

**PAUL'S APPROACH TO THE
CULTURAL CONFLICT IN CORINTH:
A SOCIO – HISTORICAL STUDY**

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BA; Hons BA; BTh

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Paul's approach to the cultural conflict in Corinth: A Socio-historical study.

Abstract: *This dissertation aims at studying underlying cultural conflicts in Corinth and Paul's approach thereto. Firstly, the cultural underlays in the congregation of Corinth are revisited, with special reference to the presence of Greeks, Romans and Jews in the congregation which came into being there. This theme is explored by studying the meaning of culture, the archaeological data, as well as Biblical data and other historical data regarding these cultures and Corinth. Furthermore attention is given to the way in which these three cultures were reflected in Paul's own background. In conclusion Paul's approach to the conflict is delineated in terms of positive and negative renderings of the concept "becoming a slave to fellow humans". Special focus is given to 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 as a key pericope in this regard. The deduction made in this dissertation is that Paul disregards his own cultural heritage and makes himself a slave to people on behalf of winning people for Christ, without allowing people (or cultural groups) to rule him as masters.*

Keywords: *Paul, Corinth, cross-cultural, inter-cultural, Jews, Greeks, Romans, slavery, self-enslavement, cultural conflict, kenosis.*

Paulus se benadering tot interkulturele konflik in Korinte: 'n Sosio-Historiese studie

Opsomming: *Hierdie verhandeling poog om die onderliggende kulturele konflikte in Korinte en Paulus se benadering daartoe te ondersoek. Hierdie tema word ondersoek deur die betekenis van kultuur, die argeologiese data, sowel as Bybelse en ander historiese data aangaande hierdie kulture en Korinte te bestudeer. In die eerste deel van die verhandeling word die kulturele onderbou van die gemeente in Korinte ondersoek, met spesiale verwysing na die teenwoordigheid van Grieke, Romeine en Jode in die gemeente wat daar tot stand gekom het. Verder word daar ook aandag gegee aan die wyse waarop hierdie drie kulture in Paulus se eie agtergrond gereflekteer word. Ten slotte word Paulus se benadering tot hierdie konflik nader gedefinieer in terme van Paulus se positiewe en negatiewe verwysings na die begrip "om 'n slaaf van mense te wees". In hierdie opsig word spesiale aandag aan 1 Korintiërs 9:19-23 gegee. Die resultaat van hierdie navorsing toon aan dat Paulus sy persoonlike kultuurerfenis ter syde stel om sodoende soveel mense moontlik vir Christus te wen, sonder dat hy toelaat dat mense (of kulturele groepe) as (slawe-)eienaars hom regeer.*

Sleutelwoorde: *Paulus, Korinte, kruis-kultureel, interkultureel, Jode, Grieke, Romeine, slawerny, kulturele konflik, kenosis.*

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

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1.1 CONTEXT

Though structural unity between the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa (DRCSA), the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa (URCSA), the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa (DRCA) and the Reformed Church in Africa (RCA) currently receives growing attention in Southern Africa, little attention is given to how existing multi-cultural churches are functioning on root-level. Hendriks, in a ground-breaking work, *Studying congregations in Africa* (2004), succeeded in creating awareness for the lack of scientific research on this topic.

On the other hand the existence of multi-cultural congregations (consisting of members from African and Western contexts) within the broader Dutch Reformed family has often been overlooked.¹ The Dutch Reformed Church in Botswana (DRCB) is an example where believers from different cultures are members of the same local congregation.²

These congregations consist out of large contingents of local Batswana, as well as smaller entities of Coloureds and White Afrikaners. A growing number of expatriates from Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe are also joining the DRCB. In this context research concerning the way that different cultures in a congregation relate to one another is very important.

Though the work of Hendriks made a substantial contribution to the study of modern congregations in a multi-cultural context, a detailed investigation into the Biblical foundation for such a scenario is still lacking. In discussing Scripture and tradition, he concludes:

"Theology in Africa must be able to read the Christian faith tradition in the light of its present realities and then discern what God requires of it" (Hendriks, 2004:29).

¹ Multicultural congregations of this nature is "less common" (Hendriks 2004:92).

² Stoltz (2001:177-202) describes the complex cultural composition of the DRCB and its local congregations in detail.

Though originating from a White Afrikaner family, I (as a pastor who has been involved spiritually with believers from African as well as Western contexts for more than ten years) view myself as able to contribute positively to the plight of the energetic and evolving Christian church in Africa. Therefore the aim of this study is to probe into the early Christian Church for evidence of cultural interaction. Such a study could serve as a framework, not only for a theological approach to multi-cultural congregations, but could also provide practical guidelines for pastors caught up between vastly different cultural worlds.³

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

In the current New Testament research Paul's treatment of his readers' cultural context is still an area of contention.⁴ Though vast research has been done on the field of socio-historical context of the New Testament, it has not always been reconciled and/or integrated with Biblical contents in an extensive way (Van Rensburg 2000:564-582).

For the purpose of this study the congregation in Corinth is chosen, for the following reasons: The letters to the Corinthians are generally accepted as authentic Pauline letters, and are part of the first corpus of Christian letters available to us.⁵ These letters (especially 1 Corinthians) also deal with practical questions concerning the congregation. This makes it easier to make deductions about the cultural context than in the other Pauline letters, which are of a more theoretical and abstract nature (Horseley 1998:22; Winter 2003:154).

In the past half-century research mainly focused on the social diversity and conflict within the congregation of Corinth. Whilst Theissen (1982:145-174) argues that social factors played a major role in the conflict in Corinth, Meggitt in his book *Paul, Poverty and Survival* (1998) regards the differences in the Corinth congregation as being more of a personal nature between members in the congregations without social roots. It is clear that the origin and nature of this conflict is not yet totally resolved.

Though this problem has been re-visited again by researchers like Henderson (2002:195-208) and Theissen himself (2003:371-391), it still seems that sociological studies mainly focus on the relevance of the social composition of the first century audience for the text in question, and not on the role of culture as a more inclusive, encompassing entity (Banda, 2004:2). Winter (2003:154) also argues that the role of the social and cultural composition in the congregation of Corinth in their conflicts was "blurred" by the form-critical approach to the text.

In a strong contextual approach to 1 Corinthians, Banda reads this letter from the perspective of African culture. Though very relevant, even this study is still one-dimensional in its approach to culture in Corinth. The Bible text is approached from the perspective of the Chewa culture. The true value of cultural-oriented studies comes to the surface when the dynamics of foreign cultures meeting, are being investigated.⁶ Van der Walt (2001:24) aptly states:

"Culture is our "frame of reference" for human thought and conduct. We are hardly aware of it. It is like the air we breathe; like water in which fish lives; we are

³ For the scope of this dissertation a detailed study of the present-day context of the Christian as well as the implications for the modern context of the Christian will not be addressed extensively. The intention is rather to provide foundational research for such a study.

⁴ The outcome of the 2005 NTSSA annual meeting, *Paul and morality: Can Paul be rescued?*, supports the suggestion that huge differences still exist in research on this matter. Some of the papers delivered at this seminar, for instance *Halakah in the letters of Paul?* (Wessels 2005:1-12), indicates that Paul's relation to Judaism is still very much at the centre of the current debate.

⁵ Barton (2003:1315) and Thiselton (2000:29-32) confirm that placing both letters between 50-60AD is generally accepted.

⁶ Nye (2000:427) states that describing culture as a fixed and rigid entity is not acceptable anymore. Culture must be defined and described as a process of "culturing". The aim of this study is to explore the dynamics of cultural mobility and interaction.

'programmed' by our own culture. We only become aware of our culture when something goes awry or when we encounter people of another culture."

This statement could probably also be applied to the person of Paul. Though a Roman Citizen coming from a Greek-oriented city called Tarsis, he was sent to Jerusalem to study at the feet of Gamaliel (Ac 22:3). Well educated in Jewish law, he became a Pharisee and a persecutor of Christians (Ac 22:4,5; Ac 23:6). But after his conversion God appointed him as apostle to the Gentiles (Ac 9:15). Though Paul pursued this call with fervour, he was working side by side with Jews in the Diaspora, especially by using the synagogue as departure point in numerous cases (Ac 9:20; Ac 13:5; Ac 13:14; Ac 17:1). Paul often encountered serious opposition from Jewish Christians for the way that he disregarded the Jewish law in dealing with the Gentiles (Ac 18:13-15; Ac 21:28).

Paul was therefore often made very aware of his cultural frame of reference. In more than one instance it is clear that he had to deal with Jewish Christians as well as Gentiles of Greco-Roman descent that converted to Christianity. On the one hand he is very adamant that Christians should not enslave themselves to the sexual practices of the heathens (1 Cor 6:12) or to the Jewish Christians themselves (1 Cor 7:23) and their prescriptions. Likewise the believers are even exhorted not even to associate or to eat with the immoral, the greedy, the swindlers and the idolators in the congregation (1 Cor 5:9-13).

On the other hand Paul is mentioning that he made himself a slave to all (1 Cor 9:19), and he presents himself and his co-workers as slaves of the believers (2 Cor 4:5).⁷ Paul's attitude of submitting himself as a slave is also used as an exhortation to others. In 1 Corinthians 10:23, 31-32 he also commands everybody to act not to their own benefit, but to the benefit of others. 1 Corinthians 8:7-13 also has the implication that the Christian's freedom is not without limits, but that he has to serve the interests of his weaker brothers when it comes to the eating of idol meat.

In discussing Paul and his approach to different cultures, as well as the adherence to Jewish tradition, Den Heyer (2000:149) expresses this paradox very clearly:

"Paul was evidently not ashamed of appearing to be a chameleon. He had the capacity to adapt himself relatively easily to other circumstances. He could do so because he was a 'man of two worlds', a Diaspora Jew who knew the Graeco-Roman world, but had also enjoyed instruction in Jerusalem from the influential Pharisaic scriptural scholar Gamaliel."

It is therefore clear that this facet of the person and work of Paul still presents a challenge. Where does Paul really fit in? On whose side is he?

The main problem is: **How did Paul endeavour to achieve "unity" amongst believers from cultural diverse contexts?**

The following questions are considered in the research:

1. What is the current state of research on Paul's approach to the conflicts amongst the believers in Corinth?
2. Who were the main cultural groups in Corinth?
3. What contribution does to the Bible make on cultural interaction?
4. What role did the cultural contexts of the Corinthians play in their reaction to the various problems in the congregation?
5. What was the cultural context of the apostle Paul?

⁷ Although the NIV translates the latter with "servants", the Greek refers to *δούλους*. Louw & Nida (1988) makes a clear distinction between *δούλος* and *διάκονος* and all subsequent derivatives, as being under different domains. Harris (1999:45) also argues convincingly for the preservation of "slavery" language for the New Testament.

6. How does Paul approach the cultural pluralism within Corinth?
7. What are the implications of this study for the present-day multi-cultural context of the Dutch Reformed Church in Botswana?

1.3 AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this study is to establish the way in which cultural diversity influenced the congregation in Corinth, and how the apostle Paul, as a "man of two worlds"⁸ himself, approached this congregation and its problems in coping with cultural diversity. The study seeks to ascertain Paul's handling of the cultural diversity within this apparently difficult congregation.

Specific objectives of the study are the following:

1. To gain an understanding of Paul's approach to the conflict in Corinth.
2. To determine the context and beliefs of the main cultural groups in Corinth.
3. To ascertain how the different cultural groups in Corinth handled the problems in the congregation.
4. To explore cultural interaction from a Biblical perspective.
5. To construct the personal cultural context of the apostle Paul.
6. To determine Paul's approach to the cultural pluralism within Corinth.
7. To derive practical implications for the present-day ministry in the multi-cultural context of the Dutch Reformed Church in Botswana.

1.4 CENTRAL THEORETICAL ARGUMENT

The central theological argument of this dissertation is that Paul responds to the battle of cultural supremacy in the congregation of Corinth in a unique way. He degrades himself to the lowest position within societal ranks, i.e. by voluntarily becoming a slave to everyone. This act of degradation is much more "all encompassing" than just normal "service".

1.5 METHOD OF RESEARCH

This New Testament study is undertaken from within the Reformed tradition. The study is done mainly within the framework of a socio-historical approach to the New Testament.⁹ This approach takes into account not only available data from the historical sources, but views the data as interwoven with the specific text, with relevance for modern day readers (Joubert 1994:35-37).

This methodology is applied to the specific objectives in the following way:

1. To gain an understanding of Paul's approach to the conflict in Corinth the research attempts an overview of the *Wirkungsgeschichte* amongst New Testament scholars in this regard. Information on the Corinthian conflict, and Paul's responses to this conflict are drawn from relevant exegetical and historical studies, as well as biographies on the life of Paul.

⁸ Cf. the title of Den Heyer's publication, "*Paul: A Man of Two Worlds.*"

⁹ To provide a full picture of the *Wirkungsgeschichte*, attention will also be given to New Testament scholars with pure sociological approaches, eg. Theissen. De Klerk & van Rensburg (2005:55) refers to the method I am employing as a "socio-scientific enriched socio-historical approach".

2. To determine the context and beliefs of the main cultural groups in Corinth relevant contextual studies, archaeological data, as well as socio-historical and socio-scientific studies are utilized.
3. To explore cultural interaction from a Biblical perspective references to cultural interaction are discussed, with special attention to the revelation-historical place and function of Scripture portions.
4. To ascertain how the different cultural groups in Corinth handled the different problems in the congregation, special attention is given to relevant passages in Scripture which illustrate the interaction between culture and text. The references to this topic within Scripture are addressed together with their revelation-historical significance. Step 11 of the reformed exegetical model of De Klerk & Van Rensburg (2005:77-86) is used.
5. To construct the personal cultural context of the apostle Paul, Biblical information concerning Paul as a product of two cultures is studied.¹⁰ Special attention is given to recent developments in New Testament studies concerning Paul's approach to his ministry in general and his rhetorical style.
6. To determine Paul's approach to the cultural pluralism within Corinth, attention is given to Paul's theology, with specific reference to suffering and slavery. The relevant exegesis is done according to the grammatical-historical method, utilizing the steps proposed by (De Klerk & Van Rensburg, 2005). The relevant meaning of *δοῦλος* and its derivatives (in the *loci* discussed in 1.2) is established by utilizing the Greek-English lexicon of Louw & Nida (1988). Theological dictionaries as well as the work of Harris (1999), *Slave of Christ*, are be utilized.
7. To derive practical implications for the ministry in the multi-cultural context of the Dutch Reformed Church in Botswana, the results of the work done for 1-6 above are processed through analysis and synthesis. The desired product is a constructed model of Paul's approach to the problem of different cultural beliefs and attitudes amongst his Christian believers. This model can serve as a theoretical basis for present-day pastors ministering to multi-cultural congregations.

1.6 BREAKDOWN OF CHAPTERS

1. Introduction
2. The *Wirkungsgeschichte* of Paul's approach to the conflict in Corinth
3. The context and beliefs of the main cultural groups in Corinth
4. The Bible on cultural interaction
5. The influence of the culture of groups in Corinth on the various conflicts
6. Personal background of the apostle Paul
7. Paul's approach to cultural pluralism in Corinth
8. Implications for the ministry of the Dutch Reformed Church in Botswana
9. Conclusion
10. Bibliography

¹⁰ On the person of Paul, no other historical information is available (Den Heyer, 2000:11).

2. To determine the context and details of the main cultural groups in Corinth relevant contextual studies, archaeological data, as well as socio-historical and socio-scientific studies are utilized.
3. To explore cultural interaction from a biblical perspective reference to cultural interaction are discussed with special attention to the tension-historical place and function of Scripture portions.
4. To ascertain how the different cultural groups in Corinth handled the different problems in the congregation, special attention is given to relevant passages in Scripture which illustrate the interaction between culture and text. The references to the topic within Scripture are addressed together with their exegetical-historical significance. Step 11 of the reformulated exegetical model of De Klerk & Van Rensburg (2005:77-87) is used.
5. To conduct the personal cultural context of the apostle Paul. Biblical information concerning Paul as a product of two cultures is studied. Special attention is given to recent developments in New Testament studies concerning Paul's approach to his minority in general and his Hellenistic style.
6. To determine Paul's approach to the cultural conflict in Corinth. Attention is given to Paul's theology, with special reference to suffering and slavery. The relevant exegesis is done according to the genealogical-historical method, utilizing the steps proposed by De Klerk & Van Rensburg (2005). The relevant meaning of *malice* and its derivatives (in the text discussed in 1.2) is ascertained by utilizing the Greek-English lexicon of Louw & Nida (1988). Theological disciplines as well as the work of Harris (1988), 'Slaves of Christ', are utilized.
7. To derive practical implications for the minority in the multi-cultural context of the Dutch Reformed Church in Botswana. The results of the work done for 1-6 above are processed through analysis and synthesis. The desired product is a contextualized model of Paul's approach to the problem of different cultures, beliefs and attitudes amongst his Christian believers. This model can serve as a theoretical base for present-day pastors ministering to multi-cultural congregations.

1.6 BREAKDOWN OF CHAPTERS

1. Introduction
2. The Ntshungwechwe of Paul's approach to the conflict in Corinth
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On the person of Paul, no other historical information is available (Den Hartog, 2000:11)

CHAPTER 2

THE WIRKUNGSGESCHICHTE OF

PAUL'S APPROACH TO THE CONFLICT IN CORINTH:

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2.1 INTRODUCTION

Over the course of the second half of the 20th century a tremendous amount has been written about Paul.¹¹ These works however, mainly focused upon Paul's theology. This in turn, led to letters like Romans and Galatians receiving a lot of attention, whilst the letters to Corinth received less attention due to their fragmentary and less coherent nature.¹²

Nevertheless, Paul's life and work in the congregations, as well as his missionary approach did receive ample attention.¹³ With the emergence of the socio-historical and socio-scientific approaches in the 1980's, there was a resurgence of the interest in the context of Early Christianity and Paul's influence on the early Christian church.¹⁴ Although the problem of Paul's position regarding the law has often been revisited from theological and rhetorical perspectives¹⁵, Paul's approach to the adherers of the law and the new non-Jewish converts came into the spotlight with the emergence of socio-historical studies.

This chapter aspires to highlight a few of the past approaches to the way in which Paul dealt with cultural tension (focused on the congregation in Corinth), as well as the current state of research on the problem. Special attention is given to the use of Biblical sources, the composition of the Corinthian congregation, and the current views on the reason for the conflict in Corinth.

¹¹ Some of the major works on Paul would include those of Bornkamm (1971), Sanders (1977), Ridderbos (1978), and Dunn (1998).

¹² The letters to the Romans and Galatians were much more susceptible to theological interpretation than 1 Corinthians, which contains "issues that arose in the life of a certain community at a certain point toward the beginning of its development..." (Horsely 1988:22). Martin (1986:xli-xlvi) clearly showed that there is no consensus amongst scholars concerning the structure of 2 Corinthians.

¹³ Already in 1956 Allen focused on the approach of Paul to missions in general in his book, "*Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or ours?*". Cf. also Bornkamm (1969); Sanders (1990); Den Heyer (1998) as other contributions in this field.

¹⁴ Cf. Theissen (1982), Meeks (1986), Stambauch and Balch (1986).

¹⁵ Cf. Cheung (1999:17). The thesis of Loubser (2005) is witness to the continuing debate.

2.2 BIBLICAL SOURCES FOR STUDYING PAULINE CHRISTIANITY

In the study of the Pauline corpus it is important to note that the authenticity of quite a few of the traditionally accepted Pauline letters has been questioned. This process led to a general acceptance that the books of Romans, 1&2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians and Philemon was written or dictated by Paul in person.¹⁶

It is also important to note the general acceptance that the letters to the congregation in Corinth which we possess were not the only letters written to them. After planting the church in Corinth, Paul proceeded to Ephesus, from where he wrote his first letter to the Corinthians; this letter is now lost.¹⁷ The second letter to the Corinthians is the letter we know as 1 Corinthians. A third letter, Paul refers to as a letter which he wrote under tears,¹⁸ is also not in our possession. The fourth letter of Paul is the letter we know today as 2 Corinthians.¹⁹

A further problem arises in the use of the book of Acts as a source of information and context for studying the Pauline epistles.²⁰ The reason for this reluctance to use Acts as a source is amongst others that Acts was written by Luke, who had other aims in mind. Furthermore, there are some chronological differences between Acts and the Pauline epistles.²¹ Apart from the differences mentioned above, Sanders (1990:8-9) even doubts that Paul ever studied in Jerusalem under Gamaliel, and that he actually was a persecutor there before his conversion.

For the purpose of this study information that is given by the book of Acts cannot be ignored. The majority of scholars accept Luke as the author of Acts, as well as a companion of Paul during at least some of his missionary journeys (Den Heyer 1998:22). Therefore Acts is used in the study for the valuable information it provides for the context of the Corinthian congregation and the early church at large. It is, however, be treated with the necessary circumspection, keeping in mind that it is a secondary source.

2.3 COMPOSITION AND IDENTITY OF THE CONGREGATION IN CORINTH

Much has been written over the years concerning the origin of the conflict in Corinth, as well as the groups involved therein.²² Therefore an overview in this regard is essential.

2.3.1 Culture as a framework for interpreting divisions within Corinth

Regarding the main cultural groups that were resident in Corinth, there is little difference of opinion amongst New Testament scholars. Most scholars agree that the city of Corinth was inhabited mainly by Romans (after the city has been rebuilt by Caesar in 44 BC), local Greeks, and with Corinth being a cosmopolitan city, groups from other countries.²³ One distinct group in Corinth was the Diaspora Jews, who had their own synagogue, and retained a degree of separation from other groups due to their adherence to Judaism.

¹⁶ Den Heyer (1998:14-18) provides us with a detailed explanation for this choice.

¹⁷ 1 Cor 5:9: "I have written to you in my letter not to ..." (NIV) is referring to this letter.

¹⁸ In 2 Cor 2:4 and 2 Cor 7:8 Paul refers to the letter that he wrote "with tears". This is probably an indication that 1 Corinthians was not received favorably in the Corinthian congregation. At his visit after this letter he was also humiliated before the congregation (Martin 1986:xxxiv).

¹⁹ There are also a theory that the first letter could have been 2 Cor 6:14-7:1, whilst the third letter may be partly preserved in 2 Cor 10-14. Cf. Martin (1986:xxxiv) for a detailed chronological description.

²⁰ The questioning of the historicity of data in Acts dates far back. Cf. Deissmann (1912:24).

²¹ The reason for the questioning of Act's historicity is different versions of Paul's itinerary after his conversion (Ac 9:31 vs. Gal 1:17), and his visit to Jerusalem (Ac 9:29-30). The letters of Paul does not only lack a reference to visiting Jerusalem, but Paul himself states in Gal 1:21-22 that he is not known by sight to the churches of Christ in Judea.

²² Cf. Groenewald (1967:12-13); Grosheide (1953:14); Martin (1986:xix-xxi); Stambauch & Balch (1986:157-160); and most recently Button (2003:11-17).

²³ Cf. Chapter 3 for a detailed discussion of these groups.

The composition of the congregation in Corinth, and the divisions within the congregation, has been much debated. Baur and the Tübingen-school initially viewed the partisanships in 1 Corinthians 1:12 to be of a cultural nature. He followed the principles of Hegel and assessed the divisions in terms of a thesis (the Christian Jews supporting Peter and Christ) versus the antithesis (the Gentile Christians supporting Paul and Apollos). According to Baur, the Roman Catholic church would eventually bring about the synthesis and unify the two groups).²⁴

This view has been dismissed largely by scholars due to the fact that four groups are mentioned, and that it is only in Galatians 2:11-14 that Peter and Paul is shown to have serious differences. According to Grosheide (1953:37), the leaders never tried to attract followers for themselves, but the congregants themselves favoured one leader above another. Despite the objections of Grosheide, the relevance of Galatians 2:11-14 should not just be ignored. Although there is no textual evidence as support, it must be asked whether Peter, or for that matter James and the delegation from Jerusalem could have visited the congregation in Corinth at some stage (which could have promoted adherence to food laws).

This movement away from interpreting the schisms in the Corinthian congregation as a cultural one, was noticed by Allen (1956:26-35). Although Allen accepts the rendering of Acts, that Paul always started out his preaching activity in the synagogue, he concludes that Paul's preaching in the synagogue was unsuccessful, since only some godfearers from the Gentiles accepted Christ. The response of the Jews in Corinth to Paul's ministry (according to Allen) was altogether negative.

This argument is taken a step further by Sanders (1991:19-21) who argues that Paul probably did not preach in the synagogues at all. The main reason for this radical statement is the lack of reference to preaching in synagogues and opposition from the Jews in Paul's letters. He reasons that Paul used the *agora* and his workplace to promote the gospel. If this line of argumentation is followed, the question still remains: "Who are the *weak* that opposes the eating of idol meat?"

A solution to this problem was raised by Ziesler (1990). He argues that Paul's opponents may have been Judaizing Christians who were not Jews at all. According to him, it is quite possible that his opponents were *Gentile*²⁵ Christians who had begun to explore their adopted heritage and found there greater emphasis on keeping the Torah which they now proposed to import into the church. They probably distorted it, and made it what it had not been in Judaism, a prerequisite for salvation (Ziesler 1990:106).

By rendering Acts as an unreliable historical source, as well as suggesting the absence of Christians from Jewish origin from the Early Christian congregations, some scholars attempted to solve some of the chronological anomalies between the book of Acts and the Pauline epistles. This, however, created a new paradigm²⁶ with its own set of problems: Could the divisions in the congregation of Corinth be explained without taking into consideration the cultural diversity in the congregation? Would this imply that there were only two divisions, between the rich and the poor, or the important and the unimportant? Would these remaining categories, for instance, suffice in qualifying the "weak" and the "strong" in 1 Corinthians 8-10?

²⁴ Cf. Grosheide (1965) on this issue. He does however mention that there still remained some adherents to Baur's point of view (Grosheide 1965:33-37).

²⁵ The author's own italics.

²⁶ I propose here that the interpretation of the divisions and conflict in the Corinthian letters has undergone a paradigm shift, according to the theory posed by Kuhn (1970).

2.3.2 The socio-political, socio-economic and socio-ecological composition of society as interpreting principle for the divisions in Corinth

During the emergence of socio-historical interpretation of the text, scholars interpreted the divisions in Corinth as being a division of class. Initially the concept class also included cultural aspects.²⁷ Around the late 1970's scholars such as Theissen (1978:31-95) began to distinguish clearly between socio-political, socio-economical, socio-ecological and socio-cultural factors. Since a socio-cultural reading of the problem in Corinth was ruled out, interpretations of the divisions in the congregation were made, utilizing the other mentioned factors.

Especially in the light of 1 Corinthians 1:26-28, the Corinthian congregation was viewed not only as a congregation originating mostly from the lower socio-political and socio-economical strata of the society, but that there were some members from higher levels of society (Theissen 1978:116; Meeks 1986:133).

The phrase τοὺς μὴ ἔχοντας as a indication of the "have not's" or poor, which were denied sharing in the communal meals (1 Corinthians 11:17-34), have been the object of much debate (Meggit, 1998:118). Traditionally the phrase was accepted as meaning the have nots, the poor.²⁸ Fee (1987:534) recons the implied object of the phrase to be "houses". This would mean that the rich (with houses of their own) facilitated the meetings, and adds to the view that the conflict was of socio-economic nature.

Although Theissen (1983:148) does not directly take the phrase τοὺς μὴ ἔχοντας as an indication for the poor, he interprets the object of the phrase to be "bread". He refers to the habit of the first-century elite to hand out different portions of food to people to accentuate their status. Therefore his interpretation leads to the assumption that this phrase is an indication of people with a different socio-political status.

These views were challenged by the 1998 book by Meggit, *Paul Poverty and survival*. In this controversial publication he poses the view that socio-economic, or socio-political status was not an issue in the congregation of Corinth. According to Meggit (1998:122) there is no evidence to make any deductions from a socio-historical point of view from the passage in question. He argues that Paul as well as the congregants came from the lower strata of society, and that there is no evidence of social tension in the congregation. He also argues that the meal referred to here is referring to the Eucharist, rather than a communal meal (Meggit 1998:179).

Meggit's proposal was soon to be challenged by Henderson (2002:195-208), who accentuated the meal as an informal meal for the promotion of unity in the congregation. Theissen (2003:371-391) also answered this attack on his own theories with an article where he reiterated the social underlays of the community, referring to the fact that only the rich had access to the meat markets.

At the end of this *apologia*, Theissen (2003:391) makes a remark that is very relevant for this study. He places 1 Corinthians 11 in the context of 1 Corinthians 8-10 by interpreting verse 34 in the following way:

"It is possible that these factors are also present in the background of other conflicts. In any event, Paul tries to solve these conflicts by a certain pragmatism, which takes into account not only the real distribution of power and influence, but also the norms of a group with its ethos and equality. His management of these conflicts is not cynical. He tries to privatise the conflicts concerning meals: everybody should eat enough to be filled at home, but within the congregation there should be equality! Anyone may eat in private rooms meat that is sacrificed, but it must not be a part of a ritual to the gods. In public refutation of idolatry should be unmistakable."

²⁷ Cf. Allen (1956:26-35) discusses the cultural situation in the Early Church under the heading of class.

²⁸ This phrase has been traditionally interpreted as referring to poor (Grosheide 1953:268; Pop 1965:248; Groenewald 1967:147).

The issues raised by Theissen are very important for understanding the divisions and the underlying reasons in Corinth. The reference to Christians eating meat that was sacrificed in private, but not in public, is an important lead to the fact that the nature of conflict in this passage as related to 1 Corinthians 8-10 needs to be investigated.²⁹

2.3.3 The “weak” and the “strong” in 1 Corinthians 8-10

It has already been shown that most of the major works on Paul focus on theological and rhetorical aspects, rather than socio-historical data.³⁰ This is also true of the interpretation of this passage, especially because it touches the issue of the law. Recently, however, a few noteworthy works on the concrete, historical issues present in this section have been published.

Although continuing with the thesis presented by Theissen (1983:148), Martin (1990) focuses on the weak as the target of Paul’s main missionary activity in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23. He surprisingly ignores the Jews, those under the law, and those without the law, to proceed to Paul’s accommodation of the “weak”. Martin (1990:119) sees the “weak” as the socially “low” or underprivileged, whilst the strong would be the minority with a “high” status in social and economic ranks.

Although confirming again the lack of unity in scholarship about the Paul’s approach on this issue, Cheung’s answer on the question of the identity of the “weak”, is noteworthy. Not only does he (1999:124-125) refute the idea that the “weak” are just a rhetorical ploy invented by Paul himself, but he also finds an explanation that the “weak” may be Jewish Christians unacceptable in the light of 1 Corinthians 8:7. This verse refers to the “weak” as believers that were “until now accustomed to the idol”, and therefore, according to Cheung (1999:124), excludes Jewish Christians. He also comes to the conclusion that the “weak” does not refer to social status, but to cognition. In his words: “The ‘weak’ are those who are intellectually and/or morally immature” (Cheung, 1999:125).

Given the central nature of these chapters in the book, and the great possibility that differences regarding eating habits could spark conflict, it is strange that Cheung (1999:124) would regard the “weak” and the “strong” not as parties within the congregation, but only as weak individuals whose salvation is in jeopardy. It is also probable that this conflict have at least some contribution from Jewish origin, in the light of the recurrent reference to the Jews and those under the law in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23, all the references to Israel’s history in 1 Corinthians 10, and even the inclusion of the Jews in the command not to cause anyone to stumble in 1 Corinthians 10:32.

2.3.4 The Hebrews in 2 Corinthians 11:22

The reference to Hebrews in the Corinthian congregation has often been overlooked in the approach to the composition of the congregation.³¹ With reference to the theme of this dissertation, it is very important to look at the interpretations of the identity of Paul’s critics in this verse.

²⁹ The common view (also held by Theissen, 2003:391) that Paul urges abstention from idol food (by the “strong”) only when there is the danger of causing the “weak” to stumble, is challenged by Cheung (1999:16). The alternative understanding that Cheung proposed is that Paul considers conscious consumption of idol food a “denial of the Corinthians’ allegiance to Christ”. He urges them to avoid idol food “if, and only if, it is identified as such” (Cheung 1999:296).

³⁰ Cf. 2.1 Introduction. See also Cheung (1999:17).

³¹ Cf. 1 Cor 11:22: “Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they Abraham’s descendants? So am I”.

These Christians could have been Jews from Palestine, or they could have been Judaisers. It is also proposed that it could be a delegation from the Jerusalem Apostolate, similar to the one in Galatians 2:11-14. The other alternatives posed are Gnostic Jewish Christians, or Hellenistic Jewish missionaries.³²

In the light of the inconclusive nature of this debate (Savage 1996:10), it is important to give attention to this issue in Chapter 5. It is also important to review the composition and conflict of the congregation in 1 Corinthians (especially in regard to Jewish factions) in the light of this passage.

2.4 THE EXISTENCE OF CULTURAL CONFLICT IN CORINTH

From the preceding sections it is clear that very few scholars still accept the presence of socio-cultural factors in the conflict in Corinth. The problem statement (1.2) referred to Banda's (2004) appreciation of the role of culture in Corinth. He (2004:94) lists eight issues in 1 Corinthians which have definite socio-cultural connotations, namely: Wisdom and power (1:10-4:21), illicit sexuality (5:1-13), marriage and divorce (7:1-40), idol food (8:1-10:33), head covering (11:2-16), drunkenness at the Lord's Supper (11:27-34), ecstasy (14:1-40) and the resurrection of the body (15:1-58).

In an exploratory article, Winter (2003:139-155) undertakes an analysis of the size of each issue in the letter to the Corinthians. He motivates this study with the reason that past studies of 1 Corinthians have largely proceeded on an *a priori* assumption that each of the issues addressed form a discreet unit. With this kind of analysis Winter aims at exposing underlying problems and cumulative argumentations.

The outcome of this study is that the leadership conflict between Paul and Apollos, the Lord's Supper, and the litigation of members in the congregation are the conflict issues which are foremost in terms of the attention Paul yields to these in his letters. Roman society was never successful in defining acceptable limits of behaviour to its followers, and this loose structure was also evident in the way the Corinthians viewed authority (Winter 2003:142-143, 153).

The issue of compromise to a certain culture is also investigated by Winter (2003:143-148). In this investigation it becomes clear that Paul's warnings against Christian compromise to the sexual illicitness of the Roman culture comprise of a large cluster within the Corinthian letter.

In this study Winter has clearly proven that there are cultural underlays to the letter of Corinth, and that the outcome yields more promising results than the traditional way of interpreting, as shown in 2.3.3. This enterprise of Winter also clearly creates room for a new method of studying the Corinthian letters, i.e. by examining underlying themes in the letter, rather than viewing each section as a separate and closed entity.

³² Both Savage (1996:3-12), as well as Martin (1986:373-375) gives a lengthy discussion on the identity of the "Hebrews".

2.5 PAUL AND THE CONFLICT IN CORINTH

2.5.1 Paul's life and status

Much has been deliberated on Paul's status and position within the First Century Society.³³ I have already stated that there are ample evidence to support that Paul was a product, both of the Greco-Roman as well as the Jewish world in Jerusalem (cf. 1.2). Although there are questions concerning Paul's education in Jerusalem under Gamaliel, even Sanders (1990:8-10) doesn't doubt Paul's education as a Pharisee within a Jewish community as well as his Greco-Roman background, and that it contributed to his good oratory skills. Despite a lengthy explanation why the information given in Acts is not reliable, he himself (1990:10) admits - where Paul's own biographical information is lacking, that Acts must be utilised.³⁴

In all the discussions on Paul's status, the issue of his work as a tent-maker is prevalent.³⁵ This is normally viewed as evidence that Paul belonged to the middle class, having to work for himself on the one hand, but having his own business, and not working for himself on the other. This did not mean that Paul had a comfortable life. Information from his letters available to us in 1 Corinthians 4:11, 2 Corinthians 11:28, Philippians 4:7-11³⁶ attests to the fact that Paul endured a lot of hardship, although it was self-imposed (Sanders, 1990:10-11).

There is, however, research that argues the opposite. The abovementioned "New Consensus" position is strongly opposed by Meggit (1998:179). He argues that not only Paul, but the church in general lived in very poor conditions, and presented a uniform, low socio-economic class. Meggit's stance is highly contested, as previously shown in 2.3.2, but it has to be reckoned with in studying Pauline Christianity.

2.5.2 Contributions from Missiology

When investigating Paul's approach to conflict in Corinth, it is important not to ignore the contribution of Missiology. As early as 1964 it was clear that 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 already was a *locus classicus* for understanding Paul's missionary work.³⁷ It is however important to realize that Bosch (1991:136) follows Bieder (1964:35) in his interpretation that Paul is not offering guidelines for cross-cultural missionary accommodation in this passage. Bieder argues here that Paul presents himself as a slave in terms of removing the stumbling blocks in the way of everybody, in order that they might accept the gospel.

This statement is an important frame of reference, especially in the light of the other passages in the problem statement (cf. 1.2 above), where Paul makes it clear that he wants to enslave himself neither to the habits of the heathens (1 Cor 6:12), nor to the circumcision rites of the Jews (1 Cor 7:23).

³³ Sources that focus more on Paul's life, status and position, include the following: Bornkamm (1969); Sanders (1990); Den Heyer (1998); and Meggit (1998).

³⁴ "We can go no further on the basis of Paul's own letters. The story is picked up by Ac. While we must often query the portrait of Paul in Ac, what happened to him after he took the offering to Jerusalem would have been well known, and Acts can be relied on with regard to the main events." (Sanders 1990:10)

³⁵ Cf. Bornkamm (1969:76); Sanders (1990:10-11); Martin (1990:139); Meggit (1998:76-77).

³⁶ 1 Cor 4:11: "To this very hour we go hungry and thirsty, we are in rags, we are brutally treated, we are homeless." 2 Cor 11:27: "I have laboured and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked." Php 4:12: "I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content whatever the circumstances."

³⁷ In his presentation of this passage under the heading *Die missionarische Freiheit*, it is clear that Bieder (1964:32-35) warns against previous abuses of this passage.

An exploratory article by Fredericks, “*kenosis* as a model for interreligious dialogue” (2005), cannot be overlooked in the study of Paul and his approach to cultural conflict. Fredericks (2005:211-222) proposes a fifth missionary model, namely *kenosis*³⁸ as a paradigm additional to the existing models of mission, i.e. Expansion, Diakonia, Presence, and Dialogue. She views the self-emptying act of Christ, described as an example by Paul in Philippians 2:5-11 as a new model for approaching other religions and cultures. It is precisely along these lines that Martin (1990), has viewed Paul’s missionary endeavours.

2.5.3 The focus on the degradational approach of class

In an article from a socio-scientific angle, Szesnat (1993:83) mentions that there has been no research done yet on degradational concept of class. He did however seem to overlook the study of Martin (1990); he approaches the missionary attitude of Paul from this very angle. In his work, “Slavery as salvation”, focusing on 1 Corinthians 9, he argues that Paul not only presents himself as a high-positioned managerial slave of Christ, but that he moves downward from this position to become “slave of all” (Martin 1990:147). The relevance of this theory for the study is made even more striking by the way that Martin views Paul’s motivation for this “downward move”. Paul does not only do this because of imitating the *kenosis* of his Master, Jesus Christ, or for his own salvation and the salvation of everybody in Corinth, but he does it primarily, according to Martin (1990:144), for the unity of the church of Christ.

2.5.4 The contribution of 2 Corinthians

Although material for the motivation of this study has mainly been taken from 1 Corinthians, it is important to study the Corinthian corpus as a whole. It is generally accepted that 1 Corinthians has not resolved all the conflict and divisions in Corinth, but that it actually became worse after the letter was dispatched. Paul’s writing of the “letter of tears” and the letter 2 Corinthians bear intrinsic testimony to the situation.

It is important to note, however that Paul did not change his approach as a “slave of all” in 2 Corinthians, but rather expanded it (2 Cor 4:5). With the paradoxical title, “Power through weakness”, Savage (1996) actually confirms the approach of Paul in 2 Corinthians as a continuation of the theme in 1 Corinthians as proposed by Martin (1990).

He argues that Paul’s critics in the congregation understood the first letter from a worldly point of view, and that his position of “weakness” was incomprehensible to them. Paul uses this letter to explain his stance, and how he, in conformation to the humility of Christ, became “a vessel for the expression of the divine power” (Savage 1999:188-190).

2.6 CONCLUSION

The recent *Wirkungsgeschichte* on the origin of the conflict in Corinth is all but conclusive. Despite the negligence in recent scholarly discipline concerning the socio-cultural factors that contributed to the conflict in Corinth, no waterproof alternatives have been produced. I believe that there is room to use the method of Winter (2003) to examine and reconsider the possibility of cultural contributors to the conflict in Corinth. The clear marker in 2 Corinthians for Jewish influence in the congregation (2 Cor. 11:27) also has to be revisited in the following chapters.

The *Wirkungsgeschichte* on Paul’s approach to conflict in Corinth shows the hypothesis in 1.4 above to be compatible with current research on the life and attitude of Paul towards his calling and the people of different cultures that he encountered on his missionary journeys.

³⁸ *kenosis* is relating to the Greek verb that describe Jesus’s self-emptying action in Php 2:7, ἐκένωσεν.

CHAPTER 3

THE CONTEXT AND BELIEFS OF THE RELEVANT CULTURAL GROUPS IN CORINTH

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3.1 INTRODUCTION

To form a picture of the cultural context and conflict in the congregation in Corinth, it is important to research the diverse cultural characteristics of the people, or rather, groups of people involved in First Century Corinth.

Scholars have often written about cultures in the time of the Bible without attending to any anthropological theories and departure points.³⁹ Because this study is done primarily from a socio-historical and not a socio-scientific angle (cf. 1.5 above), it is necessary to include a summary of the developments of Anthropology. Therefore the first section in this chapter is devoted to the concept of culture, and cultural research on Biblical data.

