ	obedience to Christ	→	
		ποιῶντες τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐκ ψυχῆς, doing the will of God from (your) inner self	attitude (positive) — y		
	6:7	μετ' εὐνοίας δουλεύοντες serving with eagerness	attitude (positive) — y		
		ὡς τῷ κυρίῳ as (you serve) the Lord	obedience to the Lord	→	
		καὶ οὐκ ἀνθρώποις, and not people	attitude (negative) --- x		
	6:8	εἰδότες ὅτι knowing that	knowledge (positive) — y		
		ἕκαστος ἐάν τι ποιήσῃ ἀγαθόν, what ever good each one does τοῦτο κομίσεται παρὰ κυρίου this he will receive back from (the) Lord εἴτε δοῦλος εἴτε ἐλεύθερος. whether slave or free person	reward from the Lord	→	
	6:9	Καὶ οἱ κύριοι, Indeed, masters,			
		τὰ αὐτὰ ποιεῖτε πρὸς αὐτούς, do the same to them			
		ἀνιέντες τὴν ἀπειλήν, giving up threatening	attitude (negative) — x		
		εἰδότες ὅτι knowing that	knowledge (positive) — y		
		καὶ αὐτῶν καὶ ὑμῶν ὁ κύριός ἐστιν ἐν οὐρανοῖς both their and your Lord is in heaven καὶ προσωποληψία οὐκ ἔστιν παρ' αὐτῷ. and partiality is not with Him.	in heaven the same Lord	→	

4.1.1. Thought structure analysis remarks

In the Ephesians Haustafeln there are complete sets of admonitions to one class, slaves, within the set of accompanying directives to masters. These corresponding classes are not as frequent in the Pastoral

Epistles as in Ephesians, Colossians and 1 Peter¹⁶². There is a significant shift in the Haustafeln of Ephesians, Colossians and 1 Peter which probably is to be understood as a shift designed “to encourage exemplary behaviour as a witness to those outside church” (Sampley; 1971:22). In the Haustafeln of Ephesians, Colossians and 1 Peter there is a direct address of the classes. The Haustafeln in Ephesians is more extended and expanded than in Colossians and raises the question of the role it plays in Ephesians. “The primary purpose of the household codes in the New Testament is not to repress the socially downtrodden, but to spiritually transform all who are in Christ—husbands, fathers and masters included” (Dudrey; 1998:40). The purpose of the household codes to transform social relationships indicates that the codes have a missional function.

Markers and pericope division

(1) The pericope 5:21-6:9 is so clearly structured in the pattern of household codes that it is acknowledged as such by various commentators (cf. Lincoln; 1990:349; Best; 1998:519-527). The markers by which household codes are recognized, are different members of the household (husband and wife, children, slaves, master) that are addressed and prescribed regarding their conduct within the household (cf. also Col 3:16-4:1; 1 Pe 2:11-3:12). On the basis of such markers the pericope 5:21-6:9 can be divided into three thought blocks:

5:21-33. Thought-block A: The conduct of husbands and wives

6:1-4. Thought-block B: The conduct of parents and children:

6:5-9. Thought-block C: The conduct of masters and slaves:

(2) **Thought-block A** is marked by repeated references to husbands (ἄνδρες) and their wives (γυναῖκες) throughout the pericope. Another striking feature is the parallel that is drawn repeatedly between the husband-wife relation and the relation between Christ and his church (cf. ὡς καὶ in 5:23, οὕτως καὶ in 5:24, καθὼς in 5:25 and καθὼς καὶ in 5:29). The relation between husband and wife and that of Christ and his church is described in terms of the relation between head and body, which becomes a third semantic marker of the thought block, with the combination of *head-body* (κεφαλή, σῶμα) repeated in 5:23,28,29,30):

This relation between Christ as Head and the church as his body is called by Paul a great mystery (τὸ μυστήριον τοῦτο μέγα ἐστίν) in 5:32, which suggests a link to the μυστήριον-motif elsewhere in the letter (cf. 1:9; 3:3,4,9; 10:19)¹⁶³. So in this respect 5:32 should be regarded as a special marker, linking the thought block and pericope in a special manner to Paul’s message elsewhere in the letter.

The conduct of the body/Body towards its head/Head is described as that of *respect* (ὑποτάσσεται). The *inclusio* pattern formed by ὑποτασσόμενοι in verse 21 and ὑποτάσσεται in verse 24 marks 5:21-24 as a subsection within the

¹⁶² “A missionary purpose can be seen in 1Pe 3:1f but this is not the ruling purpose even of that HT, let alone of others, since there is no suggestion slaves should attempt to convert their owners” (Best; 1998:523).

¹⁶³

thought block, which can be titled: *As the church respects her Head, so should each wife respect hers* (cf. the vertical text in the exposition of the thought structure in above). The conduct of the head/Head towards its body is described in terms of *loving* (ἀγαπᾶν) and *caring* (θαλπεῖν). The concepts of *love* and *care* are repeated in 5:25-20, forming a word cluster to mark these verses as a subsection within the thought block, which can accordingly be titled: *As Christ loves his church, so should every husband love his wife* (cf. again the vertical text in above).

The *love* and *respect* that mark the mutual conduct of the head and his body are repeated at the end of **thought block A**, in verse 33 (ἀγαπάτω, marked as **b**, and φοβῆται, marked as **a**), to form a chiasm (a-b-b-a) with the earlier subsections in the Thought Block. By this chiastic repetition the entire thought block is enclosed in a type of *inclusio*, by which 5:21-33 is finally marked as one separate thought block in the pericope.

(3) **Thought block B** is marked by the repetition of *children* (τέκνα) and *parents* (τοῖς γονεῦσιν, τὸν πατέρα σου καὶ τὴν μητέρα, οἱ πατέρες). These markers are spread evenly over the thought block, in chiastic sequence a-b-b-a. Another striking repetition in the Thought Block is the phrase “*in the Lord*” (ἐν κυρίῳ) in 6:1 by which the obedience and *respect* of children towards their parents are characterized, and in 6:4 (κυρίου) by which the parents’ attitude towards and education of their children are characterized.

(4) In **thought block C** the mutual attitudes of masters and slaves who belong to the body of Christ are described by a variety of words from the semantic field of Attitude (cf. Louw & Nida, 1988:26.5, 16; 30:5, 6). Some of these attitudes are described in positive terms (marked as ‘y’ in the thought-structural exposition in 5.4.1.1 above), others in negative terms (marked as ‘x’ in the exposition) and alternated in the sequence y-y-x-x-y-y x-y-x-y:

The most striking structural feature of **thought block C**, however, is that the conduct of slaves and masters, as was the case with that of children and parents, is anchored throughout the Thought Block in their attitude towards Christ, knowing Him as their Lord (and Head) in heaven. This ‘anchor’ is situated in the repeated comparisons ὡς τῷ Χριστῷ (in 6:5), ὡς δοῦλοι Χριστοῦ (in 6:6) and ὡς τῷ κυρίῳ (in 6:7), which are expanded by εἰδότες ὅτι ... παρὰ κυρίου (in 6:8) and εἰδότες ὅτι ... ὁ κύριός ἐστιν ἐν οὐρανοῖς (in 6:9).

4.1.1.1. Exegetical remarks

The examination of the household codes is necessary as they are part of a larger group of texts with instructions for household management (Eph 5:20-6:9; Col 3:18-4:1; 1 Pe 2:18-3:7; 5:1-5) and related to *oikonomia* (household administration). In Ephesians the Christian *oikonomia* is discussed in the context of virtue discourse (cf. de Wet; 2012:403)¹⁶⁴.

The Christian Household and the head of the household

¹⁶⁴ The household codes are derived from ancient Mediterranean codes but not an exact Christianization of these codes (cf. de Wet; 2012:403; Osiek & Balch; 1997:189).

The function of the household codes is to guide the head of the household into a new conception of his roles that Christianizes his conduct in various ways and so turns marriage into more of a partnership and household management into actualizing biblical principles about love of neighbour and honouring others. The codes are given the context of Christ's loving sacrifice. The head of the household in these codes does not subordinate or command subordination of the other household members. The household manager exercises his role by loving self-sacrifice, stepping down and serving others and so subordination has been broadened to describe the relationships of all Christians to each other. The major force of the household codes is reciprocal self-sacrifice. In Christ the household relationships are transformed. Paul works for social change from within the Christian household. He does so by changing all three relationships into relationships of reciprocity. He views himself as the household head as a fellow slave of Christ with the other members of the household¹⁶⁵. "The Christian code is about everyone in the household and treats everyone as moral agents, even children. The Christians' household codes are not about the head of the household and "about how he should act authoritatively but benevolently" (Worthington III; 2007:320). The Christian household code was about everyone in the household and treated everyone as moral agents, even the children. In the church community the heads of the households served as community leaders when the community assembled (1 Co 1:11; 16; 16:15-17).

What is the main purpose of the Ephesian household code?

(1) The *Haustafeln* (Eph 5:20- 6:5-9; Col. 3:22-4:1; 1 Ti 6:1-2; Tit 2:9-10 and 1 Pe 2:18-25) were intended generally as advice to Christians on how to manage their slaves in their households (cf. de Wet; 2012:397). The advice is directed towards the Christian *pater familias* and the roles of husband, father and slaveholder. The *Haustafeln* in Ephesians "must be understood in the context of not only the other familial roles, but also the wider context of the document" (de Wet; 2012:399). It has to be understood in the wider context of *oikonomia* in Ephesians¹⁶⁶. The role of the *oikonomos* was to duplicate Christ in the *pater familias*. The cyclical hierarchy revolved around the *pater familias* as Christ-duplicate. This duplication of Christ involved a missional dimension. The emphasis in the Ephesians and Colossian household codes is upon the higher authority of Christ. The *oikonomia* is discussed in the context of virtue discourse (cf. de Wet; 2012:403). The *oikonomos* is reminded to demonstrate fairness, justice and care, all of which had a missional dimension in contrast to the non-Christian household manager. It was in the reciprocal relationship between the *oikonomos* and the family that the mission of the Church was worked out practically in a pagan society. The everyday lives of the wife, children and slaves were all determined by

¹⁶⁵ It is a misreading of the trajectory of this passage to say that the primary purpose of Eph 5:21-6:9 is the subordination of the members of the household to the head of the household.

¹⁶⁶ Harrill (2006:113-116) argues that the *haustafeln* in both Ephesians and Colossians represent primitive Christian "handbooks" of *oikonomia*.

their relations to the pater familias, but ultimately in their relations to Christ. The focus in Ephesians is not upon the worthy example of the overseer or oikonomos but the pater familias as an image of the heavenly pater familias¹⁶⁷

(2) The Ephesian household code focuses on the new people of God in relation to God's old people (cf. Moritz; 1996:166). The household codes play essentially the same function in both Ephesians and Colossians, that of giving guidelines to the family in the context of a pagan environment. In Ephesians the household codes are directed at internal relationships which are observed by outsiders whereas Colossians is concerned with the consolidation of the Christian position within society. MacDonald (1988:108) makes the contra argument that the Colossian *Haustafel* gives some advice for Christians' attitudes towards outsiders, whereas in Ephesians "there is no explicit mention of dealing with outsiders". But this is clearly not the context as the author insists that the new converts "must no longer live as the pagans do" (Eph 4:17).

(3) The relationship between Jew and Gentile is to be like "one new man" (2:15), "a new household" (2:19) and "holy temple" (2:22), which was clearly visible to outsiders.

(4) A difference exists in the rhetoric between the household codes in Eph 5:20-6:9 and Col. 3:18-4:1 (cf. Roitto; 2008:150).

(5) In the Ephesians household codes the qualities of household relations in the domain of the marriage have been transferred from the domain of identity in Christ. The qualities of self-sacrificing love and respect in marriage are transferred from the domain of identity in Christ. "In Eph 6:5-9 the ideal submission to Christ is used to transfer patterns of honesty, fear, subordination and respect to the domain of slaves and masters" (Roitto; 2008:150).

(6) The household identities are subordinate to the identity in Christ and a model for behaviour in the household. The household in turn is a model of behaviour in society. The relationship to Christ is the paradigm for the household relationship and social relations within society.

(7) The relationship to mission is that the transference of beliefs and emotions from one domain, identity in Christ, is transferred to other domains. This movement between identity in Christ and socio institutions, marriage (5:20-32), parenting (6:1-3) and labour (6:4-9) are related to identity in Christ which implies that the social-relationships within the household are a vehicle of missions.

¹⁶⁷ It is in the pastoral epistles, specifically Titus, that the qualities of the overseer, specifically viruosity, is emphasized.

(8) The household is a vehicle for the communication of identity in Christ. The household codes and household relations are able to transform the socio institutions of society to the extent that they communicate identity in Christ.

(9) This is supported by a socio-historical investigation of the household codes in Eph 5:20-6:9. It is when the household codes are not anachronistically looked at and current social evaluations are retrojected into the reading of the text and understanding of social conditions which are very different from the world of the NT imposed on the text then it will be discovered that “the primary purpose of the household passage of the NT is not to repress the socially downtrodden, but to transform spiritually all who are in Christ – husbands, fathers, and masters included. This in turn transforms all their relationships” and society (Dudery; 1999:39).

(10) “The construct of mutual submission and reciprocal self-sacrifice is the major force of the household codes” (Dudery1999:40). “*Submit yourselves to one another*” (Eph 5:20) is central to the missional nature of the household codes and the oikonomia of God. “All these Christian transformations of the perspective of those in power over the Roman household would have been earth-shaking in the social world of the Roman *paterfamilias* (Dudery; 1999:41). The transforming power of its driving force was unique to the Christian household codes. This is brought into relation with the work of the Holy Spirit “the wealth of his power and glory makes possible such transformation- transformation far beyond all we can ask or even imagine” (Dudery; 1999:41). The household codes have a missional nature that has been overlooked. The verse Ephesians 5:21 is not echoed in any other husband/wife *Haustafeln*” (Connock; 2000:37).

(11) The plan of God is to unite all things, both in heaven and on earth, in Christ (Eph 1:10) and the unification of all things is extended to husband and wife (Eph 5:30-32). The primary purpose of the codes in Ephesians was to demonstrate Christian distinctiveness while showing commonality with the wider culture (cf. Slater; 2012:153). It is the distinctiveness of Christian household relations, mutual love for one another, harmony and unity, “Spirit-filled living in the world” (Lincoln; 1990:349)¹⁶⁸ that gave to the Christian codes a missionary character and purpose. The Household Codes served to provide a social framework for the Christian community, a framework that served the purpose of missions.

(12) Best (1998:524) writes that “the content of the Household Tables in Ephesians is unrelated to the outside world and its purpose can therefore have been neither apologetic nor missionary” but he does not support this statement with evidence. (Hoehner; 2002:729) suggests that “the Ephesians’ household code was for the purpose of fostering unity in believers”.

¹⁶⁸ The wise and Spirit-filled living in the world is elaborated in the relationships of the household codes in 5:21-6:9 (cf. Lincoln; 1990:349).

(13) The household codes of 5:21-6:9 are related to believers being filled by the Spirit (cf. Hoehner; 2002:728). Although “there is no mention of relationships with outsiders in the household table itself, Paul ties in appropriate behaviour with believers’ wise conduct in the world, which involves them in making the most of every opportunity and understanding the Lord’s will in the present” (O’Brien; 1999:407). The household relationships that were controlled by the Spirit had an effect on the surrounding society. In contrast to Greco-Roman society which was governed by specific rules for the order of life, Christian household relations were controlled by the Spirit. The distinction can also be attributed to the believers having a calling before the Lord to be responsible and honourable (cf. O’Brien’ 1999:408). Those in subordinate positions in Christian households, wives, children and slaves were treated with value, dignity and worth by those in positions of authority, husbands, fathers and masters. It is confirmed by the language Paul uses. He uses the nominative with the article as the vocative, Οἱ ἄνδρες, (“you men”), instead of using the nominative with the article only in Attic. Gr. and addresses his hearers as equals instead of inferiors. Inferiors were addressed in a harsh manner but Paul addresses them in a softer manner.

(14) It was as members of the household fulfilled their duties so as to please the Lord and lived blameless lives in close and continual contact with their family or employment relations that a visible contrast would have been seen between the Christian household and the Greco-Roman household. This blameless life was lived out as the Christians appropriated the new life, they lived out their lives as an expression of the confession that they had been made holy, cleansed by the washing through the Word and were a radiant Church without stain, wrinkle, blemish (Eph 5:25-26). The term ἐν ῥήματι may be a reference to the gospel, and it is thus through the gospel that was proclaimed that the believers had been cleansed.

4.1.1.2. Word study

(1) Ὑποτασσόμενοι (“Submit”) Ephesians 5:20-21

The term subordinate is a missionary term used to indicate that the missionary responsibility of the Church depicted as a marriage between husband and wife, Christ and the Church is central in Paul’s view of marriage (cf. Barth; 1974:711).

4.1.2. Thought block A: love and respect between husband and wife: Ephesians 5:21-33

4.1.2.1. Thought block analysis remarks

The basic exhortation in 5:21 indicates that the central idea of the pericope is about submission. Admonitions are made to both husband and wife and are repeated for force. The direction of the wife’s

submission is to the Lord, ὡς τῷ κυρίῳ. It indicates the ultimate and actual direction of the action of submission of the wife.

In this pericope the term `submission' is meant as corrective to the Greco-Roman understanding of submission which demanded an unquestionable submission to the authority of the head of the household. The model for relationship that Paul proposes is not a model of slavish obedience but one based upon love and respect as the key elements. Instead, love and respect should regulate the submission, whereas the submission of Greco-Roman society by law was regulated by the unlimited authority of the head of the household. The love and respect that should mark the relation between husband and wife is emphasized in 5:21-33 by repetition and the *inclusio* arrangement of Thought Block A (cf. 5.4.1.1 above).

This results in an entirely new dimension for marriage, as the marriage is `in Christ'. "The marital love bond no longer depends for its basis on natural attraction alone (as in Gen. 2:23f) – its enhanced foundation now includes Christ's love for the Church" (Moritz; 1996:140). The purpose of the marriage relationship is to reiterate Christ's love within society. The admonition to the husband to love his wife is preferential in the passage over the admonition to the wife to respect her husband. "The injection is placed on a new foundation: the love which Christian husbands are to show towards their wives should now be governed by an awareness of belonging to the body of Christ which is the Church (v.30)" (Moritz; 1996:141-142). It is thus the awareness of the husband that he is involved in a more pervasive relationship with Christ, in which Christ has demonstrated the ultimate example of love that the husband is to demonstrate to his wife. The relationship between husband and wife, specifically the self-sacrificial love of the husband following after the example of Christ, reveals the relationship of Christ with his Church to the world. The admonitions to wives to respect their husbands are in response to the self-sacrificial love of the husbands to wives as the admonition to husbands takes precedence.

In missions the relationship between the missionary and his spouse is to be governed by love and respect. Love and respect should mark the relation between husband and wife, to serve as a model for observers, as a visible preaching that communicates the message that the relationship of Christ with the Church is central. The submission of wife and husband to one another (Eph 5:20) is never intended to be an end in and of itself. It is intended to reflect the fundamental relationship of Christ with his Church.

The central idea of the pericope is located in the concept of the *profound mystery*, which is the relationship between Christ and his Church (Eph 5:32). This profound mystery is experienced in missions in whom Jesus Christ is the source of all the resources which makes mission possible. A Church which is not missions conscious and divorces mission from the life of the community deprives itself of the experience of the resources of Christ and an experience of the richness of the marriage relationship between Christ and his Church. The marriage relationship is lived out in the realities of the challenges and obstacles of every day and in the same way the relationship between Christ and his Church is lived out in the realities, challenges and obstacles of mission.

4.1.2.2. The relation to the Old Testament

4.1.2.2.1. Marriage as an illustration of Christ's love.

The quotation of Ge 2:24 has been placed within a new interpretative framework. In Gen 2:24 is indicated that the one flesh union is wholly rooted in God's creation order. "It is not a matter of substituting one framework for the other, but of extending the framework presupposed in the Pentateuch so as to include the new dimension of the Christ event and the ongoing love and care offered by Christ for his Church" (Moritz; 1996:139). The care of Christ for the Church serves as an example for believers, for husbands for their wives and as an example for outsiders.

A quotation of the sexual unity between husband and wife as an image of unity in the body

Ge 2:24	The mystery of "one flesh" is an image of the intimacy between Christ and the Church.	Eph 5:31-32

4.1.3. Thought block B: the relation of children and parents in Christ: Ephesians 6:1-4

4.1.3.1. Thought Structure Analysis Remarks

(1) Ephesians 6:2 anchors the moral charge to the Old Testament command and applies the promise to Christian parents. "Honour your father and mother – this is the first commandment with a promise – that it may go well with you and that you may live long on the land" (Eph 6:2). "The Old Testament link is clearly to the Land of Promise in Judea and yet here this letter can refer the promise to Ephesians' Gentiles and their life in the land. The writer of this letter hardly had in mind a promise that the Ephesians would live long in the Land of Promise in Judea. The notion of "land" has here been expanded and now embraces a wider theological geography" (Burge; 2010:93). The land was a witness of Yahweh's covenant faithfulness and a covenant blessing. "The Israelites had no ultimate title to the land, it was owned by God" (Wright; 2006: 293). Yahweh was the supreme landlord. In this context the clause, "which the Lord gives you" is omitted because the church is not a continuation of Israel and therefore it has not received the promise of a specific piece of land (cf. Hoehner; 2002: 793). The phrase *ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς* is better translated, "on the earth" rather than "on the land". The "land" in the Old Testament had a reference to the Promised Land of Israel (cf. Hoehner; 2002: 792).

(2) Paul critiques the Hellenistic Judaist idea that parents were superior to children and that the child occupied lower positions in society. He gives a new perspective to fathers on the treatment of their children. The Jewish father had a right to severely admonish as well as beat and lock up his children (cf.

Hoehner; 2002: 795). He addresses fathers who provoke their children to anger (Eph 6:4). In the Roman household “the father had absolute control over all his family, called *patria potestas*. He had the power of life and death over his children. Although the authority was used primarily in regard to the new born, he could legally put to death any of his offspring for serious transgressions” (Hoehner; 2002: 740-741).

(3) The missional motif of the household codes is identifiable in the fact that in the Greco-Roman codes slaves were not included as addressees because they were regarded as non-persons or as persons without the social responsibilities of the free (cf. Harris; 1999:54). The Household codes employed by Paul are unique in that slaves are treated as equals and have equal moral and social responsibilities. It was this equal status that was given to slaves that was radically socially transformational. The slaves equally participated in the plan of God. This gave to them a sense of significance and elevated their social responsibilities to a role in the divine economy of God. “In the *oikonomia* of God the slaves are elevated to a party of status with masters in the divine economy” (Harris; 1999:54).

(4) Paul achieves this elevation of the social status of slaves by placing the social relationships of master and slave in the context of a higher allegiance to Jesus Christ. Instead of trying to win the favour of masters, slaves are to do the will of God from their heart (Eph 6:6). This is missional as it is behaviour ultimately directed at Jesus Christ and fulfilling God’s will, the plan of God (cf. Eph 1:11). The obedience to Christ was the motivation which was to guide the execution of social and moral responsibilities of slaves (Eph 6:5). The obedience to Christ had missional overtones as Paul in the discharge of the commission given to him saw himself as a slave, *doulos*, who willingly fulfilled the orders of his master, Jesus Christ (cf. 1 Co 7:22-23). The slave had been set free to serve Christ as his slave – just as Israel was set free from Egyptian bondage so that in their freedom they could become the servants of God (Ex. 6:6-7).

4.1.3.2. Exegetical remarks

(1) Barth has suggested that even though the apostle Paul may have used the words “subordinate” and “obey” elsewhere¹⁶⁹ in Ephesians the relationship between husband and wife, father and child, master and slave it has to be seen in the light of the exhortation of mutual submission to one another in Eph 5:21 (cf. Barth; 1974:714). He argues that although the verbs “subordinate one” and “obey” were synonyms, this cannot be demonstrated for the *Haustafel* in Ephesians 5-6. “Only children and slaves are to “obey” (6:1, 5).

¹⁶⁹ In 1 Peter 3:6 for the submission (obedience) of the wife.

(2) The obedience of slaves to their masters was the outworking of the plan of God. The slaves were exhorted to obey wholeheartedly. Obedience in Ephesians 6:1-9, although not specifically stated as in 1 Peter 3:1-2 as a way of winning over an unbelieving spouse, has missional connotations.

(3) In Eph 6:6 (1 Cor. 7:22) both Christian slaves and Christian free persons are slaves of Christ. Paul twice introduces himself to his hearers as “a slave of Christ Jesus” (Ro 1:1; Php 1:1). In its depiction of figurative slavery to Christ, the New Testament has not eradicated the negative notion of slavery, but has made it subordinate to a higher purpose, the plan of God. The metaphor is a positive image only in the sense that it depicts the believer’s exclusive devotion to the Lord Christ. The humble submission to the person of Christ involved an acknowledgment that, as supreme Lord, Christ had absolute and exclusive rights to the will and affections and energy. The obedience to Christ had the further effect of strengthening the sense of belonging to the Lord.

4.1.3.3. The relation to the Old Testament

4.1.3.3.1. The Fifth Commandment (Ex 20)

The allusion to Exodus 20 in Ephesians 6:2-3 is an allusion to the Jewish household. It implies that the household codes in Ephesians are to be read against a Jewish background¹⁷⁰. The addressee in Exodus 20 is the head of a Jewish household who is to instruct “son, daughter, male and female slave” to observe the Sabbath” (v.10) (Moritz; 1996:158). The author’s allusion to Exodus 20:12 is to be read against the background of the commandment, the penalty for a son who maltreated or rebelled against his parents and the consequence of stoning (Dt 21:28f) (cf. Moritz; 1996:156). Durham concludes that this was because rebellion against the parents was seen to amount to disrespect for Yahweh (Noth, 1962:165; Moritz; 1996:156). The missional intent of the allusion to the Fifth commandment in the household codes is that it promised the reward that “the successful conduct of a God-fearing nation requires respect for God’s will in the small family unity of family ties” (Moritz; 1996:157) which Paul applies to the mission of the Church. It presupposes the importance of the socially cohesive family unit for mission.

¹⁷⁰ The addresses are “not those who stand under the *patria potesta*, but those exerting it who are at the centre of the commandment” (Moritz; 1996:156). “Our author may have been more concerned with the Judeo-Christian continuity in ethical matters than with the interaction between Christianity and Greco-Roman society” (cf. 1 Peter) (Moritz; 1996:161).

The allusion to the Jewish household in the quotation and allusion to the Fifth Commandment

Exod. 20:12	The commandment of honouring parent's with a promise of inheriting the land is extended to inheriting the earth.	Eph 6:2-3

4.1.3.3.2. A kingdom of priests

In Ex. 19:4-6 the redemption of Israel out of slavery is linked to its missional task, “you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (Ex. 19:4-6). In Exodus it is expressed as a condition, “not of gaining God’s redemption but of fulfilling the mission their identity lays on them” (Wright; 2006:370). The new status and identity of the slaves Paul was writing to in Ephesians also sought to obey and fulfil the mission that their new identity placed on them. In Ephesians although directly addressing slaves, God conferred upon believers the role of being his priesthood as “slaves of Christ” (Eph 6:6) and “serving the Lord and not men” (Eph 6:7).

4.2. SUMMARY OF THE PERICOPE OF EPHESIANS 5:21-6:9

In the first century world identity was determined by the categories of kinship, household, clan or tribe. In this view an individual was entirely destined by his or her social kinship situation and always identified with his or her family roles. The Pauline Christian movement had frequent collisions with the household structure. In order for the Pauline Christian movement to be understandable, the individuals would have to make decisions about their social identity. The Pauline model was that an individual could join a household or family structure and not on the basis of kinship hierarchy. It is because of the frequent collisions with Greco-Roman household structures that Paul sets out the Christian believers’ relationship to the household in Ephesians. The identity in Christ was the most important identity and negotiation between a person’s identity as a believer and kinship hierarchy necessitated that the household identities had to be find their identities as hierarchically subordinate to the identity in Christ (cf. Roitto; 2008:147). The maintenance of a Christian identity and sense of belonging to the household of God required certain self-understanding and positioning to Greco-Roman household structures.

The author does not seek for members of the community to remove themselves from social relationships with pagans or from the dominant cultural ethos, but to bring a stark contrast through the way that the community lives so that the contrast between darkness and light becomes visible. The Christian social relationships that need to be exemplary are the relationships within the household (Eph 5:21-6:9).

The function of the household codes is to guide the head of the household into a new conception of his roles that Christianizes his conduct in various ways and so turns marriage into more of a partnership and

household management into actualizing biblical principles about love of neighbour and honouring others. The codes are given the context of Christ's loving sacrifice. The head of the household in these codes does not subordinate or command subordination of the other household members. The household manager exercises his role by loving self-sacrifice, stepping down and serving others and so subordination has been broadened to describe the relationships of all Christians to each other. The major force of the household codes is reciprocal self-sacrifice. In Christ the household relationships are transformed. Paul works for social change from within the Christian household. He does so by changing all three relationships into relationships of reciprocity.

The *Haustafeln* has to be understood in the wider context of *oikonomia* in Ephesians. The role of the *oikonomos* was to duplicate Christ in the *pater familias*. The cyclical hierarchy revolved around the *pater familias* as Christ-duplicate. This duplication of Christ involved a missional dimension.

The *oikonomos* is reminded to demonstrate fairness, justice and care, all of which had a missional dimension in contrast to the non-Christian household manager. It was in the reciprocal relationship between the *oikonomos* and the family that the mission of the Church was worked out practically in a pagan society. The everyday lives of the wife, children and slaves were all determined by their relations to the *pater familias*, but ultimately in their relations to Christ. The focus in Ephesians is not upon the worthy example of the overseer or *oikonomos* but the *pater familias* as an image of the heavenly *pater familias*.

