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Paul, a Transformational Leader

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Abstract

Recent studies by NT scholars have shown that, in his dealings with the Corinthians, Paul adopted a counter-cultural stance. In this article it is argued that this involved Paul's rejection of the style of leadership generally accepted in the Graeco-Roman world of his time and his adoption and demonstration of a new form of leadership which is encapsulated by the modern designation 'Transformational Leadership'. As a transformational leader, he challenged the dominant culture and sought to build a new social world for the Corinthians to inhabit: a world in which they could become what they *already* are in Christ.

In his work *Kirchenrecht*, written at the end of the nineteenth century, Sohm argued that the only possible authority in the church was a charismatic one and that legal organization and hierarchical structures were unacceptable. The apparent opposition between charisma and office dominated the debate for many years. Since the mid-twentieth century, however, there has been a growing acceptance of the need to combine theology with sociology and to develop our understanding of Paul's letters by sociological analysis of the situation that pertained in the early communities which Paul addressed. Such analysis of the situation in Corinth suggests that Paul's purpose was not to set out a church order but rather to define leadership in a new way.

Theissen,¹ in his ground-breaking work on 1 Corinthians, concluded that the *ethos* of the fledgling communities in Corinth was encapsulated by the designation 'love patriarchy' which he defined in this way:

¹ Theissen, Gerd *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1982)

This love patriarchy takes social differences for granted but ameliorates them through an obligation of respect and love, an obligation imposed upon those who are socially stronger. From the weaker are required subordination, fidelity, and esteem.²

This *ethos* and the style of leadership it engendered would have been generally accepted in the Graeco-Roman world.³ Though Theissen's characterization of the social *ethos* of the Pauline communities has been widely accepted, it fails to take into account the social implications of 1 Corinthians 1:26-31, which are more radical than love patriarchy would suggest. In Paul's view the Corinthian strong cannot be used to shore up the existing hierarchy; they can no longer demand 'subordination, fidelity and esteem'. Rather, they are being asked to modify their behaviour for the benefit of the weak and to forgo their privileges for the building up of the ἐκκλησία.

As the leader of the Corinthian community Paul must exercise a new kind of leadership which embodies and promotes the way of life enshrined in the gospel. His task appears twofold. Firstly, he must set out clearly his vision for the community. Secondly, he must be an agent in guiding, encouraging and facilitating the coming to fruition of this vision and the transformation it demands. He has been described as a charismatic leader both in theological and Weberian or sociological terms. Both designations tell us something about the relationship between him and those he led but little about how he pursued his vision, imparted new values and norms and transformed the social world of the Corinthians.

The organizational leadership scholars House, Burns and Bass have sought to illuminate the operation of charismatic leadership in formal or business

² Theissen, *Social Setting*, 107

³ Aristotle, *Ethica Nicomachea* Perseus 2.0 CD (New Haven: Yale UP, 2000), 1161a 10; Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, 8.2.13-14 Perseus 2.0 CD (New Haven: Yale UP, 2000); Martin, Dale B. *Slavery as Salvation: The Metaphor of Slavery in Pauline Christianity* (New Haven; Yale U P, 1990), 104

organizations. Their work can add to our understanding of its operation in other leadership situations, specifically that of Paul in Corinth. One specific idea which they developed was that of the 'Transformational Leader'. This, according to their definition, was a form of charismatic leadership which involved bringing about transformations; that is, 'alterations so comprehensive and pervasive that new cultures and value systems take the places of the old'.⁴

Such leaders possess three essential characteristics: (i) they create a vision as a focal point of their leadership; (ii) they act as strong role models as they endeavour to empower and nurture their followers towards realizing this vision; and (iii) as agents of change they identify the values and attitudes which need to be changed and endeavour to replace them with the values and norms which they believe the community should espouse.

The idea is not bound to a specific age or culture. According to both Burns and Bass, Moses, Christ and Buddha are all examples of this kind of leadership.⁵ Bass and Steidlmeier conclude that there are many points of congruence between the 'authentic moral sage' of the Judaeo-Christian tradition and the 'authentic transformational leader'.⁶ The title 'transformational leader' appears to be an appropriate one for Paul and a study of the way he demonstrated the three essential characteristics may throw light on the model of leadership which he was setting forth.

1. Paul's Vision as it appears in his Presentation of the Gospel in the Corinthian Correspondence

In the prologue (1 Cor. 1:1-2) Paul lays the theological foundations for the exhortations and admonitions which follow. Both Paul and the believers in Corinth are κλητοί, he to be an apostle of Christ Jesus and they to be άγιοί (1 Cor.1:1-2; cf. 2 Cor. 1:1). The introduction of the word κλητοί and the

⁴ Burns, James MacGregor, *Transforming Leadership*, (New York:Grove Press, 2003), 25

⁵ Johannsen, Murray, *A Short Guide to Transformational Leadership Development* <http://www.legacee.com/Info/Leadership/LeaderResources.html> (21/01/2005)

⁶Bass, Bernard M.& Steidlmeier, Paul 'Ethics, Character and Authentic Transformational Leadership Behaviour', *Leadership Quarterly*, 10(2) (1999), 182-217, 196

related word ἐκκλησία identifies the Corinthians as ‘being called by God’ a status which has both theological and ethical dimensions. In the words of Cranfield: ‘As used by Paul, καλεῖν denotes God’s effectual calling: the κλητοί are those who have been called effectually, who have been summoned by God and have also responded to His summons’.⁷ The idea of calling (κλήσις) continues (1 Cor. 1:26) where it is combined with the related verb ἐκλέγομαι; a verb used in the LXX of things and people whom God has chosen for his own purposes, particularly of the people of Israel (Ps. 32:12; cf. Isa. 49:1; 41:8-9; 48:12; 51:2). The verb is repeated three times to show the Corinthians that God has chosen them to be his people despite their lack of wisdom, status or power; a reversal of human values.

The meaning of ἅγιος and its cognate ἁγιάζειν, when applied to humans overlaps with that of ἀφορίζω ‘set apart’ (Rom. 1:1); they are all words which are used ‘to express Israel’s very powerful sense of their having been specially chosen and set apart to God’.⁸ The Corinthians are called to be a holy people, to live their lives in a manner which reflects the status they have *already* been given in Christ.

The short phrase ἐξ αὐτοῦ (1 Cor. 1:30) emphasizes that it is because of God’s call (1 Cor. 1:2, 24, 26), his election (vv. 26-28) and his resolve to save those who believe (v. 21) and put their whole trust in God, that the Corinthian congregation exists. By his choice God has created something new; a new creation in Christ Jesus (cf. 2 Cor. 5:17) and as Schütz has observed: ‘Christ is, in this new creation, the σοφία for them’.⁹ This new wisdom reveals as foolishness the self-centred wisdom of the world, a wisdom highly prized in Corinth. Such worldly wisdom has led to factions in the community (1 Cor. 1:12) which reveal a deeply rooted misunderstanding of the implications for their lives of the gospel Paul proclaims. Their lives should now be guided by the wisdom of God, which is expressed in the message of ‘the crucified Christ’.