In studying the composition and identity of the various groups in the city of Corinth, it is necessary to have an overview of the city itself and its history. This is the aim of section 3.3, whilst the next subdivision (3.4) is devoted to the archaeological and historical data on the context of the different cultural groups from secular sources. Section 3.5 explores the world views and beliefs of the different groups.

The final section (4.2) studies the Biblical data concerning cultural diversity in the Bible, with special emphasis on the Corinthian situation. The Scripture passages that sparked the controversy about the identity of the groups in Corinth receive special attention in this section.

³⁹ Cf. the works of Stambauch & Balch (1986), Koester (1995), Den Heyer (1998), Wallace & Williams (1998), Jeffers (1999).

3.2 UNDERSTANDING FIRST CENTURY CULTURE

Considering the myriad of terms for describing the origin, life, circumstances, “Umwelt”, and beliefs of people, it is very important to define clearly what is meant by “cultural”, also used in the title of the dissertation. Therefore sections 3.2.1-3.2.5 looks at approaches to the portrayal of first century culture.

3.2.1 Definitions of culture

Newbegin (1986:3) sees culture as the “sum total of ways of living developed by a group of human beings, and handed on from generation to generation”.

The definition of Newbegin has the shortcoming that it lacks the dynamic and open nature of culture. The view of culture as being handed over from generation to generation may often be viewed as ethnocentric (Garrett, 1992:90). A further problem with this definition is that we almost need an Archimedes-point to perceive your own culture, because it is so much a part of us. Regarding this problem Van der Walt⁴⁰ (2000:14) stated that we become only aware of our culture when “something goes awry”, or when our culture comes into contact with another culture.

This thesis is supported by Loewen (2000:19), who sees “culture contact” as a reason for “culture change”. He not only argues that “changing situations, new locations, new challenges” can gradually bring about culture change⁴¹, but also that the cultural history of Israel is a good example thereof.

3.2.2 The socio-historical approach

In his article Van Rensburg (2000:564-582) explains that the more recent socio-historical approach focuses upon the context of the readers, interwoven with their situation, rather than viewing historical data as mere background, as a separate set of data without any real dynamic interaction with the dynamics of the Biblical text. Being of a socio-historical nature, as the title and 1.5 indicates, this dissertation views the dynamics of the text as in interaction with the cultural context.

3.2.3 “Culture” from the socio-scientific perspective

As mentioned in 1.5 above, socio-scientific studies also has a contribution to make to this issue: Theissen (see 2.3.2) makes a distinction between socio-economical, socio-ecological, socio-political⁴² and socio-cultural factors in earliest Christianity. He (1978:31) defines the “cultural” of the term socio-cultural factors to include “all values, norms and traditions which give a group self-awareness and identity”. The prefix “socio-” refers to the notion that the “factors under investigation do not have an immediate effect on human behaviour, but make their impact through the ‘totality’ of all social interconnections” (Theissen 1978:31).

It is therefore only logical that Theissen (1978:31) proceeds to argue that the abovementioned categories are “artificial”, but that “isolating” different factors assists us to reach a better understanding of the “totality” of all social interconnections.

⁴⁰ Cf. 1.2 above.

⁴¹ The interest in the dynamics of culture, and the powers at work to bring about change, was stimulated by the work of Foucault (1978), “The history of sexuality”.

⁴² Theissen (1978:31) defines the first three factors as follows: “Socio-economic factors are the organization of work and the distribution of its products between productive workers and those who enjoy the profits; socio-ecological factors are the results of the interplay between man and nature as expressed in the relationship between city and country and in the trading pattern of a country. Socio-political factors include the structures of government in Palestine, i.e. the opportunities of various groups and institutions for imposing their will as a general law, claiming legitimacy for it, and overcoming opposition by force.”

The categories proposed by Theissen were refined by Elliott (1986:1-33). Although the first two categories (socio-economical and socio-political) stay more or less the same in Elliott's model, he (1986:34-35) contributes by referring to categories 3&4 as "Culture, belief system", and "strategy and ideology". Under the category of "Culture, belief system" he (Elliott 1986:17) lists four subsections, i.e. (1) pivotal values, (2) accentuated beliefs and their symbolisation, (3) norms and sanctions, as well as (4) socialisation and personality structure.

The description of the culture and belief system of Elliott (1986) presents a meaningful way of approaching the different cultural groups in Corinth. Although the other categories⁴³ won't be disregarded at all, the focus is on the cultural- and belief-system involved.

3.2.4 Contributions from Anthropology

In the discussion of socialisation and personality structure (the last heading of Elliott above) fruitful work has been done in the field of Anthropology. From describing the influence of the Greek culture upon other cultures as Hellenisation, scholars have moved to terms such as acculturation or assimilation to determine to which extend immigrants from another culture adopted or rejected the culture of the hosts (Seland 2005:153-156).

Acculturation/assimilation was developed into a framework for assessing the influence of cultures upon one another by Gordon (1964) and Berry (1980:9-25). Initially assimilation was divided under seven "assimilation variables" by Gordon (1964:71), i.e. cultural or behavioral assimilation as a "change of cultural patterns" to those of the host society (also called acculturation), structural assimilation, marital assimilation, identificational assimilation, attitude receptional assimilation, behaviour receptional assimilation, and civic assimilation.

In this thesis especially the refinement of the first section (cultural or behavioral assimilation) under Gordon's model by Berry (1980:9-25), is utilised to study not only the assimilation of Jews into the Roman and the Greek cultures, but to describe Paul's particular approach to the conflict amongst Jews, Greeks, and Romans in Corinth.

The main discerning questions utilised by Berry (1980:12) are: "Is my cultural identity of value to be retained?" and: "Are positive relations with the larger (dominant society to be sought?". These questions are used to form a distinction between assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalisation on the basis of the following table (Berry 1980:14).

<i>Options</i>	<i>Retention of identity?</i>	<i>Positive relationship to dominant society?</i>
<i>Assimilation</i>	No	Yes
<i>Integration</i>	Yes	Yes
<i>Separation</i>	Yes	No
<i>Marginalisation</i>	No	No

The table above is utilised to assess the level of assimilation or acculturation that was sustained by the Jews in the Diaspora, especially in the Corinthian situation, and the way in which Paul approaches the host cultures in proclaiming the message in the formation of Christianity.

Many of the approaches of Biblical scholars have also recently received criticism from other sciences. In her article "Religion, post-religionism, and religioning: Religious studies and contemporary cultural debates" Nye (2003:943), criticises Biblical scholars for acting indifferently towards the contemporary cultural debate. According to Nye (2003:943) there have been

⁴³ Socio-economic, Political-legal, and "Strategy and Ideology factors" are the other categories proposed by Elliott (1986:19).

relatively few attempts from Biblical scholars to engage with the discourses of post-modern theory.

In her article she (2003:951) argues that “culture” as a noun is outdated, and should rather be used as an adjective, e.g. “cultural”, or even better, a verb, e.g. “culturing”⁴⁴. She then proceeds to the term “travelling culture”, as an indication that culture is never static, but a result of interaction with a specific location. This concept is eventually linked to the “Diaspora-cultural manifestations” (Nye 2003:953).

Furthermore it is important to acknowledge your own cultural stance before you approach another culture; a student is always a scholar and a participant (Nye 2003:954). In retrospect it seems that religious studies are not so far removed from Anthropology after all. If studied carefully, it seems that the move from cultural background to socio-historic studies is definitely an indication that theology, Biblical Studies in particular, has not been so indifferent to Post Modernism. It is noteworthy, however, that the object of this study, especially in the light of Corinth as a cosmopolitan harbour town, full of travellers⁴⁵, is ideally suited to illustrate the theory of a “travelling culture”.

Last, but not least is the contribution from Crook (2005:515-520) in an article “Critical notes: Reflections on culture and socio-scientific models”. She (2005:515-516) explores the theory of “reciprocity”, which is focused on kinship and “social distance in a family”. The “reciprocity” model explores the bi-lateral exchanging of gifts “in kind”, where “particular kinds of relationships and obligation” are established between people (Davies 1996:721).

Although Crook (2005:17) concludes that this is a workable theory in the more primitive cultures, she argues that “status distance” should be used in the First Century Greco-Roman environment, where other types of relationships, eg. client-patron and slave-master played a major role in society. The exchange of “gifts” in the “status-distant” society is often not of equal value, but expects its returns in other forms (Crook, 2005:519). Although still to be developed, it has definite possibilities for better understanding of different cultural groups in Corinth.

⁴⁴ The argument is that “culture” can’t stand as a fixed subject on its own, but is understood in terms of describing (therefore the adjective “cultural”) the people and their worldviews, or in terms of constantly being changed by circumstances (therefore the verb “culturing” (Nye 2003:953).

⁴⁵ The next section illustrates that Corinth was not only a cosmopolitan city, but that it was “a traveller’s haven” (3.3).

3.3 THE CITY OF CORINTH

In the previous section (3.2.3) I have shown that the physical location of a group of people is exercising a major influence on their cultural system. It is therefore important to study the City of Corinth, before looking at its residents.

3.3.1 Location and history of the city⁴⁶

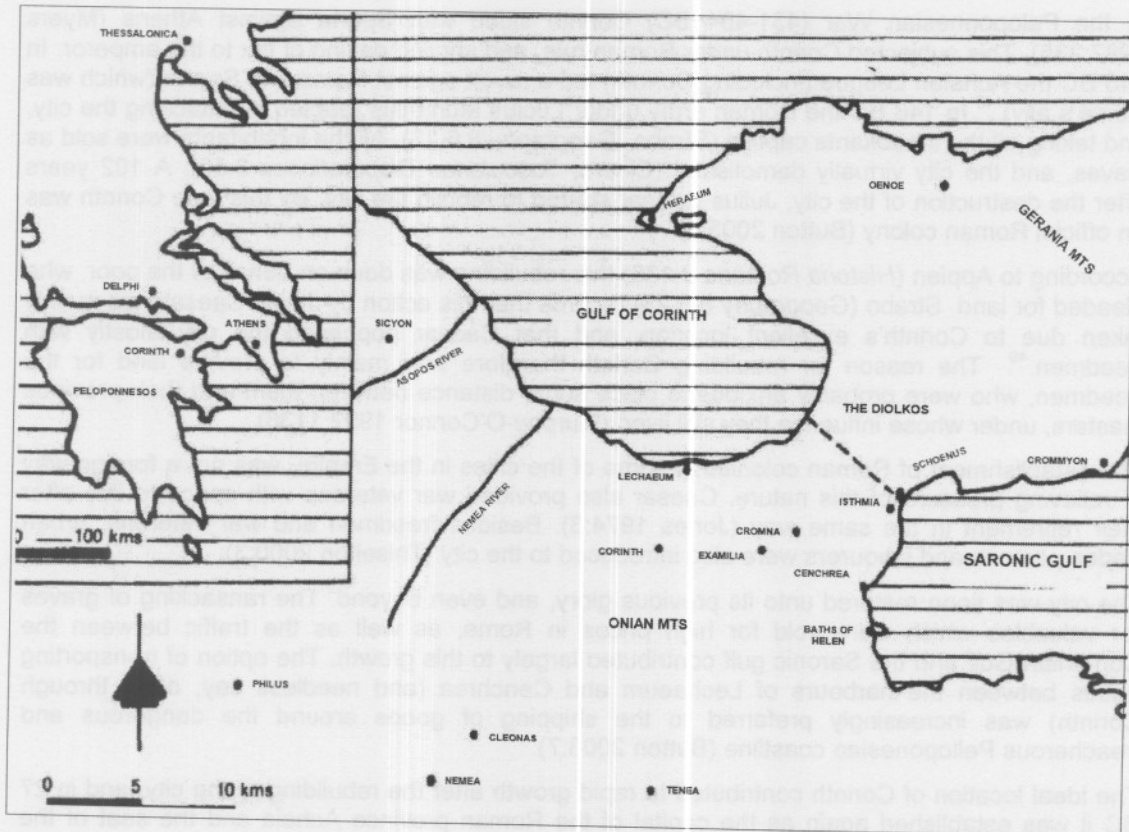


Fig. 1 Location of Corinth, Source: Button (2003:7)

Corinth has a rich and colourful history as one of the great cities of Ancient Greece. Evidence indicates that it has been inhabited as early as 4000 BC, and it reached the height of its prosperity and fame around 600 BC (Myers 1987:235). Corinth was a famous and prosperous city in the Ancient world (Thiselton 2000:1). The favourable geographical location contributed to this, because it was located on the Isthmus⁴⁷ connecting Northern Greece with the Peloponnese, and it was adjacent to two harbours, namely Lechaum to the West, and Cenchrea to the East (Martin 1986:xxvii).

A specially constructed road (called the *diolkos*) provided easier passage over the Isthmus between the Gulf of Corinth and the Saronic Gulf (Thiselton 2000:1). Even boats were sometimes transported over land to evade the dangerous detour around the Peloponnese (Willis 2000:280).

⁴⁶ Sources describing the city and its history include: Martin 1986 (xxvii-xxxviii), Garland (1999:22-24), Thiselton (2000:1-17), Button (2003:6-11).

⁴⁷ The Isthmus, the narrow strip of land dividing the gulf of Corinth and the Saronic gulf, is more or less 5 km at its narrowest point.

Corinth not only marketed merchandise from both harbours, but a considerable number of roads that converged at the city. The reason was that the only passage from the Peloponnesus and Northern Greece was over the Isthmus, passing Corinth (Martin 1998:xxviii). This ideal position was a great advantage for the city, but also made it a strategic military target. The city later became the capitol of the senatorial province of Achaia, and around the 2nd century BC it was the largest city in Greece (Thiselton 2000:2).

In the Peloponnesian War (431-404 BC) Corinth sided with Sparta against Athens (Myers 1987:235). This subjected Corinth under Roman rule, and implied paying of tax to the emperor. In 146 BC the Achaian League (including Corinth) led a revolt against Rome and Sparta (which was Rome's ally).⁴⁸ In 146 BC the Roman army under Lucius Mummius reacted by attacking the city, and taking all the inhabitants captive (Strabo, *Geography* 8.6.23). All the inhabitants were sold as slaves, and the city virtually demolished (Cicero, *Tusculanae Disputationes* 3.53). A 102 years after the destruction of the city, Julius Caesar started to rebuild the city. By this time Corinth was an official Roman colony (Button 2003:6).

According to Appian (*Historia Romana* 8:136) this rebuilding was done on behalf of the poor, who pleaded for land. Strabo (*Geography* 8.6.23) records that this action by Julius Caesar was mainly taken due to Corinth's excellent location, and that Caesar populated the city mostly with freedmen.⁴⁹ The reason for rebuilding Corinth therefore was mainly to provide land for the freedmen, who were probably anxious to place some distance between them and their previous masters, under whose influence they still lived (Murphy-O'Connor 1992:1136).

The establishment of Roman colonies in some of the cities in the Empire, was not a foreign way of relieving pressure of this nature. Caesar also provided war veterans with space to live after their retirement in the same way (Jones 1974:3). Besides freedmen and war veterans, urban trades persons and labourers were also introduced to the city (Thiselton 2000:3).

The city was soon restored unto its previous glory, and even beyond. The ransacking of graves for valuables which were sold for high prices in Rome, as well as the traffic between the Corinthian Gulf and the Saronic gulf contributed largely to this growth. The option of transporting goods between the harbours of Lechaemum and Cenchrea (and needless say, often through Corinth) was increasingly preferred to the shipping of goods around the dangerous and treacherous Peloponnesian coastline (Button 2003:7).

The ideal location of Corinth contributed to rapid growth after the rebuilding of the city, and in 27 BC it was established again as the capital of the Roman province Achaia and the seat of the Roman government (Botha & Van Rensburg 2002:52-66, Myers 1987:235). The re-introduction of the Isthmian Games between 7 BC to 3 AD attested to the status of Corinth as a leading city. Not only was the hosting of the games a witness to the financial power of some of its citizens, but provided an additional source of income to the city. By then the city of Corinth had not only surpassed Athens as a centre of culture and science (Willis 2000:279), but grew into the third largest city of the Roman empire, after Rome and Alexandria (Murphy-O'Connor 1992:1136).

It is important to note that although Corinth was a very strong and prominent city in its times, it was also the target of those aspiring power and control in the Mediterranean. It has been shown above that the Greek as well as the Romans had a major influence on the city and its composition, but that the location of the city contributed to people of all countries and cultures converging on this rapidly growing city.

3.3.2 Government

Whilst still part of the Achaian league, Corinth was known as a typical *polis*. The surrounding rural area was dependant upon the authority and rule of Corinth. The city was the basis of social and

⁴⁸ The origin of this revolt was partly due to the heavy taxation that was placed on the Achaian league, which they could no longer afford (Thiselton 2000:2).

⁴⁹ The freedmen are usually associated with the poor, because they were often dependant on the very master from which they received *manumissio* (Martin 1990:22).

economic life (Ferguson 1987:13).⁵⁰ After colonization, the governmental pattern of the city of Corinth bore close resemblance to the larger Roman empire, and could in fact be viewed as a “minor replica of the civic government of Republican Rome” (Kent 1966:23).

The city was governed by *duovirs*⁵¹ who were elected annually. These two men would preside over the city council (*duoviri iure dicundo*), and act as executive officers. They also had the important function of acting as judges and was also in charge of the census every fifth year. This resulted in them being referred to as *duoviri quinquennales* (Button 2003:8). The *duovirs* were elected annually by the *comitia tributa* (Thiselton 2000:3).

The *duovirs* were assisted by two annually-elected *aediles*. The *aediles* “superintended buildings and public works”, whilst *quaestors* attended to the financial administration of the city. An inscription in Corinth, found in 1928-29, and recorded by Kent (1966:99) refers to the *aedile* Erastus, who was also expected to make a contribution to the projects in the city.

The local council (*curia*) consisted of former magistrates (*decuriones*), in analogy to the senate in Rome (Ferguson 1987:33). It is noteworthy however that the eastern Mediterranean cities showed much more variety in their local government than those in the west. The citizens of the colony were divided into tribes (πολίτευματα) for voting purposes. The *decurions* could also be elected by the πολίτευμα. In the case of Alexandria such a division was made on the basis of culture or nationality, and that the Jews in Alexandria had their own πολίτευμα. In this case the Jews “as a large body of aliens”, were incorporated into the city “without making them full citizens” (Ferguson 1987:33-34). In the light of evidence for the presence of a relatively large Jewish community in Corinth⁵², there is a possibility that such a πολίτευμα existed in Corinth (Smallwood 1981:139).

In the light of the information above it is clear that the governmental structure of Corinth could be viewed as essentially of a Roman nature. Although evidence of allowance for governing systems that incorporated the Greek structures (see above), the total rebuilding and re-population of the city by Caesar, would suggest a government with very strong ties with Rome (Button 2003:9; Thiselton 2000:4). The role of Corinth as a centre of *Romanitas* in the province is seen by the willingness of members of local elite from other cities to fulfil magistracies there and even become benefactors (Gill 1994a:449).

In conclusion it is also necessary to note the appointment of an *agonothetes* (president) for the organization and administration of the Isthmian Games. This person was not only elected by the city council of Corinth (*curia*), but was held in high regard in the governing of the city (Thiselton 2000:11). This could serve as an indication that the Isthmian Games were appreciated for their contribution to the culture and economy of Corinth (Button 2003:8).

⁵⁰ The composition and nature of a *polis* is described extensively by Meeks (1986:23-28).

⁵¹ *Duovirs* translated literally from Latin would mean “two men”.

⁵² The discovery of a synagogue as well as some inscriptions attest to the existence of a Diaspora community in Corinth (Martin 1986:xxix).

3.3.3 Layout and activities in the city

Some of the most valuable indicators of the activities and circumstances of first-century Corinth are originating from archaeological data. Interpreting archaeological data can give a better picture of First-Century life and culture in particular.

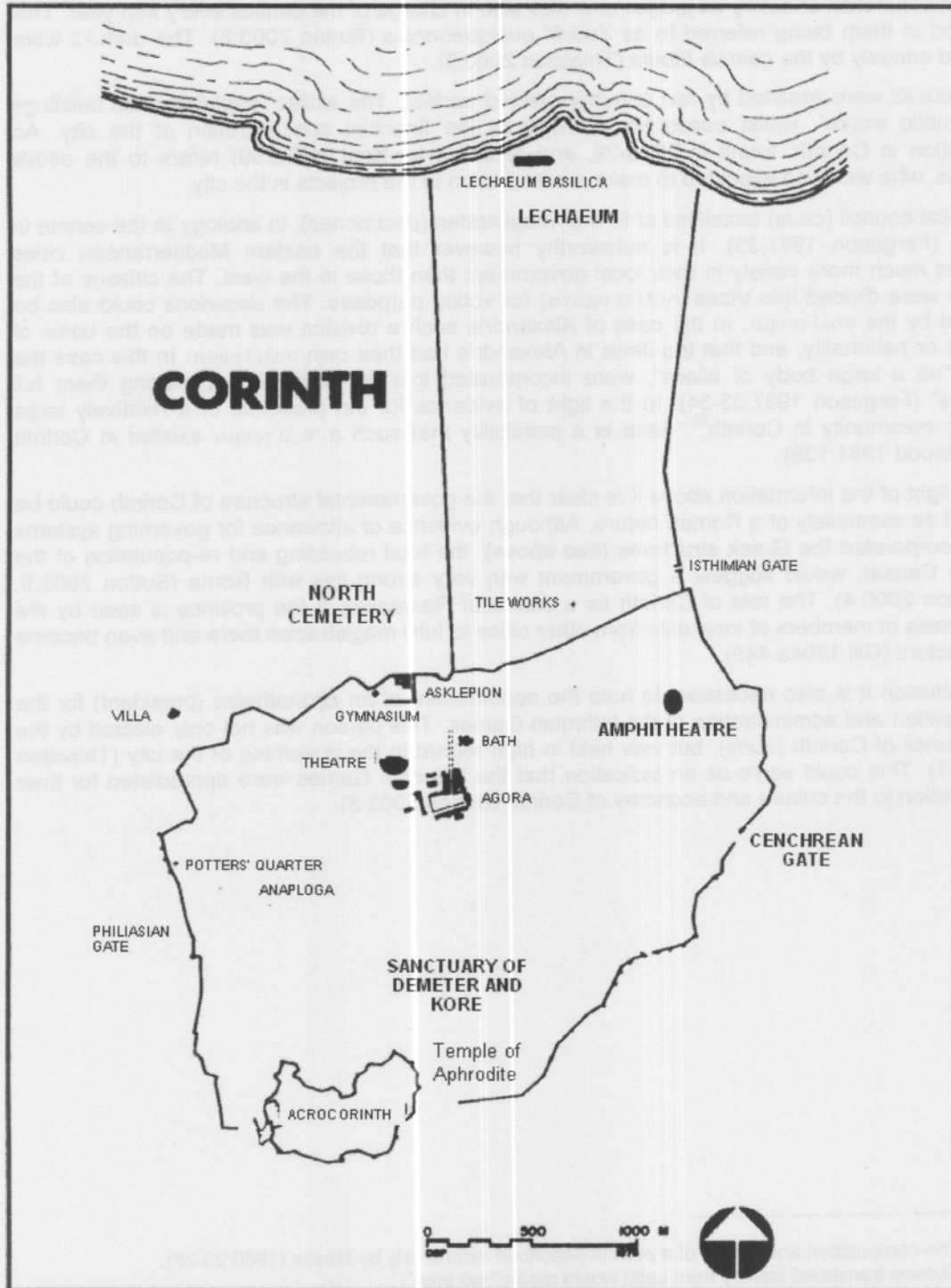


Figure 2.2 Map of the city area of Corinth. Source: Button (2003:9)

A clear landmark for those approaching the city of Corinth is the “Acrocorinth”, a mountain, with the fortification walls and the temple of Aphrodite on top (Strabo, *Geography* 8.6.21). Fig. 2.2 and fig 2.3 give an overview and layout of mid-First Century Corinth. Fig. 2.2 has references to three temples, i.e. the temples of Demeter and Kore on the Northern slopes of the Acrocorinth, as well as the Asklepeion (temple of Asclepius), at the Northern boundary of the city. The Asclepeion was brought in soon after the rebuilding of the city by Nero (Engels 1990:94).

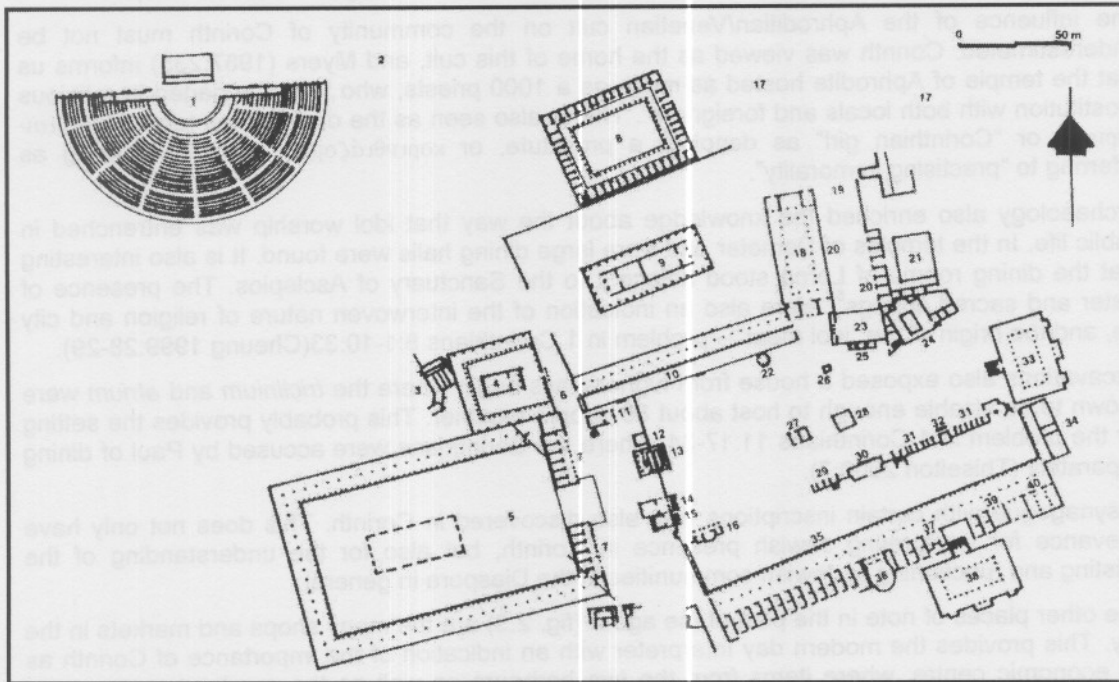


Figure 2.3. The Agora at Corinth, c. 50 AD. Source: Murphy O'Connor (1983:24-25).

Buildings are dated by the emperors Augustus (Aug.) (31BC – 14 AD), Tiberius (Tib.) (14-57 AD) and Claudius (Claud.) (41-54 AD).

- | | | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Theatre (Aug.) | 11. Temple of Tyche (Aug.) | 21. Market? | 31. Shops (Claud.) |
| 2. Erastus Pavement | 12. Babbius' Monument (Tib.) | 22. Sacred Spring | 32. Artemis Ephesia? |
| 3. Well of Glauce | 13. Fountain (Tib.) | 23. Ramp | 33. Julian Basilica (Tib.) |
| 4. Temple of Hera Acraea | 14. Temple of Appollo (Aug.) | 24. Peirene Fountain | 34. Record Office? (Tib.) |
| 5. Temple E | 15. Aphrodite temple (Aug.) | 25. Propylaea (Aug.) | 35. South Stoa (pre-146 BC) |
| 6. Road to Sicyon | 16. Identity uncertain | 26. Statue of Athena. | 36. City Council chamber |
| 7. Shops (Aug.) | 17. Probable site of market | 27. Altar | 37. Fountain House |
| 8. North Market (Tib.) | 18. Basilica (Aug.) | 28. Stone platform | 38. South Basilica (Tib.) |
| 9. Temple of Athena | 19. Lechaemum road | 29. Shops (Claud.) | 39. Office of the Agonothetes |
| 10. North-West Stoa (Aug.) | 20. Shops | 30. Berna (Aug. or Claud.) | 40. Office of the Hellanokidai |

The transition from Greek to Roman rule did not change that much regarding idol worship and the temples involved. Mostly the Greek temples and gods were just renamed with the name of their Roman counterpart. Aphrodite (Goddess of love, beauty and fertility) became Venus, Demeter (Goddess of grain) changed to Ceres, and so forth.⁵³ The change that the Roman rule brought to the religion in Corinth, however, is evident in the information that around 25 of the dedications found on the inscriptions are dedicated to uniquely Roman gods (Engels 1990:101-102).

The influence of the Aphroditian/Venetian cult on the community of Corinth must not be underestimated. Corinth was viewed as the home of this cult, and Myers (1987:235) informs us that the temple of Aphrodite hosted as much as a 1000 priests, who “often engaged in religious prostitution with both locals and foreigners”. This is also seen as the origin of the term Κορινθίαν κόρνην, or “Corinthian girl” as denoting a prostitute, or κορινθιάζομαι or corinthianizing as referring to “practising immorality”.

Archaeology also enriched the knowledge about the way that idol worship was entrenched in public life. In the temples of Demeter and Kore large dining halls were found. It is also interesting that the dining rooms of Lerna stood adjacent to the Sanctuary of Asclepius. The presence of water and sacred springs⁵⁴ were also an indication of the interwoven nature of religion and city life, and the origin of the “idol meat” – problem in 1 Corinthians 8:1-10:33 (Cheung 1999:28-29).

Excavations also exposed a house from higher-class origin where the *triclinium* and *atrium* were shown to be sizable enough to host about 80 people together. This probably provides the setting for the problem in 1 Corinthians 11:17-34, where the Corinthians were accused by Paul of dining separately (Thiselton 2000:7).

A synagogue with certain inscriptions was also discovered in Corinth. This does not only have relevance for interpreting Jewish presence in Corinth, but also for the understanding of the existing and functioning of Jewish communities in the Diaspora in general.

The other places of note in the plan of the agora (fig. 2.3) are the many shops and markets in the city. This provides the modern day interpreter with an indication of the importance of Corinth as an economic centre, where items from the two harbours as well as the overland routes were frequently traded and exchanged. The referrals to the “potter’s quarter”, as well as the “tile works” provides us with further indication that industries were prominent at Corinth. Paul’s supporting of himself by the art of tent-making (Ac 18:3), especially joining an existing group of tent-makers which included Aquila and Priscilla, would make perfectly good sense in the light of the opportunities that Corinth provided for trade.

Other important activities that can also be inferred from archaeological data are the importance of cultural feasts, such as the Isthmian Games. The presence of the theatre, the odeion, as well as the office of the Agonothetes indicate the importance of recreational activities in the city (Engels 1990:145). The presence of the *Bema* (where announcements were made and legal cases were heard) and the *basilica*, is a witness to the importance of oratory skills in First Century Corinth.

The archaeology provides the modern day scholar with rich sources of information and knowledge about city life in the First Century. For the moment it is important to note that Corinth must have been a bee-hive of religious activities. Not only the fertility cults, but also the location of the city on major trade routes, contributed to the reputation of the city as a home for moral licentiousness. This reputation of Corinth, together with the focus on culture and recreation in the city, is an indication that there is room to investigate the way that “cultural” factors influenced the congregation in Corinth.

⁵³ For a list of each Greek god/goddess and their Roman counterparts, see Ferguson (1987:115).

⁵⁴ Cf. the fountains, wells and springs referred to in 3,13,22,37 in Fig. 2.3.

3.4 THE RELEVANT CULTURAL GROUPS WITHIN THE CITY

Due to the cosmopolitan nature of Corinth, it is difficult to identify all the cultural groups within the boundaries of the city. The city is described by Myers (1987:235) as the “hub of intercourse between Romans, Greeks, Jews, Syrians and Egyptians”.

Being a city within the boundaries of Ancient Greece, and being rebuilt and populated by Caesar in 44 BC with freedmen (who were all Roman Citizens), it is generally accepted that the Romans and Greeks comprised the main two cultures in the city.⁵⁵ Although it is not the aim of this study to argue about the size of the Jewish section in comparison to the numbers of the Syrians and Egyptians, the Jews are discussed, being the third main cultural group and forming the culture within which Christianity was born. Therefore this study does not deny the presence of other cultural groups in Corinth, but the focus of interest is on the Greeks, Romans, and Jews, and their role in society.

3.4.1 The Romans as the rulers of Corinth, and the influence of the Greek culture

Scholars agree that the Roman culture was very much part and parcel of the city of Corinth. In addition to the historical data attesting to Roman rule found from historians, inscriptions, and archaeology, there are a few other factors which contribute to this consensus.

In an era of Hellenisation⁵⁶ where *koine Greek* was widely spoken in the Mediterranean, it is striking that almost all the names of Corinthian citizens that are referred to in the New Testament are of Latin origin. With the exception of Sosthenes, all the names of Corinthian persons in Acts are Latin. In his study of inscriptions in Corinth, Kent (1966:18-19) testifies to the fact that almost all the inscriptions found in Corinth are in Latin, and not in Greek. The *lingua franca* in Corinth was therefore probably Latin, and Paul writing to them in Koine Greek was therefore referring more to the person of Paul than to the audience he wrote to.

Further contributing to the strong Roman culture within Corinth was the clear discontinuity between the “old” Corinth (destroyed by Lucius Mummius) and the “new Corinth”, which was populated by Caesar. Whilst the citizens of the surrounding cities in the Greek world remained more or less intact, there was a definite discontinuity in the history of Corinth (Wallace & Williams 1998:215). The city almost had a complete makeover.

The existence of certain of the Greek statues in the city should also not just be accepted as witness to a significant Greek community in Corinth. A reference by Pausanias (*Description of Greece* 2.3.7) confirms that the new citizens of Corinth did not offer annual sacrifices to Medea’s children, although the statue was left intact.

A further testimony to Latin influence is the pottery found in Corinth. Not only the inscriptions were mostly in Latin, but the style of the art (pottery as well as stonework) was more Latin than Greek (Engels 1990:69). This is a significant testimony that not only the elite rulers, but also the middle-class businessmen and artisans⁵⁷ were from Roman origin.

In summary, it is important to take note of remarks of Thiselton (2003:3-4) concerning the First Century community and culture of Corinth. Thiselton is of the opinion that although some of the citizens have been freedmen from Achaia and other Greek provinces, they presented distinct influence and adherence to Roman culture.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Cf. Gill (1994a:451), Thiselton (2003:4-6), Winter (2003:139-155).

⁵⁶ The concept of “Hellenization”, i.e. the process in which Greek culture was forced upon other cultures, was first referred to in 2 Macc 4:10 (Rajak 2001:538).

⁵⁷ Persons involved in industry were probably part of the middle-class society, and not the elite (Martin 1990:15).

⁵⁸ The core of Corinthian culture was thoroughly Roman: “First and foremost it is important to realize that the *city community and city culture of Corinth was formed after a Roman model*, not a Greek one, even if many immigrants came from Achaia, Macedonia, and the East to constitute an equally cosmopolitan superstructure” (Thiselton 2000:3-4).

3.4.2 The Jewish community in Corinth

Regarding the size and presence of the Jewish Community in Corinth, there is relative difference of opinion amongst scholars. Although Acts 18:1-17 refers very specifically to Jews and Jewish opposition in Corinth, the evidence of Jewish presence in Corinth is sparse.

The three main witnesses for the existence of a Jewish community in Corinth is (1) the Biblical references in Acts (mentioned above), as well as the letters of 1 and 2 Corinthians, (2) the inscription referring to the “[Συνα]γωγὴ Ἑβραίων”, and (3) a passage by Philo (*Embassy* 281), where he refers to Jerusalem as the mother city of Corinth, as well as other cities associated with the Jewish Diaspora.

An important departure point for assessing the Jewish community in Corinth is the reference in Acts 18:2 concerning Aquila and Priscilla who fled to Corinth to escape the decree from Caesar Claudius, who expelled the Jews from Rome. According to Philo (*Embassy* 155) the Jews were already present in Corinth by the time of the decree. The Jews that fled from Rome to Corinth together with Aquila and Priscilla would have just strengthened the numbers of the Jews in Corinth (Gill 1994a:450).

The way that Acts relate the juridical process against Paul creates the impression that there were enough Jews to create a pressure group, and receive the attention of Gallio (Ac 18:12-17). It is also true, however, that they were not enough to pressure him into a hearing of Paul.

A further argument for the estimation of the Jews in Corinth to be of considerable number, is the fact that Philo (*Embassy* 281) mentions the name of Corinth as city next to the names of provinces, creating the impression that the community there is so large that it is worth to be mentioned separately (Murphy O'Connor 1983:78).

The inscription that bears witness to the “synagogue of the Hebrews” is only a lintel (cf. Button 2003:13), and not concrete evidence of the size of the synagogue. Furthermore the lintel itself is dated to be from a synagogue later than the time of Paul, even after 200-300 CE (Koester 1995: 213-214). Even if that should be the case⁵⁹, it does contribute to the view (clearly expressed in Acts 18:1-17) that the Jews in Corinth did gather in the synagogue around the first few Centuries CE, and that provision was made for them to build their own gathering place.

In retrospect it is easier to prove the existence of a substantial number of Jews in Corinth, that to prove the opposite, i.e. that the Jews consisted of a minute and irrelevant minority within the context of the city. The theory of the Jews comprising a sizable group is expanded further by Smallwood (see also 3.2.2), who reckons that the Jews had status as a πολίτευμα within the city of Corinth. Although this practice has an analogy in Alexandria (cf. 3.2.2 above), it should not be accepted beforehand. Although some views the audience that Gallio gave to the Jews in Acts 18:12-16 as a possible support for this view (Button 2003:13), his reluctance to hear it as an official case may be interpreted as evidence for the opposite point of view.

Having established the existence of the Romans, Greeks and Jews as the basic groups relevant to the existence of the congregation in Corinth, it is important to explore the cultural orientations of the different groups in question.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ The dating of the lintel as being post-Pauline is still uncertain (Myers 1987:236).

⁶⁰ It was pointed out in 2.3.1 that the conflict in Acts is viewed by some to be Judaizing Christians from a non-Jewish origin. Considering the early separation of the missionary activity of Paul in Corinth from the synagogue (Ac 18:6-7), and the arguments that some of the conflicts originated from the identity of the Christians as a particular group within Corinth, may lead one to study the Christians as a cultural group within Corinth. In the light of the information that Paul was the founder of the congregation (see his reference to being their “father” in 1 Cor 4:15), and his regular contact with them, the unique identity of the Christians as a group in Corinth will not be addressed fully in this study. The object of this study would rather be to show Paul's contribution as founder, to the shaping of this identity.

3.5 THE CULTURAL CONTEXT OF THE RELEVANT GROUPS IN THE CITY

In the previous section it became clear that the Romans, and Romanization played a major role in Corinth. It is, however, still of critical importance to study the way in which the Greek culture was part of the “culturing”⁶¹ process. In the light of Paul’s personal life and approach⁶², i.e. being a convert from Pharisaic origin, and starting at the synagogue with his missionary activity, the Jews are studied in 3.5.1 as a cultural entity. Next a study of Greek culture follows⁶³ in 3.5.2, and in 3.5.3 the Roman culture is addressed.

Considering the comprehensive material produced on these subjects, it is easy to get stuck in the traditional way of just embroidering on the myriad of interconnected aspects when “culture” is discussed. Therefore, as proposed in 3.2.3, the approach of Elliot is taken as a structuring and limiting principle for studying the various cultural groups, their beliefs and their “worldviews”. The different cultures are assessed in terms of their (1) pivotal values, (2) accentuated beliefs and their symbolisation, (3) norms and sanctions, as well as (4) socialisation and personality structure.

3.5.1 The Jews as a cultural group within the Diaspora

In exploring the unique culture of the Jews, it is important to appreciate that they were indeed a “travelling culture” (cf. 3.2.4 above), if there ever was one. Not only have they been taken in exile on numerous occasions⁶⁴, but they have also been in frequent contact with the languages and the customs of the Mediterranean world (Rajak 2001:4).

Many Jews moved to different locations ‘voluntarily’, looking for new trade centres and better business opportunities. The Jewish community in Alexandria was an example of such an immigration (Myers 1987:286). In the case of the Jewish community in Corinth, it is significant that Jews like Aquila and Priscilla experienced “double exile”, in the sense that they had to leave from Rome (their first abode abroad) when the Jewish faith was declared as *religio illicita*⁶⁵ by Claudius.

3.5.1.1 Pivotal values within Jewish culture

At the centre of Jewish thought and culture was Monotheism. Especially in a situation where they were separated from their homeland, the belief in the Almighty, Omnipresent God was the central focus of their existence. The fundamental context of Jewish ethical reflection was “not the polis or the individual, but Israel” (Meeks 1986:65). “Israel” was construed as “people under the special orders and protection of one God” (Meeks 1986:65).

The pivotal values of the Jewish belief can be summarised as “the belief in one God (the God of Israel), the special status of Israel (the chosen and separate people) and the Torah⁶⁶ (the law given by the one God to his chosen people and read regularly in the synagogue assemblies)” (Ferguson 1987:425). The same three main beliefs are viewed by Theissen (1978:91) as attractive to other religions in the Diaspora. The following section (3.5.1.2) elaborates more on the way these beliefs were accentuated and symbolized.

⁶¹ Cf. 3.2.4 above for the distinction between “culture”, “cultural” and “culturing”.

⁶² There are some scholars who view Paul’s habit of visiting the synagogue first in a new city/town, and preaching the word there (as suggested by Luke in Ac), as not historically just (see discussion above in 2.3.1).

⁶³ Greek government, religion and philosophy preceded that of the Roman culture in Corinth, and in the Mediterranean in general. Greek culture functioned therefore as a “foundation” to Roman culture, and therefore it will be discussed before Roman culture.

⁶⁴ The ten northern tribes were exiled to Assyria in 732 BC, and the tribes of Judah and Benjamin to Babylonia in 587 BC.

⁶⁵ The phrase *religio illicita* designates a religion that is prohibited by the ruling party of a region.

⁶⁶ The description Torah is normally used for the five books of the Pentateuch, and was taken up into the Old Testament together with the Earlier and later Prophets, as well as the Wisdom Books (Jones 2000:215).