5. COMPARISON TO EPHESIANS 1:20-23

(1) The inclusion of the relationship category of master and slave was unique to the Christian household codes. The household codes of antiquity did not address the category of master and slave because slaves were not responsible agents. Paul, however, indicates that in Christ slaves receive a new social status. In the Greco-Roman community slaves were meant for nothing else than to carry out the orders of their earthly masters directed to them. The relationship of slaves to masters was based on fear or terror, φόβος, implying severe distress for impending punishment (cf. Rom 13:3) and trembling or shaking, τρόμος. In Paul's household code he took over the terms φόβος καὶ τρόμος, but now φόβος is used figuratively for demonstrating *profound respect*, and τρόμος in the sense of *sincere loyalty* (NKJB).

(2) The dative prepositional phrase ἐν ἀπλότητι indicates the attitude with which slaves were to carry out their tasks, viz. with singleness of purpose or with purity of motive. The slaves were exhorted to adopt an attitude of mind in which they gave priority to the purposes of their earthly masters above their own goals. This attitude would have become apparent to their masters in their discharge of their duties and responsibilities of everyday life.

(3) The relative adverbial phrase introduced by ὥς “as it were” or “so to speak” (cf. 2Co 10:9) with the dative, τῷ Χριστῷ indicates the point of direction of the action, “as it were to the Lord” (Eph 6:5). The obedience of slaves to their master’s orders was ultimately to be directed to the Lord. The response of slaves to their masters revealed whether the slaves were submitted to the Lord Jesus Christ and had reverence and a profound respect for Him (Eph 6:9; cf. Eph 5:21).

(4) The noun ὀφθαλμοδολείαν is to be understood as “impressing in order to call attention to oneself”. Those who behaved in this way are negatively typified as ἀνθρωπάρεσκοι, ‘those who are just trying to make people like them.’ The Christian slaves, however, were to maintain a distinction between themselves and the surrounding Gentile culture (Eph 4:17-19) in terms of their behaviour and motivations which were to be clearly distinct. The self-perception of slaves as “*slaves of Christ*”, δοῦλοι Χριστοῦ was important in the maintenance of this distinction. They were to regard themselves not merely as slaves but as a unique category of slaves, the slaves of Christ. They had a new identity and were accordingly assigned specific tasks (ποιοῦντες, 6:6). The manner in which slaves executed their task, the orientation of the performance of their task was directed to the Lord and a conscious awareness that the fulfilment of the task was part of the purpose and plan of God (τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ, 6:6). In this way slaves of Christ could be separated from slaves in general. Even though slaves had no social status in antiquity, it was by means of the self-perception as slaves of Christ and the orientation of all their daily activities towards the fulfilment of God’s purpose and plan that their work took on a new meaning and significance. In this way even slaves by their daily conduct and the execution of their duties were instrumental in witnessing to society the new life that believers receive in Christ.

(5) The author bases his argument in Ephesians 6:5-6 on the premise that as slaves of Christ his recipients’ hearts were sincere and their thoughts, emotions and attitudes were directed towards pleasing the Lord. In Ephesians 6:6 the conjunction ἀλλά with the negative particle μή and the preposition κατά fulfils the function of contrasting the two alternative lifestyles. It expresses the confidence of the author that his readers are following the right way. The author assumes that his readers desire to do the will of God from their hearts and that their seeking of the purposes and plan of God would reveal their identity as a distinct type of slave – a slave of Christ. This would naturally give expression to their identity in Christ. The author in Ephesians 6:5-6 expresses his confidence in the readers that they are following God’s purposes and plan, on mission with God, instead of their own plans and thoughts, motives and heart.

(6) The thought marker μετά (Eph 6:7) is used by the author to build upon the argument of verse 6. The author continues the idea of verse 6 that the Christian slaves are controlled by the interests of the Lord and not by the interests of human beings (Eph 6:7), that is, they are already living as slaves of Christ, δουλεύοντες τῷ κυρίῳ and distinct from the rest of mankind (cf. Eph 2:14-15). The distinction the author has in view in the context is that his readers are already under the control of Christ unlike the rest of mankind. It is as the recipients continue under the control of Jesus Christ that they are distinct.

In the redeemed community, there is to be no distinctions of social class. Roman slaves had no legal rights and their fate was entirely in their masters hands. Masters had absolute authority over their slaves. However, in this household code the apostle addresses both the slave and the master. The master was also to be conscious of the way he treated his slave and the same verb, ποιέω, is used to indicate that the master's or owner's work would also be evaluated. The owner had a responsibility towards the Lord and was to assume responsibility for the way in which he treated his slaves. God does not show favouritism but accepts men, irrespective of social class and status.

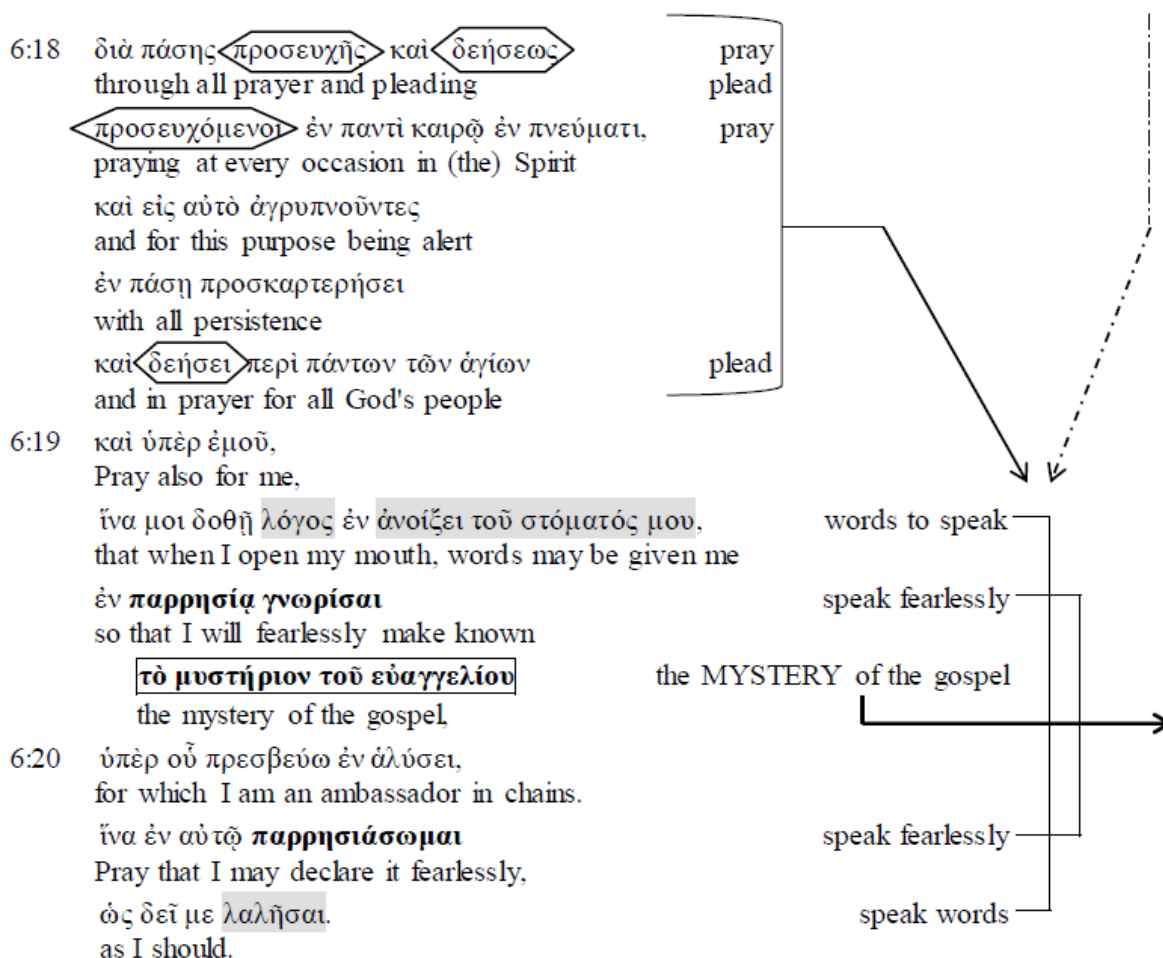
The author addresses slaves and masters in the same thought-block to avoid an 'in-group' mentality developing among the slaves or masters, so that for example the slaves or masters would not regard themselves as the exclusive members of the body of Christ at the exclusion of all other groups that belong to an 'out-group'. Paul, therefore, stresses reciprocal attitudes (cf. Eph 5:21-6:4) when he addresses the masters in their relation to slaves. The masters' response to their slaves was also ultimately directed towards their heavenly master, Jesus Christ (Eph 6:9). The task of the masters is typified as ceasing to threaten their slaves. Masters had certain rights under Roman law which gave them freedom to have a slave put to death for disobedience.

(8) Thus not only slaves but also their masters in their mutual attitudes and conduct would present a practical a visible presentation to the society of what it means to be part of the body of Christ. Thus their daily conduct became part of the mission strategy that the Lord by the apostle Paul set for his church, an integral part of their calling in Ephesus and Asia Minor.

6. EPHESIANS 6:10-20 – RESISTING SPIRITUAL OPPOSITION TO THE PLAN AND PURPOSE OF GOD

6.1. THE TEXT OF THE PERICOPE EPHESIANS 6:10-20 REWRITTEN

6:10	Τοῦ λοιποῦ, <u>ἐνδυναμοῦσθε</u> ἐν κυρίῳ Finally, become capable in union with (the) Lord	able	
	καὶ ἐν τῷ <u>κράτει</u> τῆς <u>ἰσχύος</u> αὐτοῦ. and by means of the power of His might	powerful	
6:11	ἐνδύσασθε τὴν <u>πανοπλίαν τοῦ θεοῦ</u> put on the whole armour of God		
	<u>πρὸς τὸ δύνασθαι ὑμᾶς στήναι</u> πρὸς τὰς μεθοδείας τοῦ διαβόλου· so that you can remain firmly against the schemings of the devil	resist	
6:12	ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν ἡμῖν ἡ <u>πάλη</u> πρὸς αἷμα καὶ σάρκα, because the struggle for us is not against (a) human being	struggle	
	<u>ἀλλὰ πρὸς τὰς ἀρχάς</u> , but against the powers	powers	
	<u>πρὸς τὰς ἐξουσίας</u> , against the authorities	authorities	
	<u>πρὸς τοὺς κοσμοκράτορας τοῦ σκότους τούτου</u> , against the wicked forces of this darkness	forces of darkness	
	<u>πρὸς τὰ πνευματικὰ τῆς πονηρίας ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις</u> . against the spirits of evil in the heavens.	evil spirits	
6:13	διὰ τοῦτο ἀναλάβετε τὴν <u>πανοπλίαν τοῦ θεοῦ</u> , because of this take up the whole armour of God		
	<u>ἵνα δυνηθῆτε ἀντιστῆναι</u> ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ πονηρᾷ so that you can resist on the evil day	resist	
	καὶ ἅπαντα κατεργασάμενοι <u>στήναι</u> . and (can) remain firmly having accomplished everything	stand firmly	
6:14	<u>στήτε</u> οὖν remain firmly then		
	περιζωσάμενοι τὴν ὀσφὺν ὑμῶν ἐν <u>ἀληθείᾳ</u> having girded your waist with truth	gird	truth
	καὶ ἐνδυσάμενοι τὸν <u>θώρακα</u> τῆς δικαιοσύνης and having put on the breastplate of righteousness	breastplate	truth
6:15	καὶ ὑποδησάμενοι τοὺς <u>πόδας</u> ἐν <u>ἐτοιμασίᾳ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου</u> τῆς εἰρήνης, and having put on your feet (sandals) with readiness of the gospel of peace	shoes	
	readiness		
6:16	ἐν πᾶσιν ἀναλαβόντες τὸν <u>θυρεὸν</u> τῆς πίστεως, in all things having taken up the shield of faith	shield	faith
	ἐν ᾧ δυνήσεσθε πάντα τὰ βέλη τοῦ πονηροῦ πεπυρωμένα σβέσαι· by which you will be able to put out all the burning arrows of the evil one		
6:17	καὶ τὴν <u>περικεφαλαίαν</u> τοῦ σωτηρίου δέξασθε and take hold of the helmet of salvation	helmet	salvation
	καὶ τὴν <u>μάχαιραν</u> τοῦ πνεύματος, and the sword of the Spirit	sword	Spirit
	ὃ ἐστὶν <u>ῥῆμα θεοῦ</u> . that is God's message	God's word	



6.1.1. Thought structure analysis remarks

The pericope Ephesians 6:10-20 is the final pericope of the letter body of Ephesians. Paul introduces this section with the concept ‘eventually’ or “finally” (Τοῦ λοιποῦ), in this way indicating that he is writing the final things before closing the letter. After this section, only the final greetings remain (6:21-24).

The pericope is about God’s engagement with opposing powers in the accomplishment of his mission. The conflict in Ephesians 6:10-20 is a conflict with supra-terrestrial opponents of the church in the heavenly realms that only God is able to defeat and overcome¹⁷¹. These cosmic spiritual opponents were the

¹⁷¹ Traditional Jewish apocalyptic depicts the battles as taking place in the upper regions, in the heavenly realm (cf. Martin; 1991:75). The nearest parallel is Rev. 12:7: “And there was war in heaven” (N.I.V). In Ephesians 2:2 the believer was at one time submitted to the ruler of the kingdom of the air and thus not engaged in a battle in the upper regions.

opponents of the Pauline mission (cf. 1 Thess. 2:8; 2 Cor. 12:7). They are also the opponents of the church who are to continue the Pauline mission (cf. 1 Cor. 5:5; 2 Cor. 11:4; Rom 16:20). Paul in Ephesians 6:10-18 indicates endeavours to encourage the believers that engaging in battle with the Evil One depend upon God who equips them. “Missionary efforts cannot be successful unless they are rooted in humble dependence on God’s power and resources” (Ott & Strauss; 2010: 248). The ultimate aim of the pericope, however, is not the vindication of the people of God and the defence of the individual against the assault of evil but the worldwide acknowledgment of the true God and his rule (cf. Eph 1:23).

Normally Paul ends his letters with some exhortations and admonishments directed at the local situation. The final exhortations in the Ephesians letter, however, are of more general nature, evidently to encourage the readers for their calling and task in the pagan society where they were living. Barth (1974:597) sees in Eph 6:11-14 the mission of the saints to the world.

(1) The repetition of references to the metaphor of the armour of God (ἡ πανοπλία τοῦ θεοῦ) seems to be the dominant marker in this pericope. It is mentioned twice early in the pericope 6:11, 13, and then described in detail in the pericope’s middle section (6:14-17). This armour is essential for the believer, for reasons as explained in two semantic word clusters:

- The kind of enemy we have to face: In **thought-block A** (6:11-12) words describing the enemy against whom our spiritual struggle is grouped together: the devil, powers, authorities, forces of darkness and evil spirits in the heavens.
- The need to stand firm: We should be able to stand firm and resist these forces, as indicated by the word group *able* (ἐνδυναμοῦσθε, in 6:10) *power* (κράτει τῆς ἰσχύος αὐτοῦ, in 6:10), *resist* (δύνασθαι στήναι πρὸς, in 6:11) and *stand firm* (ἵνα δυνήθητε ἀντιστῆναι, in 6:13, στήτε, in 6:14). The believer is to continually ἐνδυναμοῦσθε (“become capable” in 6:10) the power and strength of the Lord (6:10), he is to ἐνδύσασθ (“put on” in 6:11) the whole armour of God (6:11), ἐνδυσάμενοι (“having put on” in 6:14) and ὑποδησάμενοι (“having put on” in 6:15). It enables the believer to resist the methods of the evil one (6:11).
- The idea to stand is repeated four times, δύνασθαι (6:11), δυνήθητε (6:13), στήτε (6:14) and δυνήσεσθε (6:16), communicating the idea “to be able to stand” inf. in 6:11 and subj. in 6:13, imperative in 6:14 and fut. Ind. in 6:16. It is used to indicate the purpose of the armour of God (6:11 & 6:13). The armour is to be ἀναλάβετε is to be “taken up” (6:13) and ἀναλαβόντες, “having been taken up” (6:16) makes possible δυνήσεσθε (6:16). The idea of resistance is indicated by the term ἀντιστῆναι (6:13).
- There is a natural flow from thought block A to B. The thought blocks A and B are related to Ephesians 3, δυναμένῳ (“being able” in 3:20) and δυνάμει (“to become able” in 3:16).

(2) In a distinctive **thought-block B** (6:13-17) the metaphor of the armour of God is discussed in detail. The thought-block is introduced by διὰ τοῦτο (6:13, τοῦτο in 3:1, 14 and διὰ in 3:13 indicates a relation with Ephesians 3). Different parts of the armour are taken one after the other and its imagery explained. The logical order in which the different pieces of the armour are explained, is not evident from the structure analysis itself, and will have to be explained from historical or theological considerations (*cf. 5.5.2 below). The armour of God enables the believer to resist in the time of evil (6:13).

(3) The **thought-block C** (6:18-20) indicates the means by which the saints are involved in the ministry and mission of Paul.

(4) The final **thought-block D** (6:21-23) indicates that Tychicus is sent by Paul to represent him. Tychicus is sent out as a missionary because he is sent for a specific task, to make known how Paul was doing (6:21) and to encourage their hearts (6:22).

(5) One aspect of the armour seems to be singled out for special attention, viz. the *readiness to proclaim the gospel of peace* (ἐτοιμασία τοῦ εὐαγγελίου τῆς ειρήνης, in 6:15). Its special attention becomes apparent only towards the end of the pericope, in 6:19-20, where the apostle returns to the matter of willingly and fearlessly preaching the gospel. Actually 6:18 already introduces the return to this topic, where the apostle exhorts the recipients emphatically to pray for the progress of the gospel¹⁷². So at the end of the pericope, in 6:19-20, the apostle returns to the matter of speaking fearlessly and willingly when proclaiming the gospel. The gospel is now stated in reference to all believers. The task of *oikonomia* that was assigned to the Church in 3:9-10 is related to the spreading of the gospel by the saints (6:15), prayer for the ministry and mission of the saints (6:18) and prayer for Paul's own ministry and mission work (6:19).

(6) Especially significant is the fact that the mystery-motif is revisited where the apostle exhorts the recipients to pray that he "will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel" (ἐν παρησίᾳ γνωρίσαι τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ εὐαγγελίου, in 6:19). Considering the phrase "the mystery of his will" (τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ) almost at the beginning of the letter (1:9), the result is very close to a complete *inclusio* of the entire letter body. This structural feature of the letter confirms that the concept μυστήριον should be regarded as central to the letter's argument.

(7) The prayer also forms an inclusion of Ephesians 6:10-20 indicating that the prayer for the working of God's mighty power (v. 10) and the request for prayer by Paul do not belong to a separate category. Praying for Paul is part of the prayer of the believers "for all the saints" (v. 18), implying that the believers are to pray for all the saints that they boldly proclaim and witness to the gospel (Carson; 2000:182). This passage provides the most explicit link between mission and prayer and God's answers to such prayer for Paul to remain faithful in his mission (cf. Carson; 2000:181). The prayer for Paul suggests that Paul regards himself as a missionary of the Church of Ephesus, an ambassador of the mystery of the gospel.

¹⁷² Note the effective use of pleonasm in the participle phrase διὰ πάσης προσευχῆς καὶ δεήσεως προσευχόμενοι (cf. Jordaan, 2013:172), followed by δεήσει in 6:19.

6.1.2. The thought-block A: the wrestle against the powers and principalities: Ephesians 6:10-12

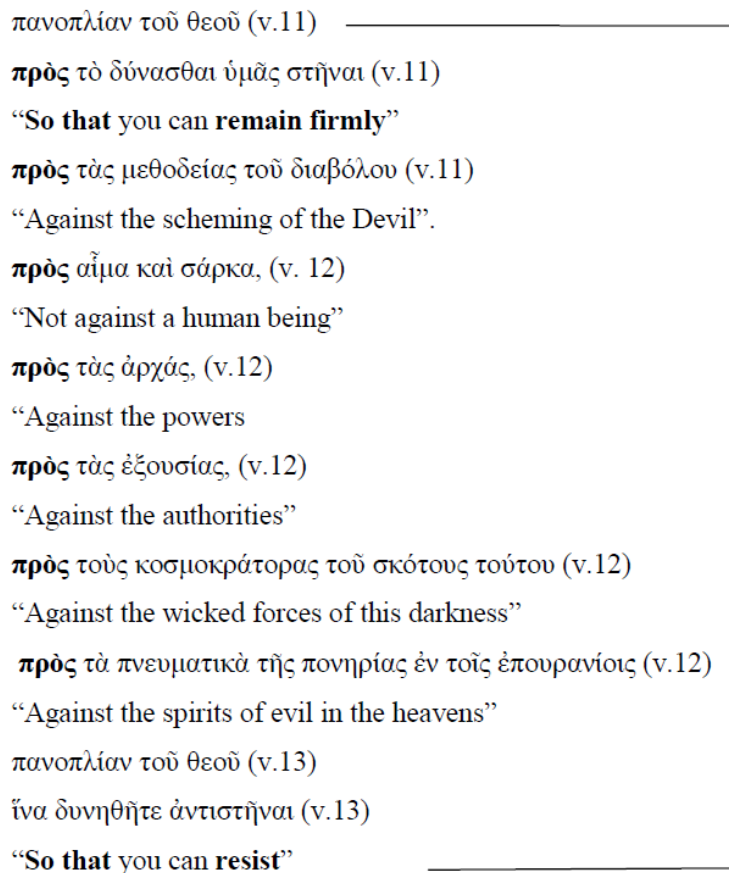
6.1.2.1. Thought Structure Analysis Remarks

(1) The central idea of thought-block 6:10-12 is union with the Lord. It is a continuation of the key theme ἐν Χριστῷ (1:1, 4, 7; 10, 11, 13, 17, 20; 2:6-7, 13, 21-22; 3:4, 11-12, 21; 4:21, 32) and ἐν κυρίῳ (4:1; 17; 5:8; 6:1, 10). It is implied that the believer becomes capable (ἐνδυναμοῦσθε) of ministry and mission in union with Christ.

(2) In Ephesians 6:10-12 Paul devotes special attention to how believers fight against the satanic enemy in carrying out the task given to them. He teaches how to apply the truths of the privileged place of triumph that believers share in Christ (Eph 2:6). It is rooted in the foundation of Christ's triumph over all of Satan's forces (Eph 1:19-22).

(3) This fighting takes place by means of the power and strength given by God. It is expressed in terms of a metaphor, the armour of God. The battle between the children of God and the forces of darkness is expressed by a series of phrases introduced by πρὸς to identify the opponents. It is used to identify against whom the battle is actually against. The *inclusio* is marked by πανοπλίαν τοῦ θεοῦ ("the armour of God") in v. 11 repeated again in v.13. It implies that the armour of God is able to protect against the list of spiritual opponents.

6.1.2.2. Schematic representation of list of opponents in Ephesians 6:10-12



In the above diagram the forces of evil have greater authority indicated by the third **πρὸς τὰς ἐξουσίας**, and **ἀρχή** can be translated “chief spirits”. The noun **ἐξουσίας** indicates that they have authority and jurisdiction over a domain or sphere. They have a certain leadership role amongst the evil spirits. This, however, should not lead to attempts to reconstruct a hierarchy on the basis of the neoplatonic system of nine such powers arranged in three orders of three each.¹⁷³ The fourth **πρὸς τοὺς κοσμοκράτορας** indicates the existence of a “world ruler”.

6.1.2.3. Background

It has traditionally been understood as a reflection of the Roman military metaphor. A more plausible alternative is to interpret the passage against the background of arena fighting. This is not to rule out the

¹⁷³Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. 1996, c1989. *Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.). United Bible societies: New York

possibility of a secondary allusion to the Roman military metaphor, but in view of the technical term *πάλη* (v. 12) and the repeatedly defensive thrust of the passage, the metaphorical background may well be that of arena fighting. The somewhat unusual phrase *πρὸς αἷμα καὶ σάρκα* is best interpreted as follows: what matters in the end, is not the believers' possible defeat in the arena, but victory in Christ, that is *ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις* (cf. 2:6). This interpretation fits well with Paul's comparison and the use of a powerful image in 1 Corinthians 15:32 to depict his opponents as ferocious wild beasts. The fighting that took place in the arena in Ephesus may have inspired Paul to use this image.

It is in the proclamation of the gospel that opposition is encountered. The proclamation of the gospel in Ephesus resulted in opposition for Paul when the guild of craftsmen, for economical reasons, opposed him publically (Acts 19:23-27). The motivation of Demetrius was "that our business may be discredited" (Acts 19:27) and the industry being on "the verge of ruin" (19:27). Paul writes to the Corinthians that "...a wide door for effective ministry has opened for me – yet many oppose me" (1 Cor. 16:8), from which it can be deduced that he faithfully proclaimed the gospel in Ephesus. The gospel requires taking a stand (1 Cor. 15:1) and salvation is through holding on to the message (1 Cor. 15:2).

6.1.2.4. Exegetical Remarks

(1) Observable in the thought-block is interplay between the imperative and the infinitive in the pericope:

ἐνδύσασθε - Aor. Imp	
δύνασθαι – Aor. Inf.	v. 11 “ put on the armour to be able to remain firm-stand”
στήνα – Aor. Inf.	
ἀναλάβετε – Aor. Imp.	v. 13 “ take up the armour to be able to resist, stand.”
δυνηθῆτε – Aor. Subj.	
ἀντιστήνα – Aor. Inf.	
στήναι - Aor. Inf.	

In v. 11 the aorist imperative demands the immediate action of the believer to put on the armour of God. The purpose is to enable the believer to remain firm, stand (“to hold a watch post”) (στήνα-the inf. completes the idea of the preceding verb).

In v. 13 the aorist imperative demands the immediate action of the believer to take up the armour before the actual battle begins. The purpose is to resist, stand.

The aorist is iterative meaning that it is to be a repeated action in v. 11 and 13. In the centre of v. 11 and 13 stand v. 12 in which the idea of wrestling and struggling against the strategy of the World Ruler is communicated. Paul has a missions strategy which is part of the *oikonomia* of God and the World Ruler, Satan, has his own strategy. In missions it is important to remember that there is an opponent with his own

strategy. It can be compared to a chess game in which there are two players, each with his own strategy. The double emphasis of “put on” and “take up” indicates the importance of the armour for ministry and missions.

(2) The armour in verse 11 is “the armour God himself bears” in his engaging with opposing powers (Wisdom. Sol. 5:17-20; cf. Isa 59:17). In the Old Testament it is God who is said to wear the helmet of doom (Wisdom Sol. 5:18; cf. Isa 59:17) (cf. Martin; 1991:76). It is God who wears the breastplate of righteousness, meaning He embarks upon a crusade against social evil (Wisdom Sol. 5:18; cf. Isa 59:17). It is thus God who fought for Israel. On the evil day of eschatological struggle the weapons are given by God and it is God who wields them. But the responsibility to put on the weapons belongs to the believer indicated by the aorist imperatives, *τὸ ἐνδύσασθ* (“put on” in 6:11), *ἀναλάβετε* (“take up” in 6:13), *στήτε* (“to stand” in 6:14), the believers are to “Put on, Take up and Stand”. The believers are in a wrestling match and in direct contact with evil opponents, who through crafty scheming and the intent to deceive, want to overthrow the believers to win the match. It is like a soldier who stands and must hold the stronghold at all cost. They may not retreat or march forward – they must stand! It is like the struggle for a city, the struggle within the walls determines the course of the battle. The inner struggle of the believer against the flesh, sinful desires, sinful nature, the world and the forces of darkness is determinative for the outcome of the struggle.

(3) In the previous section of Ephesians 1-3 the power language occurred predominantly in the prayers (Eph 1:19-21; 3:7, 14, 20) and alluded to God’s power. In 6:10-20 the power language occurs in the context of a power struggle against forces of darkness which seek to oppose the plan of God. For this reason the pericope 6:10-20 is related to Ephesians 1:10 (cf. Martin; 1991:75), and the plan of Christ “to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ”. This also stands in a relation to the stewardship of God’s grace given to Paul (Eph 3:2) and the stewardship role given to the Church (Eph 3:9-10). The role of Paul was to make plain to everyone the stewardship of the mystery but also to make known to everyone what is the power given for the accomplishment of the task (Eph 3:20). God will exert his sovereign power and complete the mission He has commissioned. “This is what guarantees the victory of the cause” (Piper; 1993:52).

(4) The struggle against the forces of darkness should not be individualized. The context of Ephesians 6:10-20 is the Church which struggles and wrestles against the forces of darkness. “The imagery of Ephesians 6 is not of a solitary soldier, but of an army equipped and ready for battle (Timmis & Chester; 2009:50).

6.1.2.5. Word Study

(1) *ἐνδυναμοῦσθε* (“to make able”): Ephesians 6:10

The verb ἐνδυναμοῦσθε means “to make someone able, to give capability to, to enable, to strengthen, to empower.”¹⁷⁴ The verb indicates that the ability to perform a task has been given by God.

6.1.3. The thought-block B: the armour of God for the battle: Ephesians 6:13-17

6.1.3.1. Thought Structure Analysis Remarks

(1) The text of Eph 6:15 reveal the apostle’s expectation that the church would be active in proclaiming the gospel (cf. Plummer; 2006:77). The wider context contains two elements which communicate to the Ephesians that it is imperative to evangelize. First, Paul’s reference in Ephesians 6:17 to Christians wielding the sword of the Spirit (which is the Word of God) have evangelistic connotations (cf. Plummer; 2006:79). God’s people are armed with “the sword of the Spirit”, the Word of God, for overcoming the powers arrayed against God’s kingdom.

(2) For this reason the most sense of Ephesians 6:15 is captured by the translation, “As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace” (NRSV). It conveys the imperative sense of the thought.

