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Paul's Financial Policy:

A Socio-Theological Approach

By

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At The

University of Durham

Department of Theology and Religion

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Abstract

This thesis attempts to provide a reason for Paul's seemingly inconsistent financial policy, insofar as he accepts monetary aid from the Philippians (and others) but refuses it from the Corinthians.

After outlining and critiquing a variety of approaches to the quandary of Paul's financial policy (Chapter 1), we then contextualise Paul in his ancient socio-economic background (i.e., the context of patronage, benefaction, reciprocity, and various other gift-exchange relationships in antiquity) and also place him in ideological comparison with Seneca's *De Beneficiis*, the major gift-giving treatise of the first century (Chapter 2). This chapter serves as a reference point, adding argumentative support to subsequent chapters by situating Paul in his ancient context.

In Chapter 3, we provide an exegetical analysis of the positive gift-giving relationship between Paul and the Philippians, teasing out the particular relational features that comprised their intimate bond. What appears is a three-way relational pattern with God as the source of Paul's gift-exchange relationship with the Philippians. In Chapters 4 and 5, we turn to investigate Paul's negative relationship with the Corinthians, primarily 1 Cor. 9 and 2 Cor. 10-12 but incorporate 1 Cor. 1-4, 11:17-34, and 12:12-31, in order to highlight the absence of the particular features found in the apostle's relationship with the Philippians. We then propound a *socio-theological* reason for Paul's refusal of Corinthian gifts.

By placing the social context of gift-exchange in dialectical relationship with Paul's theology of gift-giving (or grace), we conclude that he refused Corinthian support, not because they desired to patronise him as a dependent client (which has become commonplace among NT scholars), but because they sought to be *under* Paul as their *superior*, an act that neglected God as the *superior source* of all gifts in the divine economy. Paul therefore refuses their support to avoid two-way relationships of gift so prevalent in ancient society (i.e., the social aspect) and to underscore the *source* of the gift of the gospel, the one from whom and through whom and to whom are all things – God (i.e., the theological aspect). Thus, a *socio-theological* reason for Paul's financial policy will emerge.

Statement of Copyright

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author. All information derived from this thesis must be acknowledged appropriately.

Declaration

This work has been submitted to the University of Durham in accordance with the regulations for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. It is my own work, and none of it has been previously submitted to the University of Durham or in any other university for a degree.

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Abbreviations

Abbreviations of ancient literature generally follow the