3.5.1.2 Accentuated beliefs and their symbolization in Jewish culture

The main beliefs of the Jews stood out in their Diaspora-environment for different reasons. In the first place the worship of one God did stand out in a society where there were many cults existing alongside one another, and many of them open to polytheism. Part of the reason for this, was that (although statues and visual images of God was prohibited) these accentuated beliefs were also expressed in certain symbols.

The required rites for the “proselytes” to be accepted into the Jewish faith give an indication of the major differences between Judaism and other religions. To become a proselyte, all the males persons were required to be circumcised, and they were subjected to a ritual washing (Breytenbach 1998:345). There was a third requirement of a prescribed offering. Where the ritual of offering was not possible, it was substituted with the practise of almsgiving (McKnight (2000:845).⁶⁷ It is therefore clear that the circumcision and cleanness of the Jews had an important symbolic function for the Jews.

Tacitus (*Histories* 5:2-13) reports Moses to be the founder of the Jewish religion, and that they practiced abstention from pork, that they used unleavened bread, that they paid tribute to Jerusalem, that they were loyal to other Jews, that they avoided intermarriage with non-Jews, that they practiced circumcision, worship of one God, and that they had no image of their God in the temple.

These external symbolisms that were evident to an outsider, were all connected to the pivotal values referred to in 3.5.2.1. Although being done in most of the neighbouring eastern countries (Myers 1987:18), circumcision had a special reference to the covenant of the one and only God with Israel as his people (Gen 17:10-14). Circumcision was therefore not only the expression of the fact that Israel served one God, but also a reference to the other two pivotal values, i.e. being a separate, chosen nation by God, and their adherence to prescriptions in the Torah.

The ritual washing that was compulsory to proselytes was a symbol of the “uncleanness” of the other tribes, in contrast with the Jews as being “clean” and dedicated to God. The Torah contained numerous prescriptions of how to preserve this status, and what to do in case of any act which would render a person “unclean”. The “offering” required was probably a sign of loyalty to the one God of Israel, as well as a restitution from previous sins, that made the person unclean.

The abstention from “unclean food” was therefore an open expression of the Jews’ obedience to the Torah and their “dedication” to the Lord. This leads to the third aspect of the Jewish culture, i.e. the norms and sanctions within the culture.

3.5.1.3 Norms and sanctions within the Jewish culture

In the citation from Tacitus above (3.5.1.2) there are further referrals to issues in Jewish culture which were reflected in their everyday life. Sanctions such as not having an image of their God in the temple, the refusal to work on a Sabbath, and the refusal to partake in any ritual or festival that involved any sacrifice or recognition of any god other than their own, was a reflection of the high value that they attached to the Torah and the Ten Commandments.

The Law in the Torah can be divided into three main groups, i.e. the “command laws” of the Ten Commandments, which do not require much explanation, and the communal statutes and personal statutes, which would resort under “case law” (Matthews 2000:794).

The translation of the Old Testament into Greek (the *Septuagint*) is a testimony of the influence from the Greek world on Jewish culture. The Septuagint is not only used for textual criticism alone, but offers enormous insight into the beliefs of the Jewish community in antiquity (McLay 2000:1186). It is also the version of the Old Testament that was mostly used in the Diaspora.

⁶⁷ The lack of access to altars and the temple would especially apply to the Diaspora situation in the Mediterranean, where access to a Jewish temple would have been virtually impossible. The Latter Prophets also criticised formalism in worship, which led to a movement away from the ritual offerings (De Vaux 1961:456).

Other materials in the Rabbinic literature, such as the *Mishnah*, and the *Talmud*, have also elaborated and refined the legal implications of the Torah to the Jews.

To give even a summary of all the sanctions contained by the Torah and the Rabbinic Literature is almost impossible. It must be noted that the absence of the Temple (and therefore also offerings) in the Diaspora situation definitely must have had an effect on the way that the Torah, *Mishnah*, *Talmud*, and also the rest of the Old Testament were read and understood.

3.5.1.4 Socialisation and personality structure of the Jews

The chosen status of Israel, as being a separate and holy people⁶⁸ of the one and only God of Israel contributed directly to the lack of external socialisation that was (and still is) evident in Jewish communities around the world. Amidst all the pressures of foreign governments, cultures and education, the “synagogue and the adherence to the peculiar customs of the Jewish law”, reminded the Jews of their separate and privileged position (Stambauch & Balch 1986:51).

There is general consensus that the “synagogue” played a major role in establishing the Diaspora Jews as a separate entity. The term “synagogue” did not only refer to a building which functioned as a meeting place (Ferguson 1987:456), but could also designate a “gathering of believers”, which was not necessarily held in a building earmarked only for that purpose (Rajak 2001:463-464).

In contrast to the temple, the synagogue did not have any altars or divisions for different groups of people. The primary purpose for the “synagogue” was the public exposition and teaching of the Torah and prayers (Breytenbach 1998:351). The Jews also came together in the synagogue from time to time to enjoy meals (Josephus *Antiquities* 14:216). Although being a unifying factor amongst the Jews, the synagogue was also visited by persons from other cultures, referred to as “godfearers”⁶⁹ (Du Toit 1998:491).

Despite the consensus that Judaism was conspicuous as a separate religion in its time, foreigners were accommodated by Diaspora Judaism⁷⁰. In the light of Matthew 23:15⁷¹ it is concluded that the number of persons that became proselytes was relatively small. This was probably due to the strict rites that accompanied the decision to become a Jew (Ferguson 1987:433).

There are, however no doubt that numerous “godfearers” attended the services and prayers at the synagogue. The New Testament refers frequently to godfearers, which is a descriptive name for those who did not actually become proselytes, but attended synagogue services regularly, and even supported the synagogue financially (McKnight 2000:846).

The presence of “godfearers” is a clear indication that there was an openness to society in Jewish Diaspora. The Diaspora Jews did for instance share in the societal education for their children, they spoke the same language as did the other citizens⁷², and probably even visited the theatres and the Isthmian Games, not even to mention the influence that Greco-Roman philosophy had on them (Yamauchi 2000:386-387).

Evaluating the stance of the Jews in terms of the model presented by Berry (see 3.2.3 above), it seems that the Jews hovered somewhere between integration and separation. Although it definitely was very important for them to retain their cultural identity and characteristics, their

⁶⁸ Cf. section 3.5.1.1.

⁶⁹ The existence of the “godfearers” was doubted for a long time, but the discovery of the Aphrodisias Stone in 1976 (where the names of more than 50 “godfearers” are inscribed) settled the matter convincingly (Breytenbach 1998:365).

⁷⁰ The view of Diaspora Judaism as a missionary religion has been much debated, but the current view is that it could not be qualified as such (McKnight 2000:837).

⁷¹ Matthew 23:15: “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as you are.”

⁷² The common language spoken in Corinth was probably Latin, and not Greek (cf. 3.4.1).

stance towards relationship with other groups is relative. Although separating themselves when eating, and refraining from idol worship and the emperor cult, they were receptive to proselytes and godfearers, and participated in other levels of society.

Numerous studies have been devoted⁷³ to the sects of the Saducees, the Herodians, the Pharisees, the Hasidim, the Essene community (associated with the Qumran sect), *Therapeutae*, and the so-called "Fourth Philosophy" (which included the *Sicarii* and the Zealots and their relation to Judaism). These groups were mostly localised in Palestine, and a detailed discussion of each would have less reference to Diaspora Judaism. For the purpose of this thesis, it is necessary to realise that these groups mostly originated when the Jewish religion in Palestine were confronted with challenges from other religions and cultures⁷⁴.

The existence of such groups is also a witness to the divisions amongst the Jews themselves. The reason for this was the "attempt to preserve the cultural identity of the Judaism by intensifying the norms" (Theissen 1978:86).

In discussing the personality structure of the Jews in the Diaspora, attention must be reverted to the theory of reciprocity, as discussed above in 3.2.4. Reciprocity functioned in two directions. In the first instance it focused on the strengthening of kinship by the regular exchanging of gifts, and care for one another. But on the other hand the Jewish law contained the *lex talionis*, which referred to the principle of "an eye for an eye". The Jewish law therefore implies "complete reciprocity" for loss or injury (Matthews 2000:794). This law was also not only applicable to certain levels of society, but it was even relevant for the king.⁷⁵

3.5.1.5 Concluding remarks

Researching Diaspora Judaism highlights the changes that the "travelling nature" of a culture brings about. The absence of the temple, being a minority within the larger Greco-Roman society, and being exposed to different religions all had an effect upon Jewish culture in Corinth. All these changes did not only have negative consequences. It also contributed to the synagogue and the Greek language being the stepping stones for Paul in proclaiming the message of the true Messiah.

3.5.2 The Greek culture

In section 3.4.1 it has already been shown that Roman culture (including Latin as language) was probably dominant over Greek culture in Corinth. Nevertheless, studying the Greek culture and the influence of Greek culture (and Hellenism as an extension thereof) seems inevitable. Because Greek history preceded the rise of the Roman Empire, and Corinth and surroundings were situated strategically in the earlier Greek Empire of Alexander the Great, it only makes sense to give attention the Greek culture first.

3.5.2.1 Pivotal values and beliefs in Greek culture

Considering the lack of uniformity or written codes in early Greek religion⁷⁶, attention is given more to those aspects which has relevance for the first century milieu. Greek religion mainly originated from the agricultural background, where the "gods" were initially only powers which

⁷³ Cf. Du Rand (1998:263-307), Ferguson (1987:406-424); Stambauch & Balch (1986:96-101); Theissen (1978:70-87).

⁷⁴ The importance of contact with other cultures as a contributing factor to these movements is articulated by (Theissen 1978:87): "Our hypothesis is that the tendencies to intensify norms within Jewish renewal movements are a reaction to the drift towards assimilation produced by superior alien cultures. The first evidence for this connection was produced by the observation that tendencies to intensify norms are often caused by concern for inter-cultural segregation".

⁷⁵ A good example of this is the way in which the prophet Nathan approached king David regarding his murder of Batsheba's husband (2 Sam 12:1-14).

⁷⁶ The information on early Greek religion mainly comes from Homer, and it is difficult to find a unified view on what the religion comprised of (Ferguson 1987:112).

influenced the concrete surroundings of the primitive farmer. Later, these “powers” received names, and were regarded as being present in everything that had an impact on the farming trade⁷⁷ (Jeffers 1999:90-92).

It is important to note that the gods of the Greek mythology were (except for Scandinavian mythology) the most anthropomorphic of the surrounding religions. These gods were ageless and deathless; they were not limited by physical restrictions, and could take any shape and go anywhere quickly and invisibly. They were also able to do things (morally speaking) that humans may not do (Ferguson 1987:114).

The anthropomorphic nature of the gods was always notable, especially from Homeric literature. The human body as an object of beauty was reflected in the way the gods were portrayed (Ferguson 1987:114). This close resemblance between god and man was also developed into what later became known as the hero cult. In the hero cult it was initially the great ancestors that were honoured and worshipped. Later this resulted in the deification of war heroes and regents⁷⁸, and even to assemblies, associations and families (De Villiers 1998:202).

It is important that the pivotal values mentioned above were not absolute, or generally accepted. In philosophical circles the *sophia* or “wisdom” were accentuated by the Sophist, and in the process even the existence of the gods were questioned (Ferguson 1987:256-257). Epicurus believed in the existence of the gods, but denied their involvement with people on earth (Ferguson 1987:299). The Stoics emphasized determinism or *fate* ruling peoples lives (Koester 1995:144). One cannot proceed further without reference to centrality of the *polis* in Greek thought.⁷⁹ This constituted a movement away from the initial agricultural setting of religion, to a focus on the city life as the ideal and the norm.

3.5.2.2 Accentuated Greek beliefs and their symbolisation

As is clear from the layout of Corinth above (3.3.3), temples, altars and shrines for the gods were prominent in the city life.⁸⁰ The Greeks made offerings to the gods since the earliest times. The general purpose of such offerings was eventually to please the gods (Jeffers 1999:90), in order to receive their favour in a good harvest, rain, or protection from natural disasters. Offerings were also made in case of a sin or transgression, of which the most serious was pride or *hubris*. (De Villiers 1998:192). “Votive offerings” is a description for offerings done to the gods when making an oath before a deity (Ferguson 1987:148).

The ritual of offering is described in detail by Jeffers (1999:91): The offering consisted of a bull, cow, a pig, a sheep, a bird, a special cake, or incense. In case of the animals, the throat was slit after being stunned by a hammer. The entrails were examined to make sure that the offering was acceptable, and the inedible parts were burnt on the altar. The edible parts were then cooked in a meal to the honour of the specific god. These offerings were made especially during a feast in honour of a specific god (Parker 1998:135-136). The leftovers were usually sold to a meat market (Theissen 2003:384-385).

In addition to the offerings and feasts, statues played an important role as symbols of the god's presence amongst the people (Ferguson 1987:146). Statues or other portrayals of gods were sometimes literally transported to a newly acquired city or territory to signify the reign of the cult in the new location (Koester 1995:157). Adherents to a deity would sometimes enjoy meals “in the presence of the deity”, such as the dining rooms in Corinthian temples of Demeter and Kore

⁷⁷ The way in which these gods were practically connected to the surrounding landscape is illustrated aptly by (Jeffers 1999:92). “Zeus was a sky god who sent the rain, Demeter brought forth the grain from the earth, Dionysus caused the grapes to grow and the sap to flow in the trees, Aphrodite was concerned with reproduction and fertility...”.

⁷⁸ The growth of this religion from the sphere of the *polis* to the large sphere of the state is vividly portrayed by Ferguson (1987:157): “The imperial religion was almost the inevitable result of the extension of the polis to the oikumene and the extension of civic divinity to the imperial divinity”.

⁷⁹ The supremacy of the *polis* is demonstrated in the works of Plato and Aristotle.

⁸⁰ Each city had its own god, with a temple associated with the specific god (De Villiers 1998:192).

(referred to above in 3.3.3). The statues did not only indicate the presence of the god amongst the people, but promoted the introduction of the hero cult.

Other accentuated symbols of Greek culture were arts and athletics, which accentuated the value of the beautiful body, as stated above (3.5.2.1). This was also connected to religion, because Games such as the Olympian Games (held every four years) were opened with offerings and prayers to the gods (De Villiers 1998:192). The Gymnasium was also an extension of this symbol, and it was the Gymnasium as such that created a problem in Jerusalem (2 Macc 4:10). The accusation against the Gymnasium was the nudity of the athletes, as well as the adherents wearing a Greek hat.

The *Bema* and *Basilica* (cf. 3.3.3 above) were also symbols of the focus of the Greeks on oratory skills. The inclination to *sophia*, as already introduced by the Sophists, was an integral part of ancient Greek culture.

3.5.2.3 Norms and sanctions within Greek culture

The ancient Greek religion did not contain norms and values to the same extent as did the Jewish religion. Even though the precise execution of rites to the gods played an important part (Jeffers 1999:90), the philosophies of the time had a greater influence on the moral world of the First Century Greeks.

"Purity" was important in the rituals. Normally only men (excluding non-citizens and slaves) were allowed to bring sacrifices. Intercourse as well as contact with a corpse or woman who gave birth would render a person "impure". A man's head must be uncovered, and where women were allowed, their hair had to be loose (Ferguson 1987:114).

One of the paradoxes in Greek culture is that Zeus as the supreme deity was not at all serious about his own marital fidelity, but the institution of marriage was under protection of the gods (De Villiers 1998:193). This was not as such an indication of immorality amongst the gods, or lust, but indicated Zeus' effort to bring some system into divine society (Ferguson 1987:117).

The Sophists explored the concept of the *nomos* which (according to them) came into being through tradition or convention (De Villiers 1998:169). It was however Socrates, with his inductive methods, who created order in the chaos threatening the intellectual and moral life of his day. He argued that objective knowledge is possible, and that it should be the basis for moral behaviour (De Villiers 1998:171).

Plato and Aristotle, bound to the *polis* as norm for good government, built on Socrates' theory of objective knowledge, in coherence with the *polis*-ideal. According to them, upper class values were to be pursued to attempt a worthwhile life. In response to the theorising of knowledge the Cynics, Sceptics, and Epicureans pursued a down-to-earth, uncomplicated life, with the enjoyment of natural pleasures (Hussey 1998:177-180).

Amidst the divergence in philosophy the Stoics had a major influence on Greek life and culture. Stoicism placed great emphasis on virtue as the goal or the end of one's life. The reason (*logos*) was seen as the key to living harmoniously. The Stoics also emphasized the virtues of self-sufficiency and freedom of speech (Ferguson 1987:285-293).

To summarize the norms and sanctions of the Greeks amidst such diverse views, is virtually impossible. It is noteworthy that Stoicism had gained the upper hand amongst the Greeks, and that Stoic thought reflects the norms of Greek society at least better than most other philosophies.

The transmission of these moral traditions was also very important to the Greeks. They had a thorough education system which did not only occur at home. In the first century formal education for children was available (Meeks 1986:62).

3.5.2.4 Socialization and personality structure of the Greeks

The Greek culture as a highly influential and influenced culture is mainly illustrated by the concepts Hellenisation and syncretism.

Hellenisation was seen (i.a.) in vast use of the Greek language in the Mediterranean world and beyond, Greek curricula were taught in schools unto the outskirts of the country, and Greek theatres, temples and Gymnasiums were erected everywhere. The Olympic and Isthmian Games, as well as the various religious feasts that were held on a regular basis, soon gained wide popularity (Yamauchi 2000:386-387).

Alongside all the influences above, Greek philosophy had an undeniable influence after the death of Alexander the Great.⁸¹ The surrounding cultures, however, also had their influence upon Hellenism. Although the Greek deities were easily “transportable” to countries outside the Mediterranean (see 3.5.2.2 above), the opposite was also true: One such and example was the influence of the mystery cults upon Greek culture.

The once dominant position of the Greeks in the time of Alexander the Great, as well as the “natural fascination of the Greek mind” with everything novel and foreign, led to syncretistic phenomena in the Greek culture (Koester 1995:157). Although many gods were previously introduced to the Mediterranean from other parts of the world, syncretism specifically refers to the combination of religions from different origins.⁸²

Other examples of syncretism in this era were the cult of Isis, the Sibylline Oracles, the cult of Asclepius, and astrology. One of the factors that attracted Greeks to these cults, was that they were open to everybody, in contrast to some of the philosophical schools that often expected some educational or elitist background. Although open to everybody, there were levels of initiation that were required as involvement with a cult progressed (De Villiers 1998:195).

Corinth in the First Century was a perfect setting for the assimilation and/or acculturation of cultures. Not only its position between two important harbours, and on the crossroads through the Isthmus, but also the diverse cultural backgrounds of the Freedmen which were accommodated in the city (cf. 3.3.3 above), provided a perfect setting for a large scale assimilation and acculturation.

In conclusion, the Greek culture was definitely far developed in terms of philosophy, language, literature, education, arts and even sport. Perhaps it was precisely these diverse achievements and focus that left it vulnerable to the influence of other cultures, but that opened the door for the Christian message.

3.5.3 Roman culture

Scholars often refer to the Greco-Roman culture⁸³ to evade the pitfalls that Nye (see 3.2.4 above) warns against, i.e. viewing culture as a separate and fixed identity. There are, however, ample evidence that Roman culture was very prominent in Corinth (see 3.4.1 above). The existence of the imperial cult at Corinth can be deduced from the location of the temple for Octavia, the sister of August, in the city. This temple probably was the site for the imperial cult. In addition to this temple a statue of Julius Caesar was found, which only confirms the hypothesis (Winter 1994:94-95). Furthermore, there is literary evidence that Corinth was the home for the provincial imperial cult for the member cities of the Achaean league.

⁸¹ The words of Rajak (2001:538-539) summarises this diverse influence on the Jewish context very well: “The Greek/Hebrew opposition could take surprising forms: beauty versus truth, or else beauty and truth versus indifference to the physical; harmony with nature versus disharmony; art an science versus morality; pleasure versus guilt; cheerfulness versus solemnity; optimism versus pessimism; man versus God; an immanent versus a transcendent God; universality versus exclusivity; adaptability versus tenacity; flexibility versus rigidity; reason versus dogma; patriotism versus political helplessness; liberty versus authority; even liberalism versus socialism”.

⁸² The greek goddess of fertility, Aphrodite, is a good example of syncretism. In Corinth the temple of Aphrodite included (although disputed) a 1000 or more prostitutes in temple service (Martin 1986:xxviii). Public prostitution was not inherent to the Greek cult of Aphrodite, but was probably influenced by the adherents to the Phoenician goddess of fertility, named Astarte (Ferguson 1987:52).

⁸³ Cf. the titles of the different publications, e.g. by Jeffers (*The Greco Roman World*), Garrison (*The Greco-Roman context of Early Christian Literature*) and Goodman (*Jews in a Greco-Roman world*).

Considering furthermore the radical discontinuity in the history of Corinth (cf. 3.4.1), and the replenishing of the city with Roman Freedmen by Julius Caesar, a separate approach to Roman culture may indeed be fruitful in relation to cultural conflict in Corinth. In examining the Roman culture, however, the Greek underlays are taken into account, although not explicitly repeated.

3.5.3.1 Pivotal values within the Roman culture

In contrast to the ancient Greek religion, where the initial cult involved temples and images, the Roman cult consisted mainly of “innumerable forces”, or *numina*⁸⁴, each with its own limited sphere of influence. There was a god assigned to every minute action of man (De Villiers 1998:194). Although later influenced by the Greek Pantheon⁸⁵, the Romans still believed that there was room for “one more god” (Jeffers 1999:94; Scheid 2003:154).

The concept of *familias*⁸⁶ was very important from the outset of Roman belief. The father of the family, or *paterfamilias* normally fulfilled an important role in the household. This relation was later extended to the patron-client relationship, and from there to the emperor cult. Within this context the term *pietas*, which can be rendered as “respect” towards the ancestors, as well towards posterity is also critical to understanding Roman culture (Jones & Sidwell 1997:208).

3.5.3.2 Accentuated Roman beliefs and their symbolisation

In the absence of temples and statues the ancient Romans still did make supplication and offering to their gods. The main focus of the rituals was to preserve the *pax deorum*. The *Lares* and *Penates* were gods who looked especially after the family, and there was even a *lar familias* which probably referred to the spirit of a deceased ancestor (De Villiers 1998:194).

Developing the concept of the *numina*, divination was an important symbol of the Roman belief. Divination was practised by throwing dice in front of the temple, looking at the entrails of an animal, or the flight formation of birds. This was also performed by a special office, called the *augur* (Ferguson 1987:129,172).

Although not practised within any formal structure or building, the patron-client system is worth mentioning as an important association within the Roman cultural framework. This system actually functioned from the emperor down to the lowest slave. It also meant that a patron may even be a client to somebody else. The patron took responsibility for his client, in exchange for the promotion of the patron’s image in society (Button 2003:22).

As already mentioned above (3.5.3.1), the Romans took over a great deal of the Greek religion, and incorporated it into their own cult. There were, however, certain clear differences with the religion of Greece. Although there were clear indications of an evolving hero cult, and later imperial cult amongst the Greek, the Romans developed it into a full-fledged emperor cult. This implied that there was a temple complete with priests, statues and altars in honour of previous emperors and their family.⁸⁷ The *pax deorum* was also developed into the Pax Romana, which especially under Augustus referred to the universal peace in the territories under Roman reign.

In summary, the concept of reciprocity (see 3.2.4) functioned also strongly in the Roman culture, although in an asymmetrical form. There was a constant reciprocal exchange of goods and services. This was not only a once-off transaction, but a personal relationship of some duration (Button 2003:21).

⁸⁴ *Numen* refers to a divine power with no sense or personality (Ferguson 1987:127).

⁸⁵ *Pantheon* refers to the 12 primary gods in ancient Greek mythology. Although most of the names were more or less translated into Latin, the similarities and functions were not always identical, as in the case of Venus, who was much more sophisticated and morally just than her counterpart Aphrodite. In the case of Janus, who presided over the gates of a city, there was no Greek equivalent.

⁸⁶ It is notable here that the Roman term *familia* is not the same as what we would understand under family. The term *familia* would refer to a whole household, including the slaves but excluding the wife(s) (Jones & Sidwell 1997:208).

⁸⁷ Cf. the reference to the temple of Octavia in Corinth, in 3.5.3 above.

3.5.3.3 Norms and sanctions within Roman society

The paterfamilias as primary authority in the *familia* functions also as the one who provides order in society. In connection to his family he is referred to as *pater potestas*, which refers to his power. This person had full control over his *familia*, including the right to kill a member of his *familia* (Jones & Sidwell 1997:212-213).

During the reign of Augustus no written law was available yet. Instead cases were often debated in the *basilica* or *bema* (Meeks 1986:63). Varro and Cicero were two of the few recognised Roman writers/philosophers of the First Century, but their work concentrated mostly on the integration of Greek philosophy. In assessing the basic and important principles for the judicial system, the inherited Greek philosophical system was used (Scheid 2003:185).

August did however lay down two basic principles, i.e. that no offence should go unpunished, and that the judicial process should not take too long. In Rome itself distinction was made between two different statutes, i.e. the *leges publicae*, concerning serious crimes, such as adultery, fraud, murder, bribery and treason (De Villiers & Pelsler 1998:166); other crimes, such as being against the state religion, arson, theft and rape were handled by the relevant *patria potestas*.

Rome did have an extensive and well structured government in place (see 3.3.2 above). This probably contributed to the relative peace during the reign of August. It is however true that the Roman culture became bankrupt in the first century. The society in Corinth had almost no moral standards, and licentiousness was the order of the day (Botha & Van Rensburg 2002:75). This prepared the way for the advent of the gospel.

3.5.3.4 Socialisation and personality structure amongst the Romans

It has already been shown that syncretism was part and parcel of the Roman "culturing" process (3.5.3.2 above). Even if Hellenisation made its mark on Roman culture, it is also true that the Romanitas (the influence of Roman culture) and the *familia* model also had an undeniable influence upon the civilised world in the First Century.

It is also true, however, that the continuous hunger for power and honour, and lack of humility were not acceptable to surrounding cultures.⁸⁸ Although the concept *Pax Romana* may seem to refer to peaceful governing, the peace was relative per definition. From initial lenience towards religions like those of the Jews, the Roman Caesars later declared the Jewish as well as the Christian faiths to be *religio illicita*.

The practice of granting Roman citizenship is another indication of the manner in which the Romans were expanding their influence to other cultures. Roman citizenship was initially given to individuals on the basis of their birth, to slaves that received *manumissio*, as an acknowledgement of special service to the empire, and to auxiliary forces of the Roman army, that completed their service.⁸⁹ Tacitus (*Histories* 1.1) reveals how emperor Otho granted citizenship to the inhabitants of the colonies of Hispalis, Emertia, and Ligones.

Paul was a Roman citizen by birth (Ac 22:28⁹⁰), whilst his father required citizenship by being a group of noted citizens of Tarsus, which was an important city in Cilicia (Ferguson 1987:49). It can be deduced from Acts 22:28 that people, such as Claudius Lysias, military tribune in Jerusalem, bribed their way into citizenship by paying large amounts of money (Wallace & Williams 1998:139). The astonishment of the tribune when Paul announced his citizenship was partly due to the fact that not many Jews had Roman citizenship. In the light of their norms and sanctions (see 3.5.1.3 above) they would not be able to serve in the military, or contribute largely to Roman society and culture (Jeffers 1999:201).

⁸⁸ Cf. the article of Winter (2003:153) where he discusses the inability of adherents to the Roman culture to be submissive.

⁸⁹ Cf. Gill 1994b:106-107; Ferguson 1978:48-49; Jeffers 1999:199-201; Wallace & Williams 137-146.

⁹⁰ Ac 22:28: "Then the commander said, "I had to pay a big price for my citizenship". "But I was born a citizen," Paul replied."

This extension of Roman citizenship to freedmen, groups of people in cities or colonies, as well as auxiliary armies did imply a privileged position in society. They had the right of voting,⁹¹ and were not only exempted from cruel forms of punishment, but also welcomed into the theatres and the games. As in Paul's case (Ac 22:25), they couldn't be punished without a trial, and they had the right of appeal to higher authority, even to the Caesar himself (Ac 25:11).

The personality structure of the Romans was undeniably related to the *familia* concept. The theory of uneven reciprocity is applicable to the Romans in the context of the patron-client relationships. This principle contributed to create the *Pax Romana* for a while, but before long Rome was challenged by the "clients" and foreigners.

3.5.4 Summary

In the description of the three cultures that met one another in Corinth, it was clear that the Greek and Roman cultures have more in common, and were more accommodating towards one another than the Jewish culture and belief. Differences within the Greek and Roman cultures, however, are not to be underestimated. Although often grouped together in cultural studies, the history of Corinth (as shown in 3.3.1) contained the remains of a bitter war between the Greek and Roman superpowers. A society in Corinth without tensions between Greeks and Romans was therefore almost unimaginable.

3.6 CONCLUSION

The outcome of this chapter confirms the necessity of a structured and sound methodological approach to Biblical material. The study of different approaches to culture did not only provide a valuable structuring principle for the study, but also enriched this work with recent anthropological insights. There are numerous references in the chapter to "culturing". The dynamics of culture as ever-changing in contact with surrounding cultures cannot be underestimated.

In sections 3.2 and 3.3 it has been established that the archaeology and well-documented history of the city of Corinth provides a wealth of information, not only for this study, but for socio-historical studies in general. This material is applied in chapter 4.

Although the mountains of information on the cultural history of the Jews, Greeks, Romans, and other First Century cultures may be frustrating, it poses a challenge to review the essence and the changing of cultures through the lenses of cultural conflict and interaction.

In summary, the Corinthian Christian was probably caught up in a triangular network between the legalistic exclusivity of the Diaspora Jew, the search for wisdom and intellectual excellence by the Greek freedman, and the natural inclination to assert power and initiative by the Romans, which was imbedded in their patron-client system.

⁹¹ Only citizens residing in Rome itself were able to exercise this right (Ferguson 1987:49).

CHAPTER 4

THE BIBLE ON CULTURAL INTERACTION

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4.1 INTRODUCTION

After the overview of the culture of the three relevant cultures of the Corinthian congregation in the previous chapter, the Biblical data relevant for the cultural context of Corinth is now examined. This chapter focuses especially on Biblical data on situations where cultural interaction is involved. To assist the reader in assessing the pericope as a whole, the relevant quotations are made from the NIV, and given in full in the left column of the table.

In approaching the information that the Bible renders on this topic, the distinction between the “analogy of faith” and the “analogy of Scripture” (Kaiser 1994:193-198) is kept in mind. The “analogy of Scripture” refers to the additional historical and informational data becoming available from other sections of the Bible. This “analogy of Scripture” is given for each pericope in the right hand column under the heading “Relevance”, a method developed by De Klerk & Van Rensburg (2005:77-86).

The “analogy of faith” refers to Biblical truths that can be deduced from the Bible as a canonical corpus. In this chapter, these truths are referred to as “revelation-history”, a term used by De Klerk and Van Rensburg (2005:77-86). In each pericope, the revelation of God in relation to the timeline of God’s involvement with his children is formulated.

For this section, the data from the books of Corinthians are not included, since it is dealt with extensively in chapter 5. The second limitation to the diagram below is that it lacks proof of detailed exegetical analysis, as well as an enquiry into the history of interpretation of the portion under scrutiny.

This chapter also explores the relation of the abovementioned cultures to Christianity. For the sake of continuity and comparison, the relevant data are structured (similar to the previous chapter) within Elliott’s framework (cf. 3.2.4) for analysing culture.

4.2 THE RELEVANCE AND REVELATION-HISTORICAL PLACE OF BIBLE PORTIONS ON CULTURAL INTERACTION

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Theme	Scripture reference	RELEVANCE AND PLACE IN REVELATION-HISTORY.

4.2.1 Pivotal values and beliefs

Cultural interaction in the Bible	4.2.1.1 Monotheism
	<p>Romans 10:9-13 ⁹ That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. ¹¹ As the Scripture says, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame." ¹² For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile--the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, ¹³ for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."</p> <p>Relevance: God is portrayed here not as the sole property of the Jews, but as the living God who embraces and blesses people who approach Him, irrespective from which nation they come.</p> <p>Place in revelation-history: Israel has to realize that Jesus is the true Messiah and Son of God the Father. If they are willing to associate Him with the Father as "Lord", they will be saved. But the Lord shows no favouritism. Through his Son's redemptive work on the cross, all nations can come to him. Not only does he accept everybody who call on them, but he richly blesses them.</p>

Cultural interaction in the Bible	<p>4.2.1.2 References to Philosophy</p>	
	<p>Acts 17:16-18 ¹⁶ While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols. ¹⁷ So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Greeks, as well as in the marketplace day by day with those who happened to be there. ¹⁸ A group of Epicurean and Stoic philosophers began to dispute with him. Some of them asked, "What is this babbler trying to say?" Others remarked, "He seems to be advocating foreign gods." They said this because Paul was preaching the good news about Jesus and the resurrection.</p>	<p>Relevance: Here we find a reference to the fact that the gospel was not only preached in the synagogue, but also on the marketplace, where it came into contact with Epicurean and Stoic philosophy. Paul also adapted his preaching style to reasoning on behalf of the Greeks steeped in philosophy.</p> <p>Place in revelation-history: The gospel of Jesus Christ is surely raising the curiosity of Epicurean and Stoic philosophy. The message of a New Kingdom was obviously fresh and different in the Greek context.</p>
	<p>Acts 17: 19-21 ¹⁹ Then they took him and brought him to a meeting of the Areopagus, where they said to him, "May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting?" ²⁰ You are bringing some strange ideas to our ears, and we want to know what they mean." ²¹ (All the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there spent their time doing nothing but talking about and listening to the latest ideas.)</p>	<p>Relevance: The remark in verse 21 shows the primary social activity of the Athenians of the day. This was an ideal doorway for Paul to bring the gospel, but also posed the threat of foreign philosophy after people accepted the gospel. Although Paul was initially viewed as a "babbling", the contents of his message definitely created enough curiosity. He did not have to announce himself at the Areopagus, but was brought there.</p> <p>Place of revelation-history: The good news is spear-heading into the centre of Athens and of the Greek culture, the Areopagus. The Kingdom of God is rapidly expanding through the vehicle of philosophic reasoning.</p>
	<p>Romans 2:6-11 ⁶ God "will give to each person according to what he has done." ⁷ To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life. ⁸ But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger. ⁹ There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile; ¹⁰ but glory, honor and peace for everyone who does good: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. ¹¹ For God does not show favoritism.</p>	<p>Relevance: Here Paul uses the well known diatribe style (Keener 1993:417). It is clear here that the same rules apply to both Jew and non-Jew. It is made clear to them that God does not show favoritism, and that all cultures will share eternal life.</p> <p>Place in revelation-history: Because of Christ's death for everybody, God exalts his children from all nations and backgrounds. There is no room for cultural prejudice or pride amongst the Jews.</p>
<p>2 John 7-11 ⁷ Many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist. ⁸ Watch out that you do not lose what you have worked for, but that you may be rewarded fully. ⁹ Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God; whoever continues in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. ¹⁰ If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not take him into your house or welcome him. ¹¹ Anyone who welcomes him shares in his wicked work.</p>	<p>Relevance: Christian acceptance of one another does have limits. In the case of deceivers, Christians are urged not to accept them in their houses or welcome them. The phrase "who do not acknowledge" Jesus Christ as having come in the flesh, is probably under influence of Gnosticism.</p> <p>Place in revelation-history: Often the great danger to the new Kingdom is not portrayed as an enemy from outside, but the Antichrist coming in a form similar to Christ himself. Therefore God's children should make sure that they keep themselves holy.</p>	

<p>Cultural interaction in the Bible</p>	<p>4.2.1.3 The Greek gods</p> <p>Acts 19:23-34 ²³ About that time there arose a great disturbance about the Way. ²⁴ A silversmith named Demetrius, who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought in no little business for the craftsmen. ²⁵ He called them together, along with the workmen in related trades, and said: "Men, you know we receive a good income from this business. ²⁶ And you see and hear how this fellow Paul has convinced and led astray large numbers of people here in Ephesus and in practically the whole province of Asia. He says that man-made gods are no gods at all. ²⁷ There is danger not only that our trade will lose its good name, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis will be discredited, and the goddess herself, who is worshiped throughout the province of Asia and the world, will be robbed of her divine majesty." ²⁸ When they heard this, they were furious and began shouting: "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" ²⁹ Soon the whole city was in an uproar. The people seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul's traveling companions from Macedonia, and rushed as one man into the theater. ³⁰ Paul wanted to appear before the crowd, but the disciples would not let him. ³¹ Even some of the officials of the province, friends of Paul, sent him a message begging him not to venture into the theater. ³² The assembly was in confusion: Some were shouting one thing, some another. Most of the people did not even know why they were there. ³³ The Jews pushed Alexander to the front, and some of the crowd shouted instructions to him. He motioned for silence in order to make a defense before the people. ³⁴ But when they realized he was a Jew, they all shouted in unison for about two hours: "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"</p>	<p>Relevance: The Christians encounter opposition from a different group. Demetrius' business was in jeopardy (cf. 16:19) because of the gospel. He attacks Paul because he is not honouring the Greek gods. Demetrius immediately realises that the gospel has the power to not only hurt his personal business, but to discredit the Greek religion worldwide. Demetrius succeeds to stir an uproar amongst the adherents of Artemis. It is clear that the Christian community would proceed from here with pressure from Jewish as well as non-Jewish followers. The tension between Jews and non-Jews is also evident in the sense that the Ephesians did not want to listen to the Jew, Alexander at all, especially because he was a Jew.</p> <p>Place in history of revelation: It is clear that the spread of the gospel amongst non-Jews has encountered a major resistance in Ephesus. God eventually uses this opportunity to make a great number of people (the amphitheatre in Ephesus could hold 25000 people) curious about the gospel of Jesus Christ.</p>
	<p>Acts 19:35-41 ³⁵ The city clerk quieted the crowd and said: "Men of Ephesus, doesn't all the world know that the city of Ephesus is the guardian of the temple of the great Artemis and of her image, which fell from heaven? ³⁶ Therefore, since these facts are undeniable, you ought to be quiet and not do anything rash. ³⁷ You have brought these men here, though they have neither robbed temples nor blasphemed our goddess. ³⁸ If, then, Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen have a grievance against anybody, the courts are open and there are proconsuls. They can press charges. ³⁹ If there is anything further you want to bring up, it must be settled in a legal assembly. ⁴⁰ As it is, we are in danger of being charged with rioting because of today's events. In that case we would not be able to account for this commotion, since there is no reason for it." ⁴¹ After he had said this, he dismissed the assembly.</p>	<p>Relevance: The City Clerk obviously responds with wisdom in this very explosive situation. It is noteworthy that a non-Jew is used to calm the crowd. Paul's culture-sensitive approach, in proclaiming the gospel rather than attacking Athenian gods, is bearing fruit in this instant.</p> <p>Place in revelation-history: Persons in positions of power are used as God's instruments to restore law and order in explosive situations. All of this contributes to a peaceful atmosphere which is more conducive to the promotion of the gospel around the world.</p>

4.2.2 Passages that refer to accentuated values and symbols

Cultural interaction in the Bible ³⁰	<p>4.2.2.1 Meals</p>	
	<p>Leviticus 11:43-47 ⁴³ Do not defile yourselves by any of these creatures. Do not make yourselves unclean by means of them or be made unclean by them. ⁴⁴ I am the LORD your God; consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am holy. Do not make yourselves unclean by any creature that moves about on the ground. ⁴⁵ I am the LORD who brought you up out of Egypt to be your God; therefore be holy, because I am holy. ⁴⁶ "These are the regulations concerning animals, birds, every living thing that moves in the water and every creature that moves about on the ground. ⁴⁷ You must distinguish between the unclean and the clean, between living creatures that may be eaten and those that may not be eaten."</p>	<p>Relevance: This passage in the Old Testament forms the background for Jewish separation from other nations and cultures. The Lord commanded Israel to keep themselves pure and holy by refraining from eating or touching "impure" animals or meat, in this way distinguishing them from other nations. Place in revelation-history: In vs. 45 it is important to note that the Lord freed Israel from Egypt, not only to liberate them from slavery, but also to separate them as his holy nation. Therefore He commands them to show their total devotion to Him in their eating habits also. This is describing the situation before Christ came to be sacrificed for all nations.</p>
	<p>Deut. 14:21 ²¹Do not eat anything you find already dead. You may give it to an alien living in any of your towns, and he may eat it, or you may sell it to a foreigner. But you are a people holy to the LORD your God.</p>	<p>Relevance: The basic content of Jewish and non-Jewish meals was different, making it difficult to envisage joint meals. Place in revelation-history: This prescription is coming forth from the time that Israel was the Lord's holy nation. This is describing a situation before Christ came to be sacrificed for all nations.</p>
	<p>Isaiah 66:17-19 ¹⁷ "Those who consecrate and purify themselves to go into the gardens, following the one in the midst of those who eat the flesh of pigs and rats and other abominable things—they will meet their end together," declares the LORD. ¹⁸ "And I, because of their actions and their imaginations, am about to come and gather all nations and tongues, and they will come and see my glory.</p>	<p>Relevance: The Lord gathers all nations and languages to his glory because of Israel's inability to follow his commandments regarding unclean food. Place in revelation-history: Isaiah proclaims the Lord's promise to gather all the nations to see his glory. A turning point in the revelation-history is evident from this announcement.</p>
	<p>Ezekiel 4:9-12 ⁹ "Take wheat and barley, beans and lentils, millet and spelt; put them in a storage jar and use them to make bread for yourself. You are to eat it during the 390 days you lie on your side. ¹⁰ Weigh out twenty shekels of food to eat each day and eat it at set times. ¹¹ Also measure out a sixth of a hin of water and drink it at set times. ¹² Eat the food as you would a barley cake; bake it in the sight of the people, using human excrement for fuel." ¹³ The LORD said, "In this way the people of Israel will eat defiled food among the nations where I will drive them."</p>	<p>Relevance: Ezekiel is commanded to perform certain actions (even preparing food on human excrement) to show that the people of Israel will be punished by having to eat defiled food among the nations where God drives them. It is clear that eating defiled food was a huge embarrassment to any Jew.⁹² Place in revelation-history: In the era before the inclusion of all nations, the obeying of specific laws concerning food was a very important aspect of preserving the holiness of Israel. By driving the Jews to the nations, the Lord is also preparing the Jews and the nations for the New Kingdom.</p>
<p>Hos 9:3-5 ³ They will not remain in the LORD's land; Ephraim will return to Egypt and eat unclean food in Assyria. ⁴ They will not pour out wine offerings to the LORD, nor will their sacrifices please him. Such sacrifices will be to them like the bread of mourners; all who eat them will be unclean. This food will be for themselves; it will not come into the temple of the LORD. ⁵ What will you do on the day of your appointed feasts, on the festival days of the LORD?</p>	<p>Relevance: From verse 4 it is clear that being far away from the Temple of the Lord had many implications, especially concerning food and sacrifice. Not being near the temple, and being able to sacrifice to the Lord, had the implication that the remainder of the food was also "unclean". In foreign countries there was also no real opportunity or location to honour festival days and feasts (cf. 3.5.1.2 above). Place in revelation-history: This prophecy was written in a time where the temple and food were very central in Judaism. This is in contrast with Rom 14:17, Rev 21:3.</p>	

⁹² This explains the initial reaction in Ac 11:1-3 concerning Peter eating with the Gentiles, as well as the recurrence of the problem with eating Idol food.