6.1.3.2. Background

The passages Ephesians 6:14-17 correct the Jewish misunderstanding that God will intervene on behalf of Israel to enact justice and righteousness for God’s people (cf. Porter; 2006:193). The Old Testament prophets did not reconcile the two seemingly incompatible streams, judgement and salvation. The allusion to Isaiah addresses the wrong perception of Israel that God will judge the Gentiles. The Jewish mind-set of separation and segregation from the Gentiles is addressed by the allusion to Isaiah. The role of Ephesians 6:14-17 in the context of the letter is to awake the Church to its missional identity, the Church is called to make God known to the nations. In the new covenant God binds himself to the Church.

6.1.3.3. Word Study

(1) ἀναλάβετε (“take up”): Ephesians 6:13

The verb is an aorist imperative and demands an immediate action.

¹⁷⁴Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1989). Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.). United Bible societies: New York

(2) ἐτοιμασία (“readiness”): Ephesians 6:15

The verb in Eph 6:15, having put on as shoes, indicating that the individual members of the community have to put on the gospel like putting on a pair of shoes. It is an image intended to evoke a certain response, to take the gospel everywhere that a person travels, wherever the Ephesians placed their feet. The function of the picture was to evoke the responsibility of the Christian to wear the gospel at all times, ready to communicate it at any time. It is the necessity of being attentive and consciously identifying opportunities in which the gospel can be communicated is the goal of the image.

6.1.3.4. The relation to the Old Testament

6.1.3.4.1. The weaponry of the believer

In Eph 6:10-17 the weapons of the servant of God is transferred to the believer which is no more than an extension of Isaiah (cf. Moritz; 1996:192). “The underlying rationale is, first, that Jesus is the Christ and so the fulfilment of the messenger envisaged by the Prophet and, secondly, that Christian believers are members of Christ’s body” (Moritz; 1996:192).

6.1.3.4.2. The righteousness of the Lord and the believer

The author of Ephesians makes use of Isaiah 59:17, the Lord’s armour, and uses it to describe the attire of the believer. In Isaiah the Lord is symbolically described as putting on the breastplate of righteousness when he goes forth to bring about justice. It is part of the vengeance of the Lord that takes place on the *Day of the Lord*. Its function is to communicate the zeal of the Lord for righteousness. In Ephesians “militant armour becomes spiritual armour; temple becomes heavenly sanctuary; and so forth. This address represents holy war in the political system of the old dispensation; they must be reinterpreted to refer to the spiritual realities of the new dispensation” (Waltke & Houton; 2010:510). The believer’s attire of the breastplate of righteousness indicates that he/she possess is the righteousness of Christ. It indicates that the believer is a representative of the righteousness and justice of God in society. The breastplate of righteousness precedes the shoes of the gospel without which the believer is unable to represent Christ.

6.1.3.4.3. Proclamation of the gospel

Paul uses language that alludes to Isaiah 52:7, “How beautiful are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation, who says to Zion, “Your God reigns”. “Paul obviously saw this text as descriptive of the evangelistic task, for he employs it elsewhere in a clear

reference to the apostolic preaching of the gospel (Rom 10:15) (Plummer; 2006:79). Paul quotes Isaiah 52:7 in Rom 10:15 to indicate that every person has to receive the opportunity to hear the gospel. The allusion to Isaiah 52:7 is a clear connection of the Old Testament missional proclamation and prefiguring of Christ's deliverance of his people from the bondage of sin and of God's sovereign rule over the world through Christ with the announcement that the rule and reign of Christ has been inaugurated (Eph 6:15).

The quotation of Isaiah in Ephesians 6:10-20

Isa 59:17	Righteousness of the Servant as the breastplate of the believer	Eph 6:14, 17
Isa 52:7	The good news of the return from the exile, the revelation of the good news in Christ's coming and every believer fitted with the gospel stands in a continuum.	Eph 6:15

6.1.3.4.4. The motif of judgement replaced by the renewal of the nations

The author, by not appropriating the imagery of Isa 59:17 in its entirety, re-contextualizes the imagery to communicate that "vengeance and fury are not part of the armour of this community" (Porter & Reed; 1999:193-194). The motif of judgement has been replaced by the revelation that the judgment of God has been inflicted by upon Christ. It is the believer's identification with the substitute death of Christ on behalf of the believer that is expressed by the helmet of salvation. It is as the believer wears the helmet of salvation that he is able to be an instrument of renewal to the nations.

6.1.4. The thought-block C: truth claims made in speech: Ephesians 6:18-20

6.1.4.1. Thought structure analysis remarks

(1) The speech contemplated here is not a rational defence of the kerygma which confirms the message by arguments but rather, contemplated as an occasion when Paul, through his fearless proclamation of Christ in the face of persecution, confirms the truth and power of the gospel (cf. Ware; 1996:193). The appeal "express the need for the church's prayers that the same apostolic work, begun by Paul and continued by his disciples, may not be retarded by timidity or wither through an indifference to or neglect of the truths represented uniquely by Paul in his lifetime" (Martin; 1991:77; cf. Col. 4:2-4). The truth that the author intends the Ephesians church not to neglect is the preaching of the gospel. The church must defend the

gospel with courage akin to that shown by Paul in his imprisonment (cf. Martin; 1991:77). At stake is the truth of the gospel itself.

(2) It is important to note that verse 18 does not begin a new sentence. It connects with verse 17. Paul encourages the believers in Ephesus that their prayer (Eph 6:18-19) is part of the apostolic mission. He includes the Church in his apostolic mission through their intercession, which is “more than merely emotional, verbal, or moral support” (Barth; 1974:805). It is a continuation of the theme of the inclusion of the Church and saints in the mission of God (cf. 3:7-10; cf. 2:7; 5:8-14; 6:15). Paul makes the connection between the life of war and the work of prayer in the thought-block C (6:18-20). He encourages the Church to pray for the fearless proclamation of the gospel. The prayer is specifically for the Church to accomplish its mission. “Failure to pray for people to come to Christ, for the gospel to advance, and for “God’s will to be done on earth, as it is in heaven” is acceptance of Satan’s partial rule in this present age” (Ott; Strauss & Tennent; 2010: 248).

(3) Paul indicates that he has been imprisoned for being πρεσβεύω, “a representative, an ambassador” of Christ, for having made known the mystery of the gospel (v. 19). It may be that Paul wanted to encourage the Ephesians to be bold in their own proclamation of the gospel through his example.

(4) A key phrase in 6:18-20 is τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ εὐαγγελίου. It is a key expression which clarifies the use of μυστήριον as relating to the gospel in Ephesians. God’s plan (oikonomia) is the disclosure of the gospel which involves a particular role for the Church (cf. Sampley; 1971:8). “In 3:10, for the first time, the author specifies the function of the church. It is a mission of profound importance and cosmic scope: “that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might be made known to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places” (Sampley; 1971:8-9). The task of the Church is to reveal what is the stewardship of the mystery (Eph 3:9) and the mystery is the gospel (Eph 6:19). This means that the stewardship of the gospel is committed to every believer in the Church. Every believer in the Church has a responsibility to steward the gospel and this requires that, like Paul, they are to make known the gospel in boldness.

6.1.4.2. Word Study

(1) διὰ πάσης προσευχῆς καὶ δεήσεως (“by means of prayer and petition”): Ephesians 6:18

The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, is yielded by means of prayer and petition. The Word of God is an offensive weapon implied by the word sword. The context is the battle, which most certainly includes the proclamation of the gospel in and outside the congregation. It is confirmed by the use of the word “petition”, which an urgent appeal is made to God. It is probably an implied reference to the cause (of the gospel) (Eph 3:1). This inference can be made because a relation exists between Ephesians 3 and 6.

(2) ἀγρυπνοῦντες (“keeping alert”): Ephesians 6:18

The phrase εἰς αὐτὸ, “to this end” or “for this purpose” relates to the previous discussion on prayer. It implies to watch for a particular threat. But it could also be an allusion to Jesus’ instruction to his disciples to watch and be alert for his second coming (cf. Hoehner; 2002:358). It is supported by O’Brien (1991:485): “the concept of wakefulness had an eschatological character to it, and it seems reasonable to assume that the apostle is here encouraging his readers to be alert in expectation of the Lord’s coming” (cf. 1 Co 16:22; Rev. 22:20). This expectation of the Lord’s coming is central in the life of the Church and especially in missions. “Believers are to pray continually because their struggle with the powers of darkness is never ending” (O’Brien; 1999:484). This vigilance in prayer is both individualistic and corporate; the corporate aspect includes prayer for the ministry and mission of the Church. Believers are not to fall into spiritual sleep or complacency but pray for the extension of the kingdom of God since God’s kingdom is extended by prayer and not merely by human effort and strength.

(3) γνωρισας (“to make known”): Ephesians 6:19

The aorist infinitive verb γνωρισας indicates purpose, to make known, to reveal. He requests the Ephesians’ to pray for him that “God may open my mouth”, that God would graciously give to him speech to make known the mystery. He asks for prayer that he will speak with no restraints that he would speak freely, boldly, and openly. The preaching of the gospel is in an evangelistic sense¹⁷⁵. The verb indicates to make known “the mystery of the gospel”. Paul is speaking about the mystery of the revelation of which the gospel content and heart is Jesus Christ¹⁷⁶.

6.1.4.3. The relation to the Old Testament

6.1.4.3.1. The truth and righteousness of the gospel

The link with Isa 11:4-5 in Eph 4:24-25; 5:9 and 6:14 parallels the juxtaposition of truth and righteousness in Isaiah, truth (1:13; 4:15, 21) and righteousness refer to the truth and righteousness of the gospel. Righteousness is God’s gift through Christ and does not primarily depend on righteousness as a human virtue. The readers are encouraged to rely on the truthfulness of the gospel as a divine gift. These are divine characteristics which are conferred on the new mankind. The new creation is juxtaposed with the old creation in Eph 4:22-4 in terms of which truth relates back to the author’s exposition of the gospel for both

¹⁷⁵ Hoehner argues that it is not preaching the gospel in an evangelistic sense “for the context is about a defensive stand and not an offensive advance” (cf. Hoehner; 2002: 863).

¹⁷⁶ Hoehner argues that the mystery in the context is the union of believing Jews and Gentiles. The context, however, is not about Jews and Gentiles united in one body. The mystery is Jesus Christ (cf. Col. 2:3).

Jews and Gentiles. In Eph 6:15 the text of Isaiah 52:7 is used to indicate that the gospel alone is truth and offers righteousness. Arnold believes that in 6:15 the author was thinking of proclaiming the gospel as an offensive measure. The phrase “readiness of the gospel” may be interpreted as denoting the firmness offered by the gospel to those who are “in Christ.”¹⁷⁷ This means that Ephesians departed from Isaiah at this point. In Eph 6:15 it denotes the believers’ firmness based on the gospel rather than its proclamation as a means of counter-offensive. Christ’s victory at the cross is the very centre of the gospel (Eph 2:16). The passage Ephesians 6:14-17 combines various allusions from Isaiah (cf. Porter; 2006:192). The allusion to Isaiah 11:5 has in mind the shoot from the stump of Jesse who will be part of the creational restoration.

6.1.4.3.2. The judgement of God on the nations

The allusion to Isaiah 11 indicates a substantial theological background behind Ephesians 6:14. The theological background of Isaiah 11 is that the rule of the Messiah will be a sign to the nations that God is glorious and has called his people back from their captivity (vv. 10-16). God is the one who reigns and these overtones are central to the message of Ephesians 6 (cf. Porter; 2006:193). These passages “announce salvation, God’s peace, good news and righteousness. To describe salvation in terms of judgement on the nations: in Isaiah 11, God’s people will swoop down on the Philistines, plunder the people of the east, and put forth their hands against Edom, Moab, and the Ammonites (Isa 11:14) (Porter; 2006:193). The purpose of Paul by borrowing the terminology of Isaiah is to reject the violent judgement on behalf of God’s people (cf. Porter; 2006:193). Israel understood salvation in terms of the judgement of the nations which is no longer applicable to the nations.

The allusions to the renewal of the nations

Isa 11:4f	Righteousness and justice is central to the renewal of the covenant	Eph 6:14 (17?)

6.1.4.3.3. The majority of the recipients were Jewish

The theme of missions discernible in the quotations, allusion and echoes of Isaiah were specifically directed at the Jewish Christians. The subtle nature of this theme implies that it is the Jewish conception of the relation between Jew and Gentile and mission that the author addresses through the use of these quotations, allusions and echoes. Moritz (1996:216) concedes that a significant portion of the recipients

¹⁷⁷ The notion is brought out in the NEB translation “give you a firm footing”.

were Jewish followers of Christ. But he does not go far enough. The use of Israel's Scriptures is best explained on the presupposition that the majority of the recipients had a sufficient knowledge of these Scriptures to appreciate the thrust of the quotations, allusions, echoes and concepts. It is supported by the historical assumption that there was a strong and widespread presence of Jews in Western Asia Minor throughout the first century.

**6.1.5. The thought-block D: the servant ministry of Tychicus as representative of Paul:
Ephesians 6:21-24**

6.1.5.1. Thought structure analysis remarks

The term διάκονος has been translated as *minister* (Eph 3:7; 6:21; Col. 1:7, 25; 4:7) (KJV, NRSV, ESV, NIV) and *servant* (NASB), the person who performed the *ministry task*, την διακονιαν. The translation of the term διάκονος as *minister* has the meaning of a person who has the responsibility of teaching and leading the believers and the congregation. Paul writes to the Colossians that they heard the good news from Epaphras (Col. 1:6-7), indicating that the term διάκονος in the context is to be distinguished from the office of διάκονος that was occupied with the arrangement for providing for the needs of believers (Acts 6:1) and did not necessarily involve a teaching responsibility and obligation (1 Tim. 3:8-13). Paul sends Tychicus to Ephesus so that the believers would be encouraged or consoled, either by verbal or non-verbal means (Eph 6:21-22; Col. 4:7-8) and he related διάκονος to the activity of παρακαλέω in Ephesians 6:22 by writing to them that Tychicus will reveal to the believers about the personal circumstances of Paul as a way of encouraging them. The tasks of οικονομία and διάκονία can be distinguished from each other in that διάκονία involved more than the proclamation of the gospel, it included the element of παρακαλέω, a dimension of care and social responsibility. The task of οικονομία is specifically related to the revelation of the mystery (Eph 3:2), and in the context of Ephesians 3:2-5 it is the revelation of the mystery, Jesus Christ, God revealed to Paul, αποκαλυψιν εγνωρισεν μοι το μυστηριον, which he had the responsibility and obligation to reveal to the Gentiles and Gentile nations. A distinction can thus be drawn between οικονομία and διάκονία in the context, whereas the task of οικονομία is directed at Gentiles, outsiders, who had not previously heard the gospel message, the task of διάκονία is directed believers, insiders, to people who had heard the gospel message and who were in need of encouragement. It is the reason that Paul sent Tychicus, “that you may know things concerning us (“that you may know about us”- RSV, NEB, KJB, NKJB), specifically “to find out” something about Paul the readers did not know previously. The second purpose is “and that he may comfort your hearts” (Eph 6:22). Paul as missionary continues to be concerned about the physical and spiritual well-being of the Churches he planted. He sent Tychicus as his apostolic representative to Ephesus. The responsibility of caring for the spiritual concerns

of the believers is not based upon a leadership position, implying that Tychicus was appointed as an apostle but in the role of caring for the believers.

A very specific term is used for the sending out of Jesus Christ by the Father into the world, ἀρπετωστειλαῶν (John 17:3, 18) and the same word is also used for the sending out of the disciples into the world (John 17:18). In John 20:21, however, when Jesus speaks about the Father sending Him he uses ἀρπετωστειλαῶν and another term is used for Jesus sending out his disciples, πεμπω. The term ἐ[πεμψα is used for Tychicus being sent out by Paul on a mission (Eph 6:22). It is “an epistolary aorist, that is, it views the action from the standpoint of the recipients as they read the letter, and it should be translated “I am sending” (O’Brien; 1999:492). Paul thus has authority to send out “faithful servants” (6:21) as part of the *oikonomia* entrusted to him.

The delegates commissioned for the work of the gospel are called “co-worker” and “labourer” and the Corinthians are urged to put themselves under the direction of such people (1 Cor. 16:16) (Collins; 1990:224). The expression εἰς διακονίαν is used in the sense of a commissioned delegation or mission (Rom 12:25; 1 Cor. 16:15; 2 Cor. 8:4 19; 2 Cor. 9:1, 12-13; Acts 11:29; 12:25). In 2 Cor. 8:4 the Macedonians “shared in the fellowship of the mission to God’s people”. In Luke’s account of the mission from Antioch to Jerusalem it occurs twice (Acts 11:29; 12:25). In 1 Thessalonians 3:1-2 Timothy is identified as a “co-worker” of Paul. Paul writes to the Church Thessalonica to welcome Timothy because he has been sent by Paul to them. Timothy therefore did not possess apostolic authority but delegated authority. The use of the word “co-worker” means that Timothy was regarded as an equal by Paul even though he did not share the same apostolic authority as the apostle Paul.

Tychicus is commended as “the dear brother and faithful servant in the Lord” (cf. Col. 4:7). “In the context the term *brother* means not so much “fellow-Christian” (though Tychicus was obviously this, and the term has this meaning in v. 21) as “co-worker” or “helper” (O’Brien; 1999:492).

6.1.5.2. The co-workers of Paul: the ministry of Tychicus

Was the Ministry of Tychicus Apostolic? The task of *apostolic ministry* has been entrusted to the local, resident elders or pastors (Acts 14:23; Tit. 1:5) argues Ott & Strauss (2010:235). But does this blur the uniqueness of the apostolic office? Is there evidence for an apostolic ministry and the continuation of the mission work of Paul? And if so does the term διακονία refer to the continuation of the mission task? The co-workers of Paul have been identified as apostolic co-workers who exercised some measure of authority (cf. Ott & Strauss; 2010:232) but this risk’s blurring the important distinction between Paul and his co-workers if the use of term apostle is also used for members of Paul’s missionary band. Paul makes a distinction between himself as an apostle and his co-workers as “brothers” in the letter openings and

endings, “Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God and Timothy the brother” (Col 1:1; 1 Co 1:1; 2 Co 1:1; Eph 1:1). And Tychicus is called a brother (Eph 6:22). It is apparent that the co-workers of Paul were clearly in a class separate from that of the Twelve and Paul. The language of being “*set apart*” or “*appointed*” or “*commissioned*” indicates that the appointment of Paul as an apostle was unique and as an apostle meant more than receiving a spiritual gifts. The co-workers of Paul served as Paul’s helpers, itinerant evangelists, church planters, and helpers in the spreading of the gospel to the nations. The calling of the co-workers of Paul was to the ministry of *διάκονία*, the term used is the ministry of service rather than the apostolic ministry. Although Paul’s co-workers helped him, the term *apostolos* is not used for his missionary co-workers, as they did not share equal authority to the Twelve and Paul. The use of the ministry of service for Paul’s co-workers indicates that their special calling and vocation was based on the recognition of a spiritual gift they had received for the edification of the church (cf. Eph 4:11) and that they were sent out and commissioned by Paul. Tychicus therefore did not have his own apostolic authority but submitted to Paul who was commissioned by the Lord as apostle and missionary to the nations. It has been suggested that Timothy, Titus, Tychicus and others were designated as “*apostle of the churches*” (2 Co 8:23; Php 2:25) (cf. Ollrog; 1979:79-84). It is argued that the expression is to be distinguished from *ἀπόστολος*. The term “*apostle of the churches*” it has been suggested serves as an equivalent of the modern term missionary. The identification of the term “*apostle of the churches*” may imply that the Churches began to send out missionaries who were primarily accountable to the Churches and secondarily to Paul. This may have led to a certain tension between the sending Church and Paul if a dispute arose. The expression, rather than indicating that there was a separate class of individuals, indicates that they were supported by Churches to work with Paul. There certainly would not have been any power struggle between Paul and the Churches.

It has been suggested that Andronicus and Junias were apostles based on the translation of Romans 16:7 “well known among the apostles” (cf. Titus in 2 Cor. 8:23). The preferable translation is, however, “in the opinion of the apostles” rather than “well known as apostles”. The use of the terms *κοινωνός*, “partner” and *συνεργός*, “fellow worker” also do not indicate an authority separate from that of Paul. Paul was truly the apostle of the Church to whom all mission to the nations was related.

6.2. SUMMARY OF THE PERICOPE OF EPHESIANS 6:10-20

In Ephesians 6:10-20 Paul continues the theme of the inclusion of the Church and saints in the mission of God (cf. 3:7-10; cf. 2:7; 5:8-14; 6:15). The pericope is about God’s engagement with opposing powers in the accomplishment of the *mission Dei*. The conflict in Ephesians 6:10-20 is a conflict with supra-terrestrial opponents of the church in the heavenly realms that only God is able to defeat and overcome. The believers

are in a wrestling match and in direct contact with evil opponents, who through crafty scheming and the intent to deceive, want to overthrow the believers to win the match. It is like a soldier who stands and must hold the stronghold at all cost. They may not retreat or march forward – they must stand!

Paul has a missions strategy which is part of the *oikonomia* of God and the World Ruler, Satan, has his own strategy. In missions it is important to remember that there is an opponent with his own strategy. It can be compared to a chess game in which there are two players, each with his own strategy. The double emphasis of “put on” and “take up” indicates the importance of the armour for ministry and missions. Although the battle belongs to the Lord the believer is not passive. The Church is to engage the enemy in several ways:

a) The sense of Ephesians 6:15 is captured by the translation, “As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace” (NRSV). It conveys the imperative sense of the thought. The function of the picture was to evoke the responsibility of the Christian to wear the gospel at all times, ready to communicate it at any time.

b) Paul makes the connection between the life of war and the work of prayer in Ephesians 6:18-20. He encourages the Church to pray for the fearless proclamation of the gospel. The prayer is specifically for the Church to accomplish its mission.

At the end of the pericope, in 6:19-20, the apostle returns to the matter of speaking fearlessly and willingly when proclaiming the gospel. The gospel is now stated in reference to all believers. The task of *oikonomia* that was assigned to the Church in 3:9-10 is related to the spreading of the gospel by the saints (6:15), prayer for the ministry and mission of the saints (6:18) and prayer for Paul’s own ministry and mission work (6:19).

The Co-workers of Paul: The ministry of Tychicus

The co-workers of Paul served as Paul’s helpers, itinerant evangelists, church planters, and helpers in the spreading of the gospel to the nations. The calling of the co-workers of Paul was to the ministry of *διάκονία*, the term used is the ministry of service rather than the apostolic ministry. The use of the ministry of service for Paul’s co-workers indicates that their special calling and vocation was based on the recognition of a spiritual gift they had received for the edification of the church (cf. Eph 4:11) and that they were sent out and commissioned by Paul. The term “*apostle of the churches*” it has been suggested serves as an equivalent of the modern term missionary. The identification of the term “*apostle of the churches*” may imply that the Churches began to send out missionaries who were primarily accountable to the Churches and secondarily to Paul.

6.3. SUMMARY OF THE RELATION TO THE OLD TESTAMENT IN EPHESIANS 4-6

6.3.1. The giving of a gracious gift(s)

The quotation of Psalm 68:18 has in view the victorious king on the battlefield receiving gifts, authority and power from and over those who have been conquered. Christ's ascension was the establishment of God's kingdom and the grounds for the distribution of the gifts, authority and power (Eph 4:7). The giving of gifts to the saints is the realization of God's victory through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ. It is the use by the believers of the gifts they have received that reveals the presence of God's kingdom and announces the Jesus Christ has been victorious, the gifts being the evidence of the victory.

The use of the gifts by the church in Eph 4:8-13, by its allusion to Ps 68, is a call to use one's gift to the praise and glory of God, specifically in the context of mission. The author of Ephesians utilised a piece of tradition which was mediated to him not via general Jewish ethical teaching (as many commentators assume), but via early Christian adaptation of specific Old Testament motifs (cf. Moritz; 1995:393-396).

6.3.2. The relationship between Christ and the Torah

In Ephesians 4:8-10 the author reminds his readers of his understanding of the relationship between Christ and Torah (cf. Moritz; 1995:393-396).

6.3.3. The eschatological age has dawned

The cry, "Praise be to the Lord/God" looks forward to the continuing triumphs until the redemption of his people is complete and his kingly rule is universally acknowledged (cf. Eph 1:19-23), the vision which inspired their missional outreach. The church is called to praise the Lord in the light of Ps 68 and to use its gifts (Eph 4:7-8) so that the knowledge of God's might and power, and the submission of all the kingdoms of the earth to the rule and reign of Christ is demonstrated through the use of the gifts and God's ultimate victory proclaimed.

6.3.4. The identity and lifestyle of the believer

The Holy Spirit is grieved when the identity and lifestyle of the believer does not correspond because it hampers the witness of the believer (Eph 4:30). It contradicts his or her testimony of salvation.

6.3.5. The adaption of Isaiah

The indicatives of Isaiah are adapted as imperatives for a new exhortatory setting. The light/darkness metaphor in Ephesians 5:8-14 is transformed by the use of the term ἐπιφάσσει instead of the term used in Isaiah 60:2 to encapsulate the transformation for God's people. It indicates that fulfilment of the promise of being shining lights and exhorts "the dead" to come afresh under the influence of God's light in the context of darkness. The use of Isa 26:10 and 59:9-17 in Ephesians 5:14 correspond to the ethical trust and missional idea of the letter. Paul exhorts the believers to action (Eph 5:14b) through an early Christian hymn which in turn was heavily influenced by the wording of Isaiah (Isa. 26:19 and 60:1).

6.3.6. Marriage as an illustration of Christ's love

The care of Christ for the Church serves as an example for believers, for husbands for their wives and as an example for outsiders.

6.3.7. The Fifth Commandment

The missional intent of the allusion to the Fifth commandment in the household codes is that it promised the reward that "the successful conduct of a God-fearing nation requires respect for God's will in the small family unity of family ties" (Moritz; 1996:157). It presupposes the importance of the socially cohesive family unit for mission.

6.3.8. The righteousness of the Lord and the believer

The believer's attire of the breastplate of righteousness indicates that he/she is in possession of the righteousness of Christ. It indicates that the believer is a representative of the righteousness and justice of God in society. The breastplate of righteousness proceeds the shoes of the gospel without which the believer is unable to represent Christ. The author uses Isaiah 59:17 to indicate the identification of the attire of the Lord with the armour of the believer.

6.3.9. Proclamation of the gospel

Paul quotes Isaiah 52:7 in Rom 10:15 to indicate that every person has to receive the opportunity to hear the gospel. The allusion to Isaiah 52:7 is a clear connection of the Old Testament missional proclamation and prefiguring of Christ's deliverance of his people from the bondage of sin. The gospel is that God's sovereign rule over the world through Christ with the announcement that the rule and reign of Christ has been inaugurated (Eph 6:15).

6.3.10. The motif of judgement replaced by the renewal of the nations

The motif of judgement has been replaced by the revelation that the judgment of God has been inflicted by upon Christ. It is the believer's identification with the substitute death of Christ on behalf of the believer that is expressed by the helmet of salvation. It is as the believer wears the helmet of salvation that he is able to be an instrument of renewal to the nations.

6.3.11. The truth and righteousness of the gospel

The readers are encouraged to rely on the truthfulness of the gospel as a divine gift. In Eph 6:15 the text of Isaiah 52:7 is used to indicate that the gospel alone is truth and offers righteousness. The phrase "readiness of the gospel" may be interpreted as denoting the firmness offered by the gospel to those who are "in Christ." In Eph 6:15 it denotes the believers' firmness based on the gospel rather than its proclamation as a means of counter-offensive. Christ's victory at the cross is the very centre of the gospel (Eph 2:16).

6.3.12. The judgement of God on the nations no longer applicable

The purpose of Paul by borrowing the terminology of Isaiah is to reject the violent judgement on behalf of God's people (cf. Porter; 2006:193). Israel understood salvation in terms of the judgement of the nations which is no longer applicable to the nations.

7. CONCLUSION

7.1. THE MISSION STRATEGY FOR THE CHURCH: EPHESIANS 4-6

The execution of the plan of God for the church described in Ephesians 3 is practically worked out in Ephesians 4-6. The plan of God (1:9-10; 3:2, 9-10) is practically developed and worked out by means of the particle οὖν (Eph 4:1, 17; 5:1, 7; 16; 6:14). This plan is realized through the church and every believer (3:10; 4:1-5:20). Every believer has received a call and this call is part of the execution of the plan of God. The manner in which the believers are to live out their calling is indicated by the prepositional phrase μετὰπάσης ταπεινοφροσύνης καὶ πραΰτητος (“with all humility and gentleness”) and μετὰ μακροθυμίας (“with patience/long-suffering”) before ανεχομενοι ἀλλήλων ἐν ἀγάπῃ so that without patience/long-suffering and self-sacrificial love it would not exist at all. This is in accordance with the believers call. The confessional unity of the Church is the basis of its missional witness to the world (Eph 4:4-7). The evidence of this unity is a unity that is organic and moves beyond a merely structural unity which has to do with power, hierarchy, and uniformity of organizational forms and functions. The calling of the Church (4:1-2) is to bring the Body of Christ more and more to its intended fullness according to God’s plan. It can be illustrated by the image of a child who has been given a picture to colour. The outlines have already been drawn in, but it is the role of the child to colour in the picture. In the same way God has established the lines of the picture, His purpose and plan, and the Church is involved in colouring in the picture. It is apparent from the context (Eph 4:1-3) that Paul is giving a testimony that his imprisonment is a consequence of “walking worthy of the calling” (v.1) in order to encourage the Church. The church has gifts, certain persons are given to the church to function in one of these areas of gifting to equip the believers to use their gifts (Eph 4:11) in the practical working out of the oikonomia of God. The building up is accomplished by the apostles and prophets and the evangelists, shepherds and teachers (4:11). It is the Saints who are to perform and carry out the work of ministry and do the work of building out (4:12). It is the Saints who have been equipped by the gifted persons, who are to spread the gospel. The gifted persons or offices were given to the church for the immediate purpose of preparing all the saints to minister for the building out of the body of Christ. The process of equipping continues until the goal of the believers being mature to the full measure of the fullness of Christ is reached (4:13). The building up, therefore, has two sides, the internal building up of the body so that it can accomplish its task in the world. A distinction is made between the role of the offices that build up the body and cause it to become mature and those that build out the body of Christ; that extend the kingdom of God. The apostles and the evangelists worked outside and the prophets and shepherd inside to build up the body. The preaching function is intended to build the body up whereas the proclamation of the mystery of the gospel is intended to grow the body. Although all preaching involves the revelation of the mystery, the building up of the body of Christ is

concerned with sanctification and the building out of the body with justification (acceptance by God). The Saints have received the same riches of the grace of God given to the Apostle Paul to be able to minister the grace of God. It is as the believers continue to live through the grace of God and thus reveal the mystery of God's plan to all who see them living (together) in their victory over the evil powers and their own sinful desires (Eph 2:1-7; 3:10) that the body of Christ is built up and out (4:13-16).