⁷ Cranfield, C.E.B. *Epistle to the Romans*, Vol. 1 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1990), 69

⁸ Dunn, J.D.G. *Romans 1-8*, (Dallas, Texas: Word Biblical Commentary, 1998), 20

⁹ Schütz, John Howard *Paul and the Anatomy of Apostolic Authority* (Cambridge: CUP, 1975), 198

καταλλάσσω and its cognate καταλλαγή do not appear frequently in Paul's letters, and in this sense of reconciliation only in Romans 5:8-11 and in 2 Corinthians 5:18-21. Nevertheless, reconciliation can be regarded as a basic theme of Paul's gospel¹⁰ and as essential to his vision for the Corinthian believers. By using the active voice (2 Cor. 5:19) Paul makes it clear that the reconciliation rested on God's initiative. The following imperative (v. 20) indicates the need for a human response. The Corinthians should engage in a process of transformation which will culminate in that final reconciliation when they will have been transformed into the image of Christ (cf. 2 Cor. 3:18). In the words of Crocker: 'God's calling and God's action in Jesus Christ challenges humans to be transformed and to mature towards wholeness'.¹¹

2. Paul as Role Model

It was Paul's task to shape the life of the community in accordance with his vision. In light of this, he introduced the paternal metaphor (1 Cor. 4:14-15) to describe his relationship with the Corinthian converts. His use of this metaphor and the calls to imitation (1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1) which flow naturally from it 'must be understood against the cultural conception of what a father was in both Jewish and Greco-Roman(*sic*) culture of that time'.¹² According to the OT, the father, as head of the family, was the chief authority (Gen. 50:16; Jer. 35:6-10; Prov. 6:20) who is often portrayed as commanding and rebuking his children who were bidden to honour and respect their parents as God's representatives on earth and their greatest benefactors (Ex. 20:12; Lev. 19:3; Prov. 1:8; 30:17). He also had the authority to act judicially in certain matters without reference to any external authority. However, this apparently authoritarian picture is tempered by an abundance of pictures of the beautiful home life in patriarchal history (Gen. 22; 45; Ruth; 2 Sam.18-13) and by the ideal of the

¹⁰ Stanton, Graham N. 'Paul's Gospel' in Dunn, James D.G. (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to St Paul* (Cambridge: CUP, 2003)173-184, 181

¹¹ Crocker, Cornelia Cyss *Reading 1 Corinthians in the Twenty-First Century* (New York: T & T Clark, 2004), 103

¹² Wanamaker, CharlesA. 'A Rhetoric of Power: Ideology in 1 Corinthians 1-4' in Burke, Trevor J. & Elliott, J. Keith (edd.) *Paul and the Corinthians: Studies on a Community in Conflict* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 115-137, 118

benevolent loving and compassionate father (Gen. 25:28; 37:4; 44:20; Ps. 103:13 (LXX 102); cf. Philo, *Ios.*, 256; cf. *Abr.*, 168, 198; *Ios.*, 223, 227). It is the loving and compassionate relationship between parents and children which Pseudo-Phocylides emphasizes in his advice to parents when he writes: 'Be not harsh with your children, but be gentle. (ἡπιος).¹³ ἡπιος is the word used by God to describe his own kindly nature¹⁴ and by Paul to describe his dealings with the Thessalonians (1 Thess. 2:7).

A similar picture emerges in the Graeco-Roman world where 'a father's first care is for his children's welfare'.¹⁵ The stereotypical view of the all-powerful, tyrannical, severe, oppressive and rigid *paterfamilias*, where duty rather than affection or compassion is seen as paramount, fails to take into account the natural bond of 'reciprocal dutiful affection' which exists between parents and children; a bond known as *pietas*. Examples in the Roman world of the widely held ideal of fatherly love are not difficult to find.¹⁶ It is because of this distinction between the loving authority of a parent and the coercive authority of a despot that emperors were anxious to present themselves not as *dominus* but as the *pater* who exercised benign authority.

It is clear that in both the Jewish and Graeco-Roman worlds there should be mutual respect and honour between parents and children. While a father had the authority to admonish and correct his children, his authority should be tempered with gentleness and paternal affection. Finally, the father was expected to be a teacher, a model of appropriate ethical behaviour, and

¹³ Horst, P.W. van der *The Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides* (Leiden: Brill, 1978), 207

¹⁴ Philo, vols. I-X LCL (Harvard: London, 1941), *Moses* 1.72

¹⁵ Aristotle, *EN.*, 1160b

¹⁶ Homer, *The Odyssey* translated by E.V. Rieu (London: Penguin, 1991), 2.234; Cicero, *Ad Atticum* Perseus Digital Library Project. Ed. Gregory R. Crane. Tufts University (Dec., 2002) < <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu>>; Epictetus, *Discourses* 2 Vols. LCL (London: Harvard University Press, 2000), 1.11.4

importantly, to set a good example: ‘Whatever advice you give to your children, consent to follow it yourself’.¹⁷

In 1 Corinthians 4:14, as befits a father, Paul blends affection with severity as he encourages the Corinthians to transform their ways. He begins by defining his relationship with the Corinthian Christians in terms of the contrast between ἐντρέπειν and νοουθετεῖν. The meaning of ἐντρέπειν is given as ‘to turn about’; metaphorically, ‘to cause to turn (in shame)’, and ‘to put to shame’.¹⁸ Robertson and Plummer suggest that the root meaning of ἐντρέπειν is perhaps ‘to turn in,’ and so to make a person ‘hang his head,’ as a sign either of reverence (Matt. 21:37; Luke 18:2,4; Heb. 12:9) or of shame as here¹⁹ and in the LXX.²⁰ When Paul thought fit, he could tell the Corinthians that they might be ashamed (ἐντροπή, 1 Cor. 6:5; 15:34). However, in this instance, he does not want to make them hang their heads in shame; the participle νοουθετῶν expresses the sense in which he wishes to be understood. Though it can have a suggestion of sternness:²¹ as it is used here, in the sense of ‘to admonish’,²² it has the primary connotation of trying to have a corrective influence on someone and can be used to express the act of counselling or warning characteristic

¹⁷ Isocrates, *To Nicocles*, 3.57-61 Perseus 2.0 CD (New Haven: Yale UP, 2000); Philo, *Spec.*, 2.228; cf. Deut. 6:67; Ex. 12:26; 13:14-15; Josephus, *Josephus: The Complete Works* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998), 1.68

¹⁸ Liddell & Scott *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon: Founded upon the Seventh Edition of Liddell and Scott’s Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), ἐντρέπειν, 266; Liddell, Scott and Jones, <<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?>> (May 2005); Danker, Frederick William (ed.) *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature* (BDAG) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 341 (1)

¹⁹ Robertson, Archibald & Plummer, Alfred *1 Corinthians* ICC (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1999) (orig. 1914), 89

²⁰ LXX, *Lev.* 26:41

²¹ Aristophanes, *Wasps* Perseus 2.0 CD (New Haven: Yale UP, 2000), 254-5

²² BDAG, ‘νοουθετέω’, 679

of a loving parent. 'For he (the Lord) will correct the righteous as a beloved son' (νουθετήσῃ δίκαιον ὡς υἱὸν ἀγαπήσεως).²³

By introducing the noun *πραΰτης* (1 Cor. 4:21), Paul ends this section, as he began it, on a paternal note. Spicq succinctly sums up its thrust: 'πραΰτης implies moderation which permits reconciliation'.²⁴ It was regarded as a desirable quality in the Greek world²⁵ and in the Jewish world where it was recognized as an essential characteristic of those who lead God's people.²⁶ Though Paul stresses the need for discipline, clearly he wishes to act as a loving father who is sensitive to their situation in the honour-shame culture of the Graeco-Roman world and to encourage them, with gentleness rather than severity (cf. 2 Cor. 13:2, 10), to change their attitudes and their behaviour.