<p>Acts 10:9-15 ⁹ About noon the following day as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. ¹⁰ He became hungry and wanted something to eat, and while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance. ¹¹ He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. ¹² It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles of the earth and birds of the air. ¹³ Then a voice told him, "Get up, Peter. Kill and eat." ¹⁴ "Surely not, Lord!" Peter replied. "I have never eaten anything impure or unclean." ¹⁵ The voice spoke to him a second time, "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean."</p>	<p>Relevance: The major problem in evangelisation would normally seem to be the way that Non-Jews would accept Christians. As the gospel spreads, it seems that the problem is not on the side of non-Jews, but on the side of the culture of the evangelist. Peter would still have been refusing to "eat" with such a person due to the "unclean nature" of his food.</p> <p>Place in revelation-history: As the New Kingdom expands, God constantly persuades people (even the apostles) with Jewish blood to perceive that He is able to make non-Jews, or even "Godfearers", as well as their food, totally clean.</p>
<p>Acts 10:39-43 ³⁹ "We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a tree, ⁴⁰ but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen. ⁴¹ He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen—by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. ⁴² He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³ All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."</p>	<p>Relevance: Peter reminds himself of the Great Commission in Matthew 28. In his sermon he is himself transformed to realise that God accepts everyone who believes Him. In verse 43 he is proclaiming the cleansing of the non-Jews himself. Peter, who ate with Jesus after his resurrection, is also now eating with non-Jews.</p> <p>Place in revelation-history: The authority of Peter to take these actions is linked to the life and work of Jesus, who announced forgiveness of sins to everybody.</p>
<p>Acts 15:23-31 ²³ With them they sent the following letter:</p> <p>The apostles and elders, your brothers, To the Gentile believers in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia: Greetings.</p> <p>²⁴ We have heard that some went out from us without our authorization and disturbed you, troubling your minds by what they said. ²⁵ So we all agreed to choose some men and send them to you with our dear friends Barnabas and Paul-- ²⁶ men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁷ Therefore we are sending Judas and Silas to confirm by word of mouth what we are writing. ²⁸ It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements: ²⁹ You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things. Farewell.</p> <p>³⁰ The men were sent off and went down to Antioch, where they gathered the church together and delivered the letter. ³¹ The people read it and were glad for its encouraging message</p>	<p>Relevance: The non-Jews are not expected to convert to the Jewish faith, but to abstain from traditional practices that were not acceptable in the light of the gospel. The subtle and accommodating nature of the circular is noteworthy. The four things that are required here is very important. These are seen as "burdens", but received "from the Holy Spirit." These "burdens" are things that would be most unacceptable to the Jews. These are abstaining from <i>idolatry, murder, and sexual immorality</i>. Circumcision, however, is not mentioned. The approach of this sensitive issue is eventually resolved by concessions from both sides, but also through using the Scripture as basis.</p> <p>Place in revelation-history: The convention finds solutions to cultural issues through his Holy Spirit. This solution was not only accepted by the meeting in the Jewish centre, Jerusalem, but also accepted with joy in Antioch. Mutual sacrifice and an attitude of willingness to serve is evidently a part of God's answer to divisions in a growing church.</p>
<p>Romans 15:1-2 ¹ We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. ² Each of us should please his neighbour for his good, to build him up.</p>	<p>Relevance: According to Rom 14 this refers to the eating of idol food. The call should be on the non-Jewish Christians to bear with those who are still honouring certain ceremonial laws, and with those who have a vivid memory of idol worship.</p> <p>Place in revelation-history: Here again consideration of weaker Jewish and non-Jewish brothers are mentioned. God is patient with the weaker Christians to realize what freedom really means.</p>

Cultural interaction in the Bible	<p>4.2.2.2 Circumcision</p>	
	<p>Acts 10:44-48 ⁴⁴ While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. ⁴⁵ The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. ⁴⁶ For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God.</p> <p>Then Peter said, ⁴⁷ "Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have." ⁴⁸ So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.</p>	<p>Relevance: As in John 4, an element of surprise is present again. The delegates that came with Peter are astonished that non-Jews, who were not circumcised, had received the gift of the Holy Spirit. None of them objects when Peter asks if they can be baptized in the Name of Christ Jesus. As in John 4, the hospitality of the non-Jews is evident.</p> <p>Place in revelation-history: The Holy Spirit is now another common denominator between Jewish and non-Jewish Christians. God is transforming nations from the inside out.</p>
	<p>Acts 11:1-3 ¹ The apostles and the brothers throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. ² So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him ³ and said, "You went into the house of uncircumcised men and ate with them."</p>	<p>Relevance: From the start it was evident that the introduction of the gospel to foreign cultures would not run smoothly. The resistance from Jewish Christians which Peter found back in Jerusalem with circumcision would be an ongoing problem throughout almost all the Early Christian congregations.</p> <p>Place in revelation-history: Through the ages God is using the spreading of the gospel to shake established Christianity from isolation and traditional legalism.</p>
	<p>Acts 14:26-15:3 ²⁶ From Attalia they sailed back to Antioch, where they had been committed to the grace of God for the work they had now completed. On arriving there, they gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them and how he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. ²⁸ And they stayed there a long time with the disciples.</p> <p>^{15:1} Some men came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the brothers: "Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved." ² This brought Paul and Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them. So Paul and Barnabas were appointed, along with some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question. ³ The church sent them on their way, and as they traveled through Phoenicia and Samaria, they told how the Gentiles had been converted. This news made all the brothers very glad.</p>	<p>Relevance: The focus of tension moves again to the inner circle of the Christians. The question of Jewish tradition and circumcision was part of an ongoing debate within the church.</p> <p>Place in revelation-history: It is important to note that God has incorporated non-Jews through the apostles (vs. 27). This process of introducing the newcomers into the Kingdom to the Jewish Christians was bound to create tension. But as seen in the next passage (see Ac 15:5-11), God sometimes uses this very tension to effect growth in mutual understanding .</p>
	<p>Acts 15:5-11 ⁵Then some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees stood up and said, "The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to obey the law of Moses." ⁶ The apostles and elders met to consider this question. ⁷ After much discussion, Peter got up and addressed them: "Brothers, you know that some time ago God made a choice among you that the Gentiles might hear from my lips the message of the gospel and believe. ⁸ God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us. ⁹ He made no distinction between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith. ¹⁰ Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of the disciples a yoke that neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear? ¹¹ No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are."</p>	<p>Relevance: Peter's argument in verse 9 and 10 is of utmost importance for the way forward concerning the removal of stumbling blocks. The Jews are asked not to put any further restraints on the Gentiles, restraints which they themselves have not been able to honour.</p> <p>Relevance in revelation of history: This speech of Peter at the meeting in Jerusalem is also a crucial marker for the way that God sees the incorporation of non-Jews into the Kingdom. Through the gift of the Holy Spirit, and the grace of Jesus Christ, they should not be burdened with the yoke of earlier Jewish customs.</p>

	<p>Acts 16:1-3 ¹ He came to Derbe and then to Lystra, where a disciple named Timothy lived, whose mother was a Jewess and a believer, but whose father was a Greek. ² The brothers at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him. ³ Paul wanted to take him along on the journey, so he circumcised him because of the Jews who lived in that area, for they all knew that his father was a Greek.</p>	<p>Relevance: It is interesting to note that Timothy was not circumcised, although his mother was a Jew. Paul clearly shows his respect for the Jewish context, in circumcising Timothy before their journey. Despite the outcome of the meeting in Jerusalem, the leader Timothy are still willing to take the “burden of circumcision” on himself. This signifies that being a leader in the church, may require making even more sacrifices than would be required from a member. It is also clear from this passage that descent was still important to Jewish Christians. Timothy’s background, however, would give him ideal insight in both cultures.</p> <p>Place in revelation-history: Not only (previously) circumcised members from the Jewish nation, but also leaders from Non-Jewish origin are ministering in the church. The gradual process of integration is evident here.</p>
	<p>Galatians 2:1-8 ¹Fourteen years later I went up again to Jerusalem, this time with Barnabas. I took Titus along also. ² I went in response to a revelation and set before them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles. But I did this privately to those who seemed to be leaders, for fear that I was running or had run my race in vain. ³ Yet not even Titus, who was with me, was compelled to be circumcised, even though he was a Greek. ⁴ This matter arose because some false brothers had infiltrated our ranks to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus and to make us slaves. ⁵ We did not give in to them for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might remain with you. ⁶ As for those who seemed to be important—whatever they were makes no difference to me; God does not judge by external appearance—those men added nothing to my message. ⁷ On the contrary, they saw that I had been entrusted with the task of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, just as Peter had been to the Jews. ⁸ For God, who was at work in the ministry of Peter as an apostle to the Jews, was also at work in my ministry as an apostle to the Gentiles. ⁹ James, Peter and John, those reputed to be pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the Jews. ¹⁰ All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do.</p>	<p>Relevance: It is clear that the cultural issues did not subside during Paul’s work amongst the Gentiles. In contrast to Timothy who was circumcised for the sake of the Jewish Christians when returning to Jerusalem, it was not the case with Titus, a Greek pastor in training. Paul did not show any accommodation to the legalistic Jewish brothers who infiltrated the fraternal. Instead he exposed them as people who want to take away their freedom of Christ, and enslave them again. Noteworthy here is the referral to a clear agreement between the apostles about the focus of their ministry. Paul and Barnabas focused on the Gentiles, whilst the other apostles focused on the Jews. It is noteworthy that the compassion for the poor, especially the poor amongst the Jews is mentioned here. It seems as though cross-cultural empathy included financial assistance. Paul was very eager to do just that.</p> <p>Place in revelation-history: The reference in verse 6, that God does not judge by outward appearance is very important. God does not want to enslave anybody again like the Pharisees and Sadducees did in the previous dispensation. The freedom in Jesus Christ is central to the new Kingdom of God.</p>
	<p>Galatians 2:11-14 ¹¹ When Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he was clearly in the wrong. ¹² Before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group. ¹³ The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray.</p>	<p>Relevance: Paul opposes Peter openly because he is siding with the Jerusalem circumcision group. They imposed Jewish laws again by withdrawing themselves from Non-Jews that were not circumcised. Paul even calls this behaviour hypocrisy.</p> <p>Place in revelation-history: This passage shows clearly that separation⁹³ on the basis of circumcision was not tolerated in the Christian community anymore.</p>

⁹³ Separation refers to those who value their cultural inheritance, and keep an exclusive distance from those who don’t share in this inheritance (cf. 3.2.4 above).

	<p>Galatians 5:2-6 ² Mark my words! I, Paul, tell you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you at all. ³ Again I declare to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obligated to obey the whole law. ⁴ You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace. ⁵ But by faith we eagerly await through the Spirit the righteousness for which we hope. ⁶ For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.</p>	<p>Relevance: In Acts 15 it was communicated to the Christians outside Jerusalem that circumcision is not compulsory anymore. Here Paul is moving a step further, by actually prohibiting circumcision under certain circumstances. Verse 6 also stresses that love as internal quality and ethical code is worth more than the external act of circumcision.</p> <p>Place in revelation-history: This is an indication of the fact that the new nation of Israel has a more fixed identity, and that there is a clear internal identification needed with Christianity, rather than with external ceremonial Jewish laws.</p>
	<p>Philippians 3:2-9 ² Watch out for those dogs, those men who do evil, those mutilators of the flesh. ³ For it is we who are the circumcision, we who worship by the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh-- ⁴ though I myself have reasons for such confidence. If anyone else thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: ⁵ circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; ⁶ as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for legalistic righteousness, faultless. ⁷ But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸ What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ--the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith</p>	<p>Relevance: Reliance upon cultural practices is compared by Paul to reliance upon the flesh. Again we do not only find a rejection of circumcision, but Paul uses the strong words – “dogs” and “mutilators of the flesh”. Paul uses his own example as somebody who considers his circumcision, cultural heritage and background as “rubbish” on behalf of the message of salvation.</p> <p>Place in revelation-history: Paul talks about a new circumcision, that consists of worship in the Spirit, and glory in Christ Jesus. Worldly profit and status are considered a loss compared to the new righteousness that comes from God. This bears a striking resemblance to the words of Jesus in John 4: 23.</p>
	<p>Colossians 2:8-12 ⁸ See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ. ⁹ For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, ¹⁰ and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority. ¹¹ In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, ¹² having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.</p>	<p>Relevance: Paul refers to human tradition and the basic principles of this world as hollow and deceptive. In contrast to that is the fullness of the Deity. The new circumcision consists of the presence of Jesus Christ in the lives of people, and the circumcision by the hands of men means nothing.</p> <p>Place in revelation-history: God uses baptism to signify the burial of sin, and faith to claim the power of resurrection from the dead. The previous era of circumcision and observing the law is therefore replaced by baptism and faith.</p>

<p>Cultural interaction in the Bible</p>	<p>4.2.2.3 Proselytes and Godfearers</p>	
	<p>Acts 10:1-4 ¹ At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion in what was known as the Italian Regiment. ² He and all his family were devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly. ³ One day at about three in the afternoon he had a vision. He distinctly saw an angel of God, who came to him and said, "Cornelius!"</p> <p>⁴ Cornelius stared at him in fear. "What is it, Lord?" he asked. The angel answered, "Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God."</p>	<p>Relevance: The way that the Lord is approaching the expansion of the gospel is noteworthy: This happened not primarily through radical conversions of total strangers, but starting of with “godfearers” (cf. Acts 8:26-40). Not only all the foreign visitors to the temple at the day of Pentecost are touched, but also individuals who converted earlier to Jewish faith.</p> <p>Place in revelation-history: God gradually expands the kingdom through the “godfearers” who was seeking Him even before the coming of the Messiah.</p>

<p>Acts 13:49-52 ⁴⁹ The word of the Lord spread through the whole region. ⁵⁰ But the Jews incited the God-fearing women of high standing and the leading men of the city. They stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region. ⁵¹ So they shook the dust from their feet in protest against them and went to Iconium. ⁵² And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.</p>	<p>Relevance: For the first time proselytes and their status are used against Christians. It is only a sign on the surface of the ferocious spiritual battle that was fought within Jewish social and cultural circles.</p> <p>Place in revelation-history: The gospel message does not only divide Jews and non-Jews. Here we read about Jews inciting godfearers against Christians. In the new Kingdom of God it is not possible to be neutral. As time progresses, the schism between persistent Judaism and Christians grows wider.</p>
<p>Acts 17:10-12 ¹⁰ As soon as it was night, the brothers sent Paul and Silas away to Berea. On arriving there, they went to the Jewish synagogue. ¹¹ Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. ¹² Many of the Jews believed, as did also a number of prominent Greek women and many Greek men.</p>	<p>Relevance: Here we find an interesting comparison between communities. It is evident that the Jews were not as zealous and stubborn in all cities. Noteworthy is also the composition of the congregation in verse 12: Prominent women and many Greek men also embraced the gospel.</p> <p>Place in revelation-history: Where people are prepared to study the Scriptures without immediately acting from a position of prejudice, God works mightily.</p>
<p>Acts 21:17-25 ¹⁷ When we arrived at Jerusalem, the brothers received us warmly. ¹⁸ The next day Paul and the rest of us went to see James, and all the elders were present. ¹⁹ Paul greeted them and reported in detail what God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. ²⁰ When they heard this, they praised God. Then they said to Paul: "You see, brother, how many thousands of Jews have believed, and all of them are zealous for the law. ²¹ They have been informed that you teach all the Jews who live among the Gentiles to turn away from Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children or live according to our customs. ²² What shall we do? They will certainly hear that you have come, ²³ so do what we tell you. There are four men with us who have made a vow. ²⁴ Take these men, join in their purification rites and pay their expenses, so that they can have their heads shaved. Then everybody will know there is no truth in these reports about you, but that you yourself are living in obedience to the law. ²⁵ As for the Gentile believers, we have written to them our decision that they should abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality."</p>	<p>Relevance: The requirements for Paul and his visitors clearly resemble the requirements for proselytes (see 3.5.2.1). As the church in Asia Minor expands, cultural differences are more prevalent. The new Christians are not a few "second-class" godfearers anymore. They are an integral part of a new community of believers. In this process the Christian Jews are still struggling to come to terms with cultural differences. Even after the meeting of the apostles in Jerusalem and the result thereof, Paul are accused of turning the Jews away from the law of Moses. The customs of the Jews are mentioned here in one sentence together with circumcision. The Christian Jews have clearly not yet grasped the irrelevance of ceremonial laws in Christianity.</p> <p>Place in revelation-history: Not only the non-Jews, but also Christian Jews not adhering to ceremonial laws are under suspicion here. God is busy creating a new nation, and that means that even Christian Jews are not adhering to their traditional customs anymore. Even the Christian Jews in Jerusalem find this very difficult to accept.</p>
<p>Acts 21:26 ²⁶ The next day Paul took the men and purified himself along with them. Then he went to the temple to give notice of the date when the days of purification would end and the offering would be made for each of them.</p>	<p>Relevance: Paul gives in to the demands of the Jews regarding uncleanness, and complies with their request by taking the men for purification.</p> <p>Place in revelation-history: For the progress in the Kingdom it was important that the Christian Jews should not stay behind because of problems they have with deep-rooted customs. Therefore the rite of purification as a stumbling block to the Jews is taken away.</p>

Cultural interaction in the Bible	4.2.2.4 References to the patron-client relationship	
	<p>Matthew 20:24-28 ²⁴ When the ten heard about this, they were indignant with the two brothers. ²⁵ Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. ²⁶ Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, ²⁷ and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—²⁸ just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."</p>	<p>Relevance: In this passage rulers of the non-Jewish nations are portrayed as being dictators and dominating. This recalls the patron-client relationship in Roman culture. Against this Jesus sets out a very important principle for ministry and congregational life, which is also imitated by Paul, viz. humility and servanthood.</p> <p>Place in revelation-history: Jesus announces a new kingdom with a new set of rules. He leads by his example.</p>
	<p>Luke 22:24-30 ²⁴ Also a dispute arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest. ²⁵ Jesus said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. ²⁶ But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. ²⁷ For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves. ²⁸ You are those who have stood by me in my trials. ²⁹ And I confer on you a kingdom, just as my Father conferred one on me, ³⁰ so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.</p>	<p>Relevance: The reference to "Benefactor" is typical of the patron-client relationship. The initial sacrifice of being servants in ministry (unlike the Roman elite and emperor cult) is followed in life hereafter with a place at the table of the king, having the authority to judge over the twelve tribes of Israel (Rev 5:10).</p> <p>Place in revelation-history: A transition is portrayed here from the earthly reality of strife and division to heavenly peace and unity in the New Israel.</p>

4.2.3 Passages that refers to norms and sanctions

Cultural interaction in the Bible	4.2.3.1 Jewish Law	
	<p>Romans 2:12-16 ¹² All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law. ¹³ For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous. ¹⁴ (Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, ¹⁵ since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.) ¹⁶ This will take place on the day when God will judge men's secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares.</p>	<p>Relevance: Paul introduces an explanation of the law which stresses again that God shows now favouritism. God who sees into the hearts of Jew and non-Jew will judge people's secrets.</p> <p>Place in revelation-history: It is explained that God has a purpose with Jew and non-Jew in his eternal plan. The non-Jews who have not grown up under ceremonial law, or for that case Old Testament law, will be judged by the Almighty, who knows everything. It is evident that the non-Jews were always part of God's plan, and that he unifies Jew and non-Jews under the one head, Jesus Christ.</p>
	<p>Colossians 2:16-19 ¹⁶ Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. ¹⁷ These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ. ¹⁸ Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you for the prize. Such a person goes into great detail about what he has seen, and his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions. ¹⁹ He has lost connection with the Head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow.</p>	<p>Relevance: Paul stresses that we should not accommodate people who judge us in terms of our adherence to superfluous cultural habits. Paul also warns against people who haughtily require certain extraordinary experiences from believers.</p> <p>Place in history of revelation: God causes the body of Christ, the church, to grow. Growth of the church cannot be effected by laying down cultural laws and requirements, but only by closer connection to the head of the Church, Jesus Christ.</p>

Chapter 4 – The Bible and cultural interaction

	<p>Colossians 2:20-23 ²⁰ Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world, why, as though you still belonged to it, do you submit to its rules: ²¹ "Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!"? ²² These are all destined to perish with use, because they are based on human commands and teachings. ²³ Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence.</p>	<p>Relevance: Paul again clearly shows the danger of imposing principles of this world on fellow believers. Rules based on human preferences and teachings are destined to perish.</p> <p>Place in revelation-history: To die with Christ is not only a death of sin, but also a death of the earthly, man-made rules that enslave believers. Through the death of Christ God has announced a new dispensation of freedom which is everlasting.</p>
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<h3>4.2.3.2 Immorality of the pagan world</h3>		
<p>Cultural interaction in the Bible</p>	<p>1 Peter 2:11-12 ¹¹ dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul. ¹² Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.</p>	<p>Relevance: Believers are urged to refrain from assimilating to the practices of the culture of a society. Cross cultural respect and consideration however, exceed the boundaries of the circle of believers. Even in the face of adversity, Christians in a foreign country should show respect and be prepared to serve, and excel in all matters that society deems important and that are not contrary to God's will.</p> <p>Place in revelation-history: God has not planned a life of isolation for his people, but he chose them to be the light and the salt of the earth amongst pagans, in order that God can be glorified on the day of his return.</p>

4.2.4 Socialization and personality structure

<h3>4.2.4.1 Relationships between Jews and Non-Jews</h3>		
<p>Cultural interaction in the Bible</p>	<p>Jeremiah 29:4-7 ⁴ This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: ⁵ "Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. ⁶ Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease. ⁷ Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper."</p>	<p>Relevance: The prophet Jeremiah encourages the Jews to work towards the peace and prosperity of the city where they have been carried into exile. The main motive for this exhortation, however, is not a missionary motive as such. By contributing towards prosperity and peace in the city, they will also benefit, because they would be sharing therein.</p> <p>Place in revelation-history: The calling of the Jews to be a separate nation before God did not exclude them from doing business, contributing to the welfare of foreign cities, and maintaining peaceful relationships with non-Jews. They were also instructed to pray for the city, for it's peace and prosperity.</p>
	<p>Matthew 5:43-48 ⁴³ You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbour and hate your enemy.' ⁴⁴ But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. ⁴⁶ If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? ⁴⁷ And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? ⁴⁸ Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect</p>	<p>Relevance: As discussed in 3.5.1.5, the Jewish culture in Biblical times was not naturally inclined to be friendly and hospitable to people from other cultures. Jesus prepares them for greater things to come, when He urges his disciples to love and greet everybody.</p> <p>Place in revelation-history: Through this miracle God is preparing the way for non-Jews to partake in the heavenly inheritance. This shows clearly that Jesus' coming into the world makes a big difference in the way other nations should be approached by God's children.</p>

<p>Matthew 15:21-28 ²¹ Leaving that place, Jesus withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon. ²² A Canaanite woman from that vicinity came to him, crying out, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is suffering terribly from demon-possession."</p> <p>²³ Jesus did not answer a word. So his disciples came to him and urged him, "Send her away, for she keeps crying out after us." ²⁴ He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel." ²⁵ The woman came and knelt before him. "Lord, help me!" she said. ²⁶ He replied, "It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to their dogs." ²⁷ "Yes, Lord," she said, "but even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." ²⁸ Then Jesus answered, "Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted." And her daughter was healed from that very hour.</p>	<p>Relevance: An approach from somebody from a different culture is very unusual (After Jesus' ignoring her even the disciples tried to chase her away). Jesus even refers to dogs as a reference to her being not "clean" in the eyes of the Jews. Jesus' initial response is not necessarily an indication that foreigners were not accepted, but a test of her faith, since he deliberately speaks from a typical Jewish stance.</p> <p>Place in Revelation-history: There is a definitive indication that Jesus is widening the circle of ministry to the non-Jews after the initial (negative) response of the Jews. Jesus' action proves that the Messiah will bring peace and reconciliation, not only to Jews, but also between the nations.</p>
<p>Mark 7:24-30 ²⁴ Jesus left that place and went to the vicinity of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know it; yet he could not keep his presence secret. ²⁵ In fact, as soon as she heard about him, a woman whose little daughter was possessed by an evil spirit came and fell at his feet. ²⁶ The woman was a Greek, born in Syrian Phoenicia. She begged Jesus to drive the demon out of her daughter. ²⁷ "First let the children eat all they want," he told her, "for it is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to their dogs." ²⁸ "Yes, Lord," she replied, "but even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs." ²⁹ Then he told her, "For such a reply, you may go; the demon has left your daughter." ³⁰ She went home and found her child lying on the bed, and the demon gone.</p>	<p>Relevance: In addition to the parallel in Matthew, the woman is here portrayed as Greek, and Jesus' presence there as being secret. The irresponsiveness and initial neutrality of Jesus might be ascribed to the fact that it was not time for him to be glorified amongst the nations yet.</p> <p>Place in revelation-history: In verse 27 it is clear that Jesus is accommodating Israel up to the point where they reject Him, and then proceeds to the non-Jewish nations. His approach, therefore, always left room for non-Jews who wanted to receive God's gifts.</p>
<p>John 4:9-12 ⁹ The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.) ¹⁰ Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water." ¹¹ "Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water?" ¹² Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his flocks and herds?"</p>	<p>Relevance: Like in Matthew 5 it is evident that there was no or little natural communication between certain cultures, especially the Jews and Samaritans. Jesus approaches this woman and awakens her interest, to the amazement of the disciples.</p> <p>Place in revelation-history: Peculiar to this passage is the mention of Jacob as the common denominator between Jews and Samaritans. It is noteworthy that her question contains the possibility that Jesus has the potential to be an even more common denominator (or mediator) than Jacob!</p>
<p>John 4:36-45 ³⁹ Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I ever did." ⁴⁰ So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. ⁴¹ And because of his words many more became believers. ⁴² They said to the woman, "We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world." ⁴³ After the two days he left for Galilee. ⁴⁴ (Now Jesus himself had pointed out that a prophet has no honor in his own country.) ⁴⁵ When he arrived in Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him. They had seen all that he had done in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, for they also had been there.</p>	<p>Relevance: The significance of the transition is illustrated when a whole Samaritan town invites a Jew (and his disciples) into their midst.⁹⁴ Jesus is portrayed as a universal Saviour for everybody. Jesus' physical presence in their midst meant more to them than a thousand words.</p> <p>Place in revelation-history: Whether through miracles or a radical approach to relationships, the same Jesus is welcomed by two radically different cultures. He becomes the true Mediator!</p>

⁹⁴ The good reception in Galilee, amongst his own people, is a contrast with the comment made in verse 44.

<p>Acts 10:22-26 ²² The men replied, "We have come from Cornelius the centurion. He is a righteous and God-fearing man, who is respected by all the Jewish people. A holy angel told him to have you come to his house so that he could hear what you have to say." ²³ Then Peter invited the men into the house to be his guests. The next day Peter started out with them, and some of the brothers from Joppa went along. ²⁴ The following day he arrived in Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends. ²⁵ As Peter entered the house, Cornelius met him and fell at his feet in reverence. ²⁶ But Peter made him get up. "Stand up," he said, "I am only a man myself."</p>	<p>Relevance: Again it is clear that Cornelius, unlike many of his fellow officers, had a good relationship with the Jews, and was respected by them. Furthermore, this meeting does not only involve the two individuals. Cornelius' delegates are invited in by Peter, and Peter is taking a delegation of Christian brothers from Joppa with him to Cornelius. Place in revelation-history: The evident respect from a man of worldly status for an apostle of the Lord is a small indication of the way that Christ can overturn relations. God is also initiating change in the hearts of leaders to influence the way their followers are thinking.</p>
<p>Acts 10:17-20 ¹⁷ While Peter was wondering about the meaning of the vision, the men sent by Cornelius found out where Simon's house was and stopped at the gate. ¹⁸ They called out, asking if Simon who was known as Peter was staying there. ¹⁹ While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Simon, three men are looking for you. ²⁰ So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them."</p>	<p>Relevance: It is significant that the "Mountain is coming to Mohammed", and not vice versa. Is the prejudice on Peter's side so strong that he must be fetched in order to cross this traditional barrier? Place in revelation-history: God always takes the initiative, even if it means approaching prejudice from the reverse angle.</p>
<p>Acts 10:27-29 ²⁷ Talking with him, Peter went inside and found a large gathering of people. ²⁸ He said to them: "You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with a Gentile or visit him. But God has shown me that I should not call any man impure or unclean. ²⁹ So when I was sent for, I came without raising any objection. May I ask why you sent for me?"</p>	<p>Relevance: Peter defends his action, which was contrary to Jewish action and belief. The acceptance of Peter by a large gathering is again a sign of people regarding the gospel more important than cultural differences. Place in revelation-history: A small step for man... God is not only crossing borders between individuals, but He has a plan for believers to experience the unity (which the gospel creates) <i>en masse</i>.</p>
<p>Acts 11:15-18 ¹⁵ "As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came on them as he had come on us at the beginning. ¹⁶ Then I remembered what the Lord had said: 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' ¹⁷ So if God gave them the same gift as he gave us, who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could oppose God?" ¹⁸ When they heard this, they had no further objections and praised God, saying, "So then, God has granted even the Gentiles repentance unto life."</p>	<p>Relevance: Despite the initial resistance, the acceptance that God's grace includes the non-Jews is resulting in Jewish Christians praising God. Note that Peter equates ongoing, stubborn, cultural prejudice to opposing God. Place in revelation-history: A definite and very important phase in the growing of the New Kingdom: The lost sheep are accepted by those already in the kraal.</p>
<p>Acts 11:19-21 ²¹ Now those who had been scattered by the persecution in connection with Stephen travelled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, telling the message only to Jews. ²⁰ Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus. ²¹ The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord.</p>	<p>Relevance: The exclusive approach of some Jewish Christians is again stressed here. The episode with Cornelius did bear fruit, in as much as persecuted Christians from Cyprus and Cyrene proclaimed the message in Antioch (the first place where believers were referred to as Christians). Place in Revelation-history: It was clearly part of God's divine purpose (vs. 21) that Greeks should turn to him also.</p>

<p>Acts 21:27-29²⁷ When the seven days were nearly over, some Jews from the province of Asia saw Paul at the temple. They stirred up the whole crowd and seized him,²⁸ shouting, "Men of Israel, help us! This is the man who teaches all men everywhere against our people and our law and this place. And besides, he has brought Greeks into the temple area and defiled this holy place."²⁹ (They had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian in the city with Paul and assumed that Paul had brought him into the temple area.)</p>	<p>Relevance: Tension from within the church often seems to spread to the outside quickly. It is not clear how the message got around, but the Jews themselves are pressuring the Christians about this issue. It is also evident that the Jews had a problem with the Greeks. They were very suspicious of the Greeks travelling with Paul.</p> <p>Place in revelation-history: It slowly becomes evident that even places of worship would not be common ground for Christian and Jew anymore. In God's plan of salvation the temple has fulfilled its purpose, and it becomes time to find other places of worship.</p>
<p>Romans 9:23-26²³ What if he did this to make the riches of his glory known to the objects of his mercy, whom he prepared in advance for glory--²⁴ even us, whom he also called, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles?²⁵ As he says in Hosea: "I will call them 'my people' who are not my people; and I will call her 'my loved one' who is not my loved one,"²⁶ and, "It will happen that in the very place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' they will be called 'sons of the living God.'"</p>	<p>Relevance: Paul is explaining to the Jews how the non-Jews are adopted into the new Kingdom of God. They are not called slaves, however, but "sons of the living God".</p> <p>Place in revelation-history: God has prepared the non-Jews in advance for glory – another referral to the fact that the incorporation of non-Jews as children of God was not something new, but something that was planned long before creation.</p>
<p>Romans 11:11-16¹¹ Again I ask: Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all! Rather, because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious.¹² But if their transgression means riches for the world, and their loss means riches for the Gentiles, how much greater riches will their fullness bring!¹³ I am talking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I make much of my ministry¹⁴ in the hope that I may somehow arouse my own people to envy and save some of them.¹⁵ For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?¹⁶ If the part of the dough offered as first fruits is holy, then the whole batch is holy; if the root is holy, so are the branches.</p>	<p>Relevance: Paul again stresses his longing for the salvation of Israel. He is indicating that the Lord really wants to accommodate Israel in his Kingdom. It is important to note that Israel was to become envious of the non-Jews.</p> <p>Place in revelation-history: God's concern for the Israelites is evident here. He does not close the door on them, but urges them to accept his salvation. The salvation of non-Jews also has the function to make the Jews envious. God still has a plan to win the Jews over to his Kingdom.</p>
<p>Romans 11:28-29²⁸ As far as the gospel is concerned, they are enemies on your account; but as far as election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs,²⁹ for God's gifts and his call are irrevocable.</p>	<p>Relevance: Paul explains that special effort should still be made with the Jews. Although they are the enemies because of their persecution of the church, patience should be exercised.</p> <p>Place in revelation-history: God is portrayed as the faithful God who will bring in the harvest from the Jews.</p>
<p>Rom 15:7-13⁷Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.⁸ For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the Jews on behalf of God's truth, to confirm the promises made to the patriarchs⁹ so that the Gentiles may glorify God for his mercy, as it is written: "Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles; I will sing hymns to your name."¹⁰ Again, it says, "Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people."¹¹ And again, "Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and sing praises to him, all you peoples."¹² And again, Isaiah says, "The Root of Jesse will spring up, one who will arise to rule over the nations; the Gentiles will hope in him."¹³ May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.</p>	<p>Relevance: The passage begins with the exhortation to accept one another, and it is motivated by the fact that Jews and non-Jews were called by God.</p> <p>Place in revelation-history: Again Paul stresses the relationship between God and the Jews which comes through the ages, but also the prophecies in the Old Testament which promised that the non-Israelites will rejoice and praise God. The final purpose of God's salvation plan is eventually that Jews and non-Jews will praise him together in heaven.</p>

	<p>Galatians 2:26-29 ²⁶ You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, ²⁷ for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.</p>	<p>Relevance: A passage of utter importance – faith in Jesus and baptism (and not Jewish blood or circumcision) is mentioned as the requirements for being a child of God, and Abraham's seed, as well as heirs according to the promise.</p> <p>Place in revelation-history: God's new nation is created with a different set of values to that of the dispensation before the coming of Christ.</p>
	<p>Ephesians 3:6 ⁶ 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.</p>	<p>Relevance: The unity of believers is called a mystery. The process in which God unifies nations is therefore "mysterious" in the sense that it is not easy for humans to understand this process.</p> <p>Place in revelation-history: On the one hand non-Jewish Christians are indicated as joint heirs of the inheritance promised in the past, and on the other hand they are seen as sharers in the future promise of an eternal life with Jesus.</p>
	<p>Colossians 3:5-14 ⁵ Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. ⁶ Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. ⁷ You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. ⁸ But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. ⁹ Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices ¹⁰ and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. ¹¹ Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all. ¹² Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. ¹³ Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. ¹⁴ And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.</p>	<p>Relevance: Initially the passage seems as if it is addressing the non-Jewish Christians, and their previous lives, but in verse 11 it becomes clear that the passage refers to the pre-conversion lives of persons from both cultures. It is important that an unhealthy focus on cultural heritage and pride often leads to one of the earthly practices.</p> <p>Place in revelation-history: The Creator is reflecting the knowledge of the new self to his people through his Son and through his Word, and through his children on earth. God's new nation is freed from earthly divisions or classifications. The people of this new nation was chosen by God, and is holy to Him only through the blood of the Lamb, Jesus Christ. Because God forgave them, they are able to forgive one another, be reconciled and live together in perfect unity.</p>

<p>Cultural interaction in the Bible</p>	<p>4.2.4.2 Citizenship</p> <p>Acts 21:37-40 ³⁷ As the soldiers were about to take Paul into the barracks, he asked the commander, "May I say something to you?" "Do you speak Greek?" he replied. ³⁸ "Aren't you the Egyptian who started a revolt and led four thousand terrorists out into the desert some time ago?" ³⁹ Paul answered, "I am a Jew, from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no ordinary city. Please let me speak to the people." ⁴⁰ Having received the commander's permission, Paul stood on the steps and motioned to the crowd. When they were all silent, he said to them in Aramaic: ¹ "Brothers and fathers, listen now to my defence."</p>	<p>Relevance: Paul very prudently uses his status as a Roman citizen to speak to the crowd present. Although he was a Jew, the citizenship was the deciding factor which allowed him to preach the Word far and wide, despite all the resistance he encountered.</p> <p>Place in revelation-history: The gospel had many obstacles to overcome, especially the frequent association with revolutionaries. Despite this God broke through these obstacles to let his new Kingdom come.</p>
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<p>Galatians 3:26-29 ²⁶ You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, ²⁷ for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.</p>	<p>Relevance: A passage of utter importance – faith in Jesus and baptism (and not Jewish blood or circumcision are mentioned as the requirements for being a child of God (and therefore receiving citizenship of God's Kingdom), and being viewed as Abrahams seed, as well as heirs according to the promise.</p> <p>Place in revelation-history: God's new nation is created with a different set of values than that of the dispensation before the coming of Christ.</p>
<p>Ephesians 2:11-20 ¹¹ Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "the circumcision" (that done in the body by the hands of men)– ¹² remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. ¹⁴ For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, ¹⁵ by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶ and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. ¹⁷ He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. ¹⁸ For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. ¹⁹ Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.</p>	<p>Relevance: Paul urges the non-Jewish Christians to live up to their call of holiness by reminding them that God unified them with Christ and with his body. He reminds them that they were "uncircumcised foreigners". He stresses that Jesus removed the barrier of hostility, and reconciled Jew and non-Jew through the cross. He put hostility to death and made peace between Jew and non-Jew. He does not only proclaim that they are part of God's household now, but that they have access to the Father on the same basis as the Jews.</p> <p>Place in revelation-history: This is an explicit revelatory passage in which the process of unification between Jews and non-Jews is clearly explained. People that were formerly excluded from citizenship of Israel and from the covenant of promise, are now fellow citizens with God's people; they are members of God's household. The process in which this house was built, with the prophets as foundation (promises), and Jesus as the cornerstone, is revealed here.</p>
<p>Philippians 3:17-21 ¹⁷ Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you. ¹⁸ For, as I have often told you before and now say again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. ¹⁹ Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things. ²⁰ But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Saviour from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.</p>	<p>Relevance: In the confusion that might arise due to the lack of cultural roots of family support in the life of a new convert, Paul offers his own life as an example. Paul describes those who take pride in earthly things as enemies of the cross of Christ.</p> <p>Place in revelation-history: Paul makes a clear distinction between those who view their lives in terms of earthly citizenship and culture, and those whose citizenship is in heaven. God's destiny for his children is far better than any earthly heritage.</p>
<p>1 Peter 2:13-17 ¹³ Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority, ¹⁴ or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. ¹⁵ For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish men. ¹⁶ Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as servants of God. ¹⁷ Show proper respect to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honour the king.</p>	<p>Relevance: Again Christians are urged to behave themselves properly in the face of discrimination by authorities. Added to submission, Christians are asked to serve them, and to show them proper respect and honour.</p> <p>Place in revelation-history: In God's reign over the nations He has appointed authorities to keep peace, although these authorities might not necessarily be Christians. God's name is slandered when Christians behave badly, and therefore Christians should realize constantly that they are God's representatives on earth. In the first place they are servants of God, who must submit to his will, and fear and serve Him.</p>

Cultural interaction in the Bible	4.2.4.3 The mystery cults
	<p>Acts 19:13-20 ¹³ Some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were demon-possessed. They would say, "In the name of Jesus, whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out." ¹⁴ Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. ¹⁵ One day the evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and I know about Paul, but who are you?" ¹⁶ Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding. ¹⁷ When this became known to the Jews and Greeks living in Ephesus, they were all seized with fear, and the name of the Lord Jesus was held in high honor. ¹⁸ Many of those who believed now came and openly confessed their evil deeds. ¹⁹ A number who had practiced sorcery brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly. When they calculated the value of the scrolls, the total came to fifty thousand drachmas. ²⁰ In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power.</p> <p>Relevance: A peculiar recording, with striking links to the prophecy in Isaiah 65:3-5. Sorcery seemed to be a practice even amongst the Jews. Although publicly against the good news Paul brought, it seemed that Jesus, whom Paul preached, was good enough for the Jewish priest to drive out demons. Even more significant, however, is the response of the Jewish and Greek community to the fact that the demons knew Jesus and Paul, and the inability of the Jewish priests to drive out demons. Jesus became Lord for many in Ephesus, and people sacrificed their pride. They openly confessed their evil deeds. People surrendered their assets and income from sorcery because they met a Person with far superior power.</p> <p>Place in revelation-history: The gospel is clearly entering the spiritual realm of non-Jewish religion. These demons are already familiar with Jesus and Paul. The gospel of the Lord is shown to be stronger than the cultic practices amongst the non-Jews.</p>

Cultural interaction in the Bible	4.2.4.4 Persecution
	<p>Acts 8:1-8 ¹And Saul was there, giving approval to his death.</p> <p>On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. ² Godly men buried Stephen and mourned deeply for him. ³ But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off men and women and put them in prison. ⁴ Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went. ⁵ Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Christ there. ⁶ When the crowds heard Philip and saw the miraculous signs he did, they all paid close attention to what he said. ⁷ With shrieks, evil spirits came out of many, and many paralytics and cripples were healed. ⁸ So there was great joy in that city.</p> <p>Relevance: Jesus' work in Samaria reaped dividends when the persecution of the Christians began. In sharp contrast with the treatment of the Christians by the Jews, the message brings great joy in the city of Samaria. Philip is clearly not viewed and treated as a Jew anymore.</p> <p>Place in revelation-history: The Jews are clearly saturated with the gospel, and it is time to proceed to the hungry non-Jewish peoples. The way that the gospel is accepted, is a clear indication that the circumstances are perfect for the spread of the Kingdom in broader circles than merely the Jewish people.</p> <p>Acts 13:44-48 ⁴⁴ On the next Sabbath almost the whole city (<i>Psidian Antioch</i>) gathered to hear the word of the Lord. ⁴⁵ When the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and talked abusively against what Paul was saying.</p> <p>⁴⁶ Then Paul and Barnabas answered them boldly: "We had to speak the word of God to you first. Since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles. ⁴⁷ For this is what the Lord has commanded us: " 'I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.' " ⁴⁸ When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored the word of the Lord; and all who were appointed for eternal life believed.</p> <p>Relevance: The persecution from the Jews against Christianity is definitely circling out. The jealousy against the evangelic explosion that the apostles are experiencing, is a recurring theme in Acts. But it is also clear that the apostles are now deliberately targeting the non-Jews with the gospel. The joy of the Gentiles should not be overlooked.</p> <p>Place in revelation-history:</p> <p>This passage is again at the centre of the transition from a separate, holy nation to a new, spiritual Israel elected for eternal life. God as the initiator of this transition is very much in focus.</p>

4.3.4 Insights from revelation-historical perspective

From the revelation-historical perspective it is evident that the inclusion of the Non-Jews was no last-minute plan after the ascension of Christ, but that it has been prophesied on numerous occasions. Jesus' death on the cross made the fulfilment of Jewish ceremonial laws and customs unnecessary, and that took a long time for Jewish Christians to accept. In the relevant passages the symbol of the church as the body and Christ as the head thereof is mentioned often. In addition, the principle that God shows no favouritism is repeated several times.