7.2. THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY AND OIKONOMIA

The work of the ministry is an outworking of God's ἔργον and the same power that worked in Christ is at work in the believer for the accomplishment of the work of the ministry. The three prepositional phrases in 4:12 introduced by πρὸς and εἰς indicate purpose. They refer to Christ and must be seen as drawing out different aspects of God's ultimate purpose for the church in relation to Christ (cf. Bolt & Thompson; 2001:199). These prepositional phrases indicate that the work of the ministry of the offices and every believer is part of the oikonomia of God and that God gives the power for the task. The building up of the body of Christ has two dimensions, the building up in terms of internal growth and maturity and the building out in terms of growth by the adding of the elect to the body of Christ. The work of the Saints includes both the internal and external spheres. The ἔργον διακονίας is the task committed to the believers; the "special" ministers are to equip the gifted members for their own ministry (cf. O'Brien; 1999:301-305; Hoehner; 2002:550). The ἔργον διακονίας of the saints is based on the fact that every believer is given a gift (v. 7). The believers have been given a gift by God in order to be able to function effectively in and outside the Church whereas the Shepherd is to function in the Church. All activity inside the Church, by believers, is ministry (diakonia) whereas all activity by believers outside the Church is missions. Both the inward ministry and the outward ministry are part of God's oikonomia. The oikonomia given to Paul (Eph 3:2) is only a part of the oikonomia entrusted by God which together with diakonia (Eph 3:7), is part of the working out of the oikonomia of God (Eph 1:10). The internal building up of the body of Christ for their task is part of the oikonomia of God (1:10).

7.3. THE MISSION STRATEGY OF PAUL FOR THE BELIEVER

The work of the ministry has been given to believers. The work of the ministry is based on the believers having received a gift. This gift is to be used within and outside the Church. The spreading of the gospel to the nations is the work of the believers. The mission of the Church to the nations is the work of the Church and every believer. A misconception is that the proclamation of the gospel outside the Church is the work of the offices. In Ephesians 4 the offices are given the task of equipping the saints for their task of the proclamation of the gospel. For this reason an ordinary believer is called to proclaim the gospel in the

world and this takes on several forms: proclamation by presence without speech and verbal proclamation. Ministry is essential to the building up of the body of Christ and missions, the proclamation of the gospel to the nations are essential for the inward growth and maturity of the body of Christ. The Church is built up inwardly, it grows in maturity, as the individual members proclaim the cosmic reign of Christ in the world and to the nations. The believers are to engage in ministry to the world because each and every believer has a calling and function in the body of Christ. The lifestyle of the believer gives authenticity to the verbal proclamation of the gospel. It is the lifestyle of the child of God that is a testimony to the authenticity of the gospel. The attitudes of humility and gentleness, openness, mutual tolerance and respect (Eph 4:2) have been identified as missional attitudes. These attitudes are part of the calling of every believer. The confession of faith (Eph 4:4-7) gives to the Church unity and this unity is a demonstration to the world of the truth of the gospel. Structural unity is essential for the proclamation of the gospel. The oneness of the body is created by the Holy Spirit; it is a bond that demonstrates the presence of the Holy Spirit. The confession of faith gives to a believer a sense of belonging and shared identity.

The oneness gives the sense of integrity. Mission requires internal cohesions which is fostered through the covenant in order for the ministry outside of the Church to be an extension of the efforts of the Church. Paul encourages the believers through his imprisonment to make sacrifices for the sake of the gospel, the cause of Jesus Christ. Paul's willingness to risk personal safety presupposes some danger and personal risk for believers in Ephesus in proclaiming the gospel. The believers are to expect danger in proclaiming the gospel. The ascent and descent of Christ gives to mission its incarnational character. It is the ordinary believers who are called and commissioned to proclaim the gospel in the context of missions. The revelation of the mystery of the gospel to outsiders by the believers is the calling and responsibility of every believer. Every believer is to carry out the work of the ministry (Eph 4:12). The "work of ministry", *ἔργον δωροφορία*, "is not only part of this teaching process within the Church, but every believer has a role in the dispensing of the word, to dispenses heavenly knowledge outside of the Church (Eph 3:7; Col 1:7, 23, 25). It is the offices in the Church who carry out the function of equipping the believers (Eph 4:11), but they are not more *δουλοκρατία* or ministerial than the non-ordained. The "work of ministry" in Ephesians 4:12 is the work in which the Saints can participate. It is as the believers who are called (4:1) to perform the work of the ministry inside and outside the Church reach out that the body is built up. It is in obedience to the calling that they experience that the believer experiences the power of the resurrected Christ, the same power that raised Christ from the dead at work in them (1:19). This power is experienced by the believer when he does the work of the ministry. The work of the ministry involves much more than conversion; it also includes growth in knowledge of Christ, maturity and perfection. The believers are called to be involved in teaching and proclaiming the gospel to the nations (3:10). In Ephesians 4 the term "apostle" in this context literally means "a sent one", someone who is sent from A to B as representative of the church to perform a specific function, such as planting churches. The task of the special ministries mentioned in

4:11 is to be servants in the ministry of equipping the Church and the saints for the ministry that has been entrusted to them (3:9-10). Included in the work of the ministry is the whole range of nurturing and strengthening activities. “The work of the ministry” (Eph 4:12) does not have in view a vaguely general “spiritual service”, but the exercise of particular gifts which Christ has given to each of the Saints for the calling and the task that Jesus Christ has given. The overall purpose of Ephesians 4:1-16 is to extend the work of the ministry to all believers. The Saints have received the same riches of the grace of God given to the Apostle Paul to be able to minister the grace of God. Paul does not expect every Christian to be an evangelist, but he argues that all are called to be active witnesses. The preaching function was intended to build the body up whereas the proclamation of the mystery of the gospel to outsiders was intended to grow the body. The expression εἰς ἄνδρα τέλειον in Ephesians 4:13 speaks of attaining the measure of the full stature of Christ and picks up language from the statement in 1:23 about the church being his body, the fullness of him who fills all, and from the prayer in 3:19 about being filled with all the fullness of God (cf. Bolt & Thompson; 2000:200). It is by emphasizing the importance of the individual believer and his gifts (Eph 4:13) that Paul sought to ensure that the work of mission was not regulated to a few selected individuals within the church. Paul did not regard mission as the work of specially gifted individuals and so artificially divorced the believers “special activity” from his ordinary existence. Mission was part of the ordinary functioning of the believer in society which the believer does through serving others.

7.4. THE PRACTICAL WORKING OUT OF THE OIKONOMIA OF GOD

The working out of the *oikonomia* of God will result in the whole of the created order, the universe, will be re-created and united to Jesus Christ. God’s *oikonomia*, ordering and administration of the universe, has an active sense of his ordering, arranging and implementing of the mystery, his revealed purpose. The term *oikonomia* rather than being the content of the purpose or saving plan refers to the manner in which the purpose of God is being worked out in human history. In Ephesians 4:7-5:20 the purposes of God are worked out through transformation, transformation of relationships, the self, and the old self to the new self, and culture. Jesus Christ is the focal point, not simply the means, the instrument, or the functionary through whom transformation takes place (cf. O’Brien; 1999:112). It is the reason that the phrase “in Christ” or “in the Lord” appears at key places in 4:17-5:20 (Eph 4:17; 21, 32; 5:5:8). It indicates that Christ’s eschatological relationship to personal beings is part of the working out of the *oikonomia* of God. Relationships are transformed and brought into the unifying purpose of God indicated by “in Christ”. The missional lifestyle that accompanies the proclamation of the gospel is indicative of the transformation and the working out of the purposes of God.

7.5. THE RELATIONSHIP OF ETHICS TO OIKONOMIA

The missional ethical lifestyle (Eph 4:17-5:20) is not to be seen as being separate from the verbal proclamation of the gospel (Eph 2:1-10). The missional ethics of Ephesians 4:17-5:20 is an ethical response to three key concepts found in Ephesians, election (Eph 1:4-5), redemption (Eph 1:7-8) and covenant (Eph 2:11-13). In the pericope Ephesians 4:17-32 the central verses 22-24 function as a hinge on which the ethical admonition turns (cf. Martin; 1991:59). Missional ethics is God's people living in God's way, in God's place under God's rule in the sight of the nations. The ultimate purpose of God's plan as worked out in 4:17-5:20 is to make the believers conscious of the way they live their lives, because it is through their ethical lifestyles that they lead those outside the body to faith and certainty. It is in the household that the ethical contrast between those inside and those outside are most clearly visible and serves as an inviting body, where people that are without God and far from Christ can come to the certainty that they are part of the body. It is thus not ethics itself, but ethics as practiced by a community as an expression of identity "in Christ" which filters down to every household, that serves to invite outsiders to join the body.

The unity of the body in the Spirit, a congregation controlled by the Spirit is a community that demonstrates the new life in Christ. The contrast between a community led by the Spirit and walking or living in the light, thus a community living wisely and a community intoxicated by the world is tangibly visible and expressed by the metaphor of light and darkness (Eph 5:16). It is a community that acts "in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (ἐν ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, 5:20) and testifies to a relationship "to God who is Father" (τῷ θεῷ καὶ πατρί, 5:20) and the internal working of the Holy Spirit. It is a conscious and self-reflective community that does not act without being able to think about it' or acts in a way 'one does when the mind is absent (Eph 5:18). It is a community that acts wisely Wisdom is qualified as "to make good use of opportunity" or "working urgently" (Eph 5:16). The wise person or congregation recognizes and uses these opportunities for the spread of the gospel. He or the Church recognizes opportunities which are in the plan and purpose of the Lord. The phrases "stand up out of the dead," (ἀνάστα ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν, 5:13) is an exhortation that the believers and the Church are to awaken out of their lethargic and utterly fruitless or useless state. For this reason every believer is to "think about how accurately you live" (Eph 5:15).

The transformation of the household, Church and society is made possible by the transforming grace of God.

7.6. TRANSFORMATION

7.6.1. The transforming grace of God

Inner transformation is the result of the transforming grace of God by which the believer has been made alive and saved (Eph 2:5), it is the same grace by which Paul became a servant of the gospel (Eph 3:7) and the grace is the basis for the gifts apportioned to the believers (Eph 4:7). It is implied that this grace of God is the basis for the ethical and moral transformation in Ephesians 4:17-5:20 (cf. Eph 4:20-21). It is because of the grace of God that transformation is possible. The transformation is worked out in ethnic relations (Jew and Gentile), marriage relations (husband and wife), family relations (father and children), social relations (master and slave-employer and employee), gender relations (male and female), and ultimately in cosmic relations (heaven and earth). The transformation in these spheres is as a result of the transformation of the identity of the believer (Eph 4:22-24).

It is the transforming grace of God that gives to a believer a new identity. This identity is constantly being renewed by God.

7.6.2. The new identity

The new identity and character is continuously being renewed by the Holy Spirit. In life of every believer a tension exists between an experience of the life and the power of the kingdom of God and the not yet of the full realization of the life and power of his kingdom. The identity of the believer is constantly being transformed. The gospel and the Holy Spirit are the means through which transformation is accomplished.

7.6.3. Transformation of identity

In Ephesus this change of identity in the converts would probably have been enormous, from the perspective of the Gentile community. It all began with a new way of thinking. The thinking of the ἔθνη was in a state of futility or aimlessness (ἐν ματαιότητι τοῦ νοῦς αὐτῶν, 4:17) so that even the Jewish indictment of the Gentiles was that their thinking was aimless (cf. Safari & Sterns; 2:106: 1974-76). The Church of Ephesus was a community in the process of transformation. The evidence of this transformation was that the members of the Church were fruitful in their thinking. They lived with a purpose, the purpose of serving the *oikonomia* of God.

It implies an awareness that outsiders continue to be in a state of alienation from the life of God through the ignorance and the stubbornness in them. The motivation for Paul's missionary activity was that there were those who have not yet heard the gospel and are in darkness (cf. Rom 10:14-21). It is not merely

individuals that are darkened and alienated from God, but entire nations that are without the gospel. In Ephesians the author endeavours to impact the Church with a vision for the nations. The message of the gospel is the means of salvation for the nations. The missional significance is that it is necessary for the gospel message to be proclaimed to all the nations. The missional strategy of Paul is a practical outworking of the Great Commission (Mt 28:18-20).

The nuts and bolts of Paul's missional strategy were to build transforming relationships. All transformation takes place in relationship.

7.6.4. Transformation of relationships

In the new covenant dispensation the separation of the Church from the world is for the purpose of the Church being a witness to the world and an open and inviting fellowship. The Church in the new covenant dispensation is a network of transformational relationships firstly, and then a gathering or a place of worship. The church of Ephesus did not erect barriers of belonging. It is the reason that the author insists on the Lord, "that you must no longer live as the pagans do, in the futility of their thinking" (Eph 4:17). It is to the extent that the believer did not ignore or forget his identity (Eph 4:17-19) that he was able to live in a way that no longer conformed to his previous lifestyle as a pagan. The idea of being made new, in mind, attitude, character, "created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness" (Eph 4:24) is the central message of the periscope Eph 4:17-32. The community was transformational in that it was a place of nurturing, growth, truthful and loving relationships in which every person including outsiders were welcomed to the gathering of God's people. The entire congregation was to be involved in the transformational process, with a focus upon the functionality of each person in the body of Christ fulfilling his work and task – κατ' ἐνέργειαν ἐν μέτρῳ ἑνὸς ἐκάστου μέρους. The missional strategy of Paul was to develop an organic type of leadership which was not based upon hierarchy, but a relation of equality. This type of leadership is expressed concisely as, "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ" (Eph 5:21) which is a maxim that governs the subsequent pericope, Ephesians 5:20-6:9.

7.6.5. Transformation from ψεῦδος and ἀπάτη to ἀλήθεια

The transformation from the old to the new person, according to Paul in Ephesians 4:22-25 is a transition from a life of lies and deception (ψεῦδος and ἀπάτη) to a new life in truth (ἀλήθεια), which becomes visible in the new person speaking truth (4:25). It is to the extent that the believer ignores or forgets his identity (Eph 4:17-19) that Christian ethics are reduced to fundamental moral principles. Christianity is reduced to moral habits when separated from the transformed identity and righteousness of Christ.

This transformation is only visible in relationship. Paul in Ephesians 4:17 exhort the newly converted believers to separate themselves spiritually and not physically from outsiders, unbelievers. The separation is in terms of thinking, lifestyle and purpose, and relationships with outsiders are an opportunity for the transformed thinking that has taken place to be revealed. The transformed thinking of the new converts naturally resulted in a re-appraisal of cultural values and norms.

7.6.6. Transformation and culture

The inner transformation that has taken place in the believer necessitates a new way of relating to the pagan culture that the believer once shared (cf. Eph 4:17-23). The transformed life in Ephesus naturally resulted in a transformation of culture, in Ephesians 4:28 it is apparent that stealing was a cultural problem.). The use of the present participle κλεπτῶν indicates that Paul is referring to crimes that may still have been taking place in Ephesus. It is confirmed by the use of μή with the present imperative κλέπττω, which is normally used for a command to stop doing something (Jordaan; 2013:73). A cultural problem in Ephesus (Eph 4:29) was that the Ephesians engaged in talks that broke down and Paul indicates that these are to be replaced by talk and conversation that build up the body. The Christian culture is a culture of affirmation that builds up in comparison to the breaking down nature of un-transforming surrounding culture.

The task of the body is to spur one another on to fulfil the task (οἰκονομία) which God has given to each believer and this requires a transformation of culture and cultural values. A new and changed life in practical matters, obviously distinct from the life typical to the pagan community, would serve as a strong witness to the surrounding community. So the imperative to lead your life according to the new identity that you received from God in Christ becomes part of the mission strategy in which the Ephesians church was involved. Non-believers will be guided to Christ when they perceive the believers' new life. The first step of all missions is that the missionary should practice what he preaches. This basically seems to be the function of the pericope 4:17 – 5:20 within Paul's mission strategy for the Ephesians.

The transformation of relationships has an impact on social structures. The tendency of transformational strategies is to use political instruments to bring about transformation. This is activism and results in outer transformation which has not originated from the source of inner transformation. Paul's mission strategy began with inner transformation (Eph 4:22-25) which transforms social relationships and social structures. He did not put the horse before the cart.

The socio-structure that formed the basis of Greco-Roman society was the household. For this reason the missional strategy of Paul was directed at the transformation of the socio-structure which determined the very life of Greco-Roman society.

7.7. PAUL'S MISSION STRATEGY

7.7.1. The mission strategy of Paul for the household

In the first century world identity was determined by the categories of kinship, household, clan or tribe. In this view an individual was entirely destined by his or her social kinship situation and always identified with his or her family roles. The Pauline Christian movement had frequent collisions with the household structure. In order for the Pauline Christian movement to be understandable, the individuals would have to make decisions about their social identity. The Pauline model was that an individual could join a household or family structure and not on the basis of kinship hierarchy. It is because of the frequent collisions with Greco-Roman household structures that Paul sets out the Christian believers' relationship to the household in Ephesians. The identity in Christ was the most important identity and negotiation between a person's identity as a believer and kinship hierarchy necessitated that the household identities had find their identities as hierarchically subordinate to the identity in Christ (cf. Roitto; 2008:147). The maintenance of a Christian identity and sense of belonging to the household of God required a certain self-understanding and positioning to Greco-Roman household structures.

In Ephesians the author does not seek for members of the community to remove themselves from the social relationships with pagans or from the dominant cultural ethos, but to bring a stark contrast through the way that the community lives so that the contrast between darkness and light becomes visible. It is the reason that the metaphor of light and darkness concludes the list of ethical exhortations (Eph 5:7-8). It is followed by missional exhortations that culminate in worship (Eph 5:9-20) before the author begins to address the household socio-structure (Eph 5:21-6:9). The Christian social relationships that need to be transformed are by means of exemplary relationships within the household (Eph 5:21-6:9).

The function of the household codes is to guide the head of the household into a new conception of his roles that Christianizes his conduct in various ways and so turns marriage into more of a partnership and household management into actualizing biblical principles about love of neighbour and honouring others. The codes are given the context of Christ's loving sacrifice. The head of the household in these codes does not subordinate or command subordination of the other household members. The household manager exercises his role by loving self-sacrifice, stepping down and serving others and so subordination has been broadened to describe the relationships of all Christians to each other. The major force of the household codes is reciprocal self-sacrifice. In Christ the household relationships are transformed. Paul works for

social change from within the Christian household. He does so by changing all three relationships into relationships of reciprocity.

The *Haustafeln* has to be understood in the wider context of *oikonomia* in Ephesians. The role of the *oikonomos* was to duplicate Christ in the *pater familias*. The cyclical hierarchy revolved around the *pater familias* as Christ-duplicate. This duplication of Christ involved a missional dimension.

The head of the household was reminded to demonstrate fairness, justice and care, all of which had a missional dimension in contrast to the non-Christian household manager. It was in the reciprocal relationship between the head of the household and the family that the mission of the Church was worked out practically in a pagan society. The everyday lives of the wife, children and slaves were all determined by their relations to the *pater familias*, but ultimately in their relations to Christ. The focus in Ephesians is not upon the worthy example of the overseer or household head but the *pater familias* as an image of the heavenly *pater familias*.

The household is a vehicle for the communication of identity in Christ. The household codes and household relations are able to transform the socio institutions of society to the extent that they communicate identity in Christ. “The construct of mutual submission and reciprocal self-sacrifice is the major force of the household codes” (Duddery1999:40). “Submit yourselves to one another” (Eph 5:20) is central to the missional nature of the household codes and the transformation of the socio institutions of society.

The socio-relationships that are addressed in Ephesians are the marriage relationship, the relationship between the father as head of the household and his children and economic socio-structures. The transformation of socio-structures (Eph 5:20-6:9) is a pericope that gives insight into the spiritual struggles that lay behind transformation (Eph 6:10-20).

7.8. OPPOSING POWERS AND OIKONOMIA

7.8.1. God’s role in the struggle against the opposing powers

In Ephesians 6:10-20 Paul continues the theme of the inclusion of the Church and saints in the mission of God (cf. 3:7-10; cf. 2:7; 5:8-14; 6:15). The pericope is about God’s engagement with opposing powers in the accomplishment of the *mission Dei*. The conflict in Ephesians 6:10-20 is a conflict with supra-terrestrial opponents of the church in the heavenly realms that only God is able to defeat and overcome. The believers are in a wrestling match and in direct contact with evil opponents, who through crafty scheming and the

intent to deceive, want to overthrow the believers to win the match. It is like a soldier who stands and must hold the stronghold at all cost. They may not retreat or march forward – they must stand!

Paul has a mission's strategy which is part of the *oikonomia* of God and the World Ruler, Satan, has his own strategy. In missions it is important to remember that there is an opponent with his own strategy which must not be neglected. It can be compared to a chess game in which there are two players, each with their own strategy. The double emphasis of "put on" and "take up" indicates the importance of the armour for ministry, missions and transformation. There can be no long lasting transformation without struggle, a wrestling match. Although the battle belongs to the Lord the believer is not passive. The Church is to engage the enemy in several ways.

7.8.2. The Church's role in the struggle against the opposing powers

The sense of Ephesians 6:15 is captured by the translation, "As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace" (NRSV). It conveys the imperative sense of the thought. The function of the picture was to evoke the responsibility of the Christian to wear the gospel at all times, ready to communicate it at any time. The believer's role in the struggle for transformation is to proclaim the gospel of peace. It is the gospel which brings about transformation. Paul makes the connection between the life of war and the work of prayer in Ephesians 6:18-20. He encourages the Church to pray for the fearless proclamation of the gospel. The prayer is specifically for the Church to accomplish its mission but also for his own mission.

At the end of the pericope, in 6:19-20, the apostle returns to the matter of speaking fearlessly and willingly when proclaiming the gospel. The gospel is now stated in reference to all believers. The task of *oikonomia* that was assigned to the Church in 3:9-10 is related to the spreading of the gospel by the saints (6:15), prayer for the ministry and mission of the saints (6:18) and prayer for Paul's own ministry and mission work (6:19).

Paul's ministry and mission involved the empowering of others, his co-workers, for ministry and mission. He functioned as part of a wider body and realized that the success of his work depended upon equipping the next generation as servants of the Lord. Paul's strategy was multi-racial, multi-ethnic, multi-gender, and multi-generational. In the final missional directed pericope of the letter (Eph 6:21-22) Paul builds relationships between his co-workers and the Church that he nurtured as a father.

7.9. CO-WORKERS IN PAUL’S STRATEGY

7.9.1. The ministry of Tychicus

The co-workers of Paul served as Paul’s helpers, itinerant evangelists, church planters, and helpers in the spreading of the gospel to the nations. The calling of the co-workers of Paul was to the ministry of *διάκονία*, the term used is *the ministry of service* rather than *the apostolic ministry*. The use of *the ministry of service* for Paul’s co-workers indicates that their special calling and vocation was based on the recognition of a spiritual gift they had received for the edification of the church (cf. Eph 4:11) and that they were sent out and commissioned by God through the Church. It has been suggested that the term “*apostle of the churches*” serves as an equivalent of the modern term missionary. The identification of the term “*apostle of the churches*” may imply that the Churches began to send out missionaries who were primarily accountable to the Churches and secondarily to Paul. Although we find no evidence of these co-workers reporting back to their sending Churches, it was Paul’s practice to report back to the Church of Antioch that had sent him out and to the Church of Jerusalem. It is reasonable to assume that Paul’s co-workers followed the same practice.

It is evident that the letter to the Ephesians has a unique role in the Pauline corpus. It is a letter that builds a bridge between the *mission Dei*, the mission of Paul and the mission of the Church. It serves the vital role of committing the task of missions to the Church. The Great Commission commits the task of missions to the disciples, a task that Peter mistakenly thought was to be directed at Israel until the Holy Spirit revealed to him the plan of God (Acts 11). In the same way the Church has mistakenly thought that the task of missions was the work of a few specially gifted individuals. The letter to the Ephesians demonstrates that missions are the work of every believer. The letter to the Ephesians gives a biblical foundation for the ministry and missions of the believer. It equips the believer for the task and gives to the believer an insight of the process of transformation. It concludes by opening the eyes of the believers to the spiritual wrestling match that the believer is and will be involved in if he or she truly wants to fulfil the plan of God.

7.9.2. The relation to the Old Testament

The use by believers of the gifts they have received reveals the presence of God’s kingdom and announces that Jesus Christ has been victorious; the gifts being the evidence of the victory (cf. Ps 68:18). The author of Ephesians uses Ps 68 as a call to the church of Ephesus and the church of all time to live in the reality of the triumphal redemption of God’s people. The church is called to praise the Lord in the light of Ps 68 and to use its gifts (Eph 4:7-8) so that the knowledge of God’s might and power, and

the submission of all the kingdoms of the earth to the rule and reign of Christ is demonstrated through the use of the gifts and God's ultimate victory proclaimed.

The fulfilment of the promise of believers being shining lights is indicated in Ephesians 5:14 and the believers are exhorted to come afresh under the influence of God's light in the context of darkness. Paul exhorts the believers to action (Eph 5:14b) through an early Christian hymn which in turn was heavily influenced by the wording of Isaiah (Isa. 26:19 and 60:1).

The believer's attire of the breastplate of righteousness indicates that he/she is in possession of the righteousness of Christ. It indicates that the believer is a representative of the righteousness and justice of God in society.

Paul quotes Isaiah 52:7 in Rom 10:15 to indicate that every person has to receive the opportunity to hear the gospel. The gospel is that God's sovereign rule over the world through Christ with the announcement that the rule and reign of Christ has been inaugurated (Eph 6:15). In Eph 6:15 the text of Isaiah 52:7 is used to indicate that the gospel alone is truth and offers righteousness. The phrase "readiness of the gospel" may be interpreted as denoting the firmness offered by the gospel to those who are "in Christ." Israel understood salvation in terms of the judgement of the nations which is no longer applicable to the nations.

In the following chapter it will be necessary to examine the use of the term *oikonomos* and the relationship to the Churches and Paul as the apostle to the Gentile nations. It will be necessary to determine whether the *oikonomos* functioned independently of Paul as an equivalent of the modern term missionary.

CHAPTER 6:

OIKONOMIA, THE CHURCH AND THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE MISSION STRATEGY WITHIN THE EPHESIANS' LETTER

The exegetical investigation of the Ephesians' letter (Chapters 4 and 5 above) has led to the conclusion that the letter as a whole and its separate parts indeed present what can be termed a strategy for mission by the apostle and the church. Of major significance is the insight that missions directly come from God's οἰκονομία, which is the execution of his plan or the strategy for gathering his church in the world. It seems from Ephesians that the basic starting point of the οἰκονομία was that God appointed Christ as Head of the church, so that the church is his body (Eph 1:22-23). The essence of God's plan is that those whom He has chosen according to his divine plan of predestination (Eph 1:5, 11) shall be brought together into this one body of Christ (Eph 2:15, 16), even though they are different in background, culture and nationality (whether Jew or Gentile, cf. Eph 2:11-22).

Before the coming of Christ this plan of God remained hidden from the world through the ages (*a mystery*, cf. ἡ οἰκονομία τοῦ μυστηρίου in Eph 3:9). But since Christ as Head has appeared to make the church, his body, complete (1:23), the mystery has to be made known to the world. For the purpose of making known this mystery God has set his plan into action, i.e. God's οἰκονομία. This plan seems to be put into action in various "phases":

- The first "phase" of his οἰκονομία was to give to Paul and the apostles the ministry (διακόνια) of making known to the world this mystery of God's grace in Christ (Eph 3:2-7). Paul's special assignment was to take the gospel to the Gentiles (Eph 3:8).
- The second "phase" is that those to whom the apostles have made known the mystery, i.e. the church, in turn has to make known this mystery to all the world (Eph 3:10-13).
- Within the οἰκονομία of God's plan the church's task is not only to tell the mystery of the Gospel to the world, but also to be living witnesses of the gospel through their conduct in society (Eph 4:17 – 6:9).

For this purpose the church has to lead a life worthy of its calling, in the love and peace that become the unity of Christ's body (Eph 4:1-7). This calling requires of the church to constantly grow towards maturity, and to build itself up (συνοικοδομεῖσθαι) towards stability. Therefore, as the next "phase" of the οἰκονομία of God's plan, Christ gave apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers to equip the church for this task of witnessing by their example (Eph 4:11-16).

Now, before the above insights can indeed be taken as the mission strategy that Paul presents for the church, they need confirmation from the rest of Paul's letters. Therefore, in this chapter the conclusions that were drawn from the Ephesians' letter are tested to relevant information from the other letters of Paul.

The first matter to be thus investigated is the use of the term οἰκονομία and related words. After that follows the church's role in the mission strategy of the apostle. Finally the information from Ephesians about the role of the Holy Spirit in the apostle's mission strategy for the church has to be tested against the apostle's teaching in his other letters. On the basis of such confirmation from Paul's other letters, the study can continue to formulate the mission strategy that the apostle Paul presents in his letter to the Ephesians.