Paul's injunction (1 Cor. 4:16), not only reinforces the argument of (1 Cor. 1:10-4:13) but also points forward to his dealings with the problems in the community by means of which he exemplifies and embodies Christian service.²⁷ For example, he criticizes the attitude of those with knowledge towards those whose 'consciences are weak' (1 Cor. 8:7). *Συνείδησις*, translated here as 'conscience' would be more accurately rendered as 'consciousness' or 'self-awareness'; it does not necessarily have the 'modern notion of moral conscience'.²⁸ Theissen's argument that 'the strong' are the 'socio-economically strong', who because of their superior education and knowledge are secure in their 'self-awareness', is convincing.

²³ Psalms of Solomon 13:6-9

²⁴ Spicq, *Ceslas Theological Lexicon of the New Testament* Vols. 1-3 translated and edited by James D. Ernest (Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 1994), 3:161; cf. Aristotle, *EN*, 1125b

²⁵ Plato, *Republic* Perseus 2.0 CD (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000); (Oxford: OUP, 1941), 375c

²⁶ Philo, *Mos.* 2.279; Sirach 45:4

²⁷ Dodd, Brian J. 'Paul's Paradigmatic 'I' and I Corinthians 6:12' *JSNT* 59 (1995), 39-58, 51, 53

²⁸ Collins, Raymond F. *1 Corinthians* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1999), 324;BDAG, 'συνείδησις', (1), 967-8

Such people act autonomously and show little or no concern for the effect of their behaviour on others in the community;²⁹ they are indifferent to the situation of the 'weak' who may emulate them and become involved in syncretistic practices and may well revert to their former idol worship.³⁰ Those with knowledge, are in danger of becoming 'a stumbling block to the weak' (1 Cor. 8:9), of harming those 'for whom Christ died' (1 Cor. 8:11) and of, in effect, 'sinning against Christ' (1 Cor. 8:12).

Paul ends the chapter by affirming his own position in the hope that, by emulating him, their behaviour and attitudes will be transformed and they will forgo their rights in the interest of the 'weak'(1 Cor. 8:13; cf. 1 Cor. 9:4-7, 15, 22; 10:33; 2 Cor.11:7-9, 28-29; 12:14-15, 19). The ethical precept involved is succinctly expressed: "All things are lawful", but not all things are beneficial. 'All things are lawful', but not all things build up. Do not seek your own advantage, but that of others' (1 Cor. 10:23-24).

The criticisms of Paul have become more intense so it is not surprising that in 2 Corinthians there are no explicit calls to imitation. However, in this letter Paul 'draws freely upon the life and ministry of Jesus'³¹ to show that his own life is modelled on that of Christ. There is general agreement among scholars that the genitives *πραΰτητος* and *ἐπιεικείας* (2 Cor. 10:1) are subjective and refer to character traits of Christ which Paul, as their leader, hopes to demonstrate. Aristotle writes of *πραΰτης* (the spelling changed to *πραΰτης* at the beginning of the third century BC): 'To gentleness belongs the ability to bear reproaches and slights with moderation, and not to embark on revenge quickly, and not to be easily

²⁹ Horsley, Richard A. 'Consciousness and Freedom among the Corinthians: 1 Corinthians 8-10' *CBQ* 40 (1978), 574-589, 586

³⁰ Collins, *1 Corinthians*, 378; Garland, David E. *1 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2003), 380

³¹ Belleville, Linda L. 'Gospel and Kerygma in 2 Corinthians' in *Gospel in Paul: Studies in Corinthians, Galatians and Romans for Richard N. Longnecker* edd. L. Ann Jervis & Peter Richardson JSNTS Supplement Series 108 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 134-164, 141

provoked to anger, but free from bitterness and contentiousness, having tranquillity and stability in the spirit'.³²

Here *πραΰτης* is combined with *ἐπιείκεια*: this may be an hendiadys or *ἐπιείκεια* may be used to amplify Paul's meaning. *ἐπιείκεια* is both a divine and a human quality. In the LXX it is used of God's merciful dealings with his people (Dan. 3:42; cf. Wis. 12:16; Baruch 2:27; 2 Macc. 2:22; cf. Philo, *Mos.*, 1.198). As a human quality it is used to denote both the mildness and forbearance of kings and rulers (2 Macc. 9:27; 3 Macc.3:15; 7:6.) and the 'humble, patient steadfastness' of the just man, 'which is able to submit to injustice, disgrace and maltreatment without hatred and malice, trusting God in spite of it all' (Wis. 2:19; cf. Aristotle, *EN*, 1137b-1138a). 'Finally', in the words of Spicq, 'NT *ἐπιείκεια* is not only moderation and measure, but goodness, courtesy and generosity'.³³ As Paul himself has experienced God's forbearance and mercy (1 Cor. 7:25; 15:8-10), he in turn endeavours to show 'meekness and gentleness' towards others.

Some accuse Paul of being humble (2 Cor. 10:1)) in the sense of being 'servile in manner' when encountering people 'face to face'. Though *ταπεινός* is not considered a desirable quality in the Graeco-Roman world, for Paul himself, his lowliness is an expression in his life of the 'meekness and gentleness' of Christ. As Clement has observed: '*ἐπιείκεια καὶ ταπεινοφροσύνη καὶ πραΰτης παρὰ τοῖς ἠύλογημένοις ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ*' (1 Clement 30:8; cf. 1:2; 13:1; 21:7; 56:1). Paul's life is modelled on that of Jesus. It is because of his indescribable act of generosity (2 Cor. 9:15) that Paul no longer lives for himself; rather, his life and leadership are now dedicated to the service of Christ, the gospel and the Corinthians (2 Cor. 5:14; 8:9; 4:10; 13:4; 11:7-10; 12:13; 1 Cor. 9:15; 4:7-11; 11:7-9; 12:14-15; 1:24; cf. Mark 10:42-45; Luke 22:25).

³² Aristotle, *Vices and Virtues* Perseus 2.0 CD (New Haven: Yale UP, 2000), 1250a
1

³³ Spicq, *Theological Lexicon* Vol. 3, 38

He distanced himself from the perceptions of leadership which were typical of the Graeco-Roman world (1 Cor. 3:5; 4:1). As a role model, he sought to lead by example, by appeal and entreaty rather than to command and domineer. He guided the Corinthians so that their lives might no longer be driven by self-seeking and self-promoting motives, but rather, might progress towards his vision of lives dedicated to the service of God, the gospel and humankind.

3. Paul as an Agent of Change

The sociological analyses of the phenomenon of conversion by Berger and Luckmann³⁴ and Wanamaker³⁵ emphasize that conversion is a life-changing experience which involves a radical change in the beliefs, values and attitudes, which have been absorbed from and inculcated by the surrounding culture, to a new and often conflicting set of values and beliefs.