Furthermore the purpose of the new People, the new Kingdom of God is to glorify Him, and cause his Name to be glorified. The more God's children are able to find and accommodate one another, the more God will be glorified. The inclusion of Israel in the end-times (Rom 9-11) plays an important role with Paul. God still has a special plan for the conversion of the Israelites.

4.4 CONCLUSION

In this chapter an overview of Biblical data on the subject of cultural interaction revealed that the process of including all nations into God's Kingdom, and thus effecting the multiculturalism of this Kingdom, did not happen without conflict. As soon as cultures came into contact with one another, it took a considerable time to realize the all-encompassing nature of God's grace. People became aware of their cultural contexts and the contexts of those around them. They had to deal with it, and they also had to make several adjustments in their fixed traditional patterns of thinking and living.

The results above, to my view, further support the theory of Winter (2003:153) that there may be room for cluster analysis regarding certain recurrent themes in the New Testament. It also pointed out numerous aspects which had an effect on Christianity as a traveling culture, i.e. citizenship, power struggles in the patron-client system, and large scale immorality. It is clear that there are still new horizons to explore both from a socio-historical and a socio-scientific point of view.

Having studied the information on the broad Biblical context and revelation historical importance of cultural interaction, the textual evidence from the Corinthian correspondence concerning the situation in Corinth is now to be studied.

<p>Acts 19:8-10 ⁸ Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God. ⁹ But some of them became obstinate; they refused to believe and publicly maligned the Way. So Paul left them. He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. ¹⁰ This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord.</p>	<p>Relevance: A clear shift is indicated here. The lecture hall of Tyrannus becomes a platform for Paul after he was ousted from the synagogue. It is noteworthy that he spent two years there versus the 3 months in the synagogue.</p> <p>Place in revelation-history: The Lord uses non-Jewish meeting places to promote his Word, and it is accepted widely. The Christians are also not welcomed in the synagogue anymore.</p>
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4.3 DEDUCTIONS FROM THE INVESTIGATION OF BIBLICAL DATA

The enquiry into other Biblical texts reflecting cultural interaction brought to the surface some very interesting and relevant data.

4.3.1 Role players in the New Testament congregations

The study revealed an insight into the groups and cultures involved in New Testament congregations. Naturally the Jewish Christians played a significant role, but there is ample mention of godfearers and Greeks. Added to a low occurrence of referral to Roman officials, there is also mention of non-Greeks and Scythians (probably indicating the lowest form of barbarism) and other minority groups.

It is also evident that groups outside the congregations also definitely influenced the church, by name the Jews, the godfearers, the non-Jews, in particular the Greeks and Romans, as well as the government and the local administration.

4.3.2 Issues central to cultural conflict in the Bible

Firstly it was clear that several issues played an important role in cultural conflict. The primary issues were meals and circumcision. As far as the custom of circumcision goes, the Jewish Christians made sacrifices. However, it took a long time before the issue was finally resolved.

The eating habits of the Jews, which originated early in the history of Israel, played a major role in the early Christian congregations. The eating of meat sacrificed to the idols, as well as the issue of pork was prolonged issues in the New Testament Church.

The substantial material available about these "practical" issues confirms the hypothesis of Ferguson (1987:425) that the Jewish existence focused more on "orthopraxy" than on "orthodoxy". It must therefore be assumed that the symbolisation of certain values carried a heavier weight than what should have been the pivotal values and belief itself.

4.3.3 Christianity and first century cultures

The enquiry into Scripture also shed some light on the interaction of Greek and Roman culture with Christianity. The place of worship became more and more of a problem as the gospel progressed. In the process of finding identity the Christians were persecuted by Romans and Jews. At a later stage false prophets and preachers under the influence of foreign philosophies contributed to the cultural conflict of its time. This resulted in divisions in congregations.

Besides meals and circumcision, the relationships between people and the numerous exhortations to accept one another also support the fact that tension between cultures was part of daily life. Christians from non-Jewish origin were forbidden to continue certain offerings and feasts, but they also had to refrain from partnerships with the Greeks and Jews.

CHAPTER 5

THE INFLUENCE OF THE CULTURAL GROUPS IN CORINTH ON THE VARIOUS CONFLICTS

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5.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous two chapters, the different cultural backgrounds of Jews, Greeks and Romans have been explored from archaeology, from available literature, as well as from the Bible. In the present chapter attention is devoted to the information that the letters 1&2 Corinthians render regarding the subject. As in the previous chapter, the place of specific pericopes in the history of revelation is established.

In this analysis, the relevance to the theme - "cultural conflict in Corinth", as well as location of the passage in the history of revelation, are argued concurrently with each textual reference. As in 4.2 above, the textual evidence is limited to the portions that contain markers of cultural interaction or conflict. For the purpose of the analysis, as well as linking this section with the previous passage, the model of Elliott (see 3.2.3) above is utilised in structuring the information.

The surveys given in chapter 3 on the different cultures were done with the aim of identifying major trends in the relevant cultures, and not focusing on the detail of every cultural habit or symbol. In the more detailed discussion on the cultural context of the pericopes in the letters to Corinth, the cultural background to such issues is explained within the section "relevance of the pericope".

After investigating the text of Corinthian correspondence, the hypothesis that Corinth's cultural factors largely contributed to some of the conflicts in Corinth is discussed in the light of the preceding evidence. Finally the nature of the conflicts involved is identified as a basis for assessing Paul's approach to these conflicts.

5.2 ANALYSIS OF THE CULTURAL UNDERLAYS IN DIFFERENT CONFLICTS IN THE CORINTHIAN LETTERS

Outline of section
<p>4.2.1 Pivotal values and beliefs</p> <p> 4.2.1.1 Monotheism</p> <p> 4.2.1.2 Wisdom and miracles</p> <p>4.2.2 Accentuated values and their symbolism</p> <p> 4.2.2.1 Circumcision</p> <p>4.2.3 Norms and sanctions</p> <p> 4.2.3.1 Jewish law</p> <p> 4.2.3.2 Consumption of Idol meat</p> <p> 4.2.3.3 Covering of the head for prayers</p> <p>4.2.4 Socialization and personality structure</p> <p> 4.2.4.1 Relationship between Jews and Non-Jews</p> <p> 4.2.4.2 Citizenship</p> <p> 4.2.4.3 The mystery cults</p>

THEME	Scripture reference	Relevance to the theme and place in history of revelation.
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5.3.1 References to Pivotal values

1.1 Cultural interaction in the letters to Corinth	5.2.1 Monotheism	
	<p>1 Corinthians 10:14-22 ¹⁴ Therefore, my dear friends, flee from idolatry. ¹⁵ I speak to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say. ¹⁶ Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? ¹⁷ Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf. ¹⁸ Consider the people of Israel: Do not those who eat the sacrifices participate in the altar? ¹⁹ Do I mean then that a sacrifice offered to an idol is anything, or that an idol is anything? ²⁰ No, but the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons. ²¹ You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord's table and the table of demons. ²² Are we trying to arouse the Lord's jealousy? Are we stronger than he?</p>	<p>Relevance: Paul is clearly referring to the diverse cultural contexts of the congregation. Converted non-Jews cannot proceed with their idol offerings as normal. Paul uses the sacrificial rites of Israel as an example to show that sacrifice is an all inclusive action. Therefore participating in pagan sacrificial rites exposes oneself to the demons. In verse 21 Paul recalls the Ten Commandments.</p> <p>The other important reference to cultural interaction is the question in verse 22, "Are we stronger than He?" This would have addressed the idealisation of "power" over their gods in the Roman culture, especially where the gods had limited spheres of influence (see 3.5.3.1 above).</p> <p>Place in revelation-history: The Lord is portrayed here as a jealous God (Exodus 20:5), who does not share his children with demons. Holy Communion lies at the symbolical centre of Christ's reconciliatory function. If they want to be part of God's new people, they are expected to keep themselves holy and separate from their previous idolatry.</p>

Cultural interaction in the letters to Corinth	<p>5.2.1.2 “Wisdom and miracles”</p> <p>1 Corinthians 1:20-31 ²⁰ Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ²¹ For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. ²² Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, ²³ but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, ²⁴ but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵ For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength.</p>	<p>Relevance: It is clear that the wise men, the philosophers, the Greeks and the Jews had different expectations from the apostles. The solution for Paul is not always accommodation and supplying them what they want, but especially in proclaiming the Crucified Christ as the power of God. This Christ did not only become a stumbling block to the Jews, but also foolishness to the Greeks.</p> <p>Place in revelation-history: This passage is revealing the gospel of Christ as foolishness to the world. Those who do embrace it, will find that the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and that the weakness of God is stronger than human strength. The crucified Jesus in his weakness is the wisdom from God. Therefore the new people of God must boast in the Lord, and not in their history, culture or heritage.</p>
	<p>1 Cor 12:7-13 ⁷ Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. ⁸ To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, ⁹ to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, ¹⁰ to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹ All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.</p> <p>¹² The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. ¹³ For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free--and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.</p>	<p>Relevance: The distinction between the central values in traditional beliefs is drawn very clearly. The Holy Spirit gives another “wisdom (referring to the Sophists), miraculous power and prophecy (referring to aspects which were present in both Israel's history and the mystery cults)”, and speaking in tongues (which was a phenomenon in the mystery cults also), than the different Greco-Roman cults. Furthermore the shift from circumcision in Judaism in relation to baptism as the new symbol of unity, as well as the referral to Holy Communion are evident.</p> <p>Place in Revelation-history: Despite the close resemblance between certain aspects of Christianity and the mystery cults (with which the Greco-Roman religion was largely interwoven), the “manifestation” of this Spirit is unique, and linked to the new symbols of Christ, i.e. baptism and Holy Communion. Added unto the uniqueness of the Spirit as giver of the gifts, is the uniqueness of the gifts that every believer has received. This is in contrast to the separation that certain gifts created in the mystery cults (Is 65:5).</p>

5.2.2 Accentuated beliefs and symbolisation

<p>5.2.2.1 Circumcision</p> <p>1 Corinthians 7:17-19 ¹⁷ Nevertheless, each one should retain the place in life that the Lord assigned to him and to which God has called him. This is the rule I lay down in all the churches. ¹⁸ Was a man already circumcised when he was called? He should not become uncircumcised. Was a man uncircumcised when he was called? He should not be circumcised. ¹⁹ Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing. Keeping God's commands is what counts.</p>	<p>Relevance: A <i>crux interpretum</i> for those who argues the absence of Jews from the congregation of Corinth, or their irrelevance in the existing conflicts. Paul refers to one of the most important symbols in Jewish culture, the circumcision, and degrades it to nothing.</p> <p>Place in revelation-history: God called every individual (irrespective of culture or race) in his new Kingdom. In Jesus Christ circumcision is not the determining factor anymore, but whether you believe in Jesus Christ as Saviour and are baptised in the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12:13)</p>
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5.2.3 Norms and sanctions

5.2.3.1 The Law	
<p>1 Corinthians 9:19-23 ¹⁹ Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. ²⁰ To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. ²¹ To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. ²² To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. ²³ I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.</p>	<p>Relevance: It is clear that the Jewish law still played a major role in the Corinthian congregation. Even if people may reckon that this adherence refers mainly to godfearers, it makes little sense when his efforts to become a Jew to the Jews are mentioned here explicitly. It is strange that Paul as a "missionary to the Gentiles" would approach the issues of the Jews and their laws with so much circumspection. This can only be explained by his fervour to save at least some men (verse 22).</p> <p>Place in revelation-history: Even if the law was fulfilled in Jesus Christ, Paul are willing to submit himself under the law, where it was functional (cf. the circumcision of Timothy in Acts 16:3). Paul is doing everything in his power to promote the spreading of the gospel.</p>

5.2.3.2 The consumption of idol meat	
<p>1 Corinthians 8:7-13 ⁷ But not everyone knows this. Some people are still so accustomed to idols that when they eat such food they think of it as having been sacrificed to an idol, and since their conscience is weak, it is defiled. ⁸ But food does not bring us near to God; we are no worse if we do not eat, and no better if we do. ⁹ Be careful, however, that the exercise of your freedom does not become a stumbling block to the weak. ¹⁰ For if anyone with a weak conscience sees you who have this knowledge eating in an idol's temple, won't he be emboldened to eat what has been sacrificed to idols? ¹¹ So this weak brother, for whom Christ died, is destroyed by your knowledge. ¹² When you sin against your brothers in this way and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. ¹³ Therefore, if what I eat causes my brother to fall into sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause him to fall.</p>	<p>Relevance: It is clear from this passage that removing the "stumbling block" for the weaker brother is more important than the "make-or-break" exercising of our freedom. Freedom⁹⁵ should not be a stumbling block to the weak. This passage, with reference to verse 8, contains one of the major arguments for the absence or total minority of Jews in the congregation of Corinth (see 2.3.3). The argument is that people "accustomed to the idols" could not possibly refer to Jews, but to heathens who applied radical restrictions in their fervour for Christ. Amidst the numerous solutions the possibility remains that the weak were influenced by a Jewish faction within the congregation. If we accept that "the weak" were not Jews, it does not explain the numerous references⁹⁶ to Jews and Jewish history in this cluster of 3 chapters (1 Cor 8-10) covering the issue of idol meat. I hold that Paul is indirectly attacking the "Hebrews", and their followers referred to in 2 Cor 10:22.⁹⁷</p> <p>Place in revelation-history: In the new Kingdom food does not bring us nearer to God. No, it is more important to realize that Christ died for the weaker brother, and to take him into account when eating. Those who make the weak stumble are sinning against Christ himself.</p>

⁹⁵ "Freedom" is a laden concept within the Roman culture, especially in the case of Corinth which consisted mainly of freedmen (see 3.1.1 above).

⁹⁶ Cf. 1 Cor 8:4; 1 Cor 8:9 (a reference to Lev 19:14 in the Torah); 1 Cor 9:8,9; 1 Cor 9:13; 1 Cor 9:20; 1 Cor 10:1-10; 1 Cor 10:18; 1 Cor 10:32.

⁹⁷ See the discussion on the identity of the Hebrews in 2 Cor 10:22 in 2.3.4 above.

<p>1 Corinthians 10:23-33 ²³"Everything is permissible"--but not everything is beneficial. "Everything is permissible"--but not everything is constructive. ²⁴ Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others. ²⁵ Eat anything sold in the meat market without raising questions of conscience, ²⁶ for, "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it." ²⁷ If some unbeliever invites you to a meal and you want to go, eat whatever is put before you without raising questions of conscience. ²⁸ But if anyone says to you, "This has been offered in sacrifice," then do not eat it, both for the sake of the man who told you and for conscience' sake ²⁹ the other man's conscience, I mean, not yours. For why should my freedom be judged by another's conscience? ³⁰ If I take part in the meal with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of something I thank God for? ³¹ So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. ³² Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God-- ³³ even as I try to please everybody in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved. ¹ Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ</p>	<p>Relevance: Paul is presenting accommodation concerning meat in an innovative way. He does not want the Christian to be bound by rules again, and therefore everything is permissible. He stresses however, that the Christian should consider in which way their behaviour will be beneficial to their weaker brother. It is also clear that accommodation concerning meat is twofold. It is not only the weaker brother, bound still by Jewish laws, who are in question, but also the unbeliever inviting the Christian to eat with him. Again the issue of causing other people to stumble is mentioned. Paul explicitly tries to take away the impediments to everybody in every way, in order that many may be saved.</p> <p>Place in revelation-history: The Lord as owner of all the earth, as well as all the people on the earth is central to the issue here, which is a theme central to Jewish religion from the Torah. This Almighty God must be glorified through our eating and drinking habits. A further important insight is that Christ did not only die for the sins of the world, but he came to serve mankind in order to save them. The church of Christ should follow this example.</p>
<p>1 Corinthians 11:17-22 ¹⁷ In the following directives I have no praise for you, for your meetings do more harm than good. ¹⁸ In the first place, I hear that when you come together as a church, there are divisions among you, and to some extent I believe it. ¹⁹ No doubt there have to be differences among you to show which of you have God's approval. ²⁰ When you come together, it is not the Lord's Supper you eat, ²¹ for as you eat, each of you goes ahead without waiting for anybody else. One remains hungry, another gets drunk. ²² Don't you have homes to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you for this? Certainly not!</p>	<p>Relevance: This is another of the key areas where consent about the reason behind the conflict, has not yet been reached (see 2.3.2 above). Divisions did exist, and these divisions were brought to the surface at the Holy Supper. Paul remarks that these divisions within the church do have a certain function: to show which of them has God's approval. In general Paul finds it unacceptable that certain people eat and drink all the food, whilst others don't get anything. Although the major trend is to view this division in terms of an economic schism, there is also a background of the Roman elite or Freedmen dining separately from the plebeians or slaves to accentuate their status.⁹⁸</p> <p>Place in revelation-history: Respect for the Church of God, as well as for the Lord's Supper implies respect for fellow members of the Body. God has also revealed himself through the ages as the one who "resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble" (Proverbs 3:34, James 4:6).</p>

⁹⁸ Within the patron-client system it was typical to serve special food to special guests in the *triclinium*, whilst inferior people were served in the *atrium* with food of less quality (Keener 1993:477).

5.2.3.3 Covering of the head for prayers	
<p>1 Corinthians 11:3-16 ³ Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God. ⁴ Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head. ⁵ And every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head—it is just as though her head were shaved. ⁶ If a woman does not cover her head, she should have her hair cut off; and if it is a disgrace for a woman to have her hair cut or shaved off, she should cover her head. ⁷ A man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man. ⁸ For man did not come from woman, but woman from man; ⁹ neither was man created for woman, but woman for man. ¹⁰ For this reason, and because of the angels, the woman ought to have a sign of authority on her head. ¹¹ In the Lord, however, woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. ¹² For as woman came from man, so also man is born of woman. But everything comes from God. ¹³ Judge for yourselves: Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? ¹⁴ Does not the very nature of things teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a disgrace to him, ¹⁵ but that if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For long hair is given to her as a covering. ¹⁶ If anyone wants to be contentious about this, we have no other practice - nor do the churches of God.</p>	<p>Relevance: This can be easily interpreted as a gender issue (Keener 1993:475), but it has definite relevance for the present theme. As a rule all women appeared with veils on the street. But when it concerned prayer, Greek women, as well as the men, prayed bare-headed. On the other hand, Roman and Jewish men prayed with their heads covered (Blaiklock 1973:593). On top of this, Roman men often covered their heads as a sign of status (Winter 2003:147). It must also not be overlooked that the problem with Hellenism in 2 Maccabees 4:10 was that the adherents of the Gymnasium were forced to wear a Greek hat. Paul's solution to this problem is to make the head covering a standard rule for woman, and make wearing the head covering thus more acceptable to society. On the other hand, he discourages the wearing of the head covering for men, to prevent the spreading of the status conflict in the congregation.</p> <p>Place in Revelation-history: Although it is clear that no universal, timeless principles for all members of churches at all times can be deducted from this passage on the matter of head covering <i>per se</i>, it is important that sacrifices must be made towards the spreading of the gospel, as well as the unity in the church. A Christian must be willing to forfeit certain habits for the purpose of removing hinderances in the way for others.</p>

5.2.4 Socialization and personality structure

5.2.4.1 Relationship between Jews and Non-Jews	
<p>1 Corinthians 6:1-8 ¹ If any of you has a dispute with another, dare he take it before the ungodly for judgment instead of before the saints? ² Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases? ³ Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life! ⁴ Therefore, if you have disputes about such matters, appoint as judges even men of little account in the church! ⁵ I say this to shame you. Is it possible that there is nobody among you wise enough to judge a dispute between believers? ⁶ But instead, one brother goes to law against another--and this in front of unbelievers! ⁷ The very fact that you have lawsuits among you means you have been completely defeated already. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated? ⁸ Instead, you yourselves cheat and do wrong, and you do this to your brothers.</p>	<p>Relevance: This pericope refers to two important factors in the cultural context of the believers in Corinth. Firstly, as already shown from the layout and history of the city in 3.2 above, the court cases were held in the <i>basilica</i>. The practice of oratory skills and Roman law was part of everyday life in Corinth (cf. 3.5.2.2, 3.5.3.3). It seems that even congregation members took one another to court. Paul hints in verse 4 that people of little account (maybe referring to slaves or non-citizens) are better equipped to mediate in such cases than worldly judges. Paul reacts to this recalling the principle of reciprocity in verse 8. It is not fitting for brothers to cheat and to wrong one another.</p> <p>Place in revelation-history: Paul relates to the principles of the new Kingdom in Christ. He is actually arguing that believers should not disgrace a brother in Christ before a worldly court with worldly principles. No, they should allow fellow church members, although even of lower status, to assist them with ruling and mediation.</p>

<p>2 Corinthians 5:14-16 ¹⁴ For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. ¹⁵ And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. ¹⁶ So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer.</p>	<p>Relevance: Real accommodation of Christians from different origin starts with a spiritual point of view. Cultures should not regard one another from a worldly point of view, but serve one another with an unselfish attitude.</p> <p>Place in revelation-history Initially even Paul regarded Christ from a worldly point of view. God eventually revealed to him the true spiritual nature of Christ. Because of Christ's death membership of the church is open for everybody who is prepared to live for Him.</p>
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<p>2 Corinthians 10:21b-29 ^{21b} ...What anyone else dares to boast about—I am speaking as a fool—I also dare to boast about. ²² Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they Abraham's descendants? So am I. ²³ Are they servants of Christ? (I am out of my mind to talk like this.) I am more. I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. ²⁴ Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, ²⁶ I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers. ²⁷ I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. ²⁸ Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches. ²⁹ Who is weak, and I do not feel weak? Who is led into sin, and I do not inwardly burn?</p>	<p>Relevance: This pericope has already been shown to be critical for the understanding of Jewish influences in the congregation in Corinth. The one problem with linking this passage to 1 Corinthians is the reference in 2 Corinthians 11:4 which indicates that they came to Corinth after Paul. The recurring of the leadership problem in 2 Corinthians makes it probable that these people came after Paul's initial stay in Corinth, but before Paul received the news about the congregation and the questions that led to the writing of 1 Corinthians. Of course, there is also the matter of the lost correspondence of Paul to the Corinthian church, which makes any explanation regarding the origin of Paul's Jewish opponents just more speculative.</p> <p>Paul also argues here that the false leaders in Corinth do not have an idea what it really means to be leaders in God's church. Through his life he was prepared to be servant to the Jews and the non-Jews. Noteworthy in verse 28 and 29, Paul's concern for all the churches is still burning in his heart, despite everything that he endured.</p> <p>Place in revelation-history: When we read a summary of Paul's life, it is remarkable that a single human being received the miraculous power from God to serve in this way. A leader can alone be worthy in God's eyes if he reveals such a true and intense concern for God's flock. The motivation for Paul's labour lies in verse 23, where he implies himself to be a servant of Christ.</p>
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5.2.4.2 Citizenship	
<p>1 Corinthians 1:26-31 ²⁶ Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. ²⁷ But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. ²⁸ He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, ²⁹ so that no one may boast before him. ³⁰ It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. ³¹ Therefore, as it is written: "Let him who boasts boast in the Lord."</p>	<p>Relevance: The referral to the majority of the congregation as not being "influential" or of "noble birth" is a confirmation that "Roman citizenship by birth" must have given higher status than just being part of the freedmen. On the other hand, this probably confirms the existence of Roman elite in the congregation. Paul also refers to Jesus who was not a Roman citizen, and who did not even have the privileges Paul himself enjoyed. The concept of "boasting" would fit perfectly into the Roman patron-client system, where persons were very status-conscious.</p> <p>Place in revelation-history: In opposition to different claims of status, and the effect on those that had no status, Paul presents Jesus as the one who did not even have citizenship, and was therefore despised. The theme of "boasting in the Lord" is also repeated in 2 Corinthians 12:9.</p>
<p>1 Corinthians 7:20-24 ²⁰ Each one should remain in the situation which he was in when God called him. ²¹ Were you a slave when you were called? Don't let it trouble you—although if you can gain your freedom, do so. ²² For he who was a slave when he was called by the Lord is the Lord's freedman; similarly, he who was a free man when he was called is Christ's slave. ²³ You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men. ²⁴ Brothers, each man, as responsible to God, should remain in the situation God called him to.</p>	<p>Relevance: Paul allows for everybody to retain a place in life that the Lord assigned to that person and to which God has called him/her. For a Christian, being the "Lords" freedman, or Christ's slave is more important than citizenship of Rome and freedom from slavery.</p> <p>Place in revelation-history: God called every individual (irrespective of culture or race) into his new Kingdom for a certain task in this world. The position you hold on earth is not that important, because a Christian slave is free in the Lord's eyes, and a Christian master is actually the Lord's slave.</p>
5.2.4.3 The mystery cults	
<p>1 Corinthians 14:21-25 ²¹ In the Law it is written: "Through men of strange tongues and through the lips of foreigners I will speak to this people, but even then they will not listen to me," says the Lord. ²² Tongues, then, are a sign, not for believers but for unbelievers; prophecy, however, is for believers, not for unbelievers. ²³ So if the whole church comes together and everyone speaks in tongues, and some who do not understand or some unbelievers come in, will they not say that you are out of your mind? ²⁴ But if an unbeliever or someone who does not understand comes in while everybody is prophesying, he will be convinced by all that he is a sinner and will be judged by all, ²⁵ and the secrets of his heart will be laid bare. So he will fall down and worship God, exclaiming, "God is really among you!"</p>	<p>Relevance: In the practising of speaking in tongues it is important to note that the non-Jews had a history of sorcery, for instance the oracle at Delphi. Therefore Paul also stresses the importance of prophesying above speaking in tongues. If not approached in the right manner, speaking in tongues can create confusion in the mind of an unbeliever.</p> <p>Place in revelation-history: God's new people are not only supposed to edify one another. No, unbelievers should be brought to repentance through prophesy and the ministry of the church. The church must become the vehicle that brings the nations to repentance.</p>

5.3 CONCLUSION

It is always difficult to speculate about the composition of a congregation that existed about 2000 years ago, especially when one has to do this through the window of a text not written for that purpose.

Section 3.4.1 showed that it is almost incontestable that the congregation in Corinth had at least a fair number of Greeks and Romans in their midst. The four references to the Greeks in 1 Corinthians, as well as the presence of Sosthenes (see 3.4.1 above), as well as others with Latin names testify to this.

Although the presence and the prominence of Jews in the congregation have generally been contested in scholarship, it has been proven that the Jewish cultural background played a major role in Corinth. Some might argue Jewish culture played a major role in Christianity as a whole, but there are specific markers in the discussed pericopes which point to the presence of Jewish Christians, as well as their influence in the congregation.

Not only are the Jews as a group named 7 times, often in juxtaposition with the Greeks, but there are several references to issues important in Jewish culture, such as circumcision, meals, the Jewish law, which are also debated in their differences with other cultures in Corinth⁹⁹. Although Paul refers in somewhat impersonal fashion to the people of Israel in 1 Corinthians 10:18, the direct approach taken in 2 Corinthians 11:22 is a clear indication that Jews contributed in some or other way to the problems between the different factions in Corinth.

Consequently I argue that the Jews did play a role in the conflict in Corinth, especially in the light of their background of separation. The tensions between the Greeks and the Romans in the congregation must also be kept in mind. The Greeks might have lost the wars, but the battle for cultural supremacy, the battle between *Hellenism* and *Romanitas* was still very much part of everyday life.

⁹⁹ It must be taken into account that this study did not include all the references to Jewish culture in the Corinthian letters (for a comprehensive list, cf. Keener 1993), but only those in which the matter of cultural interaction were clearly present.

CHAPTER 6

PERSONAL BACKGROUND OF THE APOSTLE PAUL

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6.1 INTRODUCTION

After the study of the different cultures involved in the congregation, it is necessary to proceed to the personal background of Paul the apostle. To make a valid assessment of Paul's approach to cultural conflict in Corinth, an investigation into Paul's own cultural background is needed.

Although the term "background" may sound strange in terms of the nature of culture as a dynamic and changing phenomena in 3.2.4 above, Paul's background must be assessed before discussing the way that Paul integrates and even uses his unique background in his approach to cultural conflict in Corinth.

One cannot study Paul's person and background in an anachronistic manner. The way that personalities were viewed by First Century generations has to be taken into account. To understand people in the first century, they must be assessed in terms of "dyadic" personality. The focus is not primarily upon who a person is, but where he comes from, and where he belongs (Witherington 1998:31). The outward appearance of a person was also very important in the first century AD (Witherington 1988:40). This would mean that a First century person was mainly measured according to descent, gender and geography (Malina & Neyrey 1996:153-174).

In discussing the cultural background of Paul, special focus is given to his descent and his geographical background. As the "analogy of faith" is not paramount in this search for biographical information on Paul's life, it is only the "analogy of Scripture" that is attended to. Biblical passages are established and discussed for their relevance to Paul's background.

References to Paul in the *Acts of Paul*¹⁰⁰ are discussed where applicable. Studies done on the background of Paul is not covered in a separate section, but insights from these studies are utilized in the discussion of Biblical information.

¹⁰⁰ The Apocryphal writing, *Acts of the Apostle Paul* written circa 185-195 AC by a presbyter in Asia Minor (Schneemelcher 1992:351), was disapproved of by Tertullian, whilst Hypolytus of Rome seemed to accept the work as a genuine record of events (Bruce 1977:468).

6.2 CHRONOLOGY OF PAUL'S LIFE AND WORK

To understand the person of Paul, as well as his relation to different cultural groups, it is helpful to keep the chronology of his work in mind. Therefore a chronology of Paul's life and mission, and some relevant Bible portions is constructed. Of course the dates are only by approximation, and the differences in the research tradition on the matter need not be reflected here.¹⁰¹

<u>Occasion</u>	<u>Date</u>
Birth	6 BC
Persecution of the church	32-33 AD
Conversion near Damascus	33 AD
Arabia	34 AD
Return to Damascus	34 AD
Flight from Damascus	37 AD
First visit to Jerusalem as Christian	37 AD
Syria and Cilicia	37-40 AD
Antioch	40 AD
Second visit to Jerusalem	43-44 AD
First missionary journey	
Antioch, Galatia, Macedonia, Corinth, Jerusalem	45-51 AD
Apostolic convention in Jerusalem	49/51 AD
Return to Antioch	50/51 AD
Second missionary journey	
Cilicia, South-Galatia, Galgatic, Phrygia, Mysia, Troas, Philippi, Amphipolis, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, Caesarea, Jerusalem.	51-55 AD
Third missionary journey	
Antioch, Galatia, Phrygia, Ephesus, Corinth, Troas, Macedonia, Illicrium, Corinth, Miletus, Tyre, Lysia, Ptolomais, Caesarea, Jerusalem.	55-57 AD
Imprisonment in Caesarea	57-59 AD
Journey to Rome	59-60 AD

¹⁰¹ Due to the lack of consensus and the lack of uniformity in the presentation of chronologies presented by scholars, this broad chronology has been drawn up using the work of Bruce (1977:475), Hengel & Schwemer (1998:473-475), Murphy O'Connor (1996:31) and Witherington (1998:327) critically.

6.3 A PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION OF PAUL

Paul himself, as well as Luke in Acts reveals little on his physical appearance. The closest we come to such a description, is speculation concerning Paul's poor sight. The "thorn in the flesh" that Paul refers to in 2 Corinthians 12:7¹⁰² has often been interpreted as an allusion to an ailment Paul had. In Galatians 4:13-14¹⁰³ and 2 Corinthians 10:10¹⁰⁴ there are references to Paul being sick and not having a "physical presence". These references lead scholars to believe that he probably had a problem with his eyesight¹⁰⁵.

We do, however, find a more detailed description of Paul in the account of Paul's physical appearance from the *Acts of the Apostle Paul*,¹⁰⁶ in the chapter concerning the virgin Thecla:

"And he saw Paul coming, a man small of stature, with a bald head and crooked legs, in a good state of body, with eyebrows meeting and nose somewhat hooked, full of friendliness, for now he appeared like a man, and now he had the face of an angel."

Although this description may seem disturbing to the modern observer, attempts have been made to view this description as a positive portrayal of Paul (Witherington 1998:42-44). This description of Paul has even been compared to Suetonius' (*Lives of the Caesars* 2.79:1-2) description of Caesar Augustus. According to Suetonius, Caesar Augustus had clear bright eyes, with eyebrows that met. His nose projected a little at the top, and then bent slightly inward. He was also short of stature.

The baldness of Paul can be explained by him shaving his hair because of a religious vow that Paul had taken¹⁰⁷, or his compliance with Jewish requirements for converts that accompanied him¹⁰⁸. Paul's crooked stance is unconvincing compared to the stance of a man in battle (Witherington 1998:44). The lack of reference to Paul's eyes may be a confirmation that there was definitely something wrong with his eyes, but this remains pure speculation.

Considering the absence of any other description of Paul, this reference to Paul in *The Acts of Paul* (although dated very late)¹⁰⁹, gives perhaps a closer description than would have been possible in the twenty first century. The possibility of Paul being unattractive is strengthened by the reaction of the crowd in Acts 14:12¹¹⁰, naming Barnabas "Zeus" and Paul "Hermes". This is interpreted by some as an indication that Barnabas was more attractive than Paul, and therefore named after the main deity (Van der Watt & Tolmie 2005:566). The one problem with such an interpretation is that the writer of Acts provides us with the reason for this: Paul is the chief speaker, or "messenger", which was the office of Hermes.

¹⁰² 2 Cor 12:7: "To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me."

¹⁰³ Gal 4:13-14: "¹³ As you know, it was because of an illness that I first preached the gospel to you. ¹⁴ Even though my illness was a trial to you, you did not treat me with contempt or scorn."

¹⁰⁴ 2 Cor 10:10: "¹⁰ For some say, "His letters are weighty and forceful, but in person he is unimpressive and his speaking amounts to nothing."

¹⁰⁵ Paul's statement that the Galatians would have plucked out their eyes and given it to him if they could (Gal 4:15), his writing in big letters (Gal 6:11) and his inability to recognize the high priest (Ac 23:5) have been given as reasons to support the theory of Paul's "thorn" being a problem with poor sight. This theory has received little support in recent times (Winter 1986:414).

¹⁰⁶ Cf. the first section in this work *Acts of Paul* 3:3 (Schneemelcher 1992:354).

¹⁰⁷ Ac 18:18b: "Before he sailed, he had his hair cut off at Cenchrea because of a vow he had taken."

¹⁰⁸ Ac 21:24a: "²⁴ Take these men, join in their purification rites and pay their expenses, so that they can have their heads shaved."

¹⁰⁹ The authenticity of this book is seriously and validly questioned by Van der Watt and Tolmie (2005:561-562), and therefore the usefulness of the book for constructing an image of Paul, is very limited.

¹¹⁰ Ac 14:12: "¹² Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul they called Hermes because he was the chief speaker."

Lastly Paul compares himself in the figurative sense to an athlete in 1 Corinthians 9:27¹¹¹, and therefore we cannot really deduct anything from this reference. In conclusion it must be noted that the evidence for Paul as a person without a strong physical presence, outweighs evidence for the opposite. It must also be mentioned that Paul was often abused and flogged (2 Cor 11:24-25)¹¹², and that must have left some scars on his body, especially later in his ministry.

6.4 PAUL AS A JEW

Paul identifies himself as a Jew in Philippians 3:4b-5¹¹³, and the narrative in Acts 21:29¹¹⁴ points in the same direction. Paul's reference to his Jewish background in Philippians 3 is indeed laden with status. He was circumcised on the eighth day according to Jewish convention¹¹⁵, and therefore complied with one of the most important symbols of Jewish culture (see 3.5.1.2 above).

He was also part of God's separate nation, Israel. Paul's focus on his genealogy, as being born from the tribe of Benjamin should not be underestimated. Paul was not only from the seed of the first king of Israel, but bore his Hebrew name, i.e. Saul. The last reference in this verse, i.e. to Paul as a strict observer of the Law, a Pharisee, would also recall a virtue that was described in section 3.5.1 above, namely the observance of the Torah as God's code of conduct for his children.

Considering the above, it is understandable that Paul's Jewish background was never disputed by New Testament scholars. However, the kind of Jew that Paul was is still under contention. This burning issue in New Testament circles is even contested up to the point where the "search for the historical Paul" (in analogy with the search for the historical Jesus) is postulated as a field of research.¹¹⁶

One of the main differences remain the extent of Paul's involvement with the Pharisees. Although scholars such as Murphy O'Connor (1996:52-62) and Sanders (1990:8-9) doubt the historicity of Acts 22:3¹¹⁷ (placing Paul's education in Jerusalem under Gamaliel), the current consensus is that this information is historically sound (Haacker 2003:21-22; Horrel 2000:25; Witherington 1998:59).

Paul did have close ties with Jerusalem. He tells the Jews in Jerusalem that he was brought up there (Ac 22:3). The word that he uses in this context, ἀνατεθραμμενος, refers not only to growing up in his later years in Jerusalem, but also to his early childhood (Haacker 2003:21). Paul also had family there. When there was a plot against him, a son of his sister, who lived in Jerusalem, helped to rescue Paul from the plot against his life (Ac 23:16). According to Acts 21:40-22:2¹¹⁸, Paul was also fluent in Aramaic, which increases the probability of an education in Jerusalem.

¹¹¹ 1 Cor 9:27: ²⁷ No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize."

¹¹² 1 Cor 11:24-25: ²⁴ Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea..."

¹¹³ Philippians 3:4b-5: "If anyone else thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: ⁵ circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee..."

¹¹⁴ Ac 21:39: ³⁹ Paul answered, "I am a Jew, from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no ordinary city. Please let me speak to the people."

¹¹⁵ In effect Paul is also distinguishing him here from the proselytes, who were circumcised as adults.

¹¹⁶ Cf. the title of Witherington's work, *The Paul Quest: A renewed search for the Jew of Tarsus*, as well as the chapter on the "historical" Paul by Den Heyer (1998:8-22).

¹¹⁷ Ac 22:3: ³ I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city. Under Gamaliel I was thoroughly trained in the law of our fathers and was just as zealous for God as any of you are today."

¹¹⁸ Ac 21:40-22:2: ⁴⁰ Having received the commander's permission, Paul stood on the steps and motioned to the crowd. When they were all silent, he said to them in Aramaic: ¹ "Brothers and

Paul's reference to being a zealous Pharisee not only in his faultless observance of the Law, but also in persecuting the church, is probably an indication that Paul was not only an ordinary Pharisee, but that he was an "extremist Pharisee", intent on "stamping out" those who disagreed with him (Segal 2003:170).

Many scholars find Paul's previous behaviour as an extremist Pharisee incompatible with the moderate behaviour of Gamaliel in treating the Christian apostles in Acts 5:38-39¹¹⁹. The education Paul had under Gamaliel, was not necessarily by Gamaliel in person, and not with a specialised future as teacher of the law in mind (Haacker 2003:21-22).

The theory that Haacker relates is not really compatible with the reference to Paul's education in the law in Acts 22:3 as *κατά ἀκρίβειαν*.¹²⁰ If Paul's education was so "thorough", and if he refers to himself in Galatians 1:13-14¹²¹ as "advancing in Judaism beyond many Jews of my age" and "being extremely zealous for the traditions of my forefathers", it does not make sense that he had no personal contact with Gamaliel, or that his education there was of a secondary nature. If one just compare the way the Corinthian congregation deviated from Paul's initial teaching, it is quite possible that Paul could have taken a different course than his teacher.