1. OIKONOMIA AND MISSION STRATEGY

1.1. THE USE OF OIKONOMIA IN EPHESIANS AND PAUL'S OTHER LETTERS

The word οἰκονομία and its cognates, related words such as οἰκοδομέω, οἰκοδομή and οἰκεῖσις are used by Paul in various letters. The various occurrences of the word οἰκονομία in the Pauline corpus will be examined in this chapter. In the Pauline corpus the word οἰκονομία is used by Paul three times Ephesians (1:10; 3:2, 9), and the related verb (ἐπ-/συν-) οἰκοδομέω is used twice (1:20, 22), whereas οἰκοδομή is used 4 times (2:21; 4:12, 16, 29) and οἰκεῖσις once (2:19).

The term οἰκονομία has a literal meaning and it is used metaphorically in the Pauline corpus. There has been a steady development of usages from the literal root meaning of "management in the household" to management of a city-state and the management of the world (Reumann; 1967:150). The root meaning is used for an office and assignment given by God to Paul and it is also used for the carrying out of God's plan in salvation and creation. The term οἰκονομία denotes Paul's administration of his apostolic office (1 Co 4:1; 9:17; Col 1:25 & Eph 3:2). And it is used for God's administration of the world and salvation (Eph 1:10; 3:9). The root meaning, "management of the household" (Eph 3:2) and the meaning, the "carrying out of God's plan" in salvation and creation (Eph 3:9), are two different uses in the same epistle, both found in the same pericope (Eph 3). Its use in 1 Corinthians 4:1; 9:17 for Paul's administration of his apostolic office is the earliest occurrence of the term in the Pauline corpus (cf. Reumann; 1967:165).

Reumann (1967:165) argues that "there is a development or at least an articulation in the use of οἰκονομία in the Pauline corpus, progressing from 1 Corinthians through Colossians to Ephesians". Reumann bases his argument on the idea that οἰκονομία is developed by Paul on the hypothesis of Raymond Brown who has identified a development of μυστήριον from 1 Corinthians to Romans and Colossians-Ephesians. It is on the basis of this hypothesis that Reumann (1967:162) postulates: "I should regard Col 1:25 as the significant and pivotal step in development". The validity of this hypothesis will be examined in this chapter. I would like to suggest that Paul used the term οἰκονομία for his missionary activity and its relation to God's plan. Paul writes: "I have been entrusted with an assignment as οἰκονομος" (1 Co 9:17).

The use of the οἰκονομία with this double sense in Ephesians will be explored and its relation to the rest of the Pauline corpus, especially Colossians will be examined.

In Paul's other letters¹⁷⁸ οἰκονομία and its related forms are used metaphorically (i.e. not with reference to a physical building or its inhabitants, etc.).

οἰκονομία in 1 Co 9:17; Col 1:25; 1 Tim 1:4

οἰκονόμος in 1 Co 4:1,2; Titus 1:7

οἰκτήριον in 2 Co 5:2

οἶκος in 2 Co 5:1

οἰκοδομή in 1 Co 3:9; 14:3, 5, 12, 26; 2 Co 5:1; 10:8; 12:19; 13:10

οἰκοδομέω in Ro 15:20; 1 Co 8:1; 10:23; 14:4, 17; Gal 2:18; 1 Thess 5:11.

ἐποικοδομέω in 1 Co 3:10, 12, 14; Col 2:7.

In the study of οἰκονομία in Ephesians it will prove to be helpful to consider the use of οἰκονομία and its related forms in the rest of the Pauline corpus and how this serves to shed light on Paul's missionary strategy in Ephesians.

1.1.1. Οἰκονομία and its related forms in the Corinthian letters

In Paul's letters to the Corinthians the word οἰκονομία and its related forms οἰκονομός, οἰκονομέω, οἶκος, οἰκοδομέω, οἰκοδομή are used in the following passages: 1 Corinthians 3:6-17; 4:1-2; 9:15-19,19-23; 1 Co 9: 19-23.

1.1.2. Paul the master builder of the οἰκοδομή: 1 Corinthians 3:6-17

In the pericope 1 Corinthians 3:6-17 the church is *inter alia* depicted by the metaphor of a *building* (οἰκοδομή). In verse 9 Paul writes to the believers in Corinth: θεοῦ οἰκοδομή ἐστε (*"You are God's building"*). He then continues to depict himself as a worker, a craftsman who is directly involved in the erection of this οἰκοδομή. In the context of 1 Corinthians 3:6-17, Paul makes it clear that he is not working on his own. No, he and others are *fellow workers* (συνεργοί) working with God. According to the grace of God given to him, Paul sees his role in the erection of the building as that of *chief craftsman* (or *master*

¹⁷⁸ The presupposition from which the use of οἰκονομία will be explored is that 1 Corinthians and the pastoral epistles are the products of the Apostle Paul.

builder, ἀρχιτέκτων, 3:10) who lays the foundation. The foundation which Paul lays, he says in verse 11, is none other than Jesus Christ. In 1 Corinthians 3:6-10 Paul uses the metaphor of building to indicate that different tasks are given to members of the body and that it is God who gives the growth. He uses the metaphor of planting and watering to distinguish between the activity of extending the kingdom of God, planting, and the internal building up the Church, watering. These workers are called “God’s fellow workers” (1 Co 3:9) and the believers are “God’s field, God’s building” (1 Co 3:9). Paul indicates that the work to extend the body of Christ, evangelism, Church planting and missions is not inferior to the work of the internal building up the Church.

The οἰκοδομή-metaphor in 1 Corinthians 3:6-17 seems to correspond to what Paul writes in Ephesians 2:20, with some discontinuities. In 1 Co 3:11 Paul writes that Jesus Christ is the foundation, but in Eph 2:20 he speaks of the foundation of the apostles, saying that Jesus Christ is the cornerstone of the building. However, these two passages are not in contradiction. In Eph 2:20 the words “foundation of the apostles” (τῷ θεμελίῳ τῶν ἀποστόλων [καὶ προφητῶν]) refer to nothing else than the foundation laid by the apostles, the genitive τῶν ἀποστόλων (καὶ προφητῶν) being a subjective genitive. What is this foundation laid by the apostle(s)? According to 1 Co 3:10-11 it is Jesus Christ. The church has to be built on the foundation (or the cornerstone, Eph 2:20) of Jesus Christ. Of course the *foundation* (or *cornerstone*) should be understood within the parameters of the *building* metaphor, so that Jesus Christ as foundation should be taken not as the Person of Jesus Christ, but as the truth about the Person and work of Christ, proclaimed and taught by Paul and the other apostles. This truth is also confessed in chapter 1 of the Ephesians’ letter, including the acknowledgement of Christ as Head not only of the entire cosmos, but also and especially of his church. The believers must learn to build with Christ, both in objective knowledge and subjective experience, as Paul did.

On the foundation laid by him as apostle, in 1 Corinthians 3:10, Paul says others have to continue to build upon it (ἐποικοδομεῖ). Paul does not say who these “others” are, but within the context of *fellow workers* (συνεργοί, 3:9) Paul is probably referring to other preachers working in the Corinthian church. So these “other builders” seem to correspond to the “prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers” of Ephesians 4:11. However, Paul does not refer to them as such in 1 Corinthians 3:11, but simply speaks of “other (workers)”, because it may prove that the work of these “others” may break down instead of build up the οἰκοδομή of the church of Christ. Although these workers have the freedom to build, “each will become manifested” and “revealed by fire” (1 Co 3:13), indicating that each person’s building work will be tested to determine its quality. Each worker will receive a reward or lose his reward depending upon the way in which he builds (1 Co 3:14-15).

Paul's reference to the temple of God and the Spirit that dwells in the believer (1 Co 3:16) and an almost parallel expression in Eph 2:21-22 indicate that the author in 1 Corinthians 3:6-17 had in view the same metaphoric structure, a building, a temple of the Lord. The church as God's planting (v.6-9) is closely connected to the images of the building (Eph 2:19ff), the temple (Eph 2:21) and the dwelling place (Eph 2:22) (cf. Roberts; 1996:269). This matter of the building as temple of God, in which the Spirit dwells, will be discussed further in 6.3 (The role of the Holy Spirit in missions in Ephesians).

1.1.3. The role of the οἰκονόμος to build on the foundation: 1 Corinthians 4:1-2

In 1 Corinthians 4:1 Paul describes himself and fellow messengers as οἰκονόμοι (generally translated as “stewards”). Paul uses the plural to indicate that he and his co-workers are ὑπηρέται (*helpers*) of Jesus Christ and οἰκονόμοι μυστηρίων θεοῦ (*stewards*), fulfilling the task of οἰκονομία of the mysteries of God. The term οἰκονόμος should therefore not be understood as a function exclusive to Paul but a general activity of ὑπηρέται, servants and helpers. The *oikonomos* was a manager, typically of a household or of his master's property applied to the Church exercised a supervisory role (cf. Kruse; 2000:215). Kruse (2000:215) suggests that the *oikonomos* was the elder/bishop that exercised the supervisory role¹⁷⁹. These terms, however, are generally thought to be different terms for different offices so that rather than elder and bishop being synonymous, pastor and bishop are synonymous as exercising authority over the Church and elders as exercising authority in the Church. Although the term *oikonomos* was used for a **supervisory role**, Paul's role over his delegates, and delegates to whom a task had been committed, Timothy and Titus, were to exercise *oikonomia* over the churches and elders were assigned a supervisory role in the Church by the Lord.

In 1 Corinthians 4:2 the apostle writes: ὥδε λοιπὸν ζητεῖται ἐν τοῖς οἰκονόμοις, ἵνα πιστός τις εὐρεθῇ (More or less literally translated: “But now about the whole those must learn (by careful examination, by keeping a mental record, by reasoning) so that (they will) be faithful (dependable and reliable) stewards [οἰκονόμοις]”). Stewards (οἰκονόμοι) must be diligent to learn and discover the mysteries of God. Paul has in mind himself and Apollos as stewards of the mysteries of God for he says in 1 Corinthians 4:6, “I have applied these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit”. As stewards they teach the Corinthian's a spiritual truth, “you must learn from us the meaning of the saying, -“Do not go beyond what is written” (v.

¹⁷⁹ “Paul uses the words “elder” and “bishop” in Titus 1:5-9, which suggests that the two words were synonymous” (Kruse *In Bolt & Thompson*; 2000:215).

6). The role of the οἰκονόμοι is to reveal the secret or mystery that once was hidden but is now known because God has revealed it to his people by the Spirit (1 Co 2:10).

1.1.4. The task of οἰκονομία committed to Paul: 1 Corinthians 9:15-23

In 1 Corinthians 9:17 Paul writes that he was entrusted with a οἰκονομία (οἰκονομίαν πεπίστευμαι). From the context of 1 Corinthians 9:15-23 it is rather clear that this οἰκονομία Paul is speaking about is his task or commission to preach the gospel to the Gentiles (9:16,18,23). So the sentence οἰκονομίαν πεπίστευμαι is translated by some as “I was entrusted a commission” (RSV) or “I was entrusted a responsibility” (NET), with the understanding that this “commission” or “responsibility” (οἰκονομία) refers to Paul’s apostolic office. The preaching of the word of God to the Gentiles is the specific task that God assigned to Paul when He called and appointed him as apostle. This was the οἰκονομία God entrusted to Paul and was to be exercised as part of the apostolic office God had given to him.

A similar expression is used in Ephesians 3:2: “You heard about the stewardship of the grace of God given to me (τὴν οἰκονομίαν τῆς χάριτος τοῦ θεοῦ τῆς δοθείσης μοι).” And later on it is explained (3:8) that Paul’s specific task, when compared to the other apostles, was to preach the gospel to the Gentiles. In the light of all this it becomes evident that the οἰκονομία Paul received from God, was not the entire οἰκονομία of God’s plan for mankind and the creation (cf. Eph 1:10). Paul received one specific part of or role within God’s entire οἰκονομία – that of taking the gospel to the Gentiles. That this was the specific commission entrusted to Paul, is suggested in Ephesians 1:2-8 and confirmed by 1 Corinthians 9:15-23.

Paul did not see the οἰκονομία committed to him as an obligation, but a task he voluntarily discharged (1 Co 9:17). He discharged his οἰκονομία differently from that of his pagan contemporaries and the way the οἰκονόμος functioned in Greco-Roman society who were hired to manage the household, and also differently from his contemporaries in the church who received payment for their service. Paul offered his οἰκονομία free of charge and so did not misuse his position and rights as a preacher of the gospel (1Co 9:18).

Paul was the exemplary οἰκονόμος. In this way Paul endeavoured to engender respect for the way that he had discharged his οἰκονομία, but also to encourage his Christian contemporaries to discharge their share of God’s οἰκονομία entrusted to them in a way worthy of the gospel of Jesus Christ (cf. Eph 4:1). The way in which Paul discharged his οἰκονομία indicates the high esteem and value he placed upon the task that was committed to him. For him it was not simply about the preaching of the gospel, but acting as a representative of Jesus Christ, even more than that, representing Christ to the world and the believers. He compared his οἰκονομία in 1 Corinthians 9:19 with his pagan contemporaries who were slaves and

obligated to discharge their οἰκονομία, under the threat of the punishment of death if they discharged it unsatisfactorily. From these remarks of Paul it seems that he was well aware of the fact that his οἰκονομία was part of the great οἰκονομία of Him who commissioned him. His motivation was the spread of the gospel, “to win as many as possible” (1 Co 9:19) to Christ. Paul indicated that he had faithfully carried out his οἰκονομία, his commission, a mission which Christ had given him (2 Co 3:1-3; 5:10; Php 2:16; 1 Th 2:19-20).

The inference can be drawn that although the term οἰκονόμος does not occur in Ephesians, a parallel can be drawn from the evidence in 1 Corinthians 4 and to Ephesians 4:11 where Paul worked out practically what he wrote in Ephesians 3:2. It can be deduced that the use of οἰκονομία in Ephesians 3:2 corresponds to the meaning in 1 Corinthians 4 and 9 and that it is used for an office and assignment given by God to Paul. Paul was given a special office, that of a οἰκονόμος and the essence of his task was the proclamation and revelation of the gospel to those who were outsiders, the pagan Gentiles.

In 1 Corinthians 9:17 Paul speaks of the task of οἰκονομία with which he has been entrusted. The word πεπιστευμαι is used to indicate that the task has been *committed* to Paul. Πεπιστευμαι is in the perfect tense, which implies a permanent commission. The One who had entrusted Paul with the responsibility is God, as is indicated by the Divine passive. The task was to preach the gospel without payment (ἀδάπανος), a task, which he conducted willingly (ἐκόν), without being forced or pressured. A positive expression of ‘willingness’ may be indicated idiomatically by a phrase such as ‘my heart approves’. Paul voluntarily fulfilled the task and “without pay” because he highly valued the nature and importance of the task of οἰκονομία that had been committed to him by God. The authority by which he fulfilled the task was in the gospel itself, as opposed to the authority of an office – τῇ ἐξουσίᾳ μου ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ (1 Co 9:18). For the fulfilment of the task of οἰκονόμος Paul adopts the strategy of serving everyone in order to win over, (κερδαίνω) as many as possible for the gospel (, a parallel can be drawn-1 Co 9:19). Add to this the evidence of Ephesians 3:8 (ἐμοὶ ... ἐδόθη ἡ χάρις αὕτη, τοῖς ἔθνεσιν εὐαγγελίσασθαι), it proves that the task of missions for Paul was not merely to win as many unsaved people to Christ as possible but to win people to Christ from all ethnic groups. The focus in Ephesians is upon the task of the proclamation of the gospel to all the nations, ethnic groups, tribes and clans (cf. Eph 3:15). The unity that results from the proclamation of the gospel message is the result of the fact that God has reconciled all τὰ ἔθνη to him and has broken down all barriers that separate people from one another.

Paul adopts the strategy to fulfil the task of οἰκονομία to serve everyone in order to win over, κερδαίνω, as many as possible for the gospel (v. 19). The task of missions for Paul was not merely to win as many unsaved people to Christ as possible but to win people to Christ from every ethnic group. The focus in Ephesians is upon the task of the proclamation of the gospel to all the nations, ethnic groups, tribes and

clans. The unity which is the result of the proclamation of the gospel message is that God has reconciled all τὰ ἔθνη to him and has broken down all barriers that separate people from one another. The responsibilities of an oikonomos are clearly indicated by Paul in the Pastoral Epistles. One of the words Paul uses extensively in first Timothy is παραγγελία.

1.1.5. The divine necessity of the task of οἰκονομία: 1 Corinthians 9: 16-23

The words οἰκονομίαν πεπίστευμαι in 1 Corinthians 9:17 is an expression of the stance which characterized Paul's whole missionary career. Although he is speaking about his own behaviour in a variety of situations, because of his total gospel orientation (vv. 12, 14, 16, 18, 23; cf. V. 25) one is forced to question whether he expects the Corinthians to adopt a similar servant-hood attitude, even though the same divine necessity (ἀνάγκη) to preach the gospel has not been laid upon them (1 Co 9:16-17) (cf. O'Brien; 1993: 92).

According to 1 Corinthians 9:16 it was an obligation (ἀνάγκη) for Paul to preach the gospel and it would have been terrible (οὐαί) for him if he could not preach the gospel (ἐὰν μὴ εὐαγγελίσωμαι).

The importance of 1 Corinthians 9:16-23 is that it makes a distinction between οἰκονομία, the task, and πεπίστευμαι, the entrusting of the task (cf. Rom 3:2)¹⁸⁰. It is specifically in the context where οἰκονομία is connected with πεπίστευμαι that it has the meaning of commission. The jurisdiction or authority of Paul with regard to the gospel is expressed by the noun τῇ ἐξουσίᾳ (1 Co 9:18), as opposed to by the noun οἰκονομίαν, (1 Co 9:17). The possibility is suggested by O'Brien that, although Paul did not obligate the believers, he implied that the Corinthian believers had a task, οἰκονομίαν to spread the gospel to the nations (cf. Col 1:25-27), and although the responsibility for the spread of the gospel was the same for Paul and the believer, the sphere of authority was not the same. Paul's sphere of authority was as apostle over the Churches. Paul did not exclusively commit the task of οἰκονομία to the believers in Ephesus but to all the believers in the churches¹⁸¹.

"In offering the 'free 'gospel' free of charge his own ministry becomes a living paradigm of the gospel itself" (Fee; 1987: 421). This demonstrates that there is a development in the concept of οἰκονομία; it developed from a task committed exclusively to Paul (in 1 Corinthians) to the inclusion of all believers in the task of οἰκονομία (in Ephesians 3). If this is so, it means that every believer who engages in the same activities as Paul is per definition a οἰκονόμος – although exercised differently, depending upon the sphere of authority of the office.

¹⁸⁰ The Jews had been entrusted with the very words of God, the message of God and with the promises of God (cf. Rom. 3:2). The message was not intended simply to be kept by the Jews for themselves.

¹⁸¹ The purpose of 1 Corinthians 9:1-27 has been limited to the interpretation that Paul is defending his apostolic authority.

1.1.6. The socio-historical background of οἰκονόμος in Corinth: Romans 16:23

While he was staying in Corinth Paul in his letter to the Romans sent greetings from Erastus, the city treasurer (ὁ οἰκονόμος τῆς πόλεως, Ro 16:23). So it proves that the Corinthians were well acquainted with the office of οἰκονόμος, so that when Paul in his letter to the Corinthians refers to himself and the other apostles as οἰκονόμοι, his readers must have had a pretty good idea of what he meant by this word. From the use of the word in Romans 16:23 it is evident that a οἰκονόμος in the Corinthian society was associated with the management of the polis. Accordingly the term οἰκονομία was used in the public sphere of government of a polis. The οἰκονόμος functioned in a recognized sphere of authority within the Greek polis. He was a person responsible for the administration of the city, its finances, and assemblies of the people. It seems that the apostle borrowed the words οἰκονόμος τῆς πόλεως in Romans 16:23 from the sphere of public city administration, well aware of the sense his readers would attach to it, and applied it within the Christian community, but now with a distinctive meaning. In this new meaning the οἰκονόμος was no longer involved with finances¹⁸², but the task of management of finances still remained part of the picture. It is also the reason that Paul deemed it necessary only to define the term οἰκονόμος in terms of its relation to the gospel. Οἰκονομία and the role of the οἰκονόμος in the New Testament were redefined by Paul (1 Co 4:1-2; Ro 16:23; Gal 4:2) to the following:

- Stewardship/ servant – entrusted with a responsibility or task for the purpose of serving. To the steward was committed a task and responsibility to perform- elders and deacons.
- Management – the word has specific reference to the household, family or church. It was the activity of the household manager. He was responsible for delegating tasks to other members of the household and Church. Paul thus delegates tasks to ministry servants such as Tychicus (Eph 6:21-22; Col 4:7). Management is related to a sphere of authority so that Paul uses the term in the public sphere of the management of the polis (Ro 16:23).

In Paul's language οἰκονομία and the task of being a οἰκονόμος require a particular revelation of God's mind and will, which brings added responsibility. In 1 Corinthians the execution of the οἰκονομία of God, God's programme, is conferred upon Paul. In Ephesians the task of οἰκονομία is not given a new meaning but the relationship to God's planned economy is developed. The meaning of οἰκονομία in Ephesians is thus not a new meaning but a development in terms of a mission strategy¹⁸³. This is so because the οἰκονομία in fact has its origin with God himself. This perspective is provided by the apostle in the first

¹⁸² Witherington III (2007:320) makes the point that there is no mention in the N.T about how the *pater familias* should manage his finances.

¹⁸³ Mitton argues that οἰκονομία takes on a new meaning in Ephesians of "God's planned economy".

chapter of Ephesians, in Ephesians 1:10, where he speaks of God's work in Christ εἰς οἰκονομίαν τοῦ πληρώματος τῶν καιρῶν. So Paul basically uses the word οἰκονομία with reference to a divine activity – Gods “administration” (NET), his “plan” (RSV) that He “puts into effect” (NIV). And when Paul thereupon says that he received an οἰκονομία from God, he does not say that he took over God's work. What he is saying, is that God gave this task and responsibility to him as part of the execution of his divine plan-from-the-beginning.

1.1.7. Summary of the use of οἰκονομία in Corinthians

(a) The metaphors for fulfilling the task of οἰκονομία

In 1 Corinthians 3:6-9 Paul uses the metaphor of a plant that grows in the field, and indicates that different tasks are given to members of the body. The different tasks of the members are portrayed as planting and watering. Thereby he distinguishes between the activity of extending the body of Christ, planting, and building up the Church, watering. These workers are called “God's fellow workers” (1 Co 3:9), for it is God who gives the growth to the plant, i.e. to the church (1 Co 3:6). In 1 Corinthians 3:9-15 he switches to the metaphor of a building that is erected. There are those who lay the foundation – similar to the metaphor of planting – and those who build on the foundation – similar to the metaphor of watering. The link between these two metaphors is made obvious in 1 Corinthians 3:9, where he says that the believers are “God's field, God's building”.

The activity of planting the church, or laying its foundation, is the primary activity of what is in general known as evangelism. On the other hand the activity of watering the already growing plant, or building on the already existing foundation, probably relates to the continued preaching of the gospel. That this is how the metaphor should be interpreted is evident from 1 Corinthians 3:10, where Paul writes that on the foundation laid by him as apostle (θεμέλιον ἔθηκα) others have to continue to build upon (ἐποικοδομεῖ). Paul does not say who these “others” are, but his words have to be read within the context of *fellow workers* (συνεργοί, 3:9). However, Paul does not refer to them as such in 1 Corinthians 3:11, but simply speaks of “other (workers)”, because it may prove that the work of these “others” may break down instead of build up the οἰκοδομή of the church of Christ. Although these workers have the freedom to build, “each will become manifested” and “revealed by fire” (1 Co 3:13), indicating that each person's building work will be tested to determine its quality. Each worker will receive a reward or lose his reward depending upon the way in which he build (1 Co 3:14-15). It sets the stage for the development of the term οἰκονομία in 1 Corinthians 9:15-23.

Another important matter to take note of is that Paul in this passage leaves no doubt that the work of evangelism and missions (church planting, laying the foundation) is not inferior to the work of building up the Church. On the other hand the work of building up the church is equally important, for the apostle

writes: “Each one should be careful how he builds, for no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Co 3:10-11). Jesus Christ remains the foundation of the church or, as the apostle writes in Ephesians 2:20, Jesus Christ is the cornerstone on which it should rest and should remain to rest.. The οἰκοδομή-metaphor in 1 Corinthians 3:6-17 seems to correspond to what Paul wrote in Ephesians 2:20, with some discontinuities.

(b) Paul’s strategy in Corinth

It seems that Paul in 1 Corinthians 9:15-23 was well aware of the fact that his οἰκονομία was part of the great οἰκονομία of Him who commissioned him. The strategy Paul adopts in Corinth to fulfil the task of οἰκονομία is to serve everyone in order to win over (κερδαίνω) as many as possible for the gospel (1 Co 9:19). The task of missions for Paul was not merely to win as many unsaved people to Christ as possible but to win people to Christ from every ethnic group. The development of the concept of οἰκονομία in Ephesians indicates that the task of the proclamation of the gospel is to proclaim it to all the nations, ethnic groups, tribes and clans (Eph 3:8,9,15), as Paul in Corinthians saw it as his task as to win as many people from different ethnic groups to Christ (1 Co 9:20-21).

Paul’s definition of the task of the οἰκονόμος in Corinthians

The role of the οἰκονόμος in Corinthians is defined by Paul (1 Co 4:1-2; Rom. 16:23) to be the following:

- Stewardship – entrusted with a responsibility or task for the purpose of serving. To the steward was committed a task and responsibility to steward the gospel (Eph 3:2, 9; 1 Co 9:17).
- Management – the word has specific reference to the household, family or church. It was the activity of the household manager (1 Co 4:1-2). Management is related to a sphere of authority so that Paul uses the term in the public sphere of the management of the polis (Ro 16:23).

Paul’s οἰκονόμος-metaphor in both 1 Corinthians 4 and 9 has shown that “Paul’s deployment of the image is far more versatile than NT scholars have previously shown it to be” (Goodrich; 2012:201-202). Goodrich (2012:202) recognizes the multi-faceted nature of the metaphor. In his studies, however, he limited his research of the metaphor to the social and structural relations of the apostles in 1 Corinthians 4:1-5 and the administrative function of Paul in 1 Corinthians 9:16-23 (cf. Goodrich; 2012:201). He focuses on the regal administration, the civic administration, the private administration and the socio-economic standing of the οἰκονόμοι in Greco-Roman society. He focuses on Paul’s apostolic right to be financially supported and the contesting of his apostolic authority. He recognizes that “apostolic authority was afforded for the express purpose of obtaining converts and enabling them to reach maturity” (Goodrich; 2012:204). And that Paul’s apostolic authority had a instinctively constructive and empowering objective (Goodrich; 2012:204) but this empowering objective only becomes apparent in Ephesians and the Pastoral Epistles.

(c) The development in the idea of οἰκονομία from Corinthians to Ephesians

A conclusion from the comparison of Corinthians and Ephesians is that it is evident that the οἰκονομία Paul received from God, was not the entire οἰκονομία of God’s plan for mankind and the creation (cf. Eph 1:10).

Paul received one specific part of or role within God's entire οἰκονομία – that of taking the gospel to the Gentiles. That this was the specific commission entrusted to Paul, is suggested in Ephesians 1:2-8 and confirmed by 1 Corinthians 9:15-23. There is a development in the concept of but the development is in terms of a task which was committed exclusively to Paul in 1 Corinthians and extended to include the Church and all believers in the task of οἰκονομία (Eph 3).

(d) The task of οἰκονομία committed to Paul

God entrusted to Paul the οἰκονομία of the gospel which was to be exercised in his work as an οἰκονόμος and was part of the apostolic office God had given to him. Although the term οἰκονόμος does not occur in Ephesians, a parallel can be drawn from the evidence in 1 Corinthians 4 and 9 to Ephesians 4:11 where Paul works out practically what he wrote to in Ephesians 3:2. It can be deduced that the use of οἰκονομία in Ephesians 3:2 corresponds to the meaning in 1 Corinthians 4 and 9 and that it is used for an office and assignment given by God to Paul. Paul was given a special office, that of a οἰκονόμος and the essence of his task was the proclamation and revelation of the gospel to those who were outsiders, the pagan Gentiles. The relationship between the word οἰκονόμος and apostolic authority is important because it sheds light on whether it was a unique office of management given to the apostles and entrusted specifically to Paul (1Co 9:17) or a commission to preach the gospel, the mysteries of God, also given to Paul's co-workers. A similar expression as used for Paul's task in 1 Corinthians 9:17 are used in Ephesians 3:2: "You heard about the stewardship of the grace of God given to me (τὴν οἰκονομίαν τῆς χάριτος τοῦ θεοῦ τῆς δοθείσης μοι)." And later on it is explained (Eph 3:8) that Paul's specific task, when compared to the other apostles, was to preach the gospel to the Gentiles. In the light of all this it becomes evident that the οἰκονομία Paul received from God, was not the entire οἰκονομία of God's plan for mankind and the creation (cf. Eph 1:10). Paul received one specific part of or role within God's entire οἰκονομία – that of taking the gospel to the Gentiles. That this was the specific commission entrusted to Paul, is suggested in Ephesians 1:2-8 and confirmed by 1 Corinthians 9:15-23.

(e) The task of οἰκονομία of Paul's co-workers

In 1 Corinthians 4:1 Paul describes himself and fellow messengers as οἰκονόμοι (generally translated as "stewards"). Paul uses the plural to indicate that he and his co-workers are ὑπηρέται (*helpers*) of Jesus Christ and οἰκονόμοι μυστηρίων θεοῦ (*stewards of God's mysteries*), fulfilling the task of οἰκονομία of the mysteries of God. The term οἰκονόμος should therefore not be understood as a function exclusive to Paul but a general term including the activities of ὑπηρέται, servants and helpers. Paul has in mind himself and Apollos as stewards of the mysteries of God for he says, "I have applied these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit" (1 Co 4:6). As stewards they teach the Corinthians a spiritual truth. The role of the

οἰκονόμοι was to reveal the secret or mystery that once was hidden but is now known because God has revealed it to his people by the Spirit (1 Co 2:10; Eph 3:4-5).