Works of early writers such as Plato, Aristotle and Isocrates together with those of Paul's contemporaries, or near contemporaries, Philo, Josephus, Dio Chrysostom, Epictetus and Pseudo-Phocylides, have been used to determine the nature of the social world of first-century Graeco-Roman Corinth: the world which moulded the attitudes, values and beliefs of the Corinthian people. They reveal a culture in which, among those of higher status, the pursuit of honour and esteem was *de rigueur*; such ambition could be either 'the strongest incentive to deeds of honour and renown',³⁶ or could be the source of selfish ambition among the elite who became 'enslaved by the love of popularity' (φιλοτιμία).³⁷ They also show that the

³⁴ Berger, Peter & Luckmann, Thomas *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise on the Sociology of Knowledge* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967)

³⁵ Wanamaker, Charles A ' "Like a Father Treats His Own Children": Paul and the Conversion of the Thessalonians', *JTSA* 92 (Sept 1995), 46-55

³⁶ Xenophon, *Memorabilia* Perseus CD 2.0 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 3.3.13

³⁷ Euripides, *Iphigeneia in Aulis* Perseus 2.0 CD (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 527

essential attributes for those who sought self-advancement were skill in rhetoric, the means to offer patronage, and boastfulness.

Paul refers explicitly to speech five times in 1 Corinthians (1:17; 2:1, 3, 4-5, 13); the final four occurrences amplify what has been introduced in 1 Corinthians 1:17. This suggests that one of the issues in Corinth is rhetoric.³⁸ In the early first century C.E., rhetoric was the primary discipline in Roman higher education. It was essential training for wealthy males in training for public office. Though deliberative rhetoric had its place, it was epideictic rhetoric which was held in higher esteem. Ambitious orators were expected to declaim before critical audiences 'who were more interested in tricks of style and delivery than in content'.³⁹ Gregory of Nyssa, in his treatise against the Arian Eunomius, compared his struggle with that of Paul which he saw as one between those who look for oratorical display rather than the truth.⁴⁰

Paul's rhetoric disappointed the Corinthians who enjoyed the rhetoric of display, 'the love of arguing for arguing's sake'.⁴¹ They were being seduced by preachers whose behaviour was more in keeping with *their* 'profile of a Christian leader'.⁴² His admission to being with the Corinthians 'in weakness and in fear and in much trembling' (1 Cor. 2:3) suggests that he is not seeking their esteem, but is rejecting the self-confident and self-promoting demeanour of those popular preachers (οἱ πολλοὶ) whom he describes as 'καπηλεύοντες τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ' (2 Cor. 2:17). Καπηλεύω is used of the retail trade and often has pejorative

³⁸ Litfin, Duane *St. Paul's Theology of Proclamation: 1 Corinthians 1-4 and Graeco-Roman Rhetoric* (Cambridge: CUP, 1994), 158-9

³⁹ Bowie, E.L. 'Greeks and Their Past in the Second Sophistic' *Past and Present*, No. 46 (Feb., 1970), 3-41, 6

⁴⁰ Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Eunomius* Christian Classics Ethereal Library, NPNF (V2-05) <<http://www.ccel.org/>> (March 2005), 1.3-4; cf. Philo, *QG*, 111, 27

⁴¹ Philo, *Fug.* 209

⁴² Witherington, Ben III *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 367

connotations.⁴³ The cognate word κάρηλος is used in the LXX of merchants who dilute their wine (Isa. 1:22) and by Dio of traders who ‘cheat in their measures’.⁴⁴ The words of Lucian quoted by many commentators complete the picture:

In fact I cannot tell what analogy you find between philosophy and wine; there is just one, indeed: philosophers and wine-merchants both sell their wares, mostly resorting to adulteration, fraud, and false measures, in the process.⁴⁵

Paul is rejecting the standards and customs of the secular world (1 Cor. 1:10-12; 1:17; 2:1-5; 2 Cor. 2:17; 10:10 and 11:6); his mission is to proclaim the gospel faithfully and in such a way that the message is not overshadowed or obstructed by his personality. He is striving to engender a faith that rested on the power of the gospel.

In Roman society of the early Empire most of the property and wealth was in the hands of the few.⁴⁶ In such a society, personal connections were the means of access to certain goods and services and to advancement.⁴⁷ It would seem that the convention of patronage exerted an influence at all levels of Roman society, ‘ranging from the relationship between the emperor and his hand-picked officials to that between a patron and his

⁴³ Cicero, *De Officiis* English translation by Walter Miller LCL (London: Harvard University Press, 2001), 1:150; Plato, *Protagoras* Perseus 2.0 CD (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 313d

⁴⁴ Dio Chrysostom, *Discourses* Vol. I-V LCL (London: Harvard UP, 2001), 31:37

⁴⁵ Lucian, *Herminotus*, 59 < <http://www.sacred-texts.com/cla/luc/wl2/wl205.htm>>, (Nov., 2007); cited in commentaries by e.g. Thrall, Margaret E. *2 Corinthians* vol.1, 1-7 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), 1.214 n. 179; Plummer, Alfred *2 Corinthians* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1999), 74; Barrett, C. K. *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (London: A&C Black, 1973), 103; Furnish, Victor Paul *2 Corinthians, Anchor Bible* (New York: Doubleday, 1984), 178

⁴⁶ deSilva, David A. *Honor, Patronage, Kinship and Purity: Unlocking New Testament Culture* (Downers Grove, IL.: IVP, 2000), 96

⁴⁷ Saller, Richard P. *Personal Patronage in the Early Empire* (Cambridge: CUP, 1982), 3; deSilva, *Honor, Patronage*, 96

freedmen'.⁴⁸ This relationship was a personal one of some duration between parties of unequal status.⁴⁹ Clients were not chosen indiscriminately, but with a view to the contributions they could make to their patrons in return for the favours they received.⁵⁰ Cicero has indicated how important it was for clients to fulfil these reciprocal obligations.⁵¹

For the patrons, patronage was a means of enhancing their honour and status; for the clients, it was seen as an instrument of survival which they would have been slow to refuse since refusal might lead to hostility. However both Aristotle and Seneca advise caution on the part of potential clients: 'But one ought to consider from the beginning from whom one is receiving the service, and on what terms, so that one may accept it on those terms or else decline it'.⁵² While, in effect, the patronage system may bind human society more closely together, the motives of those involved are generally self-orientated showing little concern for the common good. In the words of Aristotle:

A friendship based on utility dissolves as soon as its profit ceases; for the friends did not love each other, but what they got out of each other.⁵³

It is likely those who acted as hosts of the assemblies were patrons, some of whom expected to enjoy some of the privileges, for example, esteem and loyalty, which other patrons regarded as their right.

⁴⁸ Chow, John K. *Patronage and Power: A Study of Social Networks in Corinth* JSNTS Supplement Series 75 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), 41; cf. Tacitus, *Historiae*, 1.4 Perseus Digital Library Project. Ed. Gregory R. Crane Tufts University. (Mar., 2005) <<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu>>

⁴⁹ Saller, *Personal Patronage*, 1

⁵⁰ Garnsey, Peter & Saller, Richard *The Roman Empire: Economy, Society and Culture* (London:Duckworth, 2001), 156

⁵¹ Cicero, *De Off.*, 1.15.47-48; cf. Epictetus, *Discourses* 2 Vols. LCL (London: Harvard University Press, 2000), 3.7.31

⁵² Aristotle, *EN*, 8.13.9, 1163a; cf. Seneca, 'De Beneficiis' *Moral Essays* III LCL (London:Harvard University Press, 2001), 2.18.3

⁵³ Aristotle, *EN*, 1157a

Paul advocates the responsible exercise of freedom. In particular, he asserts his right to choose to be independent of obligations to anyone or anything other than his divinely-appointed mission (1 Cor. 9:1-18). This is confirmed by the use of ἐλεύθερος, ἐλευθερία, ἑκὼν together with their antonyms ἄκων and ἀνάγκη, and the six fold repetition of the key word ἐξουσία (vv. 4, 5, 6, 12, 18). The noun ἐξουσία often means authority, but it is also 'a state of control over something, *freedom of choice, right* (e.g. the 'right' to act, decide or dispose of one's property as one wishes).⁵⁴ Those with freedom of choice should not think only of their own advantage, but, on occasion, should forgo their rights for the sake of others.⁵⁵ Paul defends his right to material support from the Corinthians and in particular the right not to work; then, he reminds them that he has chosen to renounce that right (1 Cor. 9:12, 15). Despite the continuing hostilities, he reiterates his determination to persist with this practice (2 Cor. 11:9, 12; 12:13-14, 15).