The dyadic personality of Paul becomes visible in Galatians 1:13-14 where he refers to his Jewish heritage. Paul is not necessarily ashamed of his Jewish heritage. He refers to his Jewish fathers, and to himself as a previous Judaiser. But this is precisely where the dyadic personality of Paul is also overturned. Read carefully, this passage clearly refers to Paul's previous life. From a Jewish point of view Paul would have been regarded as an "apostate" from Judaism.

The manner in which Paul argues about the position of Israel in Romans 9:1-11:36 has often been viewed as a positive attitude to Israel, but these three chapters can also be seen as a radical critique of Judaism in the first century. This passage does contain the hope of salvation for Israel, but actually declares that Israel in its current situation of unbelief is doomed.

Paul's distance from his "Jewish" heritage is also brought to the surface by his statement in 1 Corinthians 9:20 that he becomes a "Jew to the Jews". Although ironic that somebody who is a Jew can become a Jew to the Jews, this probably refers to "orthopraxy" rather than "orthodoxy" (Witherington 1998:64).

Despite Paul being circumcised himself, and circumcising Timothy according to Acts 16:3, his view concerning circumcision in Galatians 6:15¹²² reveals his true sentiments. In his conclusion on the Jewish identity of Paul, Witherington (1998:64) evades the dichotomy between Paul being a Diaspora or a Palestine Jew, but describes him as an apocalyptic or messianic Jew. In realizing the identity of Jesus as the true Messiah, Paul now obeyed the new duties of the new creation.

In conclusion, it is clear that although Paul as a missionary to the gentiles did not focus on his Jewish heritage in dyadic fashion, he was quite comfortable with his Jewish background. He only fell back on his Jewish background in polemic situations with Hebrew opponents. This careful referral to his Jewish background would probably explain why the Jews in Acts 21:40 were surprised when they heard Paul speak Aramaic.

Although Paul regretted his persecution of Christians in his previous life as Pharisee, he was proud of the fact that he did everything with the utmost zeal. Having found the true Messiah, this

fathers, listen now to my defense."² When they heard him speak to them in Aramaic, they became very quiet.

¹¹⁹ Ac 5:38-39: "³⁸ Therefore, in the present case I advise you: Leave these men alone! Let them go! For if their purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail. ³⁹ But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God."

¹²⁰ The phrase *κατά ἀκρίβειαν* is rendered by the NIV as "thoroughly".

¹²¹ Gal 1:13-14: "¹³ For you have heard of my previous way of life in Judaism, how intensely I persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it. ¹⁴ I was advancing in Judaism beyond many Jews of my own age and was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers."

¹²² Gal 6: 15: "¹⁵ Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is a new creation."

zeal of Paul was now focused on winning everybody for Christ, and opening their eyes to the identity of the true Messiah.

6.5 PAUL AS A CITIZEN OF TARSUS AND ROME

Although one would find very few scholars, if any, who would argue for the primacy of his Hellenistic or Roman background over his Jewish or Hebrew roots, the Hellenistic and Roman cultures were an undeniable part of Paul's life.

In the introduction (1.2) reference was made to the work of Den Heyer with the title *Paul: A man of two worlds*, as describing Paul's Jewish and Greco-Roman origin. In line with the (somewhat artificial) separation between Greek and Roman culture made by Den Heyer (1998) in section 3.4. above, Wallace & Williams (1998) divided the Roman and Greek worlds in Paul's life by naming their work *The three worlds of Paul of Tarsus*.

The first two sections below examine the Greek and Roman cultural influences on Paul (the fact that he originated from Tarsus and had Roman citizenship), whilst the third section is devoted to the rhetorical background and skills of the apostle Paul, with special reference to the composition of his letters, and in particular, 1&2 Corinthians.

6.4.1 Born in Tarsus

The great city of Tarsus, the capital of Cilicia, was probably Paul's (or actually his father's) passport to Roman citizenship. After Antiochus Epiphanes IV declared Tarsus a polis in 171 BC, Greek and Jewish colonists were brought in to increase the productivity of the oriental population (Murphy O'Connor 1996:33). In 66 BC it was incorporated into the Roman system by Pompey. Mark Anthony rewarded the city for opposing Cassius, the murderer of Julius Caesar, by giving the city its freedom. This honour was renewed by Caesar Augustus in 31 BC, and probably paved the way for a group of citizens to be awarded citizenship of Rome (Murphy O'Connor 1966:33).

Although Paul never mentions in his letters that he was a citizen of Tarsus or Rome, it is highly unlikely that the numerous references to Paul's citizenship of Tarsus and of Rome in Acts were merely construed by Luke. In cases where the historicity of Acts is doubted, it is mostly ascribed to the tendency to make the text more Jewish, such as Paul's education in Jerusalem and his use of the synagogue as a starting point for the gospel in foreign cities (Sanders 1990:8-9).

Therefore it would not make sense for Luke to add fictional information (such as Paul's citizenship of Tarsus and Rome) in Acts which would actually "demote" Paul as an authority amongst the Jewish Christians. The tendency to question Paul's education in Jerusalem from a young age did have the advantage that ample research is available on Tarsus, especially from scholars such as Murphy O'Connor (1996:32-51), who argues that Paul received the bulk of his education (if not all of it) in Tarsus of Cilicia.

Whilst it is disputed that Paul's family originated from Tarsus, Wallace & Williams (1998:180) in turn question Paul's birth in Tarsus and his childhood there. According to them Paul need not have been born physically in Tarsus to be regarded as a citizen of Tarsus (or of Rome), and that Paul had "obvious" connections in Jerusalem¹²³ (Wallace & Williams 1998:180). Their thesis, however, lacks an explanation for such an addition by Luke.

In view of the lack of additional extra-Biblical evidence, as well as substantial evidence for the opposite, the information rendered to us in the gospel of Luke concerning Paul's citizenship of Tarsus and Rome is accepted for the purpose of this study.

¹²³ The connections in Jerusalem refers to possible contacts that Paul built up during his education, as well as his aunt and her son, who lived in Jerusalem (Ac 23:16).

The author of Acts not only refers to Paul as coming from Tarsus (Ac 9:11), but he also relates Paul himself declaring in Acts 21:39 that he hails from Tarsus. In Acts 22:3¹²⁴, where Paul defends himself in front of the Jews in Jerusalem, he refers to himself being born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in Jerusalem.

Accepting Acts' account of Paul's early years as historically correct, i.e. that Paul must have spent most of his education as a child and as a young man in Jerusalem, Paul's eloquence in *Koine* Greek, as well as his rhetorical capabilities still need explanation.

This component of Paul's background is easily answered by the advocates that contend that Paul's childhood education was in Tarsus. Tarsus was not alone a well known trade centre, but also a city known for its education, and instruction in rhetoric (Murphy O'Connor 1996:49). If the theory for the bulk of Paul's education in Jerusalem is upheld, it does not exclude the possible influence of Tarsus on Paul.

Paul's parents probably had Greek as a home language (see the use of Greek by the Diaspora Jews, argued in 3.5.2.4 above). Even in the synagogue the Septuagint was used, and the Jews conducted their business in Greek. Greek was therefore the *lingua franca*, also for the Jews.

The sending of Paul to Jerusalem was probably due his father being a Pharisee (Ac 23:6). For his father it must have been important that Paul is educated in the Jewish law. The existence of a gymnasium in Jerusalem (see 3.5.2.2 above), as well as the presence of a group of Greek Jews Acts 6:1¹²⁵ and Acts 9:29¹²⁶) provides enough reason to believe that Greek was not only spoken in Jerusalem, but that there were ample opportunities to be schooled in rhetoric.

Paul's contact with Tarsus did not end after his childhood years. Although clashing with the information in Paul's letters, the author of Acts relates Paul being sent to Tarsus for his safety after his conversion (Acts 9:30)¹²⁷. Although this narrative from Luke is not deemed historically sound, it is generally accepted that Paul spent about 11 years (between 35-46 AD) in Cilicia and Syria afterwards (Bruce 1977:275; Witherington 1998:328).

It would be highly unlikely that he did not spend some time in his place of birth, and had some kind of contact with rhetoric there. Being outside Jerusalem and Palestine in this time, would also have given Paul (who was evidently highly intelligent), ample time to become fluent in Greek.

6.4.2 Paul as a citizen of Rome

Although not uncommon in the Mediterranean world of the first century AD, Paul's dual citizenship of Rome as well as Tarsus is also doubted by scholars despite clear references to Paul's citizenship as a citizenship by birth in Acts 22:28¹²⁸, as well as the numerous references to Paul's citizenship saving him from difficult situations (Ac 22:25¹²⁹; 23:27¹³⁰; 25:11¹³¹). Although

¹²⁴ Ac 22:3: "3 I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city."

¹²⁵ Ac 6:1: "1 "In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food."

¹²⁶ Ac 9:29: "29 "He talked and debated with the Grecian Jews, but they tried to kill him."

¹²⁷ Ac 29:30: "30 "When the brothers learned of this, they took him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus."

¹²⁸ Ac 22:28: "28 Then the commander said, "I had to pay a big price for my citizenship."
"But I was born a citizen," Paul replied."

¹²⁹ Ac 22:25: "25 As they stretched him out to flog him, Paul said to the centurion standing there, "Is it legal for you to flog a Roman citizen who hasn't even been found guilty?"

¹³⁰ Ac 23:27: "27 This man was seized by the Jews and they were about to kill him, but I came with my troops and rescued him, for I had learned that he is a Roman citizen".

¹³¹ Ac 25:11: "11 If, however, I am guilty of doing anything deserving death, I do not refuse to die. But if the charges brought against me by these Jews are not true, no one has the right to hand me over to them. I appeal to Caesar!"

Paul had received three beatings (2 Cor 11:25), which was not befitting of a Roman citizen, and it would be difficult for him to escape the emperor cult and other religious activities related to the Roman Government, there is relative consensus that Paul was indeed a Roman citizen (Horrel 2000:25).

Paul's citizenship of Rome did not only save him from the chains, or from being beaten by soldiers without a proper hearing. It did also grant him the opportunity to appeal to the Caesar of the day, and therefore it also granted him a passage to Rome, where he really wanted to preach the gospel (Ac 19:21¹³², Rom 1:14-15¹³³). His positive interaction with the praetorian guard while under house arrest (see Phil 1) was in part because the guard may not ignore or despise a Roman citizen.

Paul's Roman citizenship also provided him with advantages that would have aided him in his work as a traveling evangelist. Besides having the Roman judicial system at his disposal, he would be allowed entry into any city in the Empire, especially cities of the Roman colonies like Corinth and Philippi. He would have ready access to Roman roads as well. Paul could also travel with parties other than Roman citizens or even with Roman soldiers on a mission if need be (Witherington 1998:73).

Reference has already been made to Paul's Jewish name, Saul. Names also played an important role in the Roman empire. A Roman person's name normally consisted out of three parts, a personal name *praenomen*, a *nomen* as the name of his tribe, and a *cognomen*, which was the particular family name or tribe's name, e.g. Gaius Julius Caesar.

Although commonly accepted that Paul's name was changed from Paul to Saul at his conversion, it is probably not correct. The most Jews normally had both a Jewish as well as a Roman name. The name *Paulos* in Greek is reminiscent of a "short man", possibly leading to the characterisation of the posture of Paul in the *Acts of Paul*, discussed in 6.1 above. The author of Acts is probably swapping the name Saul with Paul to indicate the transition of his activity to the mission to the Gentiles. Although the name Saul is also used later in Acts (Ac 22:3-21; 26:9-23), it is again used when Paul's conversion story is retold (Horrel 2000:25).

In conclusion, the question regarding Paul's silence on his citizenship in his letters remains. Paul's silence about his Roman citizenship probably lies on the same level as his scarce references to his Jewish heritage. Paul did in the first place not see his citizenship and his heritage in a *dyadic* sense. He primarily focused on his citizenship in heaven, and his relationship with Christ, as Philippians 3:20-21¹³⁴ witnesses.

6.4.3 Paul's rhetorical background

Although Paul himself denies the ability to "speak well" in 2 Corinthians 11:6¹³⁵, this is probably an understatement that must be seen as a rhetorical ploy in itself. It is part of the "power through weakness"¹³⁶ approach that Paul follows in 1&2 Corinthians. Paul's statement of being ἰδιώτης τῷ λόγῳ (litt. untrained in speaking) must also be seen at the backdrop of the boasting opponents of Paul in the Corinthian letters. Paul is actually not referring to his own inability to speak, but he is mocking his opponents, as elsewhere in the letter, for reckoning themselves to be rhetorically

¹³² Ac 19:21: "21 After all this had happened, Paul decided to go to Jerusalem, passing through Macedonia and Achaia. "After I have been there," he said, "I must visit Rome also."

¹³³ Rom 1:14-15: "14 I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish. 15 That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are at Rome."

¹³⁴ Php 3:20-21: "20 But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body."

¹³⁵ 2 Cor 11:6: "6 I may not be a trained speaker, but I do have knowledge. We have made this perfectly clear to you in every way."

¹³⁶ Cf. the work of Savage (1996) on 2 Corinthians with a similar title.

skilled.¹³⁷ In fact, a study of Paul's letters reveals that he is well skilled in rhetoric (Murphy O'Connor 1996:51).

This analysis of letters from a rhetorical point of view replaced the study of letter-writing in the past few decades (Witherington 2003:263-264). The letter is presently viewed as a "surrogate for oral speech", and a good letter would seek the "best and most persuasive forms of speech possible" (Witherington 1998:119).

In section 6.4.2 it was already deduced that Paul was no ἰδιώτης τῶ λόγῳ, and that scholars try their best to explain where he received his training as rhetor. Paul did not in my view, use "legalistic aggressivity", as Murphy O'Connor (1996:206) reckons, but he rather preferred to persuade (Witherington 2003:264).

In antiquity rhetoric was basically the art of public speaking, "originally in the public gatherings of the ancient city-states and later especially in trials before magistrates and jury, where both prosecutors and defenders made lengthy speeches intended to persuade the listeners in one way or the other" (Horrel 2000:48).

Rhetorical art can be divided into three basic genres, viz. the forensic (or judicial), deliberative and epideictic. In the forensic genre the author is seeking to persuade the audience to make a judgement about events that occurred in the past, whilst the deliberative genre seeks to persuade people to take some action in the future. The epideictic genre seeks to persuade them to hold or reaffirm some point of view in the present (Kennedy 1984:19).

In assessing the rhetoric (and therefore the letter-genre), attention would normally be given to the *exordium* (the introduction making the audience at ease), *narratio* (explaining the nature of the disputer matter), *propositio* (where the essential propositions of the speaker are laid out), *probatio* (the essential arguments of the speech), *refutatio* (the dismantling of the opponent's arguments) and *peroratio* (recapturing of main points, and making a final plea to the audience) (Witherington 1998:119-120).¹³⁸

Besides the structures presented, rhetorical *topoi* or themes can be used as interpretative models for the first letter to the Corinthians (Martin 1990:87-116). The rhetorical *topos* of the "enslaved leader" is used expertly to analyze Paul's approach in 1 Corinthians 9. The *topos* of the "populist leader", striving for power within the patron-client system, is played down against the "enslaved leader" or demagogue, who becomes a slave for the benefit of his followers (Martin 1990:116).

The use of rhetoric was not just a very productive tool in Paul's time, but is clearly also powerful to explore and analyze Paul's letters today. There are however, instances where rhetorical analysis may fall short in recognizing the underlying themes in the text (Winter 2003:154), or where a certain text just do not make sense in the light of rhetorical strategies (Tolmie 2004b:487-502). Therefore a holistic way of approaching the text, also accounting for other socio-historical components is vital to understanding the New Testament letters.

¹³⁷ Cf. 1 Cor 1:17, 2:4; 2:13, 2 Cor 1:12; 10:12,18.

¹³⁸ Although these ancient structures were initially used to analyse the text, the current trend is to use a "grounded theoretical approach". In this approach neither an ancient nor a modern model is used beforehand to explore the text, but the relevant data are compared in a step-by-step fashion. In this way the individual as well as the macro-rhetorical strategies can be explored (Tolmie 2002:209).

6.6 CONCLUSION

In this chapter it was established that Paul definitely had to grapple with three different cultural worlds in his own background, let alone the cultural worlds of his audiences and readers. Although the cultural heritage of Paul was mainly Jewish, his geographical origin, as well as the language- and rhetorical trends of the day played a major role in his life and ministry. It goes without saying that although Paul retained his zeal after his conversion to Christianity, his priorities changed dramatically, and he could not be viewed as a true example of a *dyadic* personality anymore.

Paul's ability to overcome so many hurdles in his life, i.e. his physical appearance, the "thorn in the flesh", opposition from almost every culture around him, can only be a testimony of the Lord's grace, as the Lord himself answered Paul in 2 Corinthians 12:9: "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

The three worlds of Paul should not only be seen as a stumbling block to him, but his broad background also equipped him for his ministry amongst non-Jews and Jews, for refuting ferocious opposition, and to reach Rome as his ultimate missionary goal.

CHAPTER 7

PAUL'S APPROACH TO CULTURAL PLURALISM IN CORINTH

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7.1 INTRODUCTION

Up to this point we have mainly focused upon the contexts of the congregation of Corinth, as well as of Paul himself. We have not only established the presence of cultural conflict in the congregation, but also the complex way in which Paul's own background is interwoven with these conflicts. This chapter explores the dynamic interaction between Paul and this congregation, focusing on his approach to conflict situations.

In the *Wirkungsgeschichte* (cf. 2.5 above) it has been shown that Paul's suffering (whether voluntarily or not) and the *kenosis* concept are the object of renewed study. Especially the degradational concept of class, i.e. becoming a slave, is within the current focus on Pauline studies. 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 was also found to be one of the texts still in focus in the debate concerning current missionary approaches. An overview over the exegetical sources in general points to the conclusion that this *locus classicus* in Missiology was somewhat neglected in the Biblical Studies, as is 1 Corinthians in general.¹³⁹

The divisions within the chapter are as follows: First an overview of Paul's theology, especially regarding suffering and self-enslavement in 7.2. Secondly, slavery and the metaphorical use thereof are explored in 7.3, with an exegesis of the key pericope¹⁴⁰ in section 7.4. In following these steps the aim is to achieve a valid interpretation of Paul's approach to cultural conflict in Corinth.

7.2 SUFFERING AND SELF-ENSLAVEMENT IN PAUL'S THEOLOGY

In assessing Paul's theology, one cannot ignore the "fourth world" of the apostle Paul. Having looked at Paul's Jewish, Greek and Roman background, some space must be devoted to discussing Paul's Christian background. Although his development as a Christian is often taken

¹³⁹ The oversight of a renowned scholar such as Thrall (1994a:314) by discussing Paul as slave to the Corinthians in 2 Cor 4:5 without any reference to 1 Cor 9:19, and mentioning that 2 Cor 4:5 is the only reference of Paul as a slave to human beings, attests to such a conclusion. In her rhetorical analysis of the first letter to the Corinthians, Mitchell (1991:249) treats the whole section in 1 Cor 9 as a digression, and does not really comment on its rhetorical function.

¹⁴⁰ The other key texts for our study mentioned in 1.2 above will be contrasted to 1 Cor 9:19-23.

for granted, it must be remembered that almost 15 years passed between his conversion around 33 AD and his first letters, written from 48 AD onwards.

Furthermore this section is not elaborating on Paul's theology in general, but (as mentioned in 1.5 above) it especially attends to Paul's treatment of the themes of suffering and slavery. This section therefore comprises of an overview of Paul's Christian background, a summary of his main theological themes, and a discussion on Paul's views on suffering and slavery.

7.2.1 Paul's Christian background

Although Paul's conversion experience on the Damascus road in Acts 9:1-6 is prominent in one's mind in relation to Paul as a Christian, Paul's own reflection in on his conversion is used as departure point in this section, with particular reference to Galatians 1:15-16¹⁴¹.

Paul structures the account of his conversion with a specific purpose in mind. Describing conversion as a "sudden change" from his previous life would not be accepted easily within Stoic philosophy (Malina & Neyrey 1996:39), or in terms of a *dyadic* personality. He therefore refers to his conversion as being a calling that already originated at his birth. His calling is also connected to the Jewish background. Not only the expression ἐκ κοιλίας μητρός (lit. "from the womb of my mother"), but also the rest of verse 15 and 16 have very strong resemblances to the calling of Isaiah and Jeremiah in the Septuagint¹⁴² (Malina & Neyrey 1996:41, Tolmie 2004a:62-63).

Paul is furthermore referring to the event on the road to Damascus in prophetic terms. The reference ἀποκαλύψαι τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ ἐν ἐμοί (to reveal his Son in me) is not only witness to this conversion, but carries the notion that the event of the conversion meant more to Paul that just being a "turning point" in his life. The linking of the terms in verse 16 referring to a "revelation" that took place in Paul himself, refers to Paul receiving a divine revelation (Witherington 1998:75).

This theory is supported by Paul's referral in 1 Corinthians 9:1 that he has "seen" Jesus the Lord, and in Galatians 2:20 that Jesus lives in Him. A further reference to the difference that this vision made in his life, is found in Galatians 4:6, which refers to the "Spirit of the Son" whom God sent into the hearts of the believers. From the information above it is evident that Paul's Christology is central to his theology¹⁴³.

Paul's baptism after his conversion (Acts 9:18), also contributed to his separation from the Jewish community, and initiation into the Christian community. This contributed to Paul being viewed as a renegade or apostate by the Jews of his time (Witherington 1998:76), and even received "forty lashes minus one" from the Jews (2 Cor 11:23). Although Paul seems rather indifferent towards baptism in his initial reference to this sacrament in 1 Corinthians 1:7-13, it is evident from 1 Corinthians 12:13¹⁴⁴ that Paul views baptism as having an important function of bringing people from different cultures together in one new community.

On what Paul did in Arabia, after his conversion on the road to Damascus, there is still difference amongst New Testament Scholars. The growing consensus is that Paul went to Arabia to proclaim the gospel there, being obedient to the command he refers to in Galatians 1:16, i.e. to preach the gospel to the nations (Hengel & Schwemer 1998:175-179). On rhetorical grounds

¹⁴¹ Gal 1:15-17: "15 But when God, who set me apart from birth and called me by his grace, was pleased 16 to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not consult any man, 17 nor did I go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before I was, but I went immediately into Arabia and later returned to Damascus."

¹⁴² Cf. Isa 49:1,6 (LXX), Jer 1:5,6 (LXX).

¹⁴³ The centrality of Christ in Paul's theology is widely accepted (cf. for example Horrel 2000:56; Hurtado 2000:185; Witherington 1998:296).

¹⁴⁴ 1 Cor 12:13: "13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body-whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free-and we were all given the one Spirit to drink."

there are arguments in favour of the older interpretation, i.e. that Paul went to Arabia to withdraw from human beings or for religious contemplation (Tolmie 2004:66).

Although decisive evidence in this case is still lacking, it must be noted that Paul proceeded directly from Damascus to Arabia, and came back to Damascus, not visiting Jerusalem for a period of three years (Gal 1:18). Taking into account the “revelation” he received in Galatians 1:16, and the visions he refers to in 2 Corinthians 12:1, it seems that Paul received the Christian message through revelation. He never refers to any contact with a “teacher” in the same sense in which he refers to Gamaliel as his Pharisaic teacher in Acts 22:3 (Malina & Neyrey 1996:41). In summary, the origin of Paul’s Christian education can be deduced as not originating from human beings, but being a revelation from God (Gal 1:12¹⁴⁵).

Lastly Paul’s spiritual experiences during his early years as a Christian are significant, especially in relation to the Corinthian letters. He did use glossolalia (1 Cor 14:14-15, 18) and also had visions (2 Cor 12:1-6)¹⁴⁶. There are ample references to Paul as a miracle worker¹⁴⁷, and Paul also had the gift of prophecy (1 Cor 14:5). All this shows that Paul is not sarcastic when he thanks God for the spiritual gifts of the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 1:4-7, but that he “was indeed much more like the Corinthians than many modern commentators like to think” (Witherington 1998:82).

Reviewing Paul’s early years as a Christian certainly helps in the assessment of his theology. Not only the central place of Christ in his theology, but also his view on the One God of Israel, his views on the Law, and his doctrine on the Spirit were seriously influenced in this time.

7.2.2 The main trends in Paul’s theology

In studying Paul’s approach to cultural conflict in Corinth, it is essential to have an overview of his theology. This would assist in providing a context for Paul’s reasoning and actions as a response to cultural conflict. As explained in the introduction to this chapter, special emphasis is placed upon Paul’s views on Christology and suffering, as well as the theme of self-enslavement.

An overview of the theology of Paul is largely complicated by the plethora of information and opinions on his central themes and the interpretation thereof. Another problem when discussing Paul’s theology is the lack of a unified framework. In giving an overview of the theology of Paul, a few major themes are briefly be discussed, with the emphasis on Paul’s Christology.

7.2.2.1 Paul’s Christology

It has already been stated in 7.2.1 that Paul’s primary emphasis in his theology is on Christ. The main Scripture portions from which the importance of Christ are deduced, are Philippians 3:8¹⁴⁸ and 1 Corinthians 15:3-4¹⁴⁹. Paul does not only refer regularly to Christ in Messianic terms as “the anointed One” or Χριστός, but also in terms of “Lord” or Κύριος. Whilst the reference to Christ as “Messiah” or Χριστός could still be accepted by the Jews, the reference to Jesus as Κύριος, was seen as blasphemy, and probably contributed to their animosity towards Paul (Horrel 2000:57).

¹⁴⁵ Gal 1:11-12: “¹¹ I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel I preached is not something that man made up. ¹² I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ.”

¹⁴⁶ There is growing consensus amongst scholars that the “man” that Paul “knows” in 2 Cor 12:2 is referring to himself, but he refers to himself in the third person as a rhetorical strategy (Thrall 2000b: 772).

¹⁴⁷ Cf. Ac 13:1, 14:10, 16:18, 19:11, 28:3-6.

¹⁴⁸ Php 3:8: “⁸ What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ”

¹⁴⁹ 1 Cor 15:3-4: “³ For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,…”

This discontinuation of Jewish belief is explored by Dunn (1997:110) with reference to the narrative approach to Paul's theology¹⁵⁰. The "story of Israel" in Paul's Jewish background is weighed against the "story of Christ", which started with Paul's conversion on the Damascus road (see 7.1 above). This leads Dunn (1997:10) to use a quite controversial scheme of Paul's theology. Not Christ, but the "God of Israel" is viewed as central to Paul's theology. Furthermore, the "incarnational aspect of Christ" in Paul's theology is not recognised by Dunn (1998:182-206), who initially refers to Christ as: "Jesus the man".

This view that argues that Jesus was "man" first and elevated to Lord after his resurrection, is generally referred to as the "low" view of Paul's Christology, whilst the traditional and widely accepted model is the "high" theology, stating that Jesus was pre-existent as God before he "emptied" himself from his heavenly glory to become a human being. The "low" view of Paul's Christology is mostly motivated from Romans 1:1-6, where reference are only made to Jesus as born from the seed of David, whilst the "high" view refers mainly to Philippians 2:6-11, where reference is made to Christ "being in the very nature of God", before he became a human being (Sanders 1990:81).

To my view the arguments of those who hold the "high" view of Paul's Christology holds much more water than their opponents. Already the use of ἐκένωσεν (emptying himself) in Philippians 2:7 makes the probability of Paul thinking of Jesus as being of "Godly nature/form" in the same way than Adam¹⁵¹ highly unlikely. The reference κατὰ σάρκα (according to the flesh) in Romans 6:3, also leaves the question open as to the seed of whom Jesus would be κατὰ πνεῦμα (according to the Spirit), and does not directly support a "low" view of Paul's Christology.

Another question within the field of Pauline Christology, is whether the death of Jesus is "sacrificial"¹⁵², or that the believer is saved by "participation"¹⁵³ in the death and resurrection of Christ (Horrel 2000: 57-59). In this difference of opinion the ever-recurring theme of continuation versus discontinuation of the stories of Israel and Christ is repeating again. Whilst the "sacrificial" view of redemption would refer mostly to the "Israel story", the view of redemption by "participation" would be more relevant in terms of the "Christ story".

7.2.2.2 Paul on God

Paul expresses the work of Christ often in close relation to the actions of God¹⁵⁴. The name θεός occurs 550 times in the writings of Paul, whilst the name Χριστός appears 380 times and the name κύριος 275 times. Whilst these statistics by itself is inconclusive evidence, Dunn (1997:107) is of the view that God takes the central place in the theology of Paul.

Although very few agrees that God (the Father) takes the central place in Paul's theology, it has already been pointed out in 4.2.1.1 and 5.2.1 above that Paul argues from the angle of Jewish Monotheism. It has also been shown in 7.1 above that Paul links his calling and "revelation in Jesus Christ" very clearly with the calling of God whilst he was still "in his mothers womb" (see 7.1 on Gal 1:15).

Paul was definitely portraying God as different from the other gods that was worshipped and honoured in first century Corinth. The references to Jesus as also being "Lord", and not a separate god, fits in with Paul's strong emphasis on Monotheism.

¹⁵⁰ The narrative approach interprets the theology of Paul through the (hi)story of Israel (Horrel 2000:57).

¹⁵¹ The advocates for the "low" Christology of Paul argue that Christ is compared to Adam in Php 2:6-7, and therefore this verse does not reveal anything about Christ's pre-existence.

¹⁵² Jesus' sacrificial death points to his death as being the reconciliation for our sin (Sanders 1990:82).

¹⁵³ The view of redemption by "participation" is due to Paul's frequent use of the phrase "in Christ".

¹⁵⁴ Cf. Rom 3:25, 8:3, 1 Cor 15:15, Phil. 2:9.

7.2.2.3 Paul on the Law

A third important theme, which is also very important for understanding 1 Corinthians 8-10, is Paul's view on the Law. Even if Christology is viewed as central to Paul's theology, there has probably been written more on Paul's relation to the law than any other theme in his corpus. For the purpose of providing a background to the exegesis later in this chapter, a short summary is necessary.

Paul usually refers to the Law as νόμος, but he does not only use the term for the Torah in particular (Rom 3:19¹⁵⁵, 7:1¹⁵⁶; 1 Cor 14:21¹⁵⁷). In the light of passages such as 1 Corinthians 9:8-9¹⁵⁸ it is clear that Paul also uses ceremonial law to illustrate a point to his converts. This leads scholars such as Witherington (1998:65) to conclude that Paul makes no distinction in his letters between moral and ritual laws.

The early opinions of Paul's view on the law was made on the basis of the nature of the law as "a slave-guardian" or *paidagogos* as described by Paul in Galatians 3:23-4:7. Largely influenced by Luther (who valued the "justification by faith" principle) this was seen as an indication that Paul was "attacking Jewish legalism" (Stanton 2003:184).

The earlier consensus regarding Paul's negative estimation of Jewish legalism was challenged by the work of Sanders (1977), "*Paul and Palestinian Judaism*". Paul's evaluation of the law and its function is currently regarded as generally positive (Rom 7:12,16)¹⁵⁹ by most scholars. *Paidagogos*, or "slave guardian" is not viewed in a negative sense anymore, but in a narrative sense the Jews are accompanied by this "teacher" until they are able to proceed without it as mature Christians¹⁶⁰.

Paul's main opposition to the keeping of the law, was against "those (laws) which, in the Diaspora, separated Jew from Gentile" (Sanders 1990:90). These laws, according to Sanders (1990:90), were mostly those regarding circumcision, rules governing eating, and observance of the Sabbath. The main aim of Paul's missionary labour was unity amongst believers (Gal 3:28), and strict observances of these laws created disparity rather than unity, as the withdrawal of Peter and the "Jerusalem group" referred to in Galatians 2:11-14 proved.

In terms of Paul's involvement with the Corinthian congregation, it is noteworthy that these views regarding the law have great value in assessing Paul's approach to cultural conflict, which were often caused by Christian Jews forcing these laws onto others, or Jews forming an elite group within a congregation on the basis of adherence to such laws (Barrett 1971:20).

155 Rom 3:19: "19 Now we know that whatever the law (νόμος) says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God."

156 Rom 7:1: "1 Do you not know, brothers - for I am speaking to men who know the law (νόμος) - that the law has authority over a man only as long as he lives."

157 In 1 Cor 14:21, Isaiah 28:11-12 is quoted as being part of the Law: "21 In the Law (νόμος) it is written: 'Through men of strange tongues and through the lips of foreigners I will speak to this people, but even then they will not listen to me,' says the Lord."

158 1 Cor 9:8-9: "8 Do I say this merely from a human point of view? Doesn't the Law say the same thing? 9 For it is written in the Law of Moses: "Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain." Is it about oxen that God is concerned?"

159 Rom 7:12: "12 So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good."

Rom 7:16: "16 And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good."

160 The rhetorical function of the law as *paidagogos* in Paul's treatment of Gal 3:23-4:7 is aptly described by Tolmie (2004:131-133). The focus on the *paidagogos* is not pointing to the negative concept of a "strict teacher" but to the temporal relation of a "teacher" versus a "father".

7.2.2.4 Paul and ethics

Paul's methodology in approaching ethical situations has commonly been interpreted through the lenses of the indicative – imperative scheme¹⁶¹. This implies that the command to do something (imperative) is often placed within the framework of what God has done, the indicative.

Examples of the indicative-imperative scheme in the letters of Paul are (amongst others) found in 1 Corinthians 5:7, where the Corinthians are urged to “get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch of yeast – as you really are” and Galatians 5:1¹⁶². The indicative-imperative scheme can often also be seen in large pericopes, such as Romans 6:2-10 as the indicative, followed by verses 11-14 as the imperative. This scheme describes the theological basis for Paul's ethics, but the substance for his ethical instruction, as summarised by Horrel (2000:77-78), is strikingly relevant for this thesis:

In the first instance, “Paul's ethical instruction is shaped by the teaching and example of Jesus Christ”. Although Paul did not utilize many of Jesus' words, he frequently used the example of Jesus as basis for his ethical instructions¹⁶³. In these passages, which include the hymn in Philippians 2, it is important to note the emphasis on Christ's self-giving and serving, as an example for Christian behaviour.

Secondly Paul often refers to the Torah and Jewish traditions of ethical instruction (1 Cor 10:11¹⁶⁴). Paul did not only use quotations from Jewish scriptures to justify and support points of his ethical teaching¹⁶⁵, but passages such as Romans 1:18-31 reflect Paul's aversion to idolatry and sexual immorality.

Thirdly Paul's ethical teaching also carries a resemblance to Greek and Roman traditions of instruction and debate. Not only the list of vices and virtues in Galatians 5:19-24, but also his emphasis of the need for self control and discipline in 1 Corinthians 7:5 and 9:25-27 is an example. In 1 Corinthians 7 there are also parallels between marriage and celibacy, and the discussions on this issue between the Cynics and the Stoics.

Lastly Paul's ethics is also influenced by his eschatology. In Romans 10:11-13 the believers are urged to wake up, because the salvation is all the more nearer to the believers. In the light of the nearing end of times, the believers are urged to live honourably, and not in revelling, drunkenness, debauchery and licentiousness.

In retrospect, it is clear that the *kenosis* model or Christ's example of self-emptying, as well as the respective cultural backgrounds plays a major role in Paul's approach to ethics, and therefore also to themes that may have cultural origins, such as marriage, slavery, law cases and eating practices.

7.2.2.4 Other relevant themes

The previous four themes have been highlighted especially for their relevance to the theme of suffering and self-giving, as well as their relation to intercultural contact. There are many other topics that normally are discussed under Pauline theology, such as the Spirit, eschatology, the “faith of Christ”, and the church. Rather than elaborating on all relevant themes within Pauline theology, it may be more fruitful to look into the aspects of suffering and self-giving as an extension of Paul's Christology, to arrive at a viable interpretative framework for Paul's view on self-enslavement.

¹⁶¹ Cf. Dunn (1998:626-631); Witherington (1998:265) and Rosner (2003:217).

¹⁶² Gal 5:1: “¹ It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.”

¹⁶³ Cf. Rom 15:2-3, Php 2:3-8, 1 Cor 11:1.

¹⁶⁴ 1 Cor 10:11: “¹¹ These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come.”

¹⁶⁵ Cf. Rom 12:19-20, 14:10-12; 1 Cor 5:13, 6:16.

7.2.3 Paul on self-enslavement and suffering

The role of Christ's suffering and self-giving in Paul's letters is appreciated by Meeks (1986:136), who referred to Paul as "using the mediating symbol of Christ Jesus crucified, ... to signify a way in which the persons who occupied the (opposing) positions could understand their engagement with one another."

In discussing Paul's Christology (7.2.2.1 above) reference was made of Philippians 2:6-11 as a central theme in deciding on the "high view" or the "low view" of Christ' Lordship. Although the exact reference and theological implications of this early Christian hymn is seriously debated amongst scholars, the existence of the *kenosis* model, which refers to the self-emptying act of Christ as pre-existent God, is a witness to the strong following that the "high view" still enjoys.

There is, however, another difference of opinion amongst scholars concerning this hymn in Philippians. The problem is related to the introductory verse to this hymn, namely Philippians 2:5¹⁶⁶. Whilst scholars normally accepted that the example to be followed by Christians should be to "empty themselves", in analogy to Christ, others argue that the emphasis should be on following Christ's example of suffering and obedience¹⁶⁷.

The following of this self-emptying act of Christ is debated by other scholars, like Van Zyl (1989:52) and Martin (1983:xxxviii). The main difficulty they perceive is that an ordinary Christian does not have an heavenly body/form, and could therefore not imitate Christ to the full. They rather proposed the example to be followed, as being the examples in "suffering" and "obedience".

By implication the second interpretation is not that far removed from the first, because suffering and obedience are also central to self-enslavement. The difference lies perhaps in the metaphorical limitations that were put in place, i.e. that the nature of Christ's self-enslavement can never be completely imitated by man.

If Philippians 2:5 is interpreted with Philippians 2:1-4 in mind, rather than focusing more on the following hymn, then there is a distinct possibility, that in the light of Philippians 2:3-4¹⁶⁸, the focus upon "lowering" oneself can refer to "humbling oneself to a person of lower position". In discussing *kenosis*, Bosch (1991:513) also refers to John 20:21¹⁶⁹, where Jesus is sending the disciples in the same way in which the Father has sent Him. Despite the questioning of the nature of the example to be followed, there is enough evidence to interpret the example to be followed as *kenosis*, or self-emptying.

The referral made to "suffering" by Van Zyl (1989:52) and Martin (1983:xxxviii) must not be totally discarded. Self-emptying and suffering go hand in hand, as we see from the life of Jesus, even before his crucifixion. In 2 Corinthians we find Paul often relating to his suffering. Paul's major comments on suffering are found in 2 Corinthians 4:8-5:10, 11:23-29 and 11:30-33.

An investigation into the passages in question reveals that Paul's suffering can be attributed to the following reasons: suffering from hardships during his travel and ministry and deprivation as result of his ministry, (2 Cor 4:8; 11:25-27), attitudes from "false brothers and sisters" (2 Cor 11:26) as well as anxiety for all the churches (2 Cor 4:15, 11:28), and physical pain and suffering at the hands of his enemies, such as the incidents referred to in 2 Corinthians 4:9, 11:23-26 and 11:30-33.

¹⁶⁶ Php 2:5: "5 Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: "

¹⁶⁷ See the treatment of this verse by Martin (1990:132), who accepts that the "example" to be followed is that of self-enslavement: "By following Christ down, they will also eventually follow him up".

¹⁶⁸ Php 2:3-4: "3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. 4 Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others."

¹⁶⁹ Jn 20:21: "21 Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."

Paul's approach to suffering could be summarized by the word ὑποφέρω (to endure, stand up under) (Davids 2005:445), which is found in 1 Corinthians 10:13¹⁷⁰, 2 Timothy 3:11¹⁷¹ and 1 Peter 2:19¹⁷². This same theme of endurance comes to mind in 1 Corinthians 9:24-27, where Paul compares himself with an athlete prepared to run in such a way that he does get the everlasting crown as prize.

In line with the *kenosis* theme, Paul uses the juxtapositioning of the "emptying or enslaving process" from human perspective in comparison with the inner renewal of man through the spiritual perspective¹⁷³. These paradoxes are the expression of the "paradox of the cross" worked out in the life of the ministry (Hanson 1987:39). Even though Jesus Christ suffered on the cross, it did not take away the "suffering of the apostles". In the same way, Hanson (1987:53) argues that the suffering that the apostles endure is serving as an example, and cannot be a "substitute" for the suffering that the Christians will endure in general. But in all suffering for Christ, it is done with the eschatological faith and hope in the second coming Christ (Horrel 2003:68; Davids 2005:451).

From the different types of suffering described earlier in this section, it is clear that Paul's concern or anxiety for the well-being of the congregation is of utmost importance. This is proven by referring so often to his suffering in 2 Corinthians, to persuade them that he has their best interests at heart.

7.3 PAUL AND THE METAPHOR OF SLAVERY

The subject of slavery in the Bible has almost been overexploited through the years. Especially within the socio-historical context it has received ample attention. This study focuses more on the metaphorical use of slavery in the New Testament¹⁷⁴, and the understanding of Paul's use of δοῦλος and related words. A short overview of slavery in its literal sense is necessary to distinguish the shared meaning between the literal and the metaphorical sense (Combes 1998:14).

Although δοῦλος Χριστοῦ is not within the main metaphorical use proposed in 1.2 above (being self-enslavement to fellow human beings) it is important not only to contrast and compare Paul's view on enslavement to fellow Christians and non-Christians, but also his view on being "slave of Christ" as well as a "slave of fellow men".

7.3.1 Slavery in the first century

The concept of slavery must have been very prominent in the mind of the Corinthians. It has already been mentioned in 3.3.1 above that Caesar probably replenished the new city of Corinth with freedmen. It is estimated that as many as a third of Corinth's total population consisted out of slaves (Witherington 1995:183). Paul's references to slaves or slavery in his letters certainly were not strange to his readers in Corinth.

¹⁷⁰ 1 Cor 10:13: "13 No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it."