(f) The task of οἰκονομία committed to the believer

The commission that was given to Paul to proclaim the gospel to the Gentiles, as mentioned by him in 1 Corinthians 9:15-23, is expounded further on in the letter to the Corinthians. The though-block 9:24-27 is related to the previous pericope (1 Co 9:15-23) and uses the metaphor of a race to indicate the powerful advance of the gospel. The metaphor of running is used to portray the spread of the gospel. The stress in the metaphor is on the dynamic spread of the gospel, which explains Paul's work of evangelism. A further implication of the metaphor is that believers are to engage in evangelism to outsiders. The motivation given to the believer is that God will reward every athlete of the gospel. The metaphor of running is also implied in Ephesians 6:15 in the words "As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace" (NRSV).

1.2. ΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΙΑ AND ITS RELATED FORMS IN COLOSSIANS

1.2.1. The apostle's part of God's οἰκονομία: Col 1:25, 27

A line can be drawn between Ephesians and Colossians in terms of οἰκονομία. It has to be remembered that Paul wrote his letter to the Colossians before he penned his correspondence to the Ephesians.¹⁸⁴ The concept of οἰκονομία is therefore more fully developed in Ephesians than in Colossians.

In the context of Colossians 1:25, both διάκονος and οἰκονομίαν are used by Paul: "I became a servant (διάκονος) according to the plan of God (οἰκονομίαν τοῦ θεοῦ)". Paul then continues to say in this verse that the οἰκονομίαν τοῦ θεοῦ was given to him for the church (δοθεῖσάν μοι εἰς ὑμᾶς). Once again, as in the case of 1 Cor 9:15-23, the apostle is actually saying in Colossians 1:25 that what he has received is only part of God's plan for expanding his church. This is evident from the use of the preposition κατά: Paul had

¹⁸⁴ Paul responds to a problem in the Church of Colossae which was brought to his attention by Epaphras. It would seem that in the Church some members of the Church were being deceived by "fine-sounding arguments" (Col. 2:4). Paul endeavours to secure the believers in the gospel they learned from Epaphras, which was the same gospel Paul preached. In fact, Epaphras learned the gospel from Paul so even though they did not know Paul personally he considered himself the father of the Church in Colossi. It implies that his co-workers acted on behalf of Paul and the reason that Paul writes about Epaphras that he was "a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf" (Col. 17). Some manuscripts read "on your behalf".

not received the οἰκονομία as such, but what he received, was entrusted to him κατὰ τὴν οἰκονομίαν τοῦ θεοῦ (“according to the plan of God”). The part of God’s οἰκονομία entrusted to him is termed by Paul as that of a διάκονος. Διάκονος in this verse does not refer to the office of deacon or pastor, but is used as a general term for a *servant*, whereby the apostle brings home the fact that the part of God’s οἰκονομία that he received was to serve the Church. His specific task as servant is also spelled out: he has to serve the church *with the gospel* (“to present to you the word of God in its fullness”; Col 25: NIV).

The use of the phrase δοθεῖσαν μοι εἰς ὑμᾶς (“given to me for you”) in Colossians 1:25 is identical to Ephesians 3:2, in which “the stewardship of the grace of God” was given to Paul for the Ephesians. Paul sees the work given to him as a responsibility given to him by God, “given to me on behalf of you” (Col 1:25) as he does in Ephesians. The part of God’s οἰκονομία that was entrusted to Paul – his διακονία – was the task to “fulfil” (πληρῶσαι), to carry to completion the word of God. Within the context of Colossians 1:26-27 the task of *carrying God’s word to completion* is to make the gospel fully known in its fullness. The gospel is undiscoverable by human means so that it remains a mystery to humans, unless it is revealed to them by God. Paul is merely the instrument through whom God reveals the mystery. The mystery has been revealed over successive periods of time and to Paul is given the task to reveal to the Gentiles how all these successive periods of time have been brought together in Jesus Christ (Col 1:27). The idea of completion (πληρῶσαι) of God’s word is developed in the Ephesians’ letter to the fullness of the times (τοῦ πληρώματος τῶν καιρῶν), which is the time of the summing up of all things in Christ (Eph 1:10). The letter of Ephesians therefore develops the concept of οἰκονομία that is found in Colossians 1:25. It is God’s plan that the apostle is entrusted with the task of making the mystery of the gospel completely known so that the Headship of Christ and the church as his body may grow to completion.

The pericope Col 1:15-29 consists of a hymn (1:15-23) and an exposition of the ministry and mission of Paul (1:24-29). In the pericope 1:15-29 God’s administration of the Universe in the fulfilment of the plan of God is introduced, in 1:15-23 the role of Jesus Christ in God’s cosmic plan, and in 1:24-29 Paul’s role in His plan. This is further developed in Ephesians in which the οἰκονομία of God is extended to the activity of the Church (Eph 3:9-10). God’s plan (οἰκονομία), Paul says in Ephesians, is to unite all things in Christ (Eph 1:9f), and to this end his appointed agent is the Church (cf. Huneter; 1975:94). Paul in Colossians 1:25 is saying that he functions as a servant “according to the plan of God”. The οἰκονομία given to him by God “to present the Word of God to you in its fullness” in Colossians is less developed than in Ephesians. In Ephesians he relates his task to the Church (Eph 3:9-10) and the Church to the cosmic rule of Christ (Eph 1:20-23) which we do not find in Colossians. The idea of presenting the gospel in its fullness is the plan of God, οἰκονομία committed to Paul by God. We can infer from this that the term fullness stands in a certain relation to οἰκονομία. It has in view the fulfilment of the plan of God. The plan of God, οἰκονομία

entrusted to Paul in Colossians is to make known what is” the riches of the glory of the mystery among the nations that means Christ among you the hope of glory”¹⁸⁵. It is the presence of God amongst His people in Colossians that is the mystery made known to the nations. This idea of the plan of God, οἰκονομία, is specifically related to the preaching of the gospel among the nations and thus the relationship of the Church to the nations in Ephesians. God wanted to make known his rich presence among his people to the nations in Colossians, consistent with the Old Testament concept of mission, and in Ephesians the Church is God’s intended instrument to fulfil his plan by going to the nations and drawing the nations into the fellowship of the Church. The purpose of Paul’s mission was to fulfil the body of Jesus Christ by the creation of a new community of people of God who would be what Israel had failed to be – “a light for the revelation to the Gentiles” (Isa. 42:6) (cf. Hunter; 1975:94). Thus, in Ephesians we find the development:

- (1) God’s gospel plan or μυστήριον and the divine administration of His plan; and
- (2) the role given to Paul as an apostle to make known the μυστήριον (cf. Reuman; 1967:166). This double reference is expressed by Ephesians 3:2 and 9.

The language of Colossians 1:27 have been identified as missional and its use of the word μυστήριον is related to the mission of the Gospel (cf. Wright; 2006:340). The phrase “Christ among you” (Χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν) has been identified as missional (Wright; 2006:340; Carver; & Culpepper). By “Christ among you” the covenantal *Immanuel* -presence of God is extended to the nations through Paul’s missionary work, in fulfilment of the Old Testament promises in Ephesians (cf. Wright; 2006:340). In Col 1:24-29 the verb καταγγέλλομεν has been identified as missional, as “a technical term for missionary preaching” (O’Brien; 1993:64). The idea of the ongoing proclamation of Christ as the centre of the *Immanuel*-mystery (Col 1:27) and the idea of “disclosed” (Col1:27) are expanded in Ephesians by the verbs “made known” (Eph 1:9) and “make plain” (Eph 3:6). Paul communicates the obligation he has to proclaim the mystery of Christ that was once hidden but now has been openly revealed in Ephesians 3:2-6. The idea that Ephesians develops further the ideas found in the content of the letter to the Colossians supports the hypothesis that the purpose of Ephesians is missional. It is supported by Johnson (2013:327) who writes that “Ephesians lifts the local concerns found in Colossians into a reflection on the nature and mission of the church which is the fullest and most mature in the Pauline collection”. In conclusion, in Colossians 1:24-29 we find a missional reflection which is developed in its fullest and mature sense in Ephesians.

¹⁸⁵ C. J. Wright (2006:340) translates *Christos en hymin* as “Christ among you” rather than simply “in you”. “Pauls point here is not simply the presence of the indwelling Christ in the hearts of the believers, but (especially in view of the parallel passage of the letter to the Ephesians, where he explains what he means by “the mystery” [Eph 3:2-6]0, the presence of the Messiah among the Gentiles through the preaching of the gospel and its acceptance by them” (Wright; 2006:340).

1.2.2. Summary of the use of οἰκονομία in Colossians 1:25, 27.

Paul's use of οἰκονομία in Colossians 1:25-27 in general agrees with his usage in the Ephesians' letter. In both letters the primary meaning of the οἰκονομία τοῦ θεοῦ is not as much the *stewardship* of Paul or anybody else, but God's plan for making known the mystery of the Gospel to mankind. However, Paul's work as an apostle is included into God's plan is part of the οἰκονομίαν τοῦ θεοῦ. In Colossians 1:25 Paul's work is called the work of a διάκονος, which says that he has been appointed by God to work as a servant of the church. His task as servant is to make fully known the mystery of God's word to the Gentiles. The mystery was hidden from the ages for the generations of the earth (Col 1:26), but now according to God's plan it is made known to its fullness to the saints, i.e. those chosen by God to know and believe in the mystery of the gospel. This matter of making known completely, is expanded upon in the Ephesians' letter, where Paul writes that that in this way, according to God's plan, Christ as Head of his church and the church as his body, is brought to fullness (Eph 1:10,23).

One aspect of God's οἰκονομία that receives new light in Colossians 1:27 is that the mystery that is made known according to God's plan, is a fulfilment of the covenantal *Immanuel*-promise of God-with-us. Paul writes in verse 27 that the glorious riches of the mystery that is made known to them is "*Christ in you*". In this way the apostle brings forward the fact that the gospel is imbedded in the Old Testament covenant, a fact that is made even more explicit in various ways in the Ephesians' letter.

1.3. OIKONOMIA AND ITS RELATED FORMS IN THE PASTORAL EPISTLES

1.3.1. 1Timothy

1.3.1.1. Οἰκονομία and its related forms in 1 Timothy

The letters to Timothy is of special relevance to the study of Ephesians because at the time when Paul wrote these letters, Timothy was in Ephesus, appointed by Paul as preacher and shepherd of the church. In his letter to the Ephesians Paul leaves no doubt that the church inherits the mission given to the apostles. In his first epistle to Timothy the structure of the Church is set out so that the church can continue the apostolic mission. The role of Timothy is to facilitate between the mission of Paul and the mission of the Church. Timothy's role is to be a go-between in the transitional phase and set up internal structures for the Church to be able to fulfil its mission and calling.

In the first epistle to Timothy the task that was entrusted to Paul is now entrusted to Timothy. Timothy serves as a οἰκονόμος as the extension of Paul's own mission and the οἰκονομία of God. It is the reason that the term "deposit" is used by Paul to entrust the gospel to the younger Timothy (and others in 1 Ti 6:20).

“Timothy stands in the same line of fulfilment of the eschatological purpose that Paul linked to his mission to the Gentiles” (Towner; 2006:56). The first epistle to Timothy has specifically been written to prepare the co-worker of Paul to carry on with the apostle’s mission¹⁸⁶. For this reason Timothy is appointed to represent Paul (1 Ti 1:3-4).

Within this context Paul uses the term οἰκονομία in 1 Timothy 1:4: “These promote controversies rather than God’s work (οἰκονομίαν θεοῦ) – which is by faith”. The term οἰκονομία in this passage refers to the organization and ordering of a household (cf. Towner; 2006:112). Although this is the only occurrence of οἰκονομία in the Pastoral Epistles it sets the tone for the use of the concept in the other Pastoral Epistles. In Titus 1:7 the word οἰκονόμος is used in exactly the same context, where Paul writes that overseers (elders) should be appointed in the church as θεοῦ οἰκονόμοι, i.e. stewards entrusted with God’s work, followed by an exposition of the task of the overseers to serve the good order in the church. So in the Pastoral Epistles the term οἰκονομία is used in the meaning of the management of the household. Add to that its meaning in the Ephesians’ letter, it can be concluded that God’s plan for the gospel includes that good order should be maintained in the church so that the gospel can be proclaimed all the better by the church. So it proves that the concept of οἰκονομία undergoes a development from Ephesians to first Timothy¹⁸⁷. The term is used more broadly in first Timothy in that the author links the internal and external tasks together¹⁸⁸.

One of the words Paul links with οἰκονομία and uses extensively in first Timothy for the commission given to Timothy is παραγγελία (“charge”) (1 Ti 1:3; 5, 18). The term carries “the weight of apostolic authority and is intended to persuade and ensure compliance” (Towner; 2006:106). This means that Timothy is made responsible to keep good order in the church so that Paul thereby is supported for the mission to the Gentiles (1 Ti 2:7; 2 Ti 1:11), because Paul was entrusted with the good news for the Gentile nations (1 Ti 1:11). The task that Paul entrusts to Timothy and Timothy is to entrust to the church carries the stamp of

¹⁸⁶ Towner (2006:56) has suggested that it is the epistle of second Timothy that was written to prepare Timothy to carry on the apostle’s mission (2 Ti 1:6-14; 2:1-7; 3:10-17) because he neglected the role of the first epistle of Timothy to set up an organized Church structure absolutely essential for missions.

¹⁸⁷ The term “οἰκονομία in 1 Timothy must be understood not just to *salvation plan* but rather to the implications of the divine ordering” (Towner; 2006:113). In Ephesians οἰκονομία has the meaning of the working out of God’s plan of salvation.

¹⁸⁸ In 1 Co 9:17, Col 1:25 and Eph 3:2 the term οἰκονομία is used specifically with the stewardship, responsibility and gospel management of Paul in mind. In Ephesians 3:8-10 the author includes the church in the stewardship, responsibility and management of the gospel. The structure for the church to be able to fulfil its task is then worked out in 1 Timothy.

apostolic authority. This is necessary because it is “God who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth” (1 Ti 2:4), indicating the missional nature of the commission¹⁸⁹.

In 1 Timothy 4:10-11 Paul communicates again that it is God “who is the saviour of all men, especially of believers” (v. 10) and Timothy is to charge these things to the members of the household and Church which he is also to teach (v.11). Timothy’s task given to him by Paul is to teach what is true and to correct what is false so that the church will be able to fulfil the οἰκονομία of God. He is to commit the mission he received from Paul, which Paul directly received from the Lord, to the Church. Mission is part of what it means for the Church to continue the apostolic stewardship given by Jesus Christ to Paul and by Paul to Timothy. Timothy was to be an example in behaviour, love, faith and purity (1 Ti 1:5). A repetition of these key concepts occurs in Timothy 4:12 and so are linked to the οἰκονομία of God (1 Ti 1:4). It is by his example that Timothy was to guide the Church to practise this saintly behaviour as evidence of the believer’s salvation and as a witness to outsiders. The telos of the παραγγελίας (1 Ti 1:5) forms the core of Timothy’s whole mission in Ephesus (cf. Towner; 2006:114) and the mission of the church. Paul links Timothy’s mission efforts in 1 Tim 4:10 to the value of godliness and to God’s plan of salvation (cf. Towner; 2006:309).

The charge to the church is worked out in first 1 Timothy 5:7 in that Timothy is to charge widows to live a life that is irreproachable. The widows are charged to be irreproachable, a continuation of the theme of an exemplary life (1 Ti 3:2), which is to be observable by outsiders. Paul repeats the charge to Timothy to live an irreproachable life (1 Ti 6:14) but in Timothy 6:13-15 he connects it to his calling and the confession he had made before many witnesses. He grounds the charge he gives to Timothy (1 Ti 6:13) in the testimony and confession that Jesus Christ made before Pontius Pilate. He instructs Timothy to be faithful to the charge and the good confession he made as Jesus Christ testified and made the good confession before Pilate. The two fold charge to Timothy personally and to the church is drawn together into a concluding reaffirmation of his commission (1 Ti 6:20-21) (cf. Towner; 2006:415). The letter ends with Paul instructing Timothy to charge wealthy believers “to do good, to be rich in good works, to be a generous, willing to share” (1 Ti 6:18) indicating that like Paul committed to Timothy and charged him with a stewardship which he was to commit to the Church and charge with a stewardship.

1.3.1.2. The task Timothy was to commit to the Church

The task of οἰκονομία of God (1 Ti 1:4) included an inward and outward dimension, the pastoral ministry which involved the proclamation of the gospel in the Church and “to enlighten all men to the stewardship

¹⁸⁹ The first prayer in 1 Timothy 2:3-4 is linked with the Gentile mission (1 Ti 2:7) (cf. Towner; 2006:167).

of the mystery” (Eph 3:9) which Paul identifies with the proclamation of the wealth of Christ to the nations (Eph 3:8)¹⁹⁰. The οἰκονόμια of God that Timothy is to commit to the Church involved the two sided task of the proclamation of the gospel in the Church and to the nations.

Paul gives to Timothy the responsibility for proclaiming the gospel and he is to delegate tasks to other members of the household and Church to make “supplications, intercessions, prayers and thanksgivings on behalf of all men” (1 Ti 2:1). The task that Paul entrusts to Timothy and Timothy is to entrust to the church carries the stamp of apostolic authority. This is necessary because it is “God who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth” (1 Ti 2:4), indicating the missional nature of the commission¹⁹¹.

Paul in 1 Timothy uses the verb παραγγεῖλ♦ (1 Ti 1:3; 5; 18; 4:11; 5:7; 6:13; 17) with οἰκονομία for the task that he commits to Timothy (1 Ti 1:4) in the absence of language of being *set apart* or *appointed* (*aphorizo*). The task of οἰκονόμια of God (1 Ti 1:4) included an inward and outward dimension, the pastoral ministry which involved the proclamation of the gospel in the Church and “to enlighten all men to the stewardship of the mystery” (Eph 3:9) which Paul identifies with the proclamation of the wealth of Christ to the nations (Eph 3:8)¹⁹². The οἰκονόμια of God that Timothy is to commit to the Church involved the two sided task of the proclamation of the gospel in the Church and to the nations. In the absence of an office for the proclamation of the gospel to outsiders I would like to suggest that the term *oikonomos* fulfilled this function in the early Church. Ott & Strauss (2010: 237) argue that as “the popular usage of the term *missionary* has become so broad and diverse, we may wish to reintroduce the more biblically defined terminology of *apostolic ministries* and *apostolic missionaries* to describe those who are explicitly appointed by God and commissioned by the church to plant and expand kingdom communities among every people of the earth”. In the early Church the term *oikonomos* indicated the management of the proclamation of the gospel to the nations/Gentiles. The verb “I might gain” (1 Co 9:19) has been identified as a missionary term. Daube (1947:109) observed that the NT consistently uses the verb as a “missionary term”- that is, as either implying conversion (1 Pe 3:1) or turning from sin (Mt 18:15). Edwards (1885:237-238) has shown that the verb carries on the metaphor of stewardship supported by the verb “announce” (Col 1:28) which has been identified as “a technical term for missionary preaching” (O’Brien; 1993:64) and used in relation to the stewardship of the mystery among the Gentiles (Col 1:25, 27). The task of the *oikonomos* was related to the gaining or winning and announcing of the gospel to the Gentiles. The use of

¹⁹⁰ The term ἔθνη is to be translated nations in Ephesians 3:8.

¹⁹¹ The first prayer in 1 Timothy 2:3-4 is linked with the Gentile mission (1 Ti 2:7) (cf. Towner; 2006:167).

¹⁹² The term ἔθνη is to be translated nations in Ephesians 3:8.

the term οἰκονόμια in association with missionary terms and the proclamation of the mystery to nations/Gentiles confirm the relationship between the term and proclamation of the gospel to outsiders.

1.3.1.3. The use of οἰκονομία and διακονία in the letters to 1 Timothy

The essence of the above observations about the use and meaning of οἰκονομία in Paul's first letter to Timothy can be rephrased as follows:

- a. In 1 Timothy 1:4 Paul also speaks of the οἰκονομία τοῦ θεοῦ, where he writes that he appointed Timothy in Ephesus so to bring to an end false doctrines and endless genealogies (negative), and (positive) promote the οἰκονομία τοῦ θεοῦ, translated as “God's redemptive plan” (*New English Translation*), the “divine training” (*Revised Standard Version*) or simply “God's work” (*New International Version*, *Contemporary English Version*) “which is by faith” or “God's way of stewarding the world”.
- b. The continuation of Paul's mission is handed down to Timothy who is to be faithful to God's stewardship. Timothy is given a kind of divine trusteeship by which God manages the outworking of salvation history in the Church. The gospel was entrusted by God to Paul πεπιστευμαι το εὐαγγελιον, “I had been entrusted the gospel” (1 Ti 1:11; 1 Thess. 2:4; Gal 2:7), and Paul in turn entrusted the gospel to Timothy to guard (1 Ti 6:20).
- c. What does Paul have in mind with the οἰκονομία τοῦ θεοῦ in 1 Ti 1:4? Paul's purpose with the letter is to give pastoral advice to Timothy about how the church as οἶκος θεοῦ (“household of God”, cf. 3:15) should be managed. So the οἶκος θεοῦ and the Church are continuous with each other (3:15), and Paul's advice to Timothy to attend to God's οἰκονομία of the οἶκος θεοῦ then would relate to the outworking of God's plan for his church. Timothy is instructed to stabilize and secure structures which serve the οἰκονομία τοῦ θεοῦ, the plan of God for the church as his household. The οἰκονομία τοῦ θεοῦ in 1 Timothy seems to have a different accent than in Ephesians. Contrary to Ephesians, God's οἰκονομία in 1 Timothy is not directed at the world outside, but rather at the internal functioning the church. The apostle does not instruct Timothy about taking the gospel to the Gentiles as much as securing the Gospel in the church as God's household, so that the church can be maintained within a sound doctrine as “pillar and foundation of truth” (3:15) because without this the Church would not be mature an unable to fulfil its task to take the gospel to the nations.
- d. However, the church, even as steadfast pillar and foundation of the truth, is portrayed in 1 Timothy as existing and functioning not isolated from but directly within the society, even to the benefit of the society. The plan of God is for the church to be perceived by society as “the living assembly of God”, “the oikos theou” (1 Ti 3:15) and impacting society. So a secondary meaning of the οἰκονομία τοῦ θεοῦ in 1 Timothy is expanded beyond the internal maintenance and well-being of the church to proceed to

the salvation and well-being of society at large. The good news functions to transform the structures of society. Paul exhorts the church to pray for all people, “for this is a noble thing to do, and acceptable in the sight of our saviour God, who wants all human beings to be saved and come to the recognition of the truth” (1 Ti 2:1; 3-4). So the church not only has to stand firm as pillar of the truth, but in doing so has to be instrumental in the conversion of the entire society to the knowledge of God’s truth.

- e. Faith of the church becomes the springboard for faith of the world. This is how God’s plan is executed in faith (οἰκονομίαν θεοῦ τὴν ἐν πίστει), according to 1 Timothy.

1.3.1.4. The relation between First Timothy and Ephesians

When Paul in his correspondence with Timothy refers to his own work as apostle, he rather speaks of the διακονία (“service”, “ministry”) to which God appointed him (1 Ti 1:12). This is in agreement with Ephesians 3:7, where Paul writes that he became a servant (διάκονος) of the gospel according to God’s gift to him. Likewise also Timothy was appointed as διάκονος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ (1 Ti 4:6) with the task of preaching the word (1 Ti 4:16; 2 Ti 4:5) and taking pastoral care of the different members of the church (1 Ti 5:1-25). Timothy is given the double task of the supervision of the community to maturity; He is both a missionary to and pastor of the Church of Ephesus. Timothy is to conduct the work of a Missionary Pastoral Leader. As διάκονος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ (1 Ti 4:6) Timothy is given a double task: First he has responsibility of supervision of the church community to grow to maturity (1 Ti 2:1; 4:11 5:7; 6:13, 17), which is his pastoral charge; secondly, within the οἰκονομίαν θεοῦ he has the responsibility of supporting Paul in his apostolic task (1 Ti 1:3; 5, 18), which is Timothy’s missional charge. Paul uses the language of charge because of the importance of the task. It is the dual nature which explains why in Ephesians 4:11 to teach the Church and in 2 Timothy 4:5 Paul tells Timothy to do the work of an evangelist (ἔργον εὐαγγελιστοῦ). These are then not conflicting roles but part of the comprehensive task given to Timothy, a task that was directed both inward and outward. The growth to maturity of God’s people is inseparable from the mission of the people of God. It is only if the Church continues to grow that is able to engage the society and world of which it is a part. In Ephesians the growth to maturity of the Church (Eph 4:1-16) is inseparable from its call to live a worthy life, which in essence is its call to missions (Eph 4:1).

The purpose of Timothy’s διακονία is that everyone will know how they ought to behave “in the household of God (ἐν οἴκῳ θεοῦ)” (3:15). Timothy, like Paul, is to be a οἰκονόμος faithful to God in the discharge of his stewardship. He is instructed to encourage behaviour that is consistent with the standards of the gospel (1 Ti 1:1). The work of Timothy of οἰκονόμειν θεοῦ (1 Ti 1:4) involved the training and teaching of the Church to maturity and it required attention to the congregation’s spiritual life and ethical choices. Timothy is given the commission by Paul to continue Paul’s mission in Ephesus as part of God’s overall management of the world. The role of Timothy was to catechise the Church into an understanding of God’s

stewardship. The congregation was not to conceive their life as divided into “what we do for ourselves” and “what we do for others” (mission) because both the inward and outward dimensions are part of the calling of the Church. This division places the church in danger of separating the inward and outward dimensions of the single life of the community and diminishing its role in the οἰκονομία of God.

The charge to Timothy as part of the task as διακονία (1 Ti 1:3), his pastoral role as “servant of Christ”¹⁹³ in the Church:

1. Teaching that was consistent with Paul’s teaching (1 Ti 1:3)
2. Teaching that did not pay attention to myths and genealogies and caused speculations (1 Ti 1:4).
3. Teaching that nourished with the words of faith (1 Ti 4:6).
4. Teaching in which Timothy had to persevere in it (1 Ti 4:16).
5. Teaching and encouraging was central to Timothy’s task (1 Ti 6:2).

By following this teaching and the church community can grow to maturity so that they “by their life together point to the presence and power of God’s Kingdom, God’s way of ordering the world” (1 Ti 1:4) (Robinson & Wall; 2012:36).

In 1 Timothy 1:3 Paul’s departure from Ephesus meant that as the apostolic teacher who had been the authoritative teacher of the faith for the congregation, he had to instruct his successor, Timothy. Timothy had to be a faithful steward for building on the work and ministry of Paul if it was to continue. Paul’s departure thrusts Timothy into the role of successor and teacher of the faith in order that a particular congregation in Ephesus may “in their discipleship incarnate Christian truth” (Robinson & Wall; 2012:38). They were out on the mission frontier. Paul left Timothy with the task of forming a Christian congregation in a pagan place (cf. Robinson & Wall; 2012:38). The context in which Timothy found himself was a pagan place where different faiths competed and where cultural patterns of materialism, consumption, nationalism and violence were common. In this context the identity of the Church and the missional presence of the Christian congregation were essential in order for the congregation to be sustained in the midst of a pagan culture. In this way the church by faithfully living as God’s people in this world, participates in the *mission Dei*, the mission of God.

1.3.1.5. The church as οἶκος θεοῦ and household structures

The concept of the Church as “the body of Christ,” which first emerges in 1Co 12:27-28 and becomes an important idea of the Deutro-Pauline Epistles (Eph 2:12; Col 2:17; cf. Eph 1:23; 4:15-14; Col 1:8) completely disappears from the Pastoral Epistles. In the Pastoral Epistles the church is presented by the

¹⁹³ The qualification “Servant of Christ” (1 Ti 4:6) distinguished Timothy’s role from the role of the deacon.

metaphor of a household (οἶκος). In 1 Timothy 3:15 the church is called the οἶκος θεοῦ (“household of God”). The οἶκος -metaphor is not only morphologically related to the term οἰκονομία, but definitely also semantically related to it. The οἰκονομίαν θεοῦ (“God’s ordering of things”, 1 Tim 1:4), is an explicit development of the metaphor of God’s household¹⁹⁴.

From the matters that Paul discusses in the rest of 1 Timothy, it is clear that he singles out one aspect of the household-metaphor for the special attention of Timothy, and that is the *structure* of the household. The church as the *household of God* (οἶκος θεοῦ), as portrayed in 1 Timothy had a definite organization, as was characteristic to the household in Greco-Roman times. The household of God or the church in 1 Timothy has a clearly defined leadership structure. In this structure the apostle defines the roles and task of the church leaders, the ἐπίσκοποι (1 Ti 3:2), the διάκονοι (1 Ti 3:8) and the πρεσβύτεροι (1 Ti 5:17).

All of these structures served the internal stability and maintenance of the church as *household of God*, so that it could build up itself and daily grow more and more the stature of God’s household, viz. being within society the pillar and bulwark of the truth (1 Ti 3:15). This growth towards what the church is intended to be corresponds to the οἰκοδομὴ τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ (“building up the body of Christ”) which Paul writes about in Ephesians 4:12. The church needs internal growth “*until we all attain to the unity of faith and the knowledge of the Son of God to the point of a mature person to the measure of maturity of the fullness of Christ*” (Eph 4:13). This internal growth depends on good structural organization, as suggested by Paul in Ephesians 4:16 where he writes that the church as Christ’s body “*joined together and united by every ligament of support according to the working in measure of each one part brings about the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.*” So in Ephesians the *body*-metaphor is put to good use by Paul to indicate that the οἰκοδομὴ τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ is served by effective structures. Now in the Pastoral letters Paul is more precise about the leadership structures that can serve this οἰκοδομή.