The Corinthians, a patron congregation, are clearly offended by this refusal. The well-to-do in Corinth would have preferred him to enter the household of a wealthy patron as its intellectual. However, such an intellectual risks the loss of 'freedom and full independence'.⁵⁶ Rather than put an obstacle in the way of the gospel, Paul risked arousing the hostility of his would-be benefactors (1 Cor. 9:12; 2 Cor. 11:9; 12:13-14).

As an example he drew attention to Stephanas and his immediate family (1 Cor. 16:15),⁵⁷ who, when they became aware of the needs of the congregation, resolved to meet them. It was not in a spirit of self-assertion but in a spirit of humility and service that they 'appointed themselves' (cf.

⁵⁴ BDAG, ἐξουσία, 352 (1)

⁵⁵ Aristotle, *EN*, 1163b

⁵⁶ Lucian, 'De Mercede Conductis Pontentium', *The Works of Lucian* vol.3 LCL (Heinemann: London, 1921), 30, 429-463

⁵⁷ Winter, Bruce W. *After Paul Left Corinth: The Influence of Secular Ethics and Social Change* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 196

Plato, *Republic*, 371c).⁵⁸ This contrasts with the self-assertive attitude of the patrons whom Paul has criticized. Stephanas, 'who did good because good needed to be done, and did so without expectations of reciprocity or repayment',⁵⁹ has radically transformed the traditional role of patronage and given it a Christian orientation.

In the competitive context of the Graeco-Roman world, boasting in one's achievements and status was regarded as essential for those who sought honour and esteem. Plutarch argued that there are occasions when boasting may be used to good effect and should not be seen amiss.⁶⁰ However, the self-centred pursuit of honour and self-praise 'except in fairly clearly defined circumstances' was regarded by some as 'odious'.⁶¹

The word group *καυχάομαι* – *καύχησις* – *καύχημα* appears in the NT 59 times, 55 of which are in Paul, and in many cases they are used pejoratively.⁶² The sheer quantity of these *καυχ*- words in the Corinthians correspondence alone (29 in 2 Corinthians and 10 in 1 Corinthians), suggests that some of the Corinthian congregation may be numbered among those who regarded boasting as 'a prized activity',⁶³ rather than as something to be undertaken judiciously.

In 2 Corinthians 10-13, it becomes clear that some rival preachers who are present in Corinth claim to be superior to Paul (2 Cor. 11:5). They are

⁵⁸ Barrett, C. K. *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* 2nd edition (London: A&C Black, 1971), 394; Robertson & Plummer, *1 Corinthians*, 395

⁵⁹ Winter, Bruce W. *Seek the Welfare of the City* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994),

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⁶⁰ Plutarch, *Moralia* VII LCL (London: Harvard University Press, 1959); cf. Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, 7.1.17; Dio Chrysostom, *Diss.*, 43.2

⁶¹ Forbes, Christopher 'Comparison, Self-Praise and Irony: Paul's Boasting and the Conventions of Hellenistic Rhetoric' *NTS*, Vol. 32 (1986), 1-30, 8

⁶² Moulton, W.F., Geden, A.S. and Moulton, H.K. *Concordance of the Greek Testament* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1978), 542 and Fee, Gordon D. *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* NICNT (Michigan: Eerdmans, 1987), 84, n. 28

⁶³ Savage, Timothy B. *Power through Weakness: Paul's Understanding of the Christian Ministry in 2 Corinthians* (Cambridge: CUP, 1996), 54

deceitful (2 Cor. 11:13), they engage in unacceptable forms of boasting (2 Cor. 10:15; 10:14; 10:16) - the type of activity denounced by Plutarch⁶⁴ and are actively undermining Paul's apostleship, his relationship with the Corinthian Christians and, of primary concern, the Corinthians' understanding of the gospel.

Though Paul is critical of the boastfulness of his opponents, he believes that in the interests of the gospel he must, in the first instance, compete with them on their own terms; hence, he mounts a counter-attack on his detractors (2 Cor. 11:21b -12:10). Ironically, however, his list of achievements is a catalogue of disasters and hardships (2 Cor. 11:23-28). He sums up this section of his boasting with the introduction of ἀσθενέω, a word which together with its cognates is central to the rest of the argument (2 Cor. 11:29). Having boasted foolishly like his opponents, he moves on to boast in a way which his detractors would find unacceptable; he boasts of his weakness (2 Cor. 11:32-33; 2 Cor. 12:7, 10) and shows what Christian boasting should be - boasting in the Lord (1 Cor. 1:31; 2 Cor. 10:17; cf. Plutarch, 542E). A 'humiliated, frail Paul' is a more effective instrument of God's power than a 'proud, arrogant Paul' who would have hindered the progress of the gospel.⁶⁵

The boasting of the Corinthians had two aspects: firstly, they boasted in their leaders and, secondly, in their search for honour esteem, they boasted of their gifts, all of which came from God for the building up of the community and not for personal aggrandizement (1 Cor. 4:6-13).⁶⁶ To eliminate their false expectations of leadership and to show that such boasting is presumptuous and that, as God's servants, their leaders are accountable only to God, Paul introduces three words to describe his role as leader; words which would not have been regarded as specifically biblical or religious and which would not have been used of leaders in the secular

⁶⁴ Plutarch, *Moralia*, 540B

⁶⁵ Garland, David E. *2 Corinthians* New American Commentary (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman & Holman, 1999), 522

⁶⁶ de Silva David A. *The Hope of Glory: Honor Discourse and New Testament Interpretation* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1999), 127

Graeco-Roman world of the first century: διάκονος (1 Cor. 3:5), ὑπηρέτης and οἰκονόμος (1 Cor. 4:1).