¹⁷¹ 2 Tim 3:11: "11 persecutions, sufferings - what kinds of things happened to me in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra, the persecutions I endured. Yet the Lord rescued me from all of them."

¹⁷² 1 Peter 2:19: "19 For it is commendable if a man bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because he is conscious of God."

¹⁷³ The juxtaposition is clear in the outer "wasting away" and inner renewal in 2 Cor 4:16-18, and the metaphor of the earthly and heavenly tents (2 Cor 5:1-5), and in being "at home" and "away" (being present in the body, or with God in his Kingdom) in 2 Cor 5:6-10 (Davids 2005:449).

¹⁷⁴ In a metaphor one entity or realm of experience is being described in terms borrowed from another (entity). It also "incorporates features that may be recognised as apt in reference to the entity being described and other features that are clearly inapplicable" (Harris 1999:19).

There were several ways that people became slaves in the first century. The common way of enslavement was those which were taken captive during wars and sold as slaves in Roman territory. Some people often sold their children or themselves to pay debts, and others were condemned to slavery by the courts. Others were born as slaves, and belonged as such to the master of their parents (Combes 1998:26; Ferguson 1987:46).

The city of Corinth's favourable placement near the Isthmus, the two harbours Lechaem and Cenchrea, as well as being at the centre of many crossroads (see 3.3.1 above), made it a very prosperous city for trading of all kinds. The slave trade was not excluded from this, and Corinth must have been home to a healthy slave-trade (Witherington 1995:181).

Different from the agricultural slaves depicted in the Old Testament, a slave in the Greco-Roman time could be used for almost any job that would be occupied by a free person (Martin 1990:11-15). Although slavery was always held to be at the lowest social level in society, Martin (1990) in his published doctoral thesis, *Slavery as salvation*, came to a different conclusion. Exploiting the different levels of slavery, he points to the distinction of slaves being productional, non-productional, and managerial (which was the highest-ranked slave).

The slave in Luke 12:41-46, according to Martin (1990:53), probably constituted an *oikonomos* – slave, which fulfilled certain managerial functions within the household. All this leads to his (Martin 1990:56)¹⁷⁵ conclusion that slavery was not necessarily seen as an altogether negative concept in the first century. Slavery was also seen as a vehicle for “upward mobility” in the social ranks, and even to *manumissio* or freedom (which included Roman citizenship), whilst a non-Roman free person would have a more difficult route to attain Roman citizenship (Martin 1990:32).

The positive side of slavery as described above did not go unopposed. A strong critique on the work of Martin was posed by Harris (1999:18,129-131). The main problems with the views presented above are that the managerial slaves that Martin (1990:53) refers to was a very small elite within the mass of production slaves. The inability of a slave to refuse something, no rights in the court, and the relative value of *manumissio*,¹⁷⁶ leads Harris (1999:45) to conclude that “if the language of slavery is offensive (to the modern reader), the offence would have been considerably greater for those who lived in societies where slavery was intrinsic than for us for whom slavery is simply and unpleasant and embarrassing memory”.

In weighing the two views on first century slavery against one another, it is important to keep the purpose of these authors in mind. On the one hand Martin (1990:50) partly focuses on slavery to fellow men in 1 Corinthians 9:19, whilst Harris (1990:139) focuses on “slave of Christ” and would not refrain from a more radical interpretation of slavery.

The two theories are, however, not mutually exclusive, or indeed totally opposite. The contribution of Martin in introducing the positive side of slavery is acknowledged by Harris (1999:131), whilst Martin accepts that the most slaves served in the lowest levels of slavery.

7.3.2 New Testament perspectives on slavery

Having discussed slavery in the Greco-Roman world, it is appropriate to move in closer to the New Testament world of slavery. Although Paul's use of slavery as metaphor is the ultimate purpose of this section, the broader use of the concept in the New Testament is discussed first. The early church originated in a “society where slavery was an everyday commonplace” (Combes 1998:68). The New Testament in a way presupposed slavery, and “does not argue for its ablation” (Myers 1987:927).

¹⁷⁵ “...in the patronal society of the Greco Roman city, slaves of lower class persons held little power or prestige, but the slave agent of an upper-class person was to be reckoned with” (Martin 1990:56).

¹⁷⁶ The master still retained a position of patron over his “freed” slave, and *manumissio* could be revoked (Harris 1999:45).

In the parables of Jesus there are frequent references to literal slavery. In these references we often find that a slave could collect dues on behalf of his master (Mt 21:34¹⁷⁷), and that a master would sometimes entrust his slaves with money to invest (Mt 18:23-24¹⁷⁸; 25:14-30; Lk 16:1-8). One slave could be the master of another slave (Lk 12:42¹⁷⁹), and a slave's faithfulness was measured by his obedience to commands and his adherence to duty (Lk 12:43¹⁸⁰).

There are also examples where the customary practices concerning slaves were intentionally ignored. A master waiting for his slaves to finish their meals before he eats (Lk 12:37¹⁸¹) would have been something totally unheard of (Harris 1999:48).

In addition to the information about slaves in the parables of Jesus, there are more references to slavery in the rest of the Gospels and Acts. The most significant of these for my study is probably the healing of the centurion's slave, recorded in Matthew 8:5-13 and Luke 7:1-10. The centurion's slave was so precious to him that he sent some of the Jewish elders to ask for help from Jesus. The recording in Luke is interesting for the way that the centurion not only cared a lot for his slave, but also for the Jews and their religion¹⁸².

In contrast to the presumed agricultural setting of Jesus' parables, the most references we find in the New Testament letters are addressed to Christians (amongst them also slaves) who lived in the Mediterranean cities. In most of the cases these slaves were normally embedded in the household system, and were referred to as δούλοι (slaves) or οἰκέται (household slaves), or "those who belong to the family of X" (Rom 16:10-11) or "X's people". In the Pauline epistles, specific directives are given to slaves¹⁸³, as well as in the first epistle of Peter (2:18-21).

The masters of slaves are also addressed by Paul¹⁸⁴, and it is accepted that the slaves and their masters referred to were mostly Christians (Harris 1999:49). The fact that the masters are not addressed in Peter's letters at all, makes it probable that the masters or patrons in some of these "households were not Christians". This can also be deduced from 1 Timothy 6:2, which refers to οἱ δὲ πιστοὺς ἔχοντες δεσπότης (those who have believing masters), implicating that some slaves were not so fortunate.

The New Testament also introduced a new perspective on the slave - free contrast so prevalent in Roman and Greek cultures. In the first century a slave was deprived of the right to be his own representative in legal matters, to protection from being imprisoned and punished without a hearing, to work where he pleased, and freedom of movement (Ferguson 1987:46). In the letters of Paul it is repeated four times¹⁸⁵ that God does not make distinction between δούλος and ἐλεύθερος (slave and free man), whilst this distinction (being of no value to man in the end-times) is mentioned thrice in Revelation¹⁸⁶.

177 Mt 21:34: "34 When the harvest time approached, he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his fruit."

178 Mt 18:23-24: "23 "Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. 24 As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him."

179 Lk 12:42: "42 The Lord answered, "Who then is the faithful and wise manager, whom the master puts in charge of his servants to give them their food allowance at the proper time?"

180 Luk 12:43: "43 It will be good for that servant whom the master finds doing so when he returns."

181 Lk 12:37: "37 It will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when he comes. I tell you the truth, he will dress himself to serve, will have them recline at the table and will come and wait on them."

182 This centurion probably was a "godfearer", who "loved" the Jews and assisted them in building the synagogue (Lk 7:5).

183 Cf. Ep 6:5-8; Col 3:22-25; 1 Tim 6:1-2; Tit 2:9-10.

184 Cf. Ep 6:9; Col 4:1; Phm 8-22.

185 Cf. 1 Cor 12:13; Gal 3:28; Ep 6:8; Col 3:11.

186 Cf. Rev 6:15; 13:16; 19:18.

Paul qualifies this equality between free and slave (in three of the references above) with the supposition ἐν Χριστῷ. Not viewing the believers from a natural point of view (2 Cor 5:16¹⁸⁷), but a spiritual (2 Cor 5:17¹⁸⁸), Paul replaces the natural slave-free antithesis by the contrast between being “in Christ” or “separated from Christ” (Ep 2:12-13¹⁸⁹; Rom 9:3¹⁹⁰).

Being situated in the Corinthian letters as the focal point of this study, Paul’s attitude towards slavery and freedom in 1 Corinthians 7:21-22¹⁹¹ deserves attention. This passage is a clear indication that slavery or freedom made no difference in the context of the church (Conzelmann 1975:127). Paul allows for slaves who have built up their *peculium* to achieve freedom by *manumissio* to strive for freedom, but he rather advocates acceptance of the *status quo* than achieving “structural change” in society concerning slavery practices.

In verse 22 it is noteworthy that Paul in effect takes the notion of equality “in Christ” a step further. Proceeding to “slavery” and “being free” in the metaphorical sense, he states that a slave is the Lord’s freedman, and a free man is now Christ’s slave. Paul therefore almost advocates for a reversal of cognitive concepts regarding slavery in the minds of the Corinthian believers.

In conclusion it must be noted again that all the evidence from the New Testament lacks a constructive effort to demolish slavery as a system. Paul’s approach was rather to “put the leaven of the gospel into the structure of the Christian community”, and allow it to do its work in larger society over the course of time (Witherington 1995:185).

7.3.3 Slavery as a metaphor in the New Testament

Having discussed the more literal aspects of slavery, we now move on to slavery as metaphor in the New Testament. Slavery is by now means a foreign metaphor in ancient writings (Combes 1998:42). My main focus however, falls on the ways that this metaphor has been used in the New Testament, with special reference to Paul’s letters in general and specifically his letters to the Corinthians.

7.3.3.1 The δούλος - metaphor in non-Pauline writings

The synoptic Gospels reveal several metaphorical uses of being slave of God. Not only does Mary refer to herself in Luke 1:38¹⁹² as δούλη κυρίου (slave of God), but the same metaphor appears in Luke 2:29¹⁹³, where Simeon praised God at the temple. The metaphor δούλος is also used by Jesus in Matthew 20:27¹⁹⁴, where He encourages his disciples to become one another’s slave. The exhortation to follow Jesus as the “Son of man” in this regard is equally important for interpreting this metaphor.

187 2 Cor 5:16: ¹⁶ So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view.”

188 2 Cor 5:17: ¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!”

189 Ep 2:12-13: ¹² remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ.”

190 Rom 9:3: ³ For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race,...

191 1 Cor 7:20-22: ²⁰ Each one should remain in the situation which he was in when God called him. ²¹ Were you a slave when you were called? Don’t let it trouble you - although if you can gain your freedom, do so. ²² For he who was a slave when he was called by the Lord is the Lord’s freedman; similarly, he who was a free man when he was called is Christ’s slave.”

192 Lk 1:38: ³⁸ ‘I am the Lord’s servant,’ Mary answered. ‘May it be to me as you have said.’ Then the angel left her.”

193 Lk 2:29: ²⁹ Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace.”

194 Mt 20:26-28: ²⁶ Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, ²⁷ and whoever wants to be first must be your slave - ²⁸ just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

A last worthwhile metaphor to explore in this corpus is Luke 17:7-10¹⁹⁵. It is clear that the point of comparison lies in verse 10, i.e. that the slave is doing what he/she does out of pure duty, not expecting to be thanked for it.

The focal aspects of slavery referred to in these metaphors are probably the faithfulness and devotion of good slaves who give their best on their masters behalf, even "going behind the call of duty with no expectation of reward" (Combes 1998:71).

In the Fourth Gospel a negative connotation of slavery, being a "slave to sin" is used in John 8:34¹⁹⁶. The precise meaning and reference of this text have been much debated, with the alternative readings complicating the difficulties (Combes 1998:72-75). This reference, according to Combes (1998:75), points to an individual being a slave because of sin, rather than a slave to sin.

The main focal point in this metaphor is, however, the difference between being a slave and being a son, especially in the light of two other passages (Rom 8:15-16¹⁹⁷; Gal 4:7¹⁹⁸) treating the same subject¹⁹⁹ (Harris 1999:147). By adhering to the old laws of the previous dispensation, these people are depriving themselves from the "free movement" and "independence" that a "son" enjoys in the household.

In the non-Pauline epistles an interesting metaphorical use of slavery is found in 1 Peter 2:16, where the congregation as "slaves of God" (again δούλοι is translated by the NIV as "servants") are urged to "live as free men". God has bought the believers from their previous owner (the world/the devil) Now they have an obligation only towards God. Towards their previous owner (*kurios*) they are "free persons"²⁰⁰.

In Acts (4:29²⁰¹, 16:17²⁰²) references are made to the apostles as δούλοι τοῦ θεοῦ (slaves of God). Similar references to the author of Revelation and his fellow Christians are made when they refer to themselves as δούλοι and σύνδουλοι²⁰³. Martin (1990:55-56) argues extensively that the naming of leaders as slaves of Christ was already a "coined" term in New Testament times,

195 Lk 17:7-10: "7 'Suppose one of you had a servant plowing or looking after the sheep. Would he say to the servant when he comes in from the field, 'Come along now and sit down to eat'? 8 Would he not rather say, 'Prepare my supper, get yourself ready and wait on me while I eat and drink; after that you may eat and drink'? 9 Would he thank the servant because he did what he was told to do? 10 So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty.'"

196 Jn 8:34: "33 They answered him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?" 34 Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. 35 Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son a, Father."

196 Gal 4:7: " 7 So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir. 8 Formerly, when you did not know belongs to it forever.

197 Rom 8:15: "15 For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, 'Abba, Father.'"

198 Gal 4:7: " 7 So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir. 8 Formerly, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those who by nature are not gods. 9 But now that you know God - or rather are known by God - how is it that you are turning back to those weak and miserable principles? Do you wish to be enslaved by them all over again?"

199 It must be kept in mind that the addressees of Jesus' words in Jn are still Jews, whilst Paul addresses Christian Jews in Romans and Galatians.

200 The referral in 1 Pet 1:18 to being "redeemed from the empty way of life" leads Combes (1998:75) to conclude that the reference here is indeed to the dependency within the patron-client system.

201 Ac 4:29: "29 Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness."

202 Ac 16:17: "17 This girl followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved."

203 Cf. Rev. 1:1, 2:20, 6:11, 19:2, 22:3,6.

and that the borrowed authority from Old Testament leaders (like Moses) and the prophets was stronger than any underlying meaning in the metaphor. Though this statement might have been true for other writers who used the δούλος - concept sparingly, in the following section the extent to which Paul uses this metaphor indicates that he did not use the word δούλος without purpose.

7.3.3.2 The δούλος - metaphor in the Pauline letters

Having established the use of δούλος in the broader New Testament genre, the way that Paul employs this metaphor now comes into focus. The most prominent of the combinations in which Paul uses the metaphor of slavery is the portraying of himself as δούλος Χριστοῦ (slave of Christ). The title "slave of Christ" is, as explained in 7.3.3.1, interpreted in the sense of the Old Testament prophets being called as God's slaves or servants, or in the sense that Martin (1998:50-60) sees Paul as "managerial slave of Christ". According to the second view, it mattered less that one was a slave than whose slave one was (Martin 1990:35).

Although the descriptions above are not to be ignored totally, "slave of Christ" must actually encompass more than just being an archaic title or managerial position. Detaching it from its use in a more abstract sense above, Harris (1999:143) reiterates the severity of a slave's situation, and refers to the focal points in the "slave of Christ"-metaphor as (1) "humble submission to the person of Christ", (2) "unquestioning obedience to the Masters will", and (3) an "exclusive preoccupation with pleasing Christ" (2 Cor 5:9²⁰⁴).

The view of Harris above is persuasive. The existence of the first two explanations can largely be attributed to an effort of reconciling the "slave of Christ" concept with Paul's claim to apostolic authority from a rhetorical angle.

Although Paul refers often to his own role as "slave of Christ" he focuses even more on metaphorical use of slavery in his description of the believer. As already referred to in 7.3.3.1, the δούλος - concept also has a negative use in Paul's letters. Not only are the readers portrayed as previously being slaves of sin (Rom 6:20²⁰⁵), and slaves of worldly practices (Gal 4:3²⁰⁶), but Paul fears that the Christians might again become slaves of men (1 Cor 7:23²⁰⁷, Gal 5:1²⁰⁸). By giving in to circumcision and Jewish law, Paul warns the believers that they will just fall back into spiritual slavery, being slaves of Jewish laws and not of Christ.

Although Paul does highlight some negative aspects of his addressees' lives, the meanings of slavery that he assigns to the members are generally positive. Paul uses the *manumissio* concept, where a slave acquired freedom with his death, to show that Christians are redeemed from their sin (Rom 6:6-7²⁰⁹). Therefore the believers are seen to be free from sin, and slaves to righteousness (Rom 6:18²¹⁰). The Christians are not only called to serve Christ as slaves (Rom 14:18²¹¹), but they are also encouraged to become slaves to one another (Gal 5:13²¹²).

204 2 Cor 5:9: "9 So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it.

205 Rom 6:20: "20 When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness."

206 Gal 4:3: "3 So also, when we were children, we were in slavery under the basic principles of the world." The Greek τὰ στοιχεῖα can be best translated by "elementary and restrictive practices" (Tolmie 2004:137-138).

207 1 Cor 7:23: "23 You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men."

208 Gal 5:1: "1 It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery."

209 Rom 6:6-7: "6 For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin - 7 because anyone who has died has been freed from sin."

210 Rom 6:18: "18 You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness."

211 Rom 14:18: "18 ...because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by men."

212 Gal 5:13: "13 You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love."

Last, but not least, it is essential for the study at hand to investigate the *kenotic* pattern of slavery in the Pauline letters. It has already been established in 6.4.3 that the rhetoric of self-enslavement was not foreign to the demagogue leaders in the time of Paul (Martin 1998:87-116). Paul's metaphorical use of slavery eventually extends past himself and his readers to Christ becoming a slave.

In the main pericope under scrutiny in this thesis, 1 Corinthians 9:19-23, commentators such as Combes (1998:77) are of the opinion that "Paul's own enslavement is presented as an example to those who follow him, and is modelled on the kenosis of Christ himself". Despite attempts (referred to earlier in this section) to levitate the despicable nature of a slave in the first century, it still stands that Christ's self-enslavement led Him to the cross, where he died the death of a slave (Php 2:7-8).

But Paul also yearns for this kenotic pattern becoming part of the lives of his fellow Christians (Harris 1999:103). The apostles also commend themselves and their lifestyle to "every man's conscience in the sight of God" (2 Cor 4:3). They followed Christ's example of self-enslavement, to become an example of serving the believers as slaves (2 Cor 4:5²¹³). It is therefore evident that Paul also links the metaphor of slavery to the suffering and the cross of Jesus Christ. Without this in mind the metaphor of slavery in the Pauline letters cannot be fully understood.

7.4 AN EXEGESIS OF 1 CORINTHIANS 9:19-23

As indicated in 1.5 above, Paul's approach to cultural conflict in Corinth is viewed in terms of the Scripture portions where Paul denies being a slave of men and human practices, i.e. 1 Corinthians 7:23, 6:12, 5:9-13, as well as the portions where self-enslavement are encouraged, i.e. 1 Corinthians 9:19, 2 Corinthians 4:5, 1 Corinthians 10:23, 31-32, 1 Corinthians 8:7-13²¹⁴.

These portions are interpreted using the guidelines presented in the work of De Klerk & Van Rensburg (2005), *Making a Sermon*, specifically steps 2-15 (De Klerk & Van Rensburg 2005:14-96).

7.4.1 Selection of a pericope

Amongst the Scripture portions identified above as the central theme of the study, 1 Corinthians 9:19²¹⁵ is viewed as *locus classicus* in the field of Missiology where it concerns Paul's missionary approach (Bosch 1991:135-138). The other portions are used for comparing and delimitation.

7.4.2 Placing the pericope in the book and in the Bible

As pericope for the study 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 is used, because of the following considerations: The four verses in question form a separate unit of thought, i.e. an elaboration on "becoming a slave to everyone". The previous pericope, i.e. verses 15-18 is discussing Paul's decision not to make use of support for his missionary labour. Although there is a clear continuation in the line of thought, γὰρ in verse 19 is a clear marker of a new topic being introduced, motivating the preceding section.

The reason for the pericope ending at verse 23²¹⁶, is the introduction of a new topic in verse 24, i.e. the allegory concerning athletics and games, as well as the rhetorical question at the start of

213 2 Cor 4:5: "5 For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake."

214 These textual references are not ordered chronologically, but according to their direct reference to the word δούλος (slave).

215 1 Cor 9:19: "19 Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible."

216 Whilst Conzelman (1975:161) concur with the structure above, Terry (1996:106) discusses verses 19-22 as a chiasmic structure, without commenting on where verse 23 belongs.

this verse. The pericope 9:19-23 also forms a literary unit, containing a chiasmic structure (verse 20-22a), as the macro-analysis analysis below shows.

The pericope in question lies within the broader section 9:1-27, discussing the freedom of the apostle. This excursus, although seemingly an excursus, is viewed by Mitchell (1991:243-247) to have a proper rhetorical function within 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1. The rest of the letter are more or less structured by Paul's response to oral reports, and issues that was sent to him in writing.

The letter is framed within the normal epistolographic and rhetoric greetings. Due to the diverse nature of the questions forwarded to Paul, it is difficult to find a proper build-up to the letter.

DISCOURSE STRUCTURE OF 1 CORINTHIANS²¹⁷

LETTER HEADING

1 Cor 1:1-3 Author, addressees and greeting

LETTER OPENING

1 Cor 1:4-9 Thanksgiving

LETTER BODY (Deliberative)

Responses to oral information	Responses to letter received
1. Church divisions (1:10 – 4:17)	
2. Fornication (4:18-6:20)	
	3. Marriage (7:1-40)
	4. Idol food (8:1-8:13)
5. Paul's apostolic authority (9:1-27)	
5.1 Freedom and rights of the apostle (9:1-14)	
5.2 Paul's apostolic independence (9:15-27)	
5.2.1 Paul's free proclamation of the gospel (9:15-18)	
5.2.2 Paul's self-enslavement (9:19-23)	
5.2.3 Paul's perseverance (9:24-27)	
	4. (contd.) Idol food (10:1-11:1)
5. Head coverings (11:2-16)	
6. The Lord's Supper (11:17-34)	
	8. Spiritual gifts (12:1-31)
9. Love (13:1-13)	
	8. (contd.) Spiritual gifts
10. The resurrection (15:1-58)	
	11. Contribution (16:1-11)
	12. Apollos (16:12)

CONCLUSION

16:13-24 Recapitulation of argument, epistolary greetings, final curse and prayer for unity in love and in Jesus Christ.

From the discourse structure above it is evident that the pericope in question has a central location in the book. Although not wholly compatible with the preceding and following sections, it is evident that Paul makes some important statements here, pertaining to his whole ministry.

²¹⁷ The model followed for this discourse structure bears close resemblance to that of Terry (1996:43).

7.4.3 Genre of the pericope and the book

The genre of the pericope can be described as deliberative discourse within a rhetorical context. This pericope (9:19-22) exhibits a clear chiasmic structure. The genre of the book 1 Corinthians is a letter written in response to questions posed by the congregation in Corinth.

7.4.4 The Greek text of the pericope

In the selected pericope there are 2 textual variants, 1 in verse 20, and one in verse 22. Although both readings carry an {A} degree of certainty, the examining of textual variants is important in the light of the importance of this pericope for the study. First the variant reading in verse 20:

7.4.4.1 Examining the textual variant in 1 Corinthians 9:20

7.4.4.1.1 Determining and charactering the text reading and the variant reading

	Text reading (UBS)	Variant reading (UBS footnotes)
Greek	τοῖς ὑπο νόμον ὡς ὑπο νόμον, μὴ ὢν αὐτὸς ὑπὸ νόμον, ἵνα...	τοῖς ὑπο νόμον ὡς ὑπο νόμον, ἵνα...
English translation	...for those who were under the law, (though I myself am not under the law),	...for those who were under the law, ...
Characterizing the reading	The phrase “though I myself am not under the law” is included.	The phrase “though I myself am not under the law” is omitted.

7.4.4.1.2 Determining the dating of the reading

Table A: Date

	Reading 1	Reading 2
3 rd century	cop ^{sa}	
4 th century	Ⲛ, B, vg, cop ^{bo}	
5 th century	A, C, it ^{b,d} ,	syr ^p

Table A confirms that the first reading is supported by the oldest manuscripts.

7.4.4.1.3 Determining the type and distribution of the reading

Table B: Text type and distribution:

	Reading 1	Reading 2
Early text		
Alexandrian	Ⲛ, A, B, cop ^{sa,bo}	
Caesarean	arm	Geo
Western	D, F, G, it, vg, Pelagius, Ambrosiaster	D
Byzantine	C, P, syr ^h	Ⲡ, syr ^p , eth

Table B confirms that the first reading is supported by sources from Alexandrian origin, which is the more accurate tradition. Reading 2 lacks any evidence from Alexandrian origin. On the basis of text type and distribution the first reading is preferred.

7.4.4.1.4 Rating the intrinsic evidence

The structure of the pericope

The first reading is definitely breaking the structure of the pericope. The following verse, however, has the same kind of interjection, which would even count in favour of the first reading.

The style of the author

In the chiasmic structure that Paul employs, reading 1 would fit in better, in the light of the fact that verse 21, which functions on the same level of verse 20, contains a similar type of interjection.

Revelation history

Reading 1 would actually fit better in the light of revelation history, being a reiteration that Paul is not under the law anymore. Even if implied in the previous clause ("to those under the law I become like one under the law"), Paul had to stress his current status as not being under the law anymore.

Conclusion on the intrinsic evidence

On the basis of the intrinsic evidence reading 1 is preferred.

Preliminary reading choice

On the basis of the external and intrinsic evidence the preliminary choice is reading 1 (the reading of the UBS text).

7.4.4.1.5 Rating the transcriptional evidence

The difference in the two readings may be ascribed to a typical case of *homoioteleuton*, where the clause ends with the same word as the previous clause. The copier responsible for the second reading probably committed *haplography*, i.e. leaving out a clause due to similarities in the text.

7.2.4.1.6 Conclusion and final reading choice

Having completed the examination of the textual evidence beforehand, reading 1 is chosen as the most probable reading. The UBS text is kept regarding this reading.

7.4.4.2 Examining the textual variant in 1 Corinthians 9:22

7.4.4.2.1 Determining and characterizing the text reading and the variant reading

	Text reading (UBS)	Variant reading (UBS footnotes)
Greek	ἵνα πάντως τινὰς σώσω	ἵνα πάντας σώσω
English translation	So that by all possible means I might save some	So that I might save everybody
Characterizing the reading	Reading 1 has an adverb (πάντως) and a substantive adjective in the accusative plural (τινὰς).	Reading 2 has no adverb, but the adverb of reading 1 is adapted into a substantive adjective in the accusative plural (πάντας).

7.4.4.2.2 Determining the date of the reading

Table A: Age

	Reading 1	Reading 2
3 rd century	P ⁴⁶ cop ^{sa}	
4 th century	ℵ, B, cop ^{bo}	
5 th century	A, C	D, syr ^p

Table A confirms that reading 1 is supported by the older manuscripts.

7.4.4.2.3 Determining the type and distribution of the reading

Table B: Text type and distribution:

	Reading 1	Reading 2
Early text	P ⁴⁶	
Alexandrian	Ⲛ, A, B, cop ^{sa,bo}	
Caesarean	Arm	Geo
Western		D
Byzantine	C, P, Ψ, syr ^h	syr ^p , eth

Table B confirms that the first reading is supported by sources from the early text, as well as Alexandrian origin, which is the more accurate tradition. On the basis of text type and distribution the first reading is preferred.

7.4.4.2.4 Rating the intrinsic evidence

The structure of the pericope

The readings would not have serious implications for the structure of the pericope.

The style of the author

The adverb πάντως in reading 1 is used in three other instances by Paul (1 Cor 5:10, 9:10, 16:12), and is therefore not foreign to his style of writing.

Revelation history

Reading 1 would fit better into revelation history, being a realistic acknowledgement that not everybody will be saved by Paul's efforts.

Conclusion on the intrinsic evidence

On the basis of the intrinsic evidence reading 1 is preferred.

Preliminary reading choice

On the basis of the external and intrinsic evidence the preliminary choice is reading 1 (the reading of the UBS text).

7.4.4.2.5 Rating the transcriptional evidence

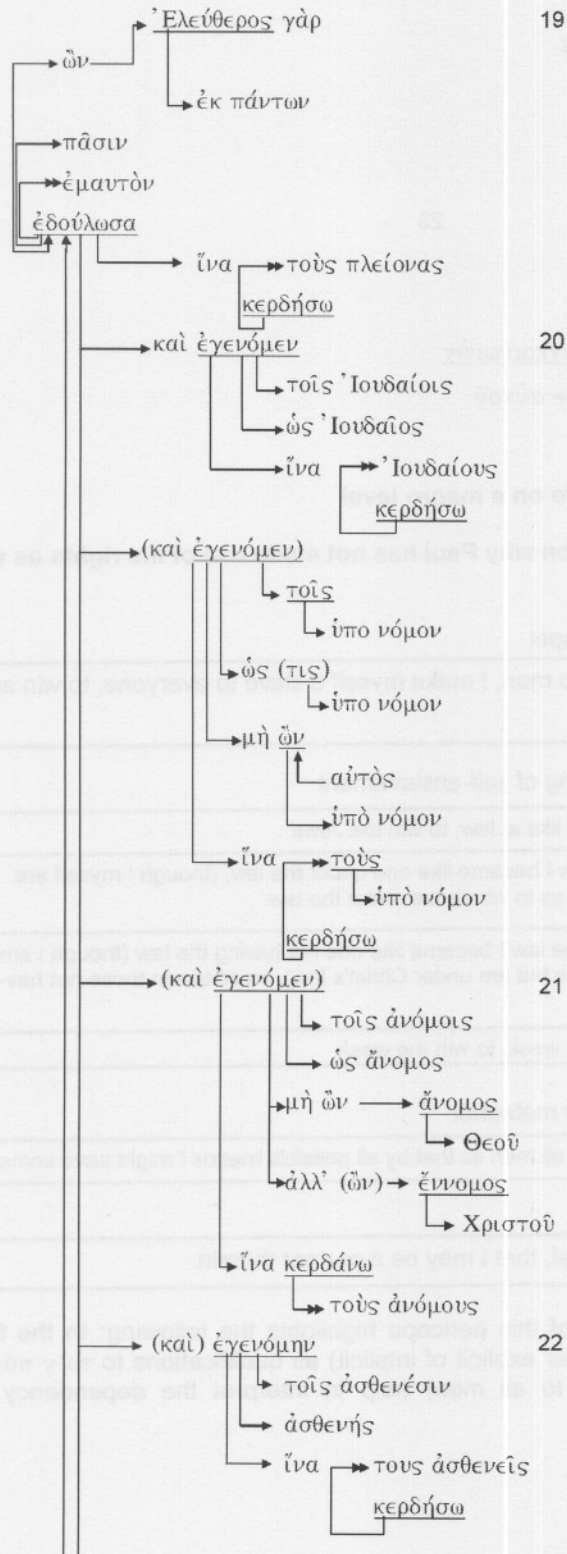
The difference in the two readings may be ascribed to a typical case of *homoioteleuton*, where the words in question end with the same letters (-ας). The copier responsible for the second reading probably committed *haplography*, i.e. leaving out a part of a word due to similarities in the text. The possibility for an alteration by the copier of the second reading to strengthen a universalistic tendency in Paul, especially towards the Jews is not totally out of the question.

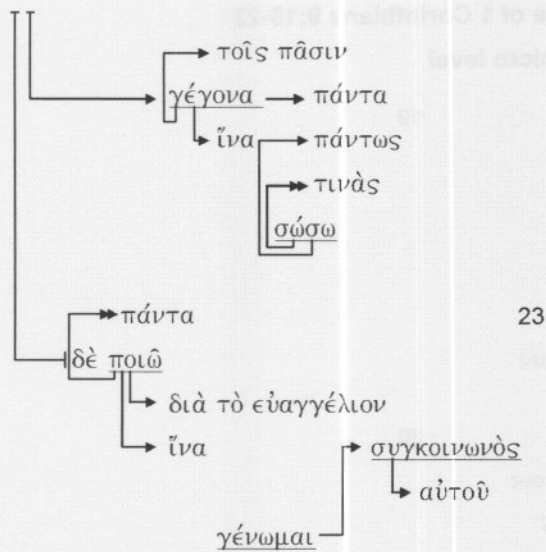
7.4.4.2.6 Conclusion and final reading choice

Having completed the examination of the textual evidence beforehand, reading 1 is chosen as the most probable reading. The UBS text is therefore kept.

7.4.5 Analysing the discourse structure of 1 Corinthians 9:19-23

7.4.5.1 Analysis of the pericope on a micro level

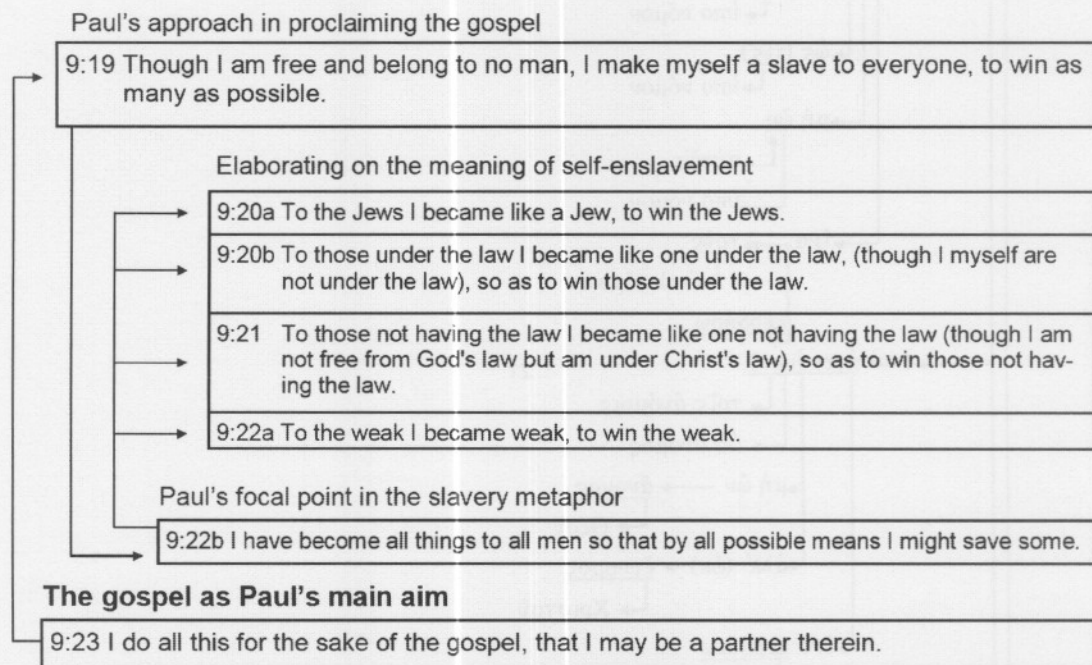




23

7.4.5.2 Analysis of Paul's thought structure on a macro level

1 Corinthians 9:19-23: Second discourse on why Paul has not made use of his rights as an apostle, set out in 1 Cor 9:1-15



This interpretation of the thought structure of this pericope highlights the following: In the first instance the four ἐγενόμεν – clauses (whether explicit or implicit) as qualifications to τοῖς πᾶσιν γέγονα πάντα (I have become all things to all men) help to interpret the dependency or interdependency of these four clauses.

The most commentaries view “those under the law” (9:20) as a further exposition to “the Jews”²¹⁸. The interpretation given earlier²¹⁹, that “those under the law” probably refer to the “proselytes, or Christians who adhered the Jewish law strictly under advice from Christian Jews”, is sustained here in the light of the following grammatical considerations:

The micro analysis does leave room for the view that there is a distinction between the Jews, those “under the law”, and those “not under the law” (1 Cor 9:20-21). The strong chiasmic form in this context would suggest a stronger connection between the Jews and the “weak”, whilst those “under the law” and those “not under the law” may refer to two categories of Gentiles²²⁰.

The macro-analysis also interprets 9:20-22 as being an elaboration of verse 19 and ἐμαυτὸν ἐδούλωσα in this pericope. The dependence of 9:19 on 19:23 also serves as a reminder, however, that Paul’s self-enslavement must always be understood in terms of the “gospel”.

7.4.6 Translation of the pericope

The only suggestion concerning an alternative translation to the NIV involves a *crux interpretum*, i.e. the rendering of ἵνα συγκοινωνῶς αὐτοῦ γένωμαι in the last part of 1 Corinthians 9:23. Although the verse might be interpreted (as the NIV-translation of “so that I may share in its blessings” presupposes) in the light of the “prize” in the next verse (Wolff 1996:207), it makes more sense to have it refer back to previous verses, and the partaking of Paul in the *kenosis* of Christ as centre of the gospel. Therefore the translation “so that I may become a partner therein” is proposed here.

7.4.7 Determining the key verse

The macro- and micro analysis of the discourse in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 pointed to two important verses as being central to the pericope. Verse 23 functions as a summary, and highlights the main reason for all Paul’s suffering and humility. Verse 19 is chosen however, in the light of it being not only the introductory verse, which is visibly explored in the rest of the pericope, but also for introducing the important slave – free person topic, which has already been discussed in 7.3.3.2.

7.4.8 Determining the socio-historic context of the pericope

The socio historic context of the Corinthian correspondence has been dealt with extensively in Chapters 2 and 3 above. Section 7.3.1 also investigated slavery as phenomenon in the first century.

Viewing the pericope in the light of socio-historic evidence, the cultural underlays must be accounted for. In the first instance Paul’s reference to himself as an ἐλεύθερος (a free man) must not pass unnoticed²²¹. In 3.5.3.4 we already have referred to the importance of Roman citizenship in the time of Paul, and that just being a Roman citizen made a big difference in Paul’s context.

Paul’s status as a Roman citizen must have been widely known, but his silence about his citizenship in his letters is noteworthy (see 6.4.2 above). Although probably meant in a metaphorical sense, Paul’s reference here must have evoked the knowledge of his citizenship

²¹⁸ Cf. Barrett (1971:211); Conzelmann (1975:160); Wolff (1996:203).

²¹⁹ The discussion on idol meat under 2.3.3 and 5.2.3.2 above raised the issue that (at least) some of those who adhered to the Jewish law regarding abstention from idol meat were not Jews, but “accustomed to idols”.

²²⁰ The two parentheses in parallel positions that are qualifying Paul’s position, being “though I myself am not under the law” in verse 20, and “though I am not free from God’s law but am under Christ’s law”, is a further support that this may refer to two groups of Gentiles.

²²¹ The main point of this metaphor, being free as a Christian, is not ignored here. The accompanying context must however be explored.

with his hearers, of whom there almost certainly were slaves present (see 7.3.1 above). Paul's referral to his freedom in opposition to him becoming a slave has therefore a definitive rhetorical background of the demagogue (see 6.4.3 above).

Furthermore, the question could be asked why Paul only refers to "becoming a Jew to the Jews" in a direct way, rather than also mentioning "Greeks" or "Romans". There is a distinct possibility that Paul already identifies himself here with the "Greco-Roman" culture, although it has been proven beyond doubt that he was a Jew much more than a Greek or a Roman (see 6.6 above).

Paul's use of the word ἐδούλωσα (to make myself a slave) in this context must have had an effect on the Greco-Roman elite in the congregation. This action of Paul was contrary to the practice within the patron-client relationship, where the accumulation of status was important. Paul's denouncing of his status in this way must have raised a few eyebrows. Paul's self-enslavement was indeed a "challenge to the popular notions of status and authority within his own world (Combes 1998:77).

The self-enslavement of Paul must also be viewed against the context of slavery in Corinth. A substantial number of believers, may have been slaves before, or had parents who were slaves. The others that did not fall into that category, were private entrepreneurs or patrons who had slaves themselves. By accepting the position and status of the lowest rank in society (cf. 7.3.2), Paul appealed to the status conscious Corinthians in a quite unique way (see 1.4 above).

Also concerning 9:19, Conzelmann (1975:159-160) makes the interesting observation that Paul is partly under Jewish influence with his idea of self-humiliation and accommodation. The Christian reference to rulers who serve according to Luke 22:24-30 (discussed in 4.2.2.4 above) and 1 Corinthians 2:1-5 is also mentioned by Conzelmann (1975:160). This passage is also connected with Philippians 2:7 by Wolff (1996:202), who refers to this self-giving love as being the true power of the gospel²²².

The referral to πᾶσιν (to everyone) and the generalisation in verse 22b τοῖς πᾶσιν γέγονα πάντα, ἵνα πάντως τιμὰς σώσω (I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some) should also not pass unnoticed. In the socio-historic context of the patron-client relationship everybody (except maybe the caesar) did "enslave" themselves to somebody within higher rank to himself, to achieve certain favours in return. Viewing the leadership crisis (evident in 1 Corinthians 1-4) in this perspective, Paul is advocating against group-forming and serving the interests of certain leaders in the congregation, but promotes "slave-like service to everyone".

The paradox of Paul, a Jew through and through, that became a Jew to the Jews (cf. 6.4) according to verse 20 probably has very subtle undertones. Paul is on the one side declaring his commitment to approach the Jews in a cultural sensitive way. On the other hand, he removes any doubt on what his viewpoint is: the Jews would not be able to use his Jewish background to win sympathy for their endeavours in the underlying cultural struggle.

Although Paul's commitment to the law is normally debated from the discipline of theology, Paul's intentional and clear interjection in 9:20 must have reiterated his stance towards Judaism again. Paul served Jews and non-Jews²²³ who lived in strict adherence to the law. It must be taken into account that adherence to the law was one of the three pivotal values of a Jew (cf. 3.5.1.1), and therefore Paul showed in practice that he respected the Jewish Torah, but within certain limits²²⁴.