How were the leadership structures intended to serve the οἰκοδομή of the church? Not only by keeping the good order (1 Ti 3:4-5) and teaching the gospel truths to the church members (1 Ti 3:2; Titus 1:9), but also by setting a good example to others. In God’s household the offices were to behave in a way that exemplified that the Church is the *pillar and foundation of the truth* (1 Ti 3:15). It is the reason for “blamelessness” (1 Ti 3:2-5) as a hallmark of the leadership of the offices in which virtue was of principal importance. The ideal exercise of office was by someone whose public persona is best summarized as “blameless,” the ideal servant, deacon and elder, a profile which begins with “respect” (cf. Robinson & Wall; 2012:73). The servants’, deacons’ and elders’, responsibility is internal to the “children” who belong to the household of faith and pertain to cultivating the faith of God’s extended family whereas the

¹⁹⁴ In 1 Timothy we find the development of the metaphor of household for the Church. There is no development of the concept Church in 1 Timothy but only of the household which is “the Church of the living God” (3:15).

responsibility of the οἰκονομία is to extend the community of faith and is external sphere of influence. The question of whether the council of elders assumed the roles of οἰκονομία and διακονία will be discussed. When discussing the household responsibilities of the ἐπίσκοπος in 1 Timothy 3:2 the apostle explicitly set the requirement that an ἐπίσκοπος should “manage his own household well and keep his children in control without losing his dignity” (τοῦ ἰδίου οἴκου καλῶς προϊστάμενον, τέκνα ἔχοντα ἐν ὑποταγῇ). Although “one’s own household” (1 Ti 3:4-5, 12; 5:4) in many respects differ from the church as *household of God* (1 Ti 3:15), it speaks of an organized management which should be characteristic of the *household of God*. Therefore an ἐπίσκοπος who at least is able to manage his own household, will be able to take leadership in the household of God.

Timothy is not called an ἐπίσκοπος or a πρεσβύτερος (cf. Fitzmeyer; 2004:584) but is assigned the task of the management of the household (1 Ti 1:3-4). Although no specific title is given to Timothy it can be inferred that he carries out the task of his part of God’s οἰκονομία without the title of οἰκονόμος. The term διάκονος is used in 1 Timothy 4:6, but it “is undoubtedly being used in the generic sense of ‘minister’ and does not carry any more specific connotation” (Fitzmeyer; 2004:587). Timothy is entrusted with a task (1:18) to “charge, direct, command” others in the church of Ephesus (1 Ti 1:3, 18; 4:11; 5:7; 6:13, 17). In 1 Timothy the management ability in one’s household is a good indicator of leadership ability in the church (cf. 1 Ti 3:4; cf. 1 Co 16:15-18). Since these leadership structures served the οἰκοδομή of the church as body of Christ, their functions within the church were all part of the execution of God’s plan for the church as body of Christ – God’s οἰκονομία. This means that to each of these leaders was entrusted a small part of God’s οἰκονομία, their own stewardship. So Paul does not hesitate in Titus 1:7 to refer to the ἐπίσκοποι as οἰκονόμοι θεοῦ (“stewards of God”). So various types of οἰκονόμοι can be recognized in the church, some for the internal οἰκοδομή of the church, others towards making known the mystery of the gospel to the world and carry on the task of the Pauline apostolate to the nations, for the οἰκοδομή of the body of Christ to its fullness. This proves to be the complete picture that Paul draws of God’s οἰκονομία.

1.3.1.6. Timothy’s position within God’s οἰκονομία of the church in Ephesus

It is unclear whether οἰκονομία implied a specific ministry assignment that Timothy was called to temporarily or whether he was called to permanent cross-cultural ministry. Timothy was for a time Paul’s co-worker in itinerant pioneer mission work, to which οἰκονομία in 1 Timothy 1:3-4 appears to be referring. It seems that Timothy settled into a more pastoral ministry in Ephesus. Given the enormous challenges of pastoral service, an exceptional call to ministry to set Timothy apart was needed. It would seem that Timothy continued ministry outside of the Church to which the task of οἰκονομία refers (1 Tim 1:4-5). Timothy’s task of οἰκονομία was confirmed by prophecy (1 Ti 1:18). Prophecy in 1 Timothy 1:18 refers to an external confirmation of calling. Prophecy and the laying on of hands does not relate to the

same event or process of ordination. The call of Paul to missionary service was confirmed by prophecy and the laying on of hands by the church of Antioch (Acts 13:1-3). Timothy, like Paul may have served as both pastor and missionary; likewise prophecy and the laying on of hands refer to two responsibilities which are not completely separated from each other. Paul had been commissioned by the church through the laying on of hands and prayer (Acts 13:3) and Timothy's commission through prophecy and the laying on of hands had these two dimensions of the building up of the body of Christ and the building out of the Church (1 Ti . 4:14; 2 Ti. 1:6)¹⁹⁵. It is probable that Timothy served as both pastor and missionary; he was a missionary in that he was engaging in cross cultural ministry sent out by his home congregation of Lydia. Timothy's work as an evangelist indicated by the word ποιέω (ἔργον ποιήσον εὐαγγελιστοῦ) in 2 Timothy 4:5. The work of an evangelist was part of God's οἰκονομία for his church, for the evangelist's task was the proclamation of the gospel to those outside of the Church (Acts 21:8; Eph. 4:11). Though the term εὐαγγελιστής indicates only an individual who 'announces the gospel,' early usage would suggest that this was often a person who went from place to place announcing the good news".¹⁹⁶ The function of an evangelist is consistent with the task of οἰκονομία but it is inconsistent with the service as a minister of the Church of Ephesus¹⁹⁷.

The work terrain of the different οἰκονόμοι (functions) within the broad οἰκονομία τοῦ θεοῦ were not set in watertight separations. So Timothy, who was Paul's co-worker during his missionary journeys, when assigned to the church in Ephesus, had the responsibility of the διακονία of pastor and teacher for the internal οἰκονομία of the church. Yet simultaneously he had to do the work of a εὐαγγελιστής (2 Ti 4:5), i.e. to preach the gospel to the Gentiles in the community. So the maintenance of the church and its missions were two sides of the same coin in the ministry of Timothy, and for that matter of the calling of the entire church.

¹⁹⁵ A gracious gift was given, ἐδοθη, to Timothy through prophecy and confirmed or recognized by the laying on of hands by the council of elders. The verb ἐδοθη can mean appoint and assign but the phrase δια προφητείας refers to the means by which one event makes another event possible, the appointed of Timothy was through an inspired utterance from God. A prophetic utterance and a commitment to the grace of God was characteristic of the call to missions (Acts 9:15; 13:1-3; 14:26; 22:21).

¹⁹⁶ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. 1996, c1989. *Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.). United Bible societies: New York

¹⁹⁷ Although the terms |ο| |} | |ω (and διακονίωα are not inter-changeable, an overlap exists.

1.3.1.7. A tabular comparison of Church structure and mission between the letter of First Timothy and Ephesians

The letter of First Timothy reflects the church and structure of the church at a <i>later stage</i> in which the roles and functions of church leaders have clearly been set out (1 Tim 3). A further development takes place in Titus in which the elders' role is extended to include the management of the household and mission.	The letter to the Ephesians reflects an <i>early church structure</i>, elders and deacons have been appointed but their roles and functions have not been defined.
In First Timothy “the most important function of the household in this letter, in fact, is to provide an analogy for leadership: administrative duties and leadership skills demonstrated in one structure are applicable to another” (Johnson; 1986:399). “In 1 Timothy a distinction is drawn between the life and responsibilities of the individual households, and the life and responsibility of the church” (1 Ti 5:4, 8, 16) (Johnson; 1986: 399). First Timothy is directed at two different spheres, the church and the household, the community and the individual households within the community (cf. Johnson; 1986:399).	The leadership roles in Ephesians of apostles and prophets are foundational (Eph 2:20; 3:5). In Eph 4:11 apostles and prophets are listed together with evangelist, pastor and teacher operative in the Ephesians' congregation(s). The function of these roles is “to prepare God's people for works of service” (Eph 4:12). A clear separation does not exist between individual households and church. The church is depicted as a household and the Jews and Gentiles are members of the same household (Eph 2:19).

1.3.1.8. The mystery of God/godliness: 1 Timothy 3:16

The advice that Paul in 1 Timothy 3 gives to Timothy on how to shepherd or take care of the flock and how they should behave in the household of God, is directed at part of Timothy's work of *διακονία*. This involved setting out the tasks of the elder and deacon (1 Ti 3:1-13). The pericope ends with a climax and a confessional hymn in first Timothy 3:14-16 which explains the reason that Paul writes to Timothy (3:14): “so that you may know how one ought to conduct oneself in the house of God” (3:15), the Church which is “the pillar and foundation of the truth” (3:15). What is the truth on which the Church should be based and which they should uphold as pillar? In the confessional hymn in 1 Timothy 3:16 Paul defines it by the word *μυστήριον* (*mystery*). The mystery of God or godliness is that Jesus Christ “was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by the angels, believed on in the world and taken up in glory” (3:16). These words are a nutshell-presentation of the gospel, and by characterizing it as mystery that is revealed, the

apostle adds to it a definite missional undertone. So the church, which inwardly stand firm on the foundation of the truth, also has the task to stand firm within society as a pillar of this very same truth, so that this hidden truth will be revealed to others, who observe the church as pillar of the truth. So included in God's οἰκονομία for making known the mystery of the gospel is how the believers are to behave in relation to the world.

1.4. SUMMARY OF THE LEADERSHIP STRUCTURES IN THE CHURCH WITHIN GOD'S ΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΙΑ

The above considerations about the leadership structures within the church as household of God, and as part of the execution of God's plan for making known the mystery of the gospel, placed within the context of the Ephesians's letter, leads to the following conclusions in summary:

- 1) First God appointed Christ as Head to make the church as his Body complete.
- 2) Then He entrusted part of the execution of his plan (his οἰκονομία) to Paul and others, giving to them the διακονία of apostleship. Their part of the οἰκονομία was to lay the foundation of the church by preaching the revealed *mystery* of the gospel to the world (Paul especially to the Gentiles). So Paul was an οἰκονόμος (1 Co 4:1) of that part of God's οἰκονομία (Eph 3:2; 1 Co 9:17) that God entrusted to him.
- 3) To bring the next part of his plan to execution (οἰκονομία) God called the church so that they in turn would make known to the world the revealed *mystery* of the gospel. This is the mission task of the church
- 4) The first part of the church's missional calling is to preach the gospel to the world (verbally). Although this calling comes to every believer individually, the church is supported in this task by evangelists that the Lord gives as a gift to the church (Eph 4:11).
- 5) However, there is a second manner by which the church can and should fulfil their missional calling. They should make known to the world the *mystery* of the gospel by way of their daily conduct and behaviour, as a silent witness to unbelievers.
- 6) For this purpose the church should be built up in order to grow to the maturity of the body of Christ, as they are (Eph 4:8-16). Therefore Christ gave as gifts to the church apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and preachers, to equip the church for this building process (Eph 3:11-13). Their work is also part of God's οἰκονομία, for He employs them as instruments to bring the church to maturity so that they can fulfil their calling.
- 7) Also in support of the church's growth the apostle commissions the pastors (Timothy, Titus) to appoint ἐπίσκοποι (1 Ti 3:2; Tit 1:7) and πρεσβυτέροι (Tit 1:5). For the part of God's οἰκονομία that God entrusted to them, although quite different from the part entrusted to the apostles, each ἐπίσκοπος

and πρεσβυτέρος is also an οἰκονόμος (Tit 1:7) . This part of God’s οἰκονομία is so that the church will be built up and live as the household of God (1 Ti 3:15).

- 8) As household of God the church should uphold the gospel with an inward and an outward purpose. Inwardly it should stand firm on the foundation of the truth in which they believe; outwardly they should stand firm as a pillar within society, as witness of the truth, so that the mystery of the gospel can be revealed all the better to others (1 Tim 3:15).

2. A THEMATIC STUDY OF THE ROLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN EPHESIANS

2.1. A GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN MISSIONS IN EPHESIANS

The word πνεῦμα specifically refers to the Holy Spirit twelve times in the letter to the Ephesians (cf. Fee; 1994:660). In one further occurrence (4:23) it is used to refer to the human spirit as it is renewed by the Holy Spirit. In Ephesians 1:3 and 5:19 the term πνευματικός is used as an adjective for the Spirit (Eph. 1:3; 5:19).

2.1.1. The Holy Spirit as promise and seal (Ephesians 1: 13b-14)

The first reference in the letter to the Holy Spirit is in Ephesians 1:13, where the Holy Spirit is called the “Holy Spirit of the promise” (τῷ πνεύματι τῆς ἐπαγγελίας τῷ ἁγίῳ). The genitive τῆς ἐπαγγελίας is to be understood as adjectival and refers to “*the promised Holy Spirit*”. The “*promise of the Spirit*” has a dual reference.

- First it refers to the Holy Spirit that was promised by Jesus to his apostles before his ascension (Acts 1:8) and was poured out on his church at the Pentecost (Acts 2:4). Thereby the apostles were empowered to speak about the great deeds of God to all the nations in Jerusalem in their own tongue (Acts 2:6-11). So revelation-historically speaking the promised Holy Spirit was directly related to the mission to the nations. The promise of the Holy Spirit as gift of the last days reaches back into the Old Testament (cf. Ezek 36:26-27; 37:14; Joel 2:28), which brings us to the second reference of the promise of the Spirit.
- Secondly the “promise of the Spirit” is a reference to the fulfilment of the promise made to Abraham (cf. Gal. 3:14). It is the Holy Spirit as the fulfilment of the “*promise*” that includes Gentiles among the people of God that is echoed in Ephesians 1:13-14. Furthermore the role of the Spirit is significant in the mission of God as the Holy Spirit is the crucial element of the promised new covenant with Israel,

and has been received by the Gentiles as they are equally sealed as God's possession in the new eschatological age (cf. Fee; 1995:671).

Therefore the apostle writes explicitly in Ephesians 1:13 that the church is "sealed by the Holy Spirit". The socio-historical background of the seal was that a document was often sealed to make sure that it arrives unopened (intact) at its destination. This use of a seal is used metaphorically in Ephesians 1:13 to say that the Holy Spirit, as received by the believers, will indeed arrive at their promised destination. This destination would certainly have an eschatological sense, but within the missional context of the covenant, it also means that the Holy Spirit as indwelling power in the church will make sure that the church arrives at the destination that God has for them in this age, i.e. the missional task of making known the mystery of the gospel to the world.

So in the light of Ephesians 1:13 the role of the Holy Spirit in missions can be described as the indwelling power in the church that ensures that the church will arrive at their God-given missional purpose of proclaiming the gospel to the world. As God's promise to his church the Holy Spirit also links the missional task of the church to God's covenantal promise in the Old Testament that his blessings to Abraham will also reach all the nations of the earth. So the role of the Holy Spirit in missions includes that the Spirit is the guarantee that God's plan from the beginning, as set forth in his covenant of grace to Abraham, will be brought to fulfilment in the New Testament era, and that through the church as his instrument.

2.1.2. The Holy Spirit enlightens and reveals (Ephesians 1:17-20; 3:5)

The Holy Spirit has a key role in the prayer. In Ephesians 1:17 Paul prays for the believers in Ephesus that the Father will give them "the Spirit of wisdom and revelation" (πνεῦμα σοφίας καὶ ἀποκαλύψεως). The prayer is not for God to grant them the Spirit as such (cf. Fee; 1994:674) but for the Spirit to enlighten their hearts. The emphasis in Ephesians 1:17 is on the Spirit who grants wisdom and revelation of God and his ways. The emphasis may either be to know God more fully and so be assured of their future hope or to experience the power available to them in the present. It is the Holy Spirit who will enlighten their eyes to understand what Jesus Christ has done for them (Eph 1:18-19).

That the enlightenment by the Holy Spirit has a definite missional purpose comes forward in Ephesians 3:5, where Paul says that "the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to men in other generations has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets". And then Paul continues to say that as apostle he has received the task to proclaim to the Gentiles this mystery that was hidden through the ages (Eph 3:8). The language of "the Spirit of wisdom and revelation" or "the Spirit of the wisdom and the revelation" is language that derives directly from Isaiah 11:2 where the Spirit who is to rest on the Messiah is further described as "the Spirit who grants wisdom and understanding" (cf. Fee; 1994:675). So according

to God's plan-from-the-beginning (οικονομία) the role of the Holy Spirit in the mission is to reveal the mystery of the gospel to the apostles so that they could preach it to the nations, and thereupon to enlighten the minds of the believers so that they can understand the richness of the gospel, the gospel that they in turn have to make known to the world.

2.1.3. The Holy Spirit as power behind the missional task of the church (Ephesians 3:1-13; 16; 6:17-20)

In Ephesians 3:7 Paul writes that he has become a servant of the gospel (i.e. received the task of missions) "according to the gift of God's grace which was given me by the working of his power" (κατὰ τὴν ἐνέργειαν τῆς δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ). The terms δύναμις and ἐνέργεια are specific expressions for God's might. "There is nothing else in the corpus quite like this especially high concentration of power terminology" (Fee; 1994:678). The power terms in Ephesians 3:7 is in line with the power language and the power that was manifested in the resurrection of Jesus Christ (cf. Eph 1:19). Paul himself is a servant of the gospel as a result of "*the grace that has been given to him,*" which is made effective by the empowering of the Holy Spirit. That the power that is worked by God is the power of the Holy Spirit, is made clear in Ephesians 3:16: "I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit (δυνάμει κραταιωθῆναι διὰ τοῦ πνεύματος) in your inner being." It is through the effective power of the Holy Spirit that Paul's ministry and mission has been successful.

Paul uses almost identical language as in Col 1:29, "in keeping with the working of his power". "The expression points to his ever-present consciousness that day by day "the operation of his power," is the fulfilment of his missionary calling" (O'Brien; 1993:15). The terms ἐνέργεια and δύναμις has in view the ongoing mighty activity of God. The focus in Colossians 1:29 is not only on God's powerful working in grace to commission Paul (cf. O'Brien; 1993:15). "It was not only in God's initial call but also in the subsequent enabling that he knew of the divine power operating mightily within him" (O'Brien; 1993:15).

The almost identical language in Ephesians 3:7 indicates that Paul does not have in mind his own commission but the continual mighty operation of the divine power of God working effectively in him.

Paul "gave practical effect to the divine plan made known to him by revelation" (Bruce; 1984:317).

The Holy Spirit as power behind the mission of the church is acknowledged in a special way in Paul's exhortation in Ephesians 6:18-20 that the believers in Ephesus should pray in the Spirit. It is a prayer for all the saints and especially for Paul, but more noteworthy is the contents of the prayer. They have to pray that "words may be given me (i.e. to Paul) so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel."

Once again the phrase *mystery of the gospel* is used, a phrase that throughout the letter has a missional intention. And now in this prayer the Holy Spirit is acknowledged as the power behind the missional task, a power that works in two ways.

- First, the Spirit provides the boldness to speak fearlessly. This boldness is required in all mission work, for working within a hostile environment and preaching to people who are by nature not willing to accept the message that is preached, called for a boldness that supersedes all human abilities.
- Secondly, the Spirit provides the words that the apostle has to speak. This does not imply that a missionary can take up his task without any preparation, simply relying on the Spirit to implant the needed words impromptu in his human spirit whenever the time comes. Of course the Spirit can work in this way, and sometimes it happens that way. But the prayer includes the work of missions as it should happen in the normal flow of events, which means that the Spirit will guide the evangelist in his preparation for the message from the Bible that he plans to preach.

2.1.4. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit as uniting power in the church (Eph 2:14-22; 4:3-4)

In Ephesians 4:3 Paul urges the recipients “to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.” Thereby is implied that the Holy Spirit is the power that unites the believers in the church. What is only implied in Ephesians 4:3-4, is made more explicit in Ephesians 2:14-22, where it is said that in Christ both Jews and Gentiles are united in one body, which is reconciled with God through Christ’s death at the cross (2:16). The fact that Jewish and Gentile believers are united into one body, as discussed at length in Chapters 2 and 4 above, is undoubtedly part of the mission strategy that Paul sets forth in the Ephesians’ letter. And being united in one body both Jews and Gentiles share in one Spirit, and through the one Spirit both have access to the Father (Eph 2:18). So the Holy Spirit is the uniting power that enables the church to enter into God’s presence as the one body of Christ.

In Ephesians 2:20-22 the unity of the church is portrayed by the metaphor of a building that is erected, a building that becomes a holy temple in the Lord, “a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit” (Eph 2:22). The indwelling of God by his Spirit gives to this “building” its temple character, once linked to covenantal *Immanuel*-promise of the Old Testament – God is with us, dwelling in us through his Spirit.

The temple in both Testaments is central to the eschatological hope. Although the believers have already come to the heavenly temple (Eph 2:5-6), they are to exercise Christ dominion over all the earth. The temple is in the entire world wherever the Spirit of Christ goes and builds the temple by the preaching of the gospel (cf. Goldsworthy; 2002:13). It is the Holy Spirit who has brought about unity and who unites believers of diverse backgrounds, ethnicities, sex and race together to form a holy temple, a community where the Holy Spirit dwells (Eph 2:21-22).

2.1.5. The Filling of the Spirit and a new life of witness to the world (Eph 4:17 – 5:19)

In Ephesians 5:18 Paul exhorts the believers in Ephesus to “be filled with the Spirit” (πληροῦσθε ἐν πνεύματι). The words “full” and “filled” refer to the control of the Holy Spirit over the believer (cf. Wuest; 1942:103). The Holy Spirit controls or guides the mind and heart of the believer to be able to proclaim the gospel. In Ephesians 5:18 we have the verb followed by the instrumental case, which latter case designates that by means of which the action in the verb is performed. The use of the instrumental case means that the Holy Spirit controls the actions and life of the believer. The believer who is indwelt by the Spirit allows¹⁹⁸ himself to be controlled by the Spirit.

When one compares Eph 5:18 with Col 3:16 in which Paul also speaks about psalms, hymns and spiritual songs but includes wisdom, teaching and admonishing in the list as ways of ministering to one another, he uses the word *logos*. This passage may shed light in Eph 5:18 and what Paul meant by being filled in the Spirit. The filling in the Spirit can be explained as letting the Word of God dwell richly in a person. We must never divide the word and the Spirit as if they operate in different spheres” (Vaughan; 2003:126). The Word of God is the “sword of the Spirit” (Eph 6:17) and the filling of the Spirit takes place through dwelling richly on the Word of God. It is wrong conception “that the believer must empty his heart of sin and self and live a separated life in order that the Holy Spirit can fill his heart” (Wuest; 1942:116).

Paul’s exhortation to be filled by the Spirit receives a deeper dimension when read within the wider context of which Ephesians 5:18. The context is the ethical life of the Christian. In the immediately preceding verses Paul exhorts his audience: “Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is” (Eph 5:15-17). The exhortation to make use of every opportunity” in these “evil times” relates to the missional task of the believers within the pagan society where they lived and by saying that they should be careful how they live, Paul exhorts them to lead a life that can be a living witness to the pagan society within which they lives.

The role of the Holy Spirit in the context is related to the indwelling of Christ (Eph 4:17). In Paul’s writings that the two phrases, “in Spirit” and “in Christ” are equivalent (Vos, 1930:166). It is through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit that the presence of Jesus Christ is experienced. By the Holy Spirit in them the believers are changed to become the people of God in the world, so as to reflect the glory of God. A clear distinction has to be made between Jesus Christ, the object who is bright in and off himself (that is to say, the source of brightness or radiance) and individual believers, objects, who are bright because they reflect light from the source, Jesus Christ (cf. Eph 5:8). The brightness and radiance is related to the transformational power of the Holy Spirit that dwells in the believers and is at work in the inward man, so

¹⁹⁸ The passive is a permissive passive and is best translated by “allow” or “permit”. It is supported by the imperative of the verb *pleroo* indicating that it is an exhortation to allow the Holy Spirit to control.

that they are recreated to become new persons “after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness” (Eph 4:24). The ethical exhortations are a demonstration of the existence of the new way of life in the believer and community.

The ways in which the “new” is different from the “old” is set out in *seriatim* fashion in a variety of ways, negatively and positively (not/but). A clear contrast is made between the old way of life, Ephesians 4:17-19 and the new way of life, Ephesians 4:25-32 empowered and made possible by the transformation of the inner self, conversion, Ephesians 4:20-24. The focus in Ephesians 4:25-32 is for the believer and community to live in such a way to reveal what they have become. The indwelling of Holy Spirit affects human social relations as believers are seen as ‘one body’ and a ‘holy temple’ whereby each member has a part to play in its strengthening and growth (Eph 2:19-22; cf. Eph 3:17-18) and minister to outsiders. It is the Holy Spirit that makes possible for the individual believer to experience Christ’s indwelling presence and radiate his presence to the world. The emphasis in the context is ultimately upon Jesus Christ’s love being present in the believers and the love of Christ radiating through the believers to the world. And this witness to the world, once again, is part of God’s plan for the church’s mission to the world.

The filling of the Spirit should also be seen within the context of the entire letter to the Ephesians. In Ephesians 1:23 the church is called “the fullness of him who fills everything in every way”. The filling of the Spirit in Ephesians is so that the believers can know God (Eph 3:18-19) and to equip the community to minister to one another (Eph 4:12-13). Each person has received a filling by the Spirit for the benefit of others in the church (Eph 4:14-16) (cf. Roberts; 2003:129). The focus in Ephesians is also upon the Holy Spirit’s function and role in the church to equip the church as a body, the body of Christ, for evangelism and mission outside the church (Eph 5:8-20; 6:15). The believers are empowered by the Holy Spirit (Eph 1:3, 13; 1:17-19; 2:18, 22; 3:16-19) for the work to which God has called them.

2.2. SUMMARY OF THE ROLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT WITHIN THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

In Ephesians there are several terms which refer to the function of the Holy Spirit. The word “filling” (Eph 3:19; 4:10; 5:18) is used in connection with the ministry of the Spirit. The work of the Holy Spirit is indicated by the word “operation” (Eph 1:19-20; 3:7; 4:16; Col 1:29; 1 Co 12:6) and the word “power” (Eph 1:19; 3:20; 6:10). It is the Spirit who “enlightens” the mind of the believer (Eph 1:18) and reveals to him “the hope of his calling” and “the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the Saints” (Eph 1:18). The Headship of Jesus Christ over the Church is administered through the Spirit who enables Jesus Christ to function as “Head over all things for the church” (Eph 1:22). The Holy Spirit fills the Body, the Church, with the presence of Jesus Christ (Eph 1:23). The Holy Spirit is the source of worship causing the believers

to praise God with their hearts directed to the Lord (Eph 5:19). The Holy Spirit connects the Church to its Head, Jesus Christ as a husband is connected to his wife (Eph 5:23-25). It is the Spirit who cleanses the church and purifies her, that He, Jesus Christ, might present the church to Himself glorious, not having spot or wrinkle or any such things (Eph 5:26-27). Prayer and petition is made through the Spirit (Eph 6:18). In Ephesians the emphasis is upon the empowering and equipping role of the Spirit (Eph 1:19-21; 3:16-19; 6:10-12) to live a gospel lifestyle (Eph 4:25-5:7) and to proclaim the gospel through the quality of interpersonal relationships (Eph 5:21-6:9). The Spirit equips the Apostle Paul to proclaim the gospel (Eph 3:7) not only to the nations (Eph 3:8) but also to equip the church, to fulfil its call, the call to proclaim the gospel in the presence of the spiritual beings and principalities in the heavenly realms who carefully observe the Church (Eph 3:10), the church has both an active and passive role. It is the role of Paul “to make plain to everyone the administration of the mystery” (Eph 3:9).

It is the Holy Spirit as “power of God” (Eph 3:16, 20) that enables the church to be what she is called to be. The believers individually and in relation to a corporate body are strengthened with power through God’s Spirit in the inner man (Eph 3:20) for a specific purpose, to be witnesses of the grace of God, the blessing of Jesus Christ and the riches of his glory. It is within the missional context of the epistle that the “power of God” (Eph 3:20) is to be interpreted. In other words, the Holy Spirit works within the believer to carry out God’s mission and that working is always according to the working of the power in the believer for which Paul prayed. “Therefore, even if God were to do far beyond that for which Paul prayed, he would still do so by the working of his Spirit in the power of the hearts of believers, and the increased working would itself lead to a deepened realization of the object of prayer, the divine glory” (Roels; 1962:174-175).

3. CONCLUSION

3.1. CORINTHIANS

In 1 Corinthians the execution of the οἰκονομία of God, God’s programme, is conferred upon Paul. In Ephesians the task of οἰκονομία is not given a new meaning but the relationship to God’s planned economy is developed. The meaning of οἰκονομία in Ephesians is thus not a new meaning but a development in terms of a mission strategy. This is so because the οἰκονομία in fact has its origin with God himself. This perspective is provided by the apostle in the first chapter of Ephesians, in Ephesians 1:10, where he speaks of God’s work in Christ εἰς οἰκονομίαν τοῦ πληρώματος τῶν καιρῶν. So Paul basically uses the word οἰκονομία with reference to a divine activity— Gods “administration” (NET), his “plan” (RSV) that He “puts into effect” (NIV). And when Paul thereupon says that he received a οἰκονομία from God, he does not say that he took over God’s work. What he is saying, is that God gave this task and responsibility to him as part of the execution of his divine plan-from-the-beginning.

A conclusion from the comparison of Corinthians and Ephesians is that it is evident that the οἰκονομία Paul received from God, was not the entire οἰκονομία of God's plan for mankind and the creation (cf. Eph 1:10). Paul received one specific part of or role within God's entire οἰκονομία – that of taking the gospel to the Gentiles. That this was the specific commission entrusted to Paul, is suggested in Ephesians 1:2-8 and confirmed by 1 Corinthians 9:15-23. There is a development in the concept of οἰκονομία in terms of a task which was committed exclusively to Paul in 1 Corinthians and extended to include the Church and all believers in the task of οἰκονομία (Eph 3).