Early studies of the διάκον— words were pursued by Brandt⁶⁷ and Beyer.⁶⁸ In the Brandt-Beyer view, ‘*diakonia* is more or less limited to a ‘service of love’ in the doing of works of mercy and charity, often with menial or servile connotations.’⁶⁹ More recently, Collins engaged in a linguistic study of these words in classical and early Christian writings; he summarized the contexts in which they appeared as: ‘attendance upon a person or in a household’, ‘message,’ and ‘agency’;⁷⁰ findings which widely concur with those found in BDAG. Of the Brandt-Beyer view he writes:

Care, concern, and love – those elements of meaning introduced into the interpretation of this word and its cognates by Wilhelm Brandt - are just not part of their field of meaning.⁷¹

Georgi,⁷² who prefers the meaning ‘envoy’, also criticized this limited view; he wrote:

The NT term almost never involves an act of charity. Instead, nearly all instances are meant to refer to acts of proclamation.⁷³

Aristotle summed up the tasks of the διάκονος by the phrase: ‘some more honourable and some more menial’.⁷⁴ They ranged from those of the human or divine messengers of the gods, to those of royal attendants, to the menial duties of a household servant. Examples from the Jewish world are

⁶⁷ Brandt, Wilhelm *Dienst und Dienen im Neuen Testament* (Gütersloh, 1931) cited in Collins, J.N. *Diakonia: Re-interpreting the Ancient Sources* (New York: OUP, 1990), 6, 48

⁶⁸ Beyer, H.W. ‘διακονέω’, *TDNT* II, 81-93

⁶⁹ Barnett, James Monroe *The Diaconate: A Full and Equal Order* Revised Edition (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: TPI, 1995), 20

⁷⁰ Collins, *Diakonia*, 335, cited in Barnett, *Diaconate*, 20

⁷¹ Collins, *Diakonia*, 254

⁷² Georgi, Dieter *The Opponents of Paul in 2 Corinthians* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1987)

⁷³ Georgi, *Opponents*, 29

⁷⁴ Aristotle, *Politics* LCL 264 (London: Harvard University Press, 1944), 1255b

found in the LXX (though it is not common here), Pseudepigrapha, Josephus and Philo. Again δῖάκονοι is used to denote personal servants of God and of humans who performed services of various kinds;⁷⁵ including those who ‘waited at table’.⁷⁶ More frequently in Josephus the word means intermediary or messenger, a use found also in Philo.⁷⁷ Perhaps Paul’s pastoral and apostolic roles as δῖάκονος are best summed up by the stoic Epictetus: ‘Caring for man indeed, but at the same time subject unto God’.⁷⁸ Specific details of what this entails are spelled out in 1 Corinthians 3:5-9 and 4:1.

The repeated neuter pronoun τί (1 Cor. 3:5) signifies that Paul and Apollos are instruments, whose ministry is an essential part of God’s plan. They are δῖάκονοι being used by God to bring the Corinthians to faith (v. 5). Each has been assigned his own specific task, a role within the corporate community which facilitates God’s work rather than his own interests, and each is accountable to God for his performance of it (v. 8). However they are not rivals, their tasks and gifts are complementary (cf. 1Cor. 12, 14).

By using an agricultural metaphor and the repeated use of the three verbs, φυτεύω, ποτίζω and αὐξάνω, Paul develops the imagery he has introduced (1 Cor. 3: 6-8). Though he and Apollos, as instruments, perform the tasks of planting and watering, tasks which provide the conditions for growth, it is God alone who is the source of growth. The first two verbs in the aorist tense followed by the third in the imperfect show that though ministers like Paul and Apollos come and go, God’s work goes on (v. 6).⁷⁹ The agricultural imagery, found also in Isaiah 5:7, in the LXX (Amos 9:14-15; Sirach 27:6) and Pseudepigrapha (Pss. of Solomon 14:4-5), underscores

⁷⁵ Esther 6:3, 5; 4 Macc. 9:17; Josephus, *Antiquities*, 11.188; 6.52; Philo, *Contempli.*, 70

⁷⁶ Josephus, *Antiquities*, 11.163, 188; 8.354; 9.54-55; cf. 5.349; Philo, *Ios.*, 241

⁷⁷ Philo, *Mos.*, 1.84; Josephus, *Antiquities*, 1.298; also, 12.187; 7.201, 224; 10.177; *War.* 3.354; 4.626

⁷⁸ Epictetus, *Diss.*, 3.24.65

⁷⁹ Thiselton, Anthony C. *NIGTC The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2000), 302

the fact that the community belongs to God who is its Creator and the source of its growth and fruitfulness. It is God alone who brings into being and maintains the Christian community in Corinth. The relative insignificance of Paul and Apollos, their nothingness without God are further emphasized in v. 9 with its thrice repeated θεοῦ.

Paul reinforces his point by adding a building metaphor; the Corinthians are not only God's garden or field (γέωργιον) but also his building (οἰκοδομή). This is not an unique combination; the Qumran documents state that the Council of the Community, 'shall be an Everlasting Plantation, a House of Holiness for Israel...' (1QS 8:5-10).⁸⁰ Jeremiah, with whose call Paul's is compared, was called to build and to plant (Jer. 1:10; cf. 1 Cor. 3:6, 9, 10; 2 Cor. 12:19). The building metaphor suggests three themes: (i) it prefigures the motif of 'building up', (οἰκοδομέω, οἰκοδομή), a theme which pervades the correspondence (1 Cor. 3:9; 8:1; 10:23; 14:3, 4, 5, 12, 17, 26; 2 Cor. 5:1; 10:8; 12:19; 13:10);⁸¹ (ii) it promotes community involvement rather than individualism; (iii) it emphasizes the importance of building on a sound foundation; a theme stressed by both Philo and Epictetus.⁸² It is clear that the richness of Paul's meaning is captured neither by Georgi's 'envoy'⁸³ nor by Beyer's 'active Christian love for the neighbour'.⁸⁴

Ἐπιπέτης is defined in BDAG as 'one who functions as a helper, frequently in a subordinate capacity, *helper, assistant*'.⁸⁵ In classical literature ἐπιπέτης and διάκονος are often used synonymously. Both can refer to the honourable and menial tasks of officials who are subordinate to a higher authority. On other occasions the words appear in parallel or in

⁸⁰ Vermes, Geza *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1997), 109

⁸¹ Barrett, *2 Corinthians*, 328-29

⁸² Philo, *Cher.*, 101; cf. *Som.*, ii.8; Epictetus, *Diss.*, 2.15.8f

⁸³ Georgi, *Opponents*, 29

⁸⁴ Beyer, 'διακονέω', 85

⁸⁵ BDAG, 'ἐπιπέτης', 1035

apposition. As God's servant (ὑπηρέτην γενέσθαι καὶ διάκονον), Joseph has an administrative task in Egypt; he can decide how best to act.⁸⁶

The general sense of ὑπηρέτης is well summed up in the advice of Socrates to Diodorus which is found in Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, where both initiative and obedience are lauded:

Yet surely it is worth many servants to have a willing, loyal, staunch subordinate (ὑπηρέτην), capable of doing what he is told, and not only so, but able to make himself useful unbidden, to think clearly and give advice.⁸⁷

If there is a difference between διάκονος and ὑπηρέτης it seems to be one of degree. Both are servants, they are answerable to another. However, it is possible that in 1 Cor. 3:5 Paul is stressing his instrumentality whereas in 1 Cor. 4:1 he is writing of his duty of administering the affairs of another. Rengstorf has concluded that as ὑπηρέται Χριστοῦ, Paul and Apollos are 'executive organs of Christ. This means that all they preach, teach, order and do has its origin and basis in God's plan for the world as this is manifested in Christ. Hence ὑπηρέται here comes close to ἀποστολος'.⁸⁸ Collins prefers to use 'official'.⁸⁹ There is a danger that by using 'official', the thrust of Paul's argument against the generally accepted notion of leadership will be lost.

Epigraphic evidence shows that the position of οἰκονόμος could be entrusted to male or female, young or old, slave or a person of some influence. In classical literature the essential characteristics of the good

⁸⁶ Philo, *Ios.*, 241

⁸⁷ Xenophon, *Memorabilia*, 2.10.3

⁸⁸ Rengstorf, Karl Heinrich 'ὑπηρέτης', *TDNT* VIII, 530-544, 542. He adds: "And the further description added by καὶ has the character of a more precise elucidation of the ὑπηρέται Χριστοῦ, making Paul and Apollos independent of the criticisms and evaluations of the Corinthian Christians and also protecting them against self-criticism on any grounds, vv. 3ff."