In the discussion of Paul's enslavement to those not having the law we find again a limitation by Paul in 9:21b, stating μὴ ὦν ἄνομος Θεοῦ ἀλλ' ἐννομος Χριστοῦ (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law). Within the context of Greek and Roman licentiousness (cf. 3.5.3.3) Paul also has to carefully demarcate what "making himself a slave" to those "not having the law" means. Although clearly separating himself from the traditional Jewish culture and their

²²² Although overlooking the reference to Paul in 1 Cor 9:19 as being slave to all, she does connect the portion in 2 Cor 4:5 with Philippians 2:7 (Thrall 1994a:314).

²²³ See Cheung (1999:124-125) on 1 Cor 8:7 in 2.3.3 above.

²²⁴ Cf. 4.2.2.2 on Paul's delicate handling of circumcision and ritual washing.

view of the Torah, he also indicates to those “not having the law” that he cannot condone “lawlessness”, but that he is under the “law of Christ”.

Whilst it is generally accepted in scholarship that the “weak” (9:22) does not fall into a socio-cultural category, Martin (1998:124), in the footsteps of Theissen (1982:121-143) interprets “the weak” convincingly to refer to a socio-economic lower-class²²⁵. This means that the elite in the congregation are called upon to follow Paul’s example in attending to the plight of the poor and deprived in the congregation (Martin 1998:148).

In terms of the assimilation theory presented by Berry (cf. 3.2.4 above) Paul is intent on preserving his identity as a Christian, but strives for a positive relationship with both the dominant and the “dominated” groups in Corinth. His approach to these cultures can therefore be described as “integration”.

Reviewing this pericope in its socio-historical context definitely has produced interesting results, and contributed to an understanding of Paul’s approach to cultural conflict in Corinth. It becomes all the more clear that Paul is not constantly changing colours like a chameleon (see 1.2) at all, but that he presents an innovative way to approach cultural differences both in context of the congregation, and in his own background.

7.4.9 Word study of important concepts in the key verse

In the key verse (1 Cor 9:19) the two key words to study are ἐλεύθερος and ἐδούλωσα. Although the socio-historical context of both has been extensively discussed previously in this thesis, a semantic study of the concepts contributes to the understanding of their function in the message of the text.

7.4.9.1 A semantic study of ἐλεύθερος

In Volume 2 of Louw & Nida (1988b:81), ἐλεύθερος is rendered as (a) “(be) free” (37.134) or (b) “free person”(87.84). This word occurs in two of the four principal semantic domains. The first meaning, “(be) free” is interpreted as an event, whilst the second meaning, “free”, describing a person, is an abstract.

The word is used in the context of 1 Corinthians 9:19 in the more literal sense. The introduction of the verb ἐδούλωσα later in the verse also evokes the literal sense of the word. The reference to “free” (describing a person) as an abstract (87.84) is therefore preferred. The relevant inscription provided under this heading in Louw & Nida (1988a:742) is:

87.84 ἐλεύθερος, α, ον: pertaining to a person who is not a slave, either one who has never been a slave or one who was a slave formerly but is no longer – ‘free person, free man’. ὁ ἐλευθερος κληθεὶς δούλος ἐστὶν Χριστοῦ “for a free man who has been called by Christ is his slave” 1 Cor 7:22; πῶς σὺ λέγεις ὅτι Ἐλεύθεροι γενήσεσθε; “How can you then say, You will not become free people?” Jn 8:33

The reference provided by Louw & Nida to 1 Corinthians 7:22, where ἐλεύθερος and δουλόω are used together in the same context, does support the choice made for this meaning of ἐλεύθερος in 1 Corinthians 9:19. Rendering the meaning of ἐλεύθερος as an event, “(be) free”, would refer to the figurative meaning, which is probably not the main intention of the author in this instance.

The word ἐλεύθερος falls under domain 87 (‘status’), preceded by 84 (‘spacial extensions’), 85 (‘existence in space’), and 86 (‘weight’). It is being followed by domains 88 (‘moral and ethical qualities and related behaviour’), 89 (‘relations’) and 90 (‘case’).

The relation of domain 87 (‘status’) to 85 (‘existence in space’), is an indication that social factors are often determined by location or travelling (cf. 3.2.4). The semantic domain 86 (weight) has

²²⁵

Although the work of Martin (1998) has been extensively used in the research of this study (Martin took 1 Cor 9:19-22 as key pericope), he unfortunately concentrates on the “weak”; he (1998:118) does not give much attention to the other three categories referred to by Paul in 1 Cor 9:20-22.

reference to 'status', because 'weight' was often used by the Greeks and the Romans in a metaphorical sense to refer to a person's status²²⁶. The relation between "status" and 88 ('moral and ethical qualities and related behaviour') as well as 89 ('relations') is important. The "status" of Paul and the Corinthians is definitely playing a role in determining their moral and ethical behaviour, and eventually all the more their relations to one another, and to foreigners.

Five sub-domains are found under domain 87 ('status'), i.e. A ('position, rank'), B ('honor or respect in relation to status'), C ('High status or rank'), D ('Low status or rank') and E ('slave, free'). The positioning of the sub-domain in question, i.e. E, at the bottom of the domain communicates something about the distinction slave-free being the most basic under the domain "status".

This probably means that being free would not necessarily mean having 'status', 'wealth' or 'political rank'²²⁷. It is important to consider the research done by Martin (1990:56) (cf. 7.3.1 above), who contends that slaves were often better off than those who were free.

In sub-domain E there are 11 entries, of which 87.81-87.86 are contrasted with one another to arrive at a better defined meaning of 87.84. The entries involved are 87.76 δούλος, 87.77 παῖς, 87.78 σῶμα, 87.79 δουλεύω, 87.80 εἰμι ὑπὸ ζυγόν, 87.81 σύνδουλος, 87.82 δουλόω, 87.83 δούλη, 87.84 ἐλεύθερος, 87.85 ἀπελεύθερος, 87.86 Λιβερτίνος.

	87.76	87.77	87.78	87.79	87.80	87.81	87.82	87.83	87.84	87.85	87.86
1 Belong to owner	+	+	+	±	+	+	±	+	-	-	-
2 Kindly regarded	±	+	-	±	-	-		+			
3 Commercial value	±	±	+	±	+	+	±	±			
4 Slave to a person	+	+	±	+	±	±	±	±	-		
5 Be in slavery	+	+	+	±	+	+		+	-	-	-
6 Be a fellow slave	±	±	+	±	+	+	±	±			-
7 To make a slave							+				
8 Previously a slave									±	+	+

In the semantic analysis done above, it is clear that ἐλεύθερος stands in direct contrast with the practise of slavery, except for the possibility that an ἐλεύθερος might have formerly been a slave. In this instance it is clear that "a free man" does not belong to any human being or group of beings, is not a slave to any person, and does not live in slavery. By opening the pericope in question (1 Corinthians 9:19-23) with the word ἐλεύθερος, Paul is certainly demarcating the concept of δουλόω that follows in his introductory sentence.

It is also useful to look at the meaning of δουλόω as an abstract. The analysis presented shows that the "to make a slave" in this context is relevant to the intention of 1 Corinthians 9:19. The components 4 & 6, being a slave to a person, and being a fellow slave²²⁸. Belonging to an owner and having commercial value, is not the components of meaning that Paul had in mind.

7.4.9.2 A semantic study of δουλόω

The concept δουλόω is categorised by Louw & Nida (1988b:67) as to (a) "enslave" (87.82) and (b) "make subservient" (37.27). In Volume 1 of Louw & Nida (1988a:475) δουλόω is listed under 37.27 in the figurative sense, actually quoting 1 Corinthians 9:19 as example:

37.27 δουλόω^b (a figurative extension of meaning of δουλόω "to enslave," 87.82) καταδουλόω (a figurative extension of meaning of καταδουλόω "to cause a person to be a slave", not occurring in the NT): to gain control over

²²⁶ Cf. the referral to levitas (the Latin word for "lightness") being used in rhetoric as a term for "forsaking one's proper place in society and attempting to assume a lower place in order to appeal to those at the lower end of the social scale" (Martin 1998:96).

²²⁷ Cf. the discussion on Meggitt (1998:179) and Paul in 2.5.1 above.

²²⁸ The alternative translation of verse 23 suggested in 7.4.6 above, does contain a hint to the idea of a "fellow slave", an idea which is not present in the NIV translation of the text.

someone and thus make such an individual subservient to one's own interests – “to gain control over, to make a slave of, to cause someone to be subservient to, to cause to be like a slave.” δουλόω: ἑμαυτὸν ἐδούλωσα, ἵνα τοὺς πλείονας κερδήσω “I made myself a slave in order to win as many as possible.” 1 Cor 9:19; ὑπο τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου ἡμεθα δεδουλωμένοι “we became subjected to the elemental spirits of the universe” or “...subjected to rudimentary knowledge” Ga 4:3.

Choosing between the meanings of δουλόω as an event or an abstract is made easier by two factors: In the first instance the context of δουλόω in 1 Corinthians 9:19 is clearly a figurative reference, whilst the authors of this lexicon lists this verse as an example of this choice for the meaning of δουλόω. The abstract rendering has already been shown in 7.4.9.1 above to be inadequate for the interpretation of δουλόω in the pericope in question.

The domain for this reference is domain 37, with the meaning of “control, rule”. The surrounding domains are thus: 33 (communication), 34 (association), 35 (help, care for), 36 (guide, discipline, follow), 38 (punish, reward), 39 (hostility, strife), 40 (reconciliation, forgiveness).

In examining the semantic domains above it is clear that there is a positive build-up from communication to association, caring for, and following. This arch reaches its highest point in 37, “control and rule”, where it decreases to punish and reward, and end in hostility and strife, which is put into perspective again by reconciliation and forgiveness. This forms an ideal interpretative framework for the meaning of δουλόω amidst the underlying tensions found in the Corinthian congregation.

Moving on to the sub-domains, we find δουλόω in the sub-domain A, labelled “control, restrain”. In the following sub-domains, being B (compel, force), C (exercise authority), D (rule, govern), E (assign to take a role or function) and F (seize, take into custody) we find the same tendency as in the discussion of the domains. Moderate exercising of authority makes space for eventual ruling and punishment. The function of δουλόω within the domain of control and restraining immediately reminds one of the concluding section of 1 Corinthians 9:24-27, where Paul describes how he restrains his body to qualify for the prize. The increased forced authority visible in the subsequent sub-domains, can also be contrasted to Paul's authority as the way that his opponents exerts authority (cf. 2 Cor 11:20²²⁹).

For the purpose of the componential semantic analysis the 32 semantic fields under domain A (control, restrain) are limited to only 8, being 37:24-27:32. The fields in question are 37.24 δουλόομαι, 37.25 δουλεύω, 37.26 δουλεία 37.27 δουλόω, 37.28 ἀρπάζω, 37.29 αἰχμαλωτίζω, 37.30 χαρίζομαι, 37.31 ὑποτάσσω, 37.32 ἀνυπότακτος. The componential analysis of δουλόω and surrounding fields under domain 37 is presented as follows:

	37.24	37.25	37.26	37.27	37.28	37.29	37.30	37.31	37.32
1 Be bound/under obligation	+	±	+	±		+	+	+	-
2 To be controlled by an influence	±	+			±				-
3 Be in a state of slavery		±	+		±		±		-
4 Cause to be subservient	±	±		+	+	+	+		-
5 Gain control over by force		±			+	+	±		-
6 Put person in control of another			±	?	-	-	±	±	-
7 To bring somebody under control				±	+	+	±	+	-
8 Not controlled by person	-	-	-	?					+

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2 Cor 11:20: “²⁰ In fact, you even put up with anyone who enslaves you or exploits you or takes advantage of you or pushes himself forward or slaps you in the face.”

From the analysis of semantic fields it is evident that the concept of “control”, or “mastery over” is very important. In a sense the phrase ἑμαυτὸν ἐδούλωσα “I make myself a slave” implies for the person to have control or “freedom of movement”. Paul’s freedom in 9:19, being an ἐλεύθερος, must not only be seen in antithesis to ἐδούλωσα, but it serves as a condition for Paul to show true servitude.

The second insight gained from this analysis is the idea of being bound/under obligation to somebody. This immediately brings 1 Corinthians 1:16²³⁰, as well as Romans 1:14-15²³¹ to mind. Paul’s approach to cultural conflict entails amongst other reasons that he feels obliged to win as many for the gospel as possible.

The rendering of ἑμαυτὸν ἐδούλωσα under this domain does pose an inconsistency. Although the meaning of δουλόω would normally imply that one person are controlled by another, (see components 6 and 8), in this context the addition of ἑμαυτὸν would render the same word to have the opposite meaning. In the context of this pericope and his Christian background and theology, Paul is not a people’s pleaser, but he is primarily loyal and obedient to Christ and God²³².

In considering an alternative placement, the presence of a word with the same root, δουλεύω in 35.27 is noteworthy. The suggestion concerning this inscription at the bottom of 35.27 is a clear indication that Louw & Nida (1988a:461) are battling with the actual meaning and placement of the δουλ- root. In listing Matthew 6:24 οὐδεὶς δύναται δυεῖς κυρίοις (a slave cannot serve two masters), we find the following comment: “It is possible that in Mt 6:24 δουλεύω^c should be understood as δουλεύω^a namely, ‘to be a slave’ (see 87.79)”.

Having already found the meaning of ἑμαυτὸν ἐδούλωσα incompatible with the listing under the abstract 87.82, another placement is proposed: In the light of the strong connections with *kenosis* (see 7.3.2.2 above) found in researching the metaphorical use of self-enslavement in this context, placing the reference to ἑμαυτὸν ἐδούλωσα in the adjacent sub-domain D (low status or rank), is proposed. The phrase in question would fit in well between fields 87.69 (ἐλαττόμαι - to become less important” and 87.70 (κενόω - to empty oneself, to divest oneself of position.)

The suggested entry would look as follows:

ἑμαυτὸν ἐδούλωσα (An figurative extension of δουλόω^a): to voluntarily lay down one’s own position of status for the benefit of others – “to make oneself a slave”. ἑμαυτὸν ἐδούλωσα, ἵνα τοὺς πλείονας κερδήσω “I made myself a slave in order to win as many as possible” 1 Cor 9:19.

In conclusion the research on the concepts of ἐλεύθερος and δουλόω in relation to their adjacent semantic fields, has surely been fruitful. It has become clear that Paul had to have the powers of “a free man”, to be able to take the decision to make himself a slave. Although the semantic analysis of these concepts provided good delimitations and departure points for interpreting the text, it is also true that these references are shown to be complicated (and ambiguous) in the light of Paul’s personal background and excellent rhetorical style²³³.

It is therefore evident that the listing of words related to other synonyms (and antonyms), in stead of the traditional way of relating to the root of the word, has its advantages. The study above showed that the semantic analysis has a great value, especially in the way that the concepts of ἐλεύθερος^a and δουλόω^a are shown to be in the same semantic sub-domain! In spite of the invaluable research done in this work by Louw & Nida (1988), the results on the concept of δουλόω has shown that there are room to refine (and add) semantic fields in the light of the introduction of socio-historical research.

²³⁰ 1 Cor 9:16: “¹⁶ Yet when I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, for I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!

²³¹ Rom 1:14: “¹⁴ I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish.

¹⁵ That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are at Rome.

²³² Cf. 7.2.2.1&7.2.2.2 above as well as Paul’s own limitations to being a slave in 1 Cor 9:21-22.

²³³ Cf. chapter 6 and section 7.2.1 above.

7.4.10 Self-enslavement in revelation historical perspective

The revelational theme researched from the perspective of 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 is Paul's approach to solve cultural conflict by means of self-enslavement.

In the light of the topic above to be researched, and the research already done in this regard (cf. chapters 4 - 7.3), this section focuses only on the key Scripture portions (besides the pericope in question), regarding slavery to or accommodation of people in a cross cultural context.

For this purpose the texts demarcated in 1.2 above are used in their respective pericopes. Although some of the texts in question (and also the key pericope) has previously been discussed in relation to certain topics, this section aims at giving a comprehensive overview of their relevance for understanding and interpreting Paul's so-called "chameleon" attitude.

Theme	Scripture reference	Relevance to the theme
Paul's approach to cultural conflict through self-enslavement.	7.4.10.1 Pericopes that are seemingly negative towards self-enslavement	
	<p>1 Corinthians 7:20-24 ²⁰ Each one should remain in the situation which he was in when God called him. ²¹ Were you a slave when you were called? Don't let it trouble you—although if you can gain your freedom, do so. ²² For he who was a slave when he was called by the Lord is the Lord's freedman; similarly, he who was a free man when he was called is Christ's slave. ²³ You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men. ²⁴ Brothers, each man, as responsible to God, should remain in the situation God called him to.</p>	<p>Relevance: Verse 23, with emphasis on the words <i>μὴ γίνεσθε δοῦλοι ἀνθρώπων</i> (do not become slaves of men) is the focus. Paul's qualification of his "enslavement to the Jews, and those under the law" in 1 Corinthians 9:20, i.e. "though I myself am not under the law", resolves this seeming "anomaly" in Paul's approach²³⁴. Paul is probably addressing the "weak" non-Jews referred to in 1 Cor 8:7, not to become slaves of men by circumcising themselves according to the demands of some Jewish leaders. Some leaders in Corinth tried to "enslave" the people (2 Cor 11:20) (cf. 7.4.9.2 above).</p> <p>Place in revelation-history: In verse 22-23 the economical dimension, as well as the ownership dimension of "being a slave of Christ" (cf. 7.3.3.2 & 7.4.9.2 above) is exploited. Christ's sacrificial death (see 7.2.1) made the believers his property. They are therefore not to be enslaved by leaders with false motives.</p>
	<p>1 Corinthians 6:12-16 ¹² "Everything is permissible for me" - but not everything is beneficial. "Everything is permissible for me" - but I will not be mastered by anything. ¹³ "Food for the stomach and the stomach for food" - but God will destroy them both. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. ¹⁴ By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also. ¹⁵ Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! ¹⁶ Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, "The two will become one flesh." ¹⁷ But he who unites himself with the Lord is one with him in spirit.</p>	<p>Relevance to the theme: The focus here is verse 12c: <i>οὐκ ἔγω ἐξουσιασθήσομαι ὑπό τινος</i> (will not be mastered by anything). Although initially seeming to be in contrast with 1 Corinthians 9:19, the solution lies in the limitation to freedom (and the extend of self-enslavement to others) Paul provides in 1 Cor 19:22: "To those not having the law I have become like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law." Paul is primarily <i>δοῦλος Χριστοῦ</i> (slave of Christ) and therefore (although devoting himself to the cause of saving his fellow human beings), he does not enslave himself to sexual immorality or anything from Greco-Roman culture that is inconsistent with being <i>ἐννομος Χριστοῦ</i> (under Christ's law). Paul can therefore be described as "slave to all, but having only Christ as master.</p> <p>Place in revelation-history: In light of eschatological considerations in verse 13 "God will destroy them both", and Christ being the Lord of the body, Paul states that he would not become a slave of something temporary and contrary to the "law of Christ".</p>

²³⁴ The exegetical problem between being free and being a slave of men, is evaded by Barrett (1971:210) by translating *πᾶσι* in 9:19 with "things" in stead of "men".

	<p>1 Corinthians 5:9-13 ⁹ I have written you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people- ¹⁰ not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world. ¹¹ But now I am writing you that you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat. ¹² What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? ¹³ God will judge those outside. "Expel the wicked man from among you."</p>	<p>Relevance for the theme: The qualification stated in 1 Corinthians 9:21 above has reference again. Because Paul is under the law of Christ, he cannot enslave himself to those who persist in their slavery to this world and its desires. If συγκοινωνός in 1 Corinthians 9:23 would refer to "partner" indeed, then Paul's denial of association with in 2 Corinthians 6:14²³⁵ also has reference to Paul's refusal of long-term association with unbelievers who don't change their lifestyle.</p> <p>Place in revelation-history: In the process of congregation-building Paul's enslavement seems to be limited to non-Christians and immature Christians. If it seems that people cannot be "won" for Christ, and they proceed in their previous ways of living without remorse or repentance, then they must be removed from the congregation. The metaphorical reference to δουλεύω in Matthew 6:24 is relevant here²³⁶. Paul's enslavement to newcomers in the Christian faith calls them to subject themselves first and foremost as δουλοί Χριστοῦ, and to live accordingly.</p>
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<p>Paul's approach to cultural conflict through self-enslavement.</p>	<p>7.4.10.2 References supporting the notion of self-enslavement</p> <p>2 Cor 4:1-6 ¹ Therefore, since through God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart. ² Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. ³ And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. ⁴ The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. ⁵ For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants (δούλους) for Jesus' sake. ⁶ For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.</p>	<p>Relevance to the theme: Of importance here is to the phrase in verse 4, ἐαυτούς δὲ δούλους ὑμῶν διὰ Ἰησοῦν (ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake). Another theme related to slavery that is introduced here, is the notion of renouncing secret and shameful ways, not using deceptive rhetorical techniques, nor distortion of God's word. Instead of the sophist(icated)-leaders in Corinth, Paul is presenting him and his fellow workers as bringing the word in a plain way, i.e. in the manner of slaves, not using devious rhetorical language, but having the interests of their hearers or readers at heart, and showing their love with deeds, rather than words²³⁷.</p> <p>Place in revelation history: The qualification to Paul being a slave primarily to Christ and then to his fellow human beings, is evident in this passage. Being "under the law of Christ" (1 Corinthians 9:21), is therefore put in perspective here by the phrase διὰ Ἰησοῦν (for the sake of Jesus). The Christological motive in Paul's self-enslavement is thus reiterated.</p>
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²³⁵ 1 Cor 6:14: " ¹⁴ Do not be yoked together with unbelievers."

²³⁶ Mt 6:24: " ²⁴ No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money."

²³⁷ Cf. 7.2.3 above on Paul and suffering in 2 Corinthians.

<p>1 Corinthians 8:7-13 ⁷ But not everyone knows this. Some people are still so accustomed to idols that when they eat such food they think of it as having been sacrificed to an idol, and since their conscience is weak, it is defiled. ⁸ But food does not bring us near to God; we are no worse if we do not eat, and no better if we do. ⁹ Be careful, however, that the exercise of your freedom does not become a stumbling block to the weak. ¹⁰ For if anyone with a weak conscience sees you who have this knowledge eating in an idol's temple, won't he be emboldened to eat what has been sacrificed to idols? ¹¹ So this weak brother, for whom Christ died, is destroyed by your knowledge. ¹² When you sin against your brothers in this way and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. ¹³ Therefore, if what I eat causes my brother to fall into sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause him to fall.</p>	<p>Relevance: The reference to freedom in verse 9 (ἐλευθερία) is of cardinal importance for understanding 1 Corinthians 9:19-23. This "freedom" is not only reminiscent of the use of ἐλεύθερος in 9:19, but read in context it carries even more resemblance to Galatians 5:13 (referred to in 7.3.3.2) where believers are implored not to use their freedom (ἐλευθερίαν) to "indulge in sinful nature, but rather to serve (δουλεύετε) one another in love. In 1 Corinthians 8:9 Paul does not only refer to his own self-enslavement, but he encourages the Corinthians to use their freedom to choose the most considerate to the weak.</p> <p>Place in revelation-history: In verse 11 the weaker brother is described as the "one for whom Christ died". The <i>kenosis</i> theme is again reiterated here. Christ is portrayed as the one who also died for the "weak". Because everybody is important to the Lord, the same is true for Paul, and should be true for the "strong" in the congregation of Corinth as well.</p>
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<p>1 Corinthians 10:23-33 ²³ "Everything is permissible"-but not everything is beneficial. "Everything is permissible"-but not everything is constructive. ²⁴ Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others. ²⁵ Eat anything sold in the meat market without raising questions of conscience, ²⁶ for, "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it." ²⁷ If some unbeliever invites you to a meal and you want to go, eat whatever is put before you without raising questions of conscience. ²⁸ But if anyone says to you, "This has been offered in sacrifice," then do not eat it, both for the sake of the man who told you and for conscience' sake ²⁹ the other man's conscience, I mean, not yours. For why should my freedom be judged by another's conscience? ³⁰ If I take part in the meal with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of something I thank God for? ³¹ So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. ³² Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God- ³³ even as I try to please everybody in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved. ¹ Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ</p>	<p>Relevance: Becoming "a slave to everybody" is described here as "removing the stumbling blocks". This passage is crucial in assessing the components of meaning of Paul's self-enslavement. Whilst it is important for Paul to preserve his identity as a Christian in every way (see 7.4.8 above), he is prepared to forfeit his cultural identity where it may be a "stumbling block" to somebody else. Not one's "own good" should be sought, but the good of others. Paul disregards his own cultural heritage²³⁸, i.e. eating habits, circumcision, purification rites, etc. But the task of becoming a slave to everyone is not an easy one. You can't please all the people all the time. There was probably a case where a church member objected to eating food of a non-Christian which was offered to an idol²³⁹. Paul therefore laid down a rule that the eating of idol meat was only prohibited when it was pointed out as such. Paul actually says here (verse 33) that he does not only lay down his own cultural presuppositions to please somebody, but in "pleasing people", he accommodates the different cultures of the others present as far as possible. This pericope also provides an interesting perspective on the identity of the people that Paul approaches "as a slave". Other than in 1 Corinthians 9, the identity of the people who Paul are referring to in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23, when he refers to becoming a slave to all, is not clearly defined. The addition of the "church of God" to the usual description of Jews and Greeks is an indication that Paul's self-enslavement is also aimed at church members, and not only at the non-Jews and non-Christian Jews.</p> <p>Place in revelation-history: Verse 31b – do it all to the glory of God", reminds of Jesus' summary of the Law in Mt 22:37-38. In following Christ's example, glorifying God is the aim of his children in the new freedom they received. Paul's freedom therefore lies in Christ and not in the eyes or opinions of his opponents (verse 29). In contrast to everything being prescribed in detail to the Jewish believer, the new dispensation used the rule: "Is it to God's glory?". Last but not least, is the ever recurring <i>kenosis</i> theme. Paul urges his readers to follow his example, as in the same way he follows the example of Christ's humiliation in "seeking the good of many".</p>
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²³⁸ See the discussion on Php 3:2-9 in 4.2.2.2 above.

²³⁹ See Barrett (1971:242-243) for a list of expositions on this complicated text.

In the analysis of the texts above new perspectives on the nature of Paul's self-enslavement came to light, especially the limitations to Paul's self enslavement. Furthermore it is noteworthy to perceive the recurring freedom – slavery antithesis, as well as the *kenosis* theme, also found in related texts.

This study revealed that Paul approached cross cultural conflict in Corinth with an attitude of humility and service. But although he tried to "please people" as much as possible he was never a people's pleaser at all. Paul's fellow congregants were never able to "control" him. His one and only lord and master was Jesus Christ.

From the analysis of the Scripture portions it is clear that Paul is not a "chameleon" in the sense of changing attitudes to deceive people. But Paul can be called a chameleon for his immense ability to adapt to any situation and atmosphere for the benefit and salvation of his fellow human beings. Paul's varied personal background must have prepared him for his work amongst different cultures.

7.4.11 The revelation about God in the pericope

In the key pericope (1 Cor 9:19-23) the main revelation about God is that his law is always useful and authoritative. Paul's freedom is qualified by being obedient to God's law (9:20). The complex way in which Paul qualifies his bondage under God's law, *μη ὡν ἄνομος Θεοῦ ἀλλ' ἐννομος Χριστοῦ* (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), is in a sense explaining the current dissention amongst scholars in Pauline theology regarding the primacy of "God" or "Christ" in Paul's theology (see 7.2 above). The important issue here is that he does not see any discontinuity between God's law and Christ's law, but rather a discontinuity between the Jewish practice of the law (seeing himself as not under the law in verse 21) and God's law.

7.4.12 The facts about salvation in the pericope, and the exhortations based upon it

There is no doubt that salvation is a key element in this pericope. There are no more than 5 references to the verb *κερδαίνω* in 9:20-22, which refers to winning people for Jesus Christ. In 9:23²⁴⁰ Paul states the aim of all his efforts, i.e. *διὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον* (for the sake of the gospel).

The conflict in the congregation of Corinth had all the potential to derail all missionary efforts there, as well as causing schism in the congregation with a potential backslide of members. Paul gave himself and his talents exhaustively in his efforts to restore unity in the congregation.

However, Paul was not just preaching and writing the gospel, he was also a living example of God's salvation in his deeds. In the footsteps of Christ, he gave up his life and his status to work not only as Christ's slave, but as a slave to everybody – to everybody's benefit. Paul's endeavours (known through his letters) also shows that there are no "quick fixes" in facilitating God's salvation in peoples life, and to win people over for his Kingdom. The work of a pastor is an arduous and life-long responsibility.

Lastly it would not be fitting to proceed to the next section without a short reference to the work of Martin (1990), who linked the concept of slavery with salvation. In his work (Martin 1990:32) the statement is made that slavery in the first century was not as bad as people generally presume. Slavery is not only seen as salvation from poverty (to sell your family into slavery) but many slaves are viewed to be of the managerial type, doing even better than the free man on the street (Martin 1990:32).

This concept is then used in the Bible for man's slavery to God as his salvation (Rom 6:20-23²⁴¹). The thesis proposed by Martin (1990:62) is that Paul uses this concept of "slavery as salvation"

²⁴⁰ 1 Cor 9:23 was established as key verse in the discourse analysis done in 7.4.5 above.

²⁴¹ Rom 6:20-23: ²⁰ When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness.

²¹ What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things

also to describe his reasons for becoming a slave to his fellow men. Not only are the Jews, those with and without the law, as well as the “weak” saved by this action. Eventually Paul himself is saved through becoming a slave (Martin 1990:62).

Although Martin makes an indispensable contribution to the study of 1 Corinthians 9, his theory in this regard is inconsistent with the emphasis Paul places justification through faith (Horrel 2000:73-75). The theory, as Martin proposes it, may border on justification through works, which is not consistent with Paul’s theology in general.

7.4.13 The communicational goal of the pericope

In view of 1 Corinthians 9 as a separate unit within the first letter to the Corinthians, the communicational goal is to convince the Corinthians of Paul’s sincere involvement in the congregation. Paul wants to prove to them that his intentions were pure, and that he did all within his power to work towards their salvation.

In the key pericope (1 Cor 9:19-23) Paul expresses the extent of his commitment to them in the strongest terms. He became “all things to all men”. He did his best for the well-being of the congregation. He sincerely wanted everybody to be saved.

Although the pericope is persuasive in nature, it also has an element of teaching. Paul presents himself as an example. In the same way he imitates Christ, the congregation is urged to follow his example, as he did follow the example of Christ (1 Cor 11:10). As he became a slave to men, his fellow workers followed (2 Cor 4:5), and he asks the same from the Galatians (Gal 5:13).

7.5 CONCLUSION

What was Paul’s approach to cultural conflict in Corinth? The research, which was drawn together in this chapter shows clearly that Paul’s identity as a Christian was primary in his approach to cultural conflict. Although his diverse background as a man from three worlds (see chapter 6) must have aided him in his approach to the Corinthians, he would not side with any of the factions.

Although it was impossible to please everybody, Paul persevered in becoming “all things to all men”, to at least save some of them. This attitude is summarized in 1 Corinthians 1:19, where Paul states in no uncertain terms that he has committed himself to becoming a slave of men. In analogy to the *kenosis*, or self-emptying act of Christ, Paul became a slave to everybody.

Paul thus addressed the patronage and power within the Roman system, the love for wisdom and rhetoric amongst the Greeks, and the pride on strictly keeping the law of some Jewish factions with an attitude of a common slave, somebody who was prepared to suffer for their salvation.

In assessing Paul’s slavery attitude, it is important to note that he always defined it as being “in Christ”. Paul was in the first instance always “slave of Christ”. His Christian identity as being free from the law, and under the law of God and Jesus Christ, was never to be compromised. In situations where the circumstances demanded cultural sensitivity in respect to the Jews, Paul did make exceptions (like the circumcision of Timothy), but the Jews were also encouraged to leave the law as *paidagogos* behind, and act as mature Christians.

Another aspect of Paul being a slave to all men, was his willingness to lay down his own cultural identity, and remove the stumbling blocks to others, wherever necessary (Barrett 1971:211). Even when the accommodation of one party led to the unhappiness of another, Paul did his best to give wise rulings and guidelines, as in 1 Corinthians 8-10.

result in death! ²² But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. ²³ For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Lastly it is important to be reminded that Paul was much more than a human resources manager. His main focus was not just the peace and the resolution of conflicts. No, as stated clearly in 1 Corinthians 9:23, Paul did everything for the sake of the gospel, and for people to accept Jesus Christ as their Lord. He provided them with an example to follow, not his own example, but the example of Jesus Christ, who "did not consider equality with God as something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the nature of a servant (δοῦλος), being made in human likeness (Php 2:6-7).

CHAPTER 8

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE MINISTRY IN THE DUTCH REFORMED CHURCH IN BOTSWANA

It has already been stated that the scope of this study does not include a detailed description into the context of the Dutch Reformed Church in Botswana (DRCB) (cf. 1.1 above). Therefore the aim of this chapter is not to attempt any concrete applications for the pastor and his ministry in the church²⁴². The intention of this chapter is rather to hint at relevant insights emanating from Paul's approach to cultural conflict in Corinth.

There is always a danger involved in the application of the Bible to contemporary context. The past interpretations of certain portions in Corinthians led to "discrimination of whole classes" of churches' members (Crocker 2004:4), not even to mention the discrimination of people outside the church. 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, and 14:33b-36 have always been in contention regarding women in the church, whilst 1 Corinthians 7:17-24 was used to justify slavery.

Despite all the complicated pitfalls involved in the application of this text to the twenty-first century context, the applicational value of 1 Corinthians for our current context is evident (cf. Thiselton 2001:17)²⁴³. Therefore it is viable to proceed in highlighting certain obvious themes from this dissertation, which may be valuable starting points and/or guidelines for the pastors and congregations in the DRCB.

Firstly it is important in the light of the definitions of culture provided in 3.2.3 above, to keep in mind that culture is not a fixed entity, but that it has a constantly changing nature. Whereas "culture" was traditionally viewed as something fixed, often with the negative connotation of people not being able to "break away" from the negative aspects in their culture, this study has shown, i.a. the major changes (whether positive or negative) that took place in Diaspora Judaism. The study of the impact of the gospel on first century Mediterranean "travelling" cultures may indeed have interesting implications for pastors and congregants operating in a post-modern society²⁴⁴.

In addition to the insight on culture as a dynamic and ever-changing concept, the research done on assimilation of cultures (see 3.2.3 above) and the way the Jews and Paul are perceived to

²⁴² To transfer Biblical values to a modern context, an interpretation has to present a) a clarity concerning the nature of relevance to contemporary situations, b) an accountable view concerning the meaning that present-day hearers/communities attaches to texts, and c) an account of the Mediterranean culture in the first century, together with the present day situations within which these messages must be communicated (Joubert 1992:62). Viewing the fact that this dissertation focuses only on the first Century Mediterranean culture, it is not possible to give concrete applications in this study.

²⁴³ Even without reference to multicultural contexts, Thiselton (2001:17) is of the opinion that the first letter to Corinth has a distinct applicational value in the modern-day context: "With today's 'post-Modern' mood we may compare the self-sufficient, self congratulatory culture of Corinth coupled with an obsession about peer-group prestige, success in competition, their devaluing of tradition and universals, and near contempt for those without standing in some chosen value system. All this provides an embarrassingly close model of a postmodern context for the gospel in our own times, even given the huge historical differences and distances in so many other respects. Quite apart from its rich theology of grace, the cross, the Holy Spirit, the ministry, love and the resurrection as an example of communicative action between the gospel and the world of given time, 1 Corinthians stands in a distinctive position of relevance to our own times"

²⁴⁴ In certain aspects it may be highly debatable to think of the Botswana context as post-modern. There is however, enough indicators of Western, and therefore first-world influence even in this context (see 1.1 above).

“approach” the dominant cultures of their day, are also very important. Such a model could prove useful in looking at how cultural minorities function in a denomination where Batswana are in the majority²⁴⁵.

The main value of this dissertation is the picture of the way in which Paul approached the congregation of Corinth on the matter of cultural conflict. In the first instance a pastor in such a situation must not only have a good insight in the cultures within which he or she is ministering, but must be able to perceive his own *Dasein*²⁴⁶. In the same way that the background of Paul had an undeniable influence on his approach to the congregation, a pastor in the current Botswana context should also recognize and be able to describe his or her own background explicitly (as has partly been done by myself in 1.1). Such a pastor should also constantly remind him- or herself of the fact that such a background does play a role in his pastoral approach, also when dealing with matters resulting from cultural conflict.

Linking on to the main conclusions drawn from the key pericope (1 Cor 9:19-23) the following observations can be made:

- A pastor in the multicultural Botswana (or any multicultural context) must perceive him- or herself first as “slave of Christ” and then as “slave of people”; to put more precisely: “slave of Christ in service of people”. Although the suffering a person must be prepared to endure in the Botswana context is not at all compatible with what Paul endured in his ministry, any minister of the Word must be aware of his or her calling from a position of freedom, to a position as “slave of Christ”, and “slave of all”.
- In Paul’s ministry there was no room for arrogance or pride on the basis of his cultural heritage. Instead, Paul became the slave who was prepared to remove any stumbling blocks that his cultural background might have presented. For him it was of primary importance to “win people for the gospel”, and bring them “under the law of God and Christ”. In times where pastors often become involved in cultural and political struggles for their “own” people and “culture”, a pastor in the DRCB must ask him- or herself what Paul’s words in Philippians 3:8 implies when he says: “I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ”.
- Having stated these important aspects, the “gaining of Christ” and his identity in Christ should always be the first and foremost motivation. The principle of “being a slave to everybody, but having only Christ as master”²⁴⁷ must always be kept in mind. Being a slave of all is not a question of accruing a following amongst people by accommodation in every sense, and “pleasing people”, but keeping the ultimate motive of pleasing God, and being a “partner” in the gospel.
- The prevalence of the *kenosis* concept and Paul’s imitation thereof is also of importance. Paul’s exhortation in 1 Corinthians 11:1, “follow my example as I follow the example of Christ”, is to be taken as an indication that Paul’s approach is not just meant for pastors and leaders in the congregation. Eventually Paul also would like the congregation to follow in his footsteps regarding his self enslavement.

The study therefore seems to have very promising, although in some ways radical implications for a minister as well as congregants in the DRCB. At least, it is so promising that it calls for fuller application, once a study of the DRCB’s present context has been done.

²⁴⁵ See 1.1 above on the composition of the DRCB.

²⁴⁶ *Dasein* refers to the personal context and background of a reader and interpreter of a text (Crocker 2004:26-35).

²⁴⁷ See the discussion on 1 Cor 6:12-14 in 7.4.10.1 above.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION

The acknowledgement and description of our own *Dasein* may often be a threatening experience to the reader, because the *discontinuity* of ancient texts as well the dialectical character of exegesis are often punctuated by such an acknowledgement and description (Crocker 2004:41). This dissertation does however present a case where approach to the text from within the present-day context opened new (and in some ways forgotten) horizons to the interpretation of cultural conflict within 1 Corinthians, and Paul's approach to this conflict.

The interpretation of 1 Corinthians from this specific DRCB context did not only show the influence of Jews and cultural conflicts to be more prevalent than the current scholarly opinion acknowledges (cf. 4.3.1 above), but it emphasized the importance to discount the fact that Paul's own person and literary style was also embedded within the cultures of his day. The study has also pointed out that the traditional reference to Paul's approach to ministry as that of a "chameleon" is in need of careful qualification²⁴⁸.

Through the comparison of different portions in the Corinthian letters, and implementing insights from socio-historical studies in this regard (cf. 7.4.10.1 above), it became clear that Paul had a very definite mission and that his actions were not contradictory. Although Paul's self-enslavement may seem to contradict his defending of his apostolic authority, it became clear that his actions in this regard were central to his theology and to his approach to his ministry in general. This study shows that it is necessary to describe Paul's apostolic authority not in opposition to his theorizing on self-enslavement, but in opposition to it²⁴⁹.

The study also highlighted the close relation between ἑμαυτὸν ἐδούλωσα (I make myself a slave) in 1 Corinthians 9:19 and ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν μορφῆν δούλου λαβὼν (he made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant) in Philippians 2:7. Paul's strategy of following this example of Christ is not just a rhetorical technique to "disarm" the instigators of cultural conflict, but also an important example to be followed by congregation members in the solution of cultural and various other conflicts in the congregation.

The dissertation also surfaced some methodological matters:

- The importance of evaluating Diaspora Judaism and Paul himself in terms of culture as a dynamic, ever-changing and "travelling" entity (cf. 3.2.4 & 3.5.1.4 above).
- The significance of the application of assimilation theories within the Corinthian context, as well as its potential for analysing current ecclesiastical contexts (cf. 3.2.4, 3.5.1.4 & 7.4.8).
- The exegetical method proposed by De Klerk & Van Rensburg (2005), although mostly focused on the making of a sermon, with some adaptations is useful for structured exegesis towards scholarly research.
- There is a need for an extension/revision of the dictionary of Nida & Louw (1988), as has been suggested due to the unsatisfactory rendering of ἑμαυτὸν ἐδούλωσα (cf. 7.4.9.2).

²⁴⁸ Cf. 7.4.10. Paul's approach can be likened to that of a "chameleon" only in terms of his ability to adapt to people and their environments for the sake of the gospel.

²⁴⁹ The traditional way of different themes being regarded in terms of "paradoxes" and "dialectical aspects" is challenged by the new "aporetic" approach, which aims at narrating such tensions within the framework of "being on the way but not knowing the way ahead", without necessarily finding solutions (Crocker 2004:40,41).

To summarize the conclusion: Paul's approach to the cultural conflict amongst factions in Corinth is one of humility and service. Despite his Roman citizenship, his Jewish and Greco-Roman education and his eloquence, he was committed to follow the example of Christ's *kenosis* in word and deed, thus presenting himself as an example to be followed by the congregation. The important implications this has for the ministers and congregants of the Dutch Reformed Church in Botswana (and of course all present day churches) has been hinted at in Chapter 8.

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