3.2. COLOSSIANS

Paul communicates the obligation he has to proclaim the mystery of Christ that was once hidden but now has been openly revealed in Ephesians 3:2-6. The idea that Ephesians develops further the ideas found in the content of the letter to the Colossians supports the hypothesis that the purpose of Ephesians is missional. It is supported by Johnson (2013:327) who writes that “Ephesians lifts the local concerns found in Colossians into a reflection on the nature and mission of the church which is the fullest and most mature in the Pauline collection”. In conclusion, in Colossians 1:24-29 we find a missional reflection which is developed in its fullest and mature sense in Ephesians.

3.3. THE PASTORAL EPISTLES

3.3.1. 1 Timothy

The term οἰκονομία in the first Timothy refers to the organization and ordering of a household (cf. Towner; 2006:112). In the Pastoral Epistles it has the meaning of the management of the household so that the gospel can be proclaimed. The concept of οἰκονομία undergoes a development from 1 Corinthians to Colossians and culminates in Ephesians. The term is used more broadly in first Timothy in that the author links the internal and external tasks of the Church together. The task of οἰκονομία in 1 Timothy includes an inward and outward dimension, the pastoral office and a missional witness. The Church examines people for church ministry and the offices of deacon and elder or pastor and in 1 Timothy and it is to Timothy to whom the task of οἰκονομία, is given.

3.3.2. Titus

The term οἰκονομία is not used in Titus as it is in Ephesians and the pastoral epistles of Timothy for the proclamation of the task of the spread of the gospel, the way in which Paul uses it. The term οἰκονομία is used in the sense that Luke did. In Titus it is thus used for the effective management of the Church rather than the management of the spread of the gospel.

3.3.3. Empowered for the task of missions by the Holy Spirit

In Ephesians the emphasis is upon the empowering and equipping role of the Spirit (Eph 1:19-21; 3:16-19; 6:10-12) to live a gospel lifestyle (Eph 4:25-5:7) and to proclaim the gospel through the quality of interpersonal relationships (Eph 5:21-6:9). The Spirit equips the Apostle Paul to proclaim the gospel (Eph 3:7) not only to the nations (Eph 3:8) but also to equip the church, to fulfil its call, the call to proclaim the gospel in the presence of the spiritual beings and principalities in the heavenly realms who carefully observe the Church (Eph 3:10), the church has both an active and passive role. It is the role of Paul “to make plain to everyone the administration of the mystery” (Eph 3:9).

It is the Holy Spirit as “power of God” (Eph 3:16, 20) that enables the church to be what she is called to be. The believers individually and in relation to a corporate body are strengthened with power through God’s Spirit in the inner man (Eph 3:20) for a specific purpose, to be witnesses of the grace of God, the blessing of Jesus Christ and the riches of his glory. It is within the missional context of the epistle that the “power of God” (Eph 3:20) is to be interpreted.

CHAPTER 7:

THE MISSION STRATEGY OF PAUL IN EPHESIANS

There is no agreement about the purpose of the letter, even if there is considerable unanimity among them about the significant themes in the letter. In order to establish the purpose of the letter the significant themes have been identified, the purpose for each of these themes has been established and the unified purpose of the letter has been derived. The central purpose of the letter has been found by identifying the central ideas and relating them together to arrive at the purpose of the letter. The exegetical evidence indicates that the Church itself as organism and institution is not the purpose of the letter. The Church has a role in God's plan of redemption, which is the main purpose in the letter (Eph 1:22-23; 2:21-22; 3:10-11; 20-21; 4:16; 5:25-27; 29-30; 32; 6:12). In order to avoid separating the function and role of the church from its structure and self-identity we need to speak about a "missionary ecclesiology" (cf. Van Engen; 1996:105) rather than simply identifying an ecclesiology in the letter. The emphasis on the proper growth and effective functioning of the body supports the formulation of ministry and missions as the central purpose of the letter. Unity and maturity are essential for the body of Christ to function effectively (Eph 4:1-16). The letter to the Ephesians is about the proper functioning of the Church in society. It precedes the structure of the Church that is developed in the Pastoral Epistles.

1. THE PURPOSE OF EPHESIANS

The proposals that have been made about a purpose of the letter have assumed that the letter address a specific problem. The purpose of the letter, however, is not dependent upon identifying a specific problem within the community. One should avoid speculating about a specific problem where no such problem is specifically stated or implied. The author's intention is not to be found in the identification of a problem or a specific false teaching. The identification of concrete problems would have to be dismissed if the letter were a circular letter. The central purpose of the letter is found by identifying the central ideas and relating them together to arrive at its purpose. Unity is a subsidiary purpose of God's plan of redemption in the letter. It has been suggested that cosmic reconciliation and the return to cosmic harmony is a central teaching in the letter. Cosmic reconciliation and unity in Christ is part of the setting of the letter and has to be distinguished from the central purpose of the letter. The letter to the Ephesians contains comparatively more references to the Spirit than any other Pauline letter, but the work of the Holy Spirit serves the purpose of the letter. In Ephesians there are no spiritual crises, refutation of a Gnostic influence within the church and baptism motif. It has been suggested that the central idea of the letter is "the summing up of all things in Christ" when the times will have reached their fulfilment (Eph 1:10) (O'Brien; 1999:30). He relates "summing up of all things in Christ" to the two spheres, earth and heaven, and identifies Ephesians

3:9-10 as a key passage in God's salvation plan (cf. O'Brien; 1999:63). The central purpose of the letter is God's plan of redemption, a plan that consists of different phases. Each of these phases of the plan is a profound mystery and is revealed and fulfilled one after the other in the fullness of time. In Ephesians different aspects of the *oikonomia* of God is worked out in which the mystery is the content (Eph 1:9-10; 3:3-4; 5:32; 6:19). The *oikonomia* of God has to be read against the background of the letter.

The author of Ephesians uses a Jewish prayer, *the berakah*, to write to a Church of Jewish and Gentile Christians. The significance of using a Jewish prayer formula is that the author communicates that the blessing that was traditionally a blessing exclusively for Jews who belonged to the nation of Israel, has been extended to include the nations. The author addresses the exclusivity of the Jewish worldview by purposefully choosing a traditional Jewish blessing. It is part of the author's missional strategy that confronted religious exclusivity that created a division between believers in the Church. The author makes use of pronouns to transform the exclusivity into an inclusivity that demonstrates the transforming power and presence of Jesus Christ.

The "we/you" passages in the letter; the unique Jewish-Gentile composition of the letter audience, has definite implications for how certain other words and phrases, that refer to the audience, should be understood in this letter. The central idea of the letter has to be read against the context of the Jews and Gentiles as a single body of Jesus Christ, the Church. The author's intention is to communicate to the Jewish believers that the Gentile Christians were equally part of God's plan and that this plan was determined by God before the creation of the world. It gave to God great pleasure to work out his plan of redemption in which both Jew and Gentile, Israel and the nations, were part of his plan. The Jews had, for a long time conceived of themselves as the solely elect people of God and the centre of God's plan. This resulted in a worldview in which the Jews believed that they were the exclusively favoured children of God. The author addresses this exclusive worldview and indicates that it is Jew and Gentile, us, who have been favoured in the beloved one, Jesus Christ (1:6). God has "be graced" Jew and Gentile with grace and indicates that the Jewish Christians were not the exclusive recipients of the grace of God. It demonstrates the abundance of the grace of God. The grace of God has been lavished upon Jew and Gentile (1:8). The mystery that is revealed is that God's purpose was that all wisdom and understanding be lavished upon Jew and Gentile (1:9). It is this that gave to God great pleasure. The unity of Jew and Gentile in the Church is part of the *oikonomia* of God, "to sum up all things in Christ". The unity of Jew and Gentile indicates that exclusive ethnicity has been transcended in the *oikonomia* of God and that ethnic boundaries are no longer an obstacle to unity, but a demonstration of unity, God's plan of uniting all things in Christ which is concretely revealed and worked out. The means by which ethnic and other boundaries are overcome is through the preaching of the gospel (1:13-14). The gospel has transforming power and it is the means by which the boundary that separates people from one another is overcome. It is through the preaching of the

good news that those who believe in Christ have been sealed with the Holy Spirit and have become an inheritance of God, the possession of God and that the boundaries to unity are overcome.

2. THE JEW AND GENTILE RELATIONSHIP

It has been suggested that Ephesians might have multiple purposes. The letter to the Ephesians was specifically to the Church of Ephesus as it would be un-characteristic of Paul not to communicate with a church which he nurtured for a period of 2½ years (Ac 19:8, 10). At the same time this does not exclude the probability that it was a circular letter. Paul may have intended that the letter be circulated also to the Colossians, Hierapolis and Laodicea (Col 4:13-17). There is no evidence of a crisis arising from persecution. The letter for this reason does not address spiritual or major crises as it is affecting several congregations simultaneously. It would exclude the possibility of spiritual crises. There is no indication that the author attempted to bring stability to the Christian community implying that there is a crisis in the community. The background of the letter is the protection of Jewish self-identity and way of life in a community of Jew and Gentile believers in which there was a large number of Gentile converts. The perceived threat of cultural assimilation of Jewish believers into a Gentile Christian community resulted in a counter reaction by the Jewish Christians. The result was that the Jewish Christians embraced markers of Jewish identity, observable in Ephesians. It is not the threat of the disappearance of national Israel and the temple cult following 70 AD but cultural assimilation that is the background of the letter. The emphasis on unity in the letter is in order to overcome the cultural divide in the community. Paul's approach to unify Jew and Gentile was to unite them in a common cause, the proclamation of the gospel. It is in working towards the common goal of the proclamation of the gospel to outsiders that internal differences would be downplayed. Paul's mission strategy served the purpose of creating an internal cohesion in the Church.

The author develops the theme of unity further in the letter. He expands upon the unity that God has brought about in 2:11-13. This unity is based upon salvation (2:1-10), a transformation of the individual by means of which he/she has become part of the people of God. He exhorts the Jewish and Gentile Christians by a nuanced communication to the Jewish believers that the special status, privileges and rights of the Jews as God's chosen nation and people has been superseded by a new community, the Church. The Church is a community in which there is no longer room for distinctions based upon ethnicity. In the past the exhortation to "remember" gave to Israel a unified narrative and self-identity. The author calls the Church to a new remembrance, a remembrance which, unlike the Exodus, which was a key historical narrative that shaped Israel's identity, shapes the identity of the new covenant people of God. The Church is to remember what Jesus Christ has accomplished. The distinction between Israel and the nations was maintained by the Law, the Torah (2:15), which in Jesus Christ has been fulfilled. The hostility that existed between Jew and Gentile has been removed in Jesus Christ. The hostility was part of Israel's maintenance

of its identity. The existence of hostility is evidence that what Christ has accomplished had not truly been conceived and appropriated. In the past the Jews believed that they had a special exclusive access to God which no longer exists. The Jew and Gentile, Israel and the nations, now have equal access to God through the one spirit, the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit given to Israel and poured out upon the nations who gives equal access to God in the present dispensation or age (1:17-18). It is specifically Jewish Christians that Paul has in view because he uses language from Isaiah to depict that the spatial separation between Jew and Gentile has been removed, the categories of “far off” to depict the Gentiles and “near” to depict the Jews, have been removed. The conclusion of the author is that the distinction between “strangers” and “aliens” no longer exists and instead Jew and Gentile, the elect out of Israel and the nations, are “fellow citizens” of God (2:19). It is not merely all of Israel but the elect from Israel who, together with the elect from the nations, are together the citizens of the household of God, the Church (2:19; 1Ti 3:16). In the Old Testament that foundation for a nation was laid by the prophets, Paul begins to lay the foundation in Ephesians for the household of God. Paul begins to rebuild the whole structure by which the elect are to relate to God’s world, creation and society. The Jew and Gentile were to conceive of themselves as belonging to a spiritual structure, no longer merely the outward structure of a visible temple but to a transformed structure united by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit dwells in the relational space between the members of the new community and the presence of God is among the members of the Church and the basis for inner transformation by means of which society is transformed.

The author of Ephesians may either be speaking about the Gentiles from the perspective of a Jew or it may indicate that there was a large contingent of Jewish believers in the audience and/or a Jewish leadership of the Church. The author used expressions and language that had Jewish overtones which only a Jewish Christian would have been able to recognize and identify as drawing upon the Old Testament as a source. Although it may be that the author is reflecting from his Jewish background, culture and understanding, thus revealing his own Jewish identity and presuppositions. But it is more probable that he wrote with a Jewish audience in mind. The author makes use of a rhetorical strategy as literary technique to address the Gentile audience (Eph 1:13-14; 2:11-13, 19, 22; 3:1; 4:17-19) which seems redundant unless of course the actual intended audience were Jewish Christians to whom he deemed it necessary to give an account of his mission to the Gentiles (Eph 3:6, 7-9). Paul makes use of this kind of indirect approach elsewhere in his letters (2Co 8:1-4). So it seems that, although he is explicitly addressing the Gentile believers in the church, the author is actually implicitly speaking to the Jewish believers. The survey of the historical data leads to the conclusion that it is very probable that Paul achieved a large following among many Jews in Ephesus (cf. Strelan; 2004:2) and that a significant segment of the congregation was Jewish. The tendency has been to see the audience as predominately, Gentile but this does not accord with the style, rhetorical strategy, background and purpose of the letter. The frequency with which Old Testament texts were explicitly used

in Ephesians and the appearance of issues related to a Jewish worldview, such as the Torah in a key passage of Ephesians support this conclusion (e.g. Eph 2:13-17; 5:31; 6:2). But yet the author draws upon the Mosaic Torah in Ephesians 6:2, “*Honour your father and mother*” (Ex 20:12), which he indicates is a preeminent commandment which raises the question, “If the author is not opposed to Jewish cultural and religious symbols what is his purpose?”. He connects the commandment with an exhortation to fathers which has its origins in the responsibility of the Jewish father for the children in typical Jewish families (Safari & Stern; 1974-76:vol. 2:796). The demographics of the community in Ephesus were that it was a community with a strongly Jewish character. The community consisted of a large number of Jews and Gentiles, but there was no one ethnic group that exercised dominance over another.

The data from the letter to the Ephesians and other canonical writings, as considered above, gives good reason to conclude that the apostle Paul with this letter had in mind an audience of believers of whom many were from a Jewish ethnic background as well as a significant number of former Jewish proselytes or God-fearing Gentiles. However, he clearly distinguishes between his Jewish and Gentile audience. On first sight it seems as if he is addressing the Gentiles, but, he is actually addressing the Jews. As a type of rhetorical device, the author writes as if the audience he is addressing were Gentile, but the implied audience is the Jewish believers to whom he deems it necessary to give an account of his mission to the Gentiles (Eph 3:6, 7-9). So it seems that, although explicitly addressing Gentile believers in the church, the author is implicitly speaking to Jewish believers and correcting their misconceptions and their misunderstanding of God’s plan for the redemption of the nations.

Taking into account some relevant archaeological evidence it is highly probable that at the time when Paul wrote his letter the believers in Ephesus used to meet in separate house-gatherings, and only occasionally all the believers in Ephesus would come together for special purposes. However, Paul probably did not have any specific house gathering in mind as the audience of his letter, but intended the letter to be read to believers from all the house-gatherings. Therefore, it can be accepted that the letter was meant to be read at such a special occasion, where all the believers in Ephesus could be the audience of Paul’s letter.

3. EPHESIANS 1-3

The plan of God consists of different phases. Each of these phases of the plan is a profound mystery and is revealed and fulfilled one after the other in the fullness of time. The central idea is the execution of God plan which is executed according to the will and good pleasure of God (Eph 1:11) and climaxes in that all things will be united under Jesus Christ as Head in his body so that harmony will be restored in the cosmos again (Eph 1:20-23). In Ephesians 3 the particular phase of God’s plan places the Pauline mission at centre

stage. The Pauline Churches are expected to do their part to spread the Gospel (3:8-10) within their sphere of influence and this is the second phase of God's plan. It is God's plan of action for executing his purpose with respect to mankind and the cosmos that Paul has been given a responsibility to practically administer. But Paul does not have the full revelation of the mystery of God's will and purpose and is therefore only responsible for the part of the plan entrusted to him by God. The Church and his co-workers also have a role to play in the practical working out of God's plan because to them God has also entrusted a responsibility. Paul's own mission to the Gentiles becomes the mission of the Church. The mission that was given to Israel becomes the mission of the Church and the nations are called to be united to the Church to form the universal Church of Jesus Christ. The inclusion of the nations, every ethnic group, in the Church demonstrates the multi-coloured and rich wisdom of God (3:10). The incorporation of all ethnic groups into the Church is part of the administration, working out, of God's plan (1:10), a plan that was part of God's eternal, unchanging, purpose (3:11). The completion of the plan is dependent upon God who works out his plan his eternal plan throughout the ages. In the present age of grace (Eph 2:1-10) Paul is given the task of *oikonomia* to make known a fuller revelation of the mystery of God, the mystery that the nations are equal heirs with Israel in the promise made in Jesus Christ through the gospel. The nation or ethnic groups are included in the promise through the preaching of the gospel to the various nations and ethnic groups. In the working out of the plan (*oikonomia*) of God, He has chosen to make use of Paul, Jewish and Gentile Christians, the Church, in the fulfilment of the mission to the nations. The means through which God's plan is accomplished is by the preaching of the mystery of the gospel. It is through the proclamation of the Gospel that the mystery, all the treasures of the wisdom and knowledge of Christ, the riches of Christ, are revealed. The working out of God's plan requires a certain type of leadership, leadership that can be typified as servant missionary leadership which the term *oikonomos*, the office of the management of the spread of the gospel, implied in the task of *oikonomia* given to Paul has in view. For this task Paul has received the gift of the grace of God which functions through the working of the power of the Holy Spirit (3:8). Paul considered it his task to enlighten all men as to what is the *oikonomia* ("stewardship") of the mystery (3:9).

4. EPHESIANS 4-6

The plan of God plan is realized through the church and every believer (3:10; 4:1-5:20). Every believer has received a call (Eph 4:1-3) and this call is part of the execution of the plan of God.

The church has gifts, certain persons are given to the church to function in one of these areas of gifting to equip the believers to use their gifts (Eph 4:11) in the practical working out of the *oikonomia* of God. The building up of the body of Christ has two dimensions, the building up in terms of internal growth and maturity and the building out in terms of growth by the adding of the elect to the body of Christ. The work

of the Saints includes both the internal and external spheres. The “work of ministry”, ἔργον δωροφορία, “is not only part of the teaching process within the Church, but every believer has a role in the dispensing of the word, to dispenses heavenly knowledge outside of the Church (Eph 3:7; Col 1:7, 23, 25). The overall purpose of Ephesians 4:1-16 is to extend the work of the ministry to all believers. The Saints have received the same riches of the grace of God given to the Apostle Paul to be able to minister the grace of God.

4.1. TRANSFORMATION

In Ephesians 4:7-5:20 the purposes of God are worked out through transformation, transformation of relationships, the self, and the old self to the new self, and culture. Jesus Christ is the focal point, not simply the means, the instrument, or the functionary through whom transformation takes place (cf. O’Brien; 1999:112). The ultimate purpose of God’s plan as worked out in 4:17-5:20 is to make the believers conscious of the way they live their lives, because it is through their ethical lifestyles that they lead those outside the body to faith and certainty. The grace of God is the basis for the ethical and moral transformation in Ephesians 4:17-5:20 (cf. Eph 4:20-21). The transformation is worked out in ethnic relations (Jew and Gentile), marriage relations (husband and wife), family relations (father and children), social relations (master and slave-employer and employee), gender relations (male and female), and ultimately in cosmic relations (heaven and earth). The transformation in these spheres is as a result of the transformation of the identity of the believer (Eph 4:22-24). Paul’s mission strategy by the believer begins with inner transformation (Eph 4:22-25) which transforms social relationships and social structures.

The missional strategy of Paul was to develop an organic type of leadership which was not based upon hierarchy, but a relation of equality. This type of leadership is expressed concisely as, “Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ” (Eph 5:21) which is a maxim that governs the subsequent pericope, Ephesians 5:20-6:9. The social relationships the Christian is part of are transformed are by means of exemplary relationships within the household (Eph 5:21-6:9).

The socio-relationships that are addressed in Ephesians are the marriage relationship, the relationship between the father as head of the household and his children and economic socio-structures. The transformation of socio-structures (Eph 5:20-6:9) is a pericope that gives insight into the spiritual struggles that lay behind transformation (Eph 6:10-20). The task of *oikonomia* that was assigned to the Church in 3:9-10 is related to the spreading of the gospel by the saints (6:15), prayer for the ministry and mission of the saints (6:18) and prayer for Paul’s own ministry and mission work (6:19).

The conclusion of the exegesis of Ephesians 1-6 can be summed up as Paul's own *oikonomia* (Eph 3:2) is the working out of the *oikonomia* of God (Eph 1:10). It can be concluded that "Paul's own mission was intimately related to the saving purposes of God in which the gospel of the Lord was central" (O'Brien; 1993:139). The *oikonomia* of Paul (Eph 3:2) is worked out in the *oikonomia* of the Church (Eph 3:9) so that it is the *oikonomia* of God that is ultimately worked out in the Church of Ephesus. It is the universal Church that is in view in Ephesians and so it is the body of Christ that continues to be involved in the *oikonomia* of God, eternal plan of redemption of God by the proclamation of the gospel. The household as a structure of the Church (Eph 5:21-6:9) and finally the individual members of the Church are the nuts and bolts in the working out of the *oikonomia* of God. They are involved in the working out of God's eternal plan of redemption and therefore the offices in the church are given the task to equip them (Eph 4:1-16). In the working out of the plan of God through the Church the powers of darkness resist the proclamation of the Word (Eph 6:10-20). The importance of Ephesians for missions is that it stands in a continuum with the great commission entrusted by God to his disciples (Mt 28:18-20) and practically sets out the task that has been given by Jesus Christ to the Church through Paul. In this way God's gracious plan is worked out.

5. OIKONOMIA, THE CHURCH AND THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE MISSION STRATEGY WITHIN THE EPHESIANS' LETTER

5.1. Corinthians

In 1 Corinthians the execution of the *oikonomia* of God, God's programme, is conferred upon Paul. In Ephesians the task of *oikonomia* is not given a new meaning but the relationship to God's planned economy is developed. The meaning of *oikonomia* in Ephesians is thus not a new meaning but a development in terms of a mission strategy. This is so because the *oikonomia* in fact has its origin with God himself. This perspective is provided by the apostle in the first chapter of Ephesians, in Ephesians 1:10, where he speaks of God's work in Christ *εἰς οἰκονομίαν τοῦ πληρώματος τῶν καιρῶν*. So Paul basically uses the word *oikonomia* with reference to a divine activity—Gods "administration" (NET), his "plan" (RSV) that He "puts into effect" (NIV). And when Paul thereupon says that he received a *oikonomia* from God, he does not say that he took over God's work. What he is saying, is that God gave this task and responsibility to him as part of the execution of his divine plan-from-the-beginning.

A conclusion from the comparison of Corinthians and Ephesians is that it is evident that the *oikonomia* Paul received from God, was not the entire *oikonomia* of God's plan for mankind and the creation (cf. Eph 1:10). Paul received one specific part of or role within God's entire *oikonomia* – that of taking the gospel to the Gentiles. That this was the specific commission entrusted to Paul, is suggested in Ephesians 1:2-8 and

confirmed by 1 Corinthians 9:15-23. There is a development in the concept of οἰκονομία in terms of a task which was committed exclusively to Paul in 1 Corinthians and extended to include the Church and all believers in the task of οἰκονομία (Eph 3).

5.2. COLOSSIANS

Paul communicates the obligation he has to proclaim the mystery of Christ that was once hidden but now has been openly revealed in Ephesians 3:2-6. The idea that Ephesians develops further the ideas found in the content of the letter to the Colossians supports the hypothesis that the purpose of Ephesians is missional. It is supported by Johnson (2013:327) who writes that “Ephesians lifts the local concerns found in Colossians into a reflection on the nature and mission of the church which is the fullest and most mature in the Pauline collection”. In conclusion, in Colossians 1:24-29 we find a missional reflection which is developed in its fullest and mature sense in Ephesians.

5.3. THE PASTORAL EPISTLES

5.3.1. 1 Timothy

The term οἰκονομία in the first Timothy refers to the organization and ordering of a household (cf. Towner; 2006:112). In the Pastoral Epistles it has the meaning of the management of the household so that the gospel can be proclaimed. The concept of οἰκονομία undergoes a development from 1 Corinthians to Colossians and culminates in Ephesians. The term is used more broadly in first Timothy in that the author links the internal and external tasks of the Church together. The task of οἰκονομία in 1 Timothy includes an inward and outward dimension, the pastoral office and a missional witness. The Church examines people for church ministry and the offices of deacon and elder or pastor and in 1 Timothy and it is to Timothy to whom the task of οἰκονομία, is given.

5.3.2. Titus

The term οἰκονομία is not used in Titus as it is in Ephesians and the pastoral epistles of Timothy for the proclamation of the task of the spread of the gospel, the way in which Paul uses it. The term οἰκονομία is used in the sense that Luke did. In Titus it is thus used for the effective management of the Church rather than the management of the spread of the gospel.

5.3.3. Empowered for the task of missions by the Holy Spirit

In Ephesians the emphasis is upon the empowering and equipping role of the Spirit (Eph 1:19-21; 3:16-19; 6:10-12) to live a gospel lifestyle (Eph 4:25-5:7) and to proclaim the gospel through the quality of interpersonal relationships (Eph 5:21-6:9). The Spirit equips the Apostle Paul to proclaim the gospel (Eph 3:7) not only to the nations (Eph 3:8) but also to equip the church, to fulfil its call, the call to proclaim the gospel in the presence of the spiritual beings and principalities in the heavenly realms who carefully observe the Church (Eph 3:10), the church has both an active and passive role. It is the role of Paul “to make plain to everyone the administration of the mystery” (Eph 3:9).

It is the Holy Spirit as “power of God” (Eph 3:16, 20) that enables the church to be what she is called to be. The believers individually and in relation to a corporate body are strengthened with power through God’s Spirit in the inner man (Eph 3:20) for a specific purpose, to be witnesses of the grace of God, the blessing of Jesus Christ and the riches of his glory. It is within the missional context of the epistle that the “power of God” (Eph 3:20) is to be interpreted.

5.3.4. In relation to the Old Testament

The author uses the Old Testament in Ephesians to demonstrate that the mission to the nations was prophesied in Isaiah. The Jewish Christians would have identified and recognized Paul’s use of Isaiah in Ephesians. The theme of missions is discernable in the quotations, allusion and echoes of Isaiah which were specifically directed at the Jewish Christians. The implied knowledge of Isaiah and the Old Testament by the readers indicates that it is specifically the Jewish concept of missions to the Gentile nations that the author addresses.

6. FINAL CONCLUSION AND RELEVANCE OF STUDY

The apostolic responsibility given by God to Paul is committed by him to the Church. The Church is instrumental in the plan of God and has been given the task to proclaim the gospel to the nations. The task of the proclamation of the gospel to the nations is the apostolic responsibility of the Church and every believer individually. The following phases have been identified in the commitment of the gospel to the Church:

- The first “phase” of his οἰκονομία was given to Paul and the apostles for the ministry (διακόνια) of making known to the world this mystery of God’s grace in Christ (Eph 3:2-7). Paul’s special assignment was to take the gospel to the Gentiles (Eph 3:8).
- The second “phase” was that those to whom the apostles had made known the mystery, i.e. the church, in turn had and has to continue to make known this mystery to all the world (Eph 3:10-13).

- The third “phase” is that the οἰκονομία given to Paul was committed by him to the next generation of leaders such as Timothy (1 Ti 1:3-5).
- The forth “phase” is that the οἰκονομία given to these Church leaders is committed to elders to oversee (Tit 1:7).
- And finally the task of οἰκονομία was to be believers called to proclaim the gospel to outsiders.
- I would like to suggest that the term *oikonomos* fulfilled the function of indicating the first missionary Church leaders, such as Timothy but also individual believers in the early Church who were called to proclaim of the gospel to the nations such as Apollos, Prisca and Aquila, Lydia and others. The task of the *oikonomos* was related to the announcing of the gospel to the outsiders.

The Church is an organism with individual members spread in diverse walks of life. God has placed each individual believer in a specific place for the purpose of communicating the mystery of God and the task of οἰκονομία. Paul’s strategy which was part of God’s plan was that all believers should be equipped to be what God intended them to be. Individual believers have been given gifts which are to be used to share the transforming grace of Jesus Christ with others. If the Church and each believer individually have been rooted in the love of Christ and have grasped what is the breadth, length, height and depth of Jesus Christ’s love, a love that surpasses knowledge, and to the extent that they are filled to the fullness of God they will testify to the greatness of God’s love. The use of the term οἰκονομία in association with missionary terms in the New Testament and specifically Ephesians indicates tht the taks of οἰκονομία involved the proclamation of the mystery of the gospel to outsiders. Those who fulfil the task of the proclamation of the gospel to outsiders as a vocation maybe called an *oikonomos*. These individuals may but often did not occupy an office in the Church, such as Apollos, Prisca and Aquila and other that qualified them to proclaim the gospel to outsiders. This implies that the apostle Paul was the father of missions.

In conclusion, mission is bound up with God’s οἰκονομία, his saving plan, which moves from creation to new creation. The saving plan of God frames the entire Bible. It is Gods salvation reaching every nation, tribe and tongue and the Church is part of the gracious movement of God. Every believer is a steward of God and entrusted with the gospel and required to manage his talents and time for the furtherance of the gospel. For this task God strengthens the believer by grace and like Paul, he or she experiences the depths of God’s grace. The structure of the Church exists to serves the stewardship of the gospel, inside and outside.

The thesis has established an exegetical basis for the concept of stewardship of the gospel which in a further study can be contextualized for the African, Eastern and Western contexts to allow for indigenous

praxis and reflection. The stewardship of the gospel and Paul's missionary strategy has to be examined in terms of the phenomena of globalization, communalization, ecologization and politicization.

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