⁸⁹ Collins, *Diakonia*, 324 n. 1

οἰκονόμος appear to be prudence, reliability and faithfulness.⁹⁰ Martin has shown that various terms, πεπιστευμένοι, οἱ ἐν πίστει ὄντες, ὧν ἐν πίστει, are used by Artemidorus to refer to slaves who held position of trust.⁹¹ οἰκονόμοι and πεπιστευμένοι appear to be synonymous.

In the LXX, Josephus and Philo there are examples of οἰκονόμοι in their different roles.⁹² Some held positions of some authority and power; all held positions of trust and managed the affairs of another. With the introduction of ὑπηρετής and οἰκονόμος (1 Cor. 4:1), two words with connotations of service, Paul amplifies his message of 1 Cor. 3:5-9. Though the theme of belonging to God which includes being in God's service continues to be prominent, the link with οἰκονόμος adds another important theme: that of faithfulness. Paul believes that like Jeremiah he has been entrusted with a stewardship and that he has no choice but to fulfil this task (1 Cor. 9:17).

The use of the three nouns διάκονος, ὑπηρετής and οἰκονόμος shows that as a leader of the Christian ἐκκλησία in Corinth, Paul regards himself first and foremost as a worker in the service of the gospel, Christ and God on whom he is dependent and to whom he is accountable (2 Cor. 3:6; 6:4; 11:23; 5:18). He is an instrument used by God to bring the Corinthians to faith, to nurture them in their faith, to facilitate their life and growth and their ongoing transformation (cf. Philo, *Agr.*, 7-8), and to build them up by offering encouragement and consolation (1 Cor. 13:4) and by showing love and concern for the other (1 Cor. 8:1). As a steward of the mysteries he

⁹⁰ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1314a-b; cf. Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History* vol. XII LCL (Cambridge, Massachusetts & London: Harvard UP, 1967), 1.62.6; Lysias, *Speech* Perseus Digital Library Project. Ed. Gregory R. Crane. Tufts University <<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu>> (March 2003), 1.7; Xenophon, *Anabasis* Perseus CD 2.0 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 1.9.19; Xenophon, *Oeconomicus* Perseus CD 2.0 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 1.2; *Memorabilia*, 2.10.4

⁹¹ Artemidorus, *Oneirocritica*, 4.15, 2.9, 2.49 cited in Martin, *Slavery*, 20-21, n. 103-105

⁹² LXX, 3Kgs. 4:6; 4 Kgs. 18:18, 37; Isa. 36:3,22; 1 Esdras 4:49; Esther 8:9; Philo, *Ios.*, 37- 38; Josephus, *Antiquities*, 12.200-203

must be trustworthy and faithful to his mission (1 Cor. 3:4-4:5). As a mediator of the gospel, he serves as a channel for God's 'word of the cross' which he proclaims not only by word but by his life which embodies it.

As an agent of change, Paul's task is not only to dispel the false expectations of leadership which the Corinthians hold, but also to change their attitudes and behaviour towards one another. Malherbe used the term *psychagogy* to describe the manner in which Paul guided the moral and spiritual development of the converts.⁹³ The verb ψυχαγωγέω can have the bad sense of 'to inveigle or to delude';⁹⁴ however, 'psychagogy' had 'been widely used by philosophers in Greece and elsewhere from the fourth century B.C.E. in the training and development of their students'.⁹⁵ The way in which they practised *psychagogy* has been described by Seid:

They first seek to persuade people to abandon conventional wisdom and continual striving for reputation, wealth, and luxury... Philosophers then seek to help their adherents make progress through teaching and encouragement, advice and reproof. They develop a close relationship in which they are able to employ frank speech in order to correct destructive behaviour and ways of thinking.⁹⁶

Paul's relationship with the Corinthians can reasonably be compared with that of moral philosophers with their adherents rather than that of the typical Graeco-Roman leader with his followers. First he encourages (παρακαλέω) and admonishes (νουθετέω) the Corinthians (1 Cor. 1:10; 4:14, 16; cf. 11:17, 22 (οὐκ ἐπαινωῶ); 16:15; 2 Cor. 2:8; 6:1); and secondly,

⁹³ Malherbe, Abraham J. *The First Letter to the Thessalonians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* AB 32B (New York: Doubleday, 2004), 323

⁹⁴ L & S, 'ψυχαγωγέω' Greek-English Lexicon, 903; cf. Isocrates, Evagoras, 9.10 Perseus CD 2.0 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000); Plato, Phaedrus Perseus 2.0 CD (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 261a

⁹⁵ Thom, Johan C. 'Review' of Malherbe, Abraham J. *The Letters to the Thessalonians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* Anchor Bible 32B (New York: Doubleday, 2000) *RBL* 09 (2004), 1-5, 3

⁹⁶ Seid, Timothy W. 'Psychagogy in Paul: What Is It, How Does it Help Us Understand Paul, and Why Does it Matter?' <<http://esr.earlham.edu/~seidti/psychagogy.pdf>> (Dec. 2006), 1-18, 5-6

he employs ‘frank speech’ (παρηγοσία), in an effort to turn them away from the ‘destructive behaviour and ways of thinking’ in which they are engaged, as was the custom of the moral philosopher in his dealings with his students.⁹⁷

It is the practice of ‘frank speech’ in the context of friendship⁹⁸, rather than in the political sphere, which is significant for understanding Paul’s relationship with his Corinthian readers. Used by parents, teachers and friends as a means of correction; it should always be exercised with love and concern for the recipient and should be tempered with just praise for the recipient’s virtues. Though the prevention of serious misdemeanours requires severe reproof, even the most severe criticism should be introduced with gentleness and kindness so that its sting will ‘build up, not tear down’.

Paul speaks frankly to the Corinthians, especially the minority group (v.26) which consisted of the influential and educated whose views probably carried disproportionate weight in the community, in a way which should bring home to them the futility of their pretentious claims to self-sufficiency and superiority. He teaches the Corinthians that no one possesses anything in his/her own right; that everything is a gift from God (1 Cor. 26-31; cf. 1 Cor. 4:7).

The final allusion to the richness of the gift which they have received from God who ‘is the source of their life in Christ Jesus, who became for them wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption’ (v. 30) tempers the sting of his criticism. It is God’s choice of and work in the Christians of Corinth which has given them something in which to glory and in which to put their confidence: ‘ὁ καυχώμενος ἐν κυρίῳ καυχάσθω’ (1 Cor. 1:31; cf. Philo, *Spec.*, 1.311; Deut. 10:21).

⁹⁷ Dio Chrysostom, *Diss.*, 32.19; cf. 1 Cor. 1:10; 4:12-13; 2 Cor. 12:20

⁹⁸ Aristotle, *EN.*, 1165a 25; cf. Aristotle, *Athenian Constitution*, 16.6 Perseus Digital Library Project. Ed. Gregory R. Crane. Tufts University. March 2003 <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu> ; cf. Philo, *Her.*, 21; Plutarch, ‘How to Tell a Flatterer’, in *Moralia* English Translation by Mr Tullie of Queen’s College. Edition by William Goodwin (Boston: Little Brown, and Co., 1878) <http://www.bostonleadershipbuilders.com/plutarch/moralia/how_to_tell_a_flatterer_from_a_friend.htm> (Dec. 2006), 28, §29; 34, §36; 33, §36; 24, §26

It is widely accepted that Paul's allusion to the report of πορνεία in the community (1 Cor. 5:1) is to an illicit, ongoing (ἐχειν) relationship between a man and his step-mother. Since such a relationship would have been regarded as incestuous both in Roman and in Jewish law;⁹⁹ 'not even 'tolerated' among the Gentiles' is the preferred translation;¹⁰⁰ it reflects Paul's condemnation of Gentile morality expressed in Rom. 1:18-3:21.

Φουσιόω (1 Cor. 5:2), an onomatopoeic word and a vivid metaphor which describes those 'blown up with self-importance',¹⁰¹ appears six times in 1 Corinthians (4:6, 18, 19; 5:2; 8:1; 13:14; cf. 1:29; 3:21). Paul is dismayed both by the man's behaviour and by the Corinthians' shameful and arrogant toleration of it (1 Cor. 5:2). As their father in Christ, he feels compelled to rebuke them. It is reasonable to propose that the immoral man was a person of high social standing who was also a patron of the community who, as clients, would not have risked criticizing him. Paul introduces the metaphor of 'leaven', (the connection between leaven and boasting was not unknown),¹⁰² to express the insidious nature of the behaviour of the immoral man and the inappropriate response of the Corinthians; both alike undermine the community's growth in holiness. The secular *ethos*, rather than the Christian one controlled their behaviour.

As a 'new batch of unleavened dough' (REB), a new creation in Christ, their lives should be true to their calling as people set apart for God, showing forth the holiness which is already theirs through the indwelling of the Spirit; they must truly be God's temple in Corinth. Their lifestyle should be like the good leaven which silently promotes the growth of the kingdom of God (Matt. 13:33; Luke 13:20-21).

⁹⁹Leviticus, 18:8; Josephus, *Antiquities*, 3,274; Gaius, *Institutes*, <http://www.constitution.org/sps/sps01_2-1.htm> (April 2005), 1.63; Cicero, *Pro Cluentio* Perseus Digital Library Project. Ed. Gregory R. Crane. Tufts University (Dec., 2002) <<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu>>, 6.15

¹⁰⁰ REB; Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 385; Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 155

¹⁰¹ Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 355

¹⁰² Philo, *Spec.*, 1.293

Paul argues that in the interest of internal relationships and of the community's witness to the world, they should forgo their rights and not pursue them by means of litigation (1 Cor. 6:7-9).¹⁰³ Together with the fact that it was the custom of both the Jewish community and the Qumran sect to settle disputes within their own communities,¹⁰⁴ it is likely that Paul mistrusted the nature of the Roman civil litigation system which favoured the influential.¹⁰⁵ He concludes that to be engaged in litigation is a moral defeat (ἡττημα) (v. 7); it is to succumb to the desire to enhance one's standing or defend it, usually at the expense of others. Again, he ends with words of encouragement: though some of them *were* wrongdoers, now, in Christ, they have been transformed (1 Cor. 6:11); their lives should demonstrate this transformation.¹⁰⁶

Paul frankly expresses his disapproval and the considerable distress caused to him by the behaviour of the Corinthians when they come together to eat the Lord's Supper with the twice repeated words οὐκ ἐπεινῶ (1 Cor. 11:17, 22). The selfish behaviour of the 'haves' which humiliated the 'have-nots', was not uncommon in the secular world.¹⁰⁷ Such behaviour

¹⁰³ Taylor, Robert D. 'Toward a Biblical Theology of Litigation: A Law Professor Looks at 1 Cor. 6:1-11' *Ex Auditu* 2 (1986), 105-116, 107

¹⁰⁴ Exodus, 18:21-22; DSSE, CD 10.5-6, 139; Schürer, Emil *A History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175B.C. – A.D.135)* vol. 2 (A New English Version Revised and Edited by Geza Vermes, Fergus Millar & Matthew Black) (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1979), 135

¹⁰⁵ Cicero, *Pro Caecina*, 26.73-74; 29,59; *Pro Quinctio*, 6.2.10; *Ad. Fam.*, 13.53; *Pro Sexto Roscio Amerino*, 60; Perseus Digital Library Project. Ed. Gregory R. Crane. Tufts University (Dec., 2002) < <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu>>; Tacitus, *Annals* Perseus Digital Library Project. Ed. Gregory R. Crane. Tufts University (Dec., 2004) < <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu>>, 1.75; Dio, *Diss.*, 8.9; Epictetus, *Diss.*, 3.17

¹⁰⁶ Fee, *1 Corinthians*, 245

¹⁰⁷ Pliny, *The Letters of the Younger* translated by Betty Radice (London: Penguin, 1963), 2.6; Juvenal, *The Poor Dependiant* (Suffolk: Penguin, 1958), 369

trivializes their sharing the Lord's Supper and, in effect, makes a mockery of it. It demonstrates that they do not see themselves as a body with mutual responsibility for one another but as individuals pursuing their own interests. However, by addressing the community as his siblings and by couching his advice in less condemnatory and more encouraging tones (1 Cor. 11:33-34), Paul ends the chapter on a conciliatory note.

Fearing that the relationships with him and with one another still left much to be desired (2 Cor. 12:20), Paul, as their father in Christ and their apostle with the ultimate responsibility for guiding and nurturing their faith, warns that he is prepared to exercise strong discipline when the welfare of his children is at stake (2 Cor. 13:2). However, the purpose of the entire communication is the prevention of harsh action; he earnestly desires their repentance. On his part, he offers prayers; he threatens but never loses hope of the outcome he desires (2 Cor. 13:7, 9).¹⁰⁸ He seeks the highest good of the community which he sees as restoration, edification and ultimately, unity and peace (2 Cor. 13:9, 10, 11).

By making clear his vision and mission, Paul, a transformational leader, developed in the Corinthian converts an awareness of the demands of the gospel and of their calling. By his own example, he enabled them to adapt to the Christian *ethos* with its radically new values and beliefs; he fostered their growth toward 'moral maturity'; and he encouraged them to put aside their own interests and to participate with him in the building up of the community with its new social world. He endeavoured to motivate and inspire them by example, by frank criticism and by persuasion, to see the Christian life as a call to put their trust in God and his wisdom; a call to holiness, to live as a people set apart by God for his purposes; and a call to live a life of service to God, to one another and to the community.

If at times Paul appears to be egocentric or aggressive, this is a mark of his humanity, a reminder that, like his brothers and sisters in Christ he is still on the road to maturity; a reminder that he and they are dependent on God's grace.¹⁰⁹ This 'human Paul' is still a model for leaders of every age.¹¹⁰ He

¹⁰⁸ Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 489

¹⁰⁹ Sampley, J. Paul 'Paul and Frank Speech' in Sampley, J. Paul (ed.) *Paul in the Greco-Roman World: A Handbook* (Harrisburg, PA.: TPI, 2003), 293-318, 314

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‘has given future generations a picture of Christian ministry possessed of considerable theological depth and spiritual insight’¹¹¹ and *mutatis mutandi* is one which should continue to guide, inspire and encourage church leaders now and in the future.

Dr Deirdre McCrea

¹¹⁰ Thrall, *2 Corinthians* II. 962

¹¹¹ Thrall, *2 Corinthians* II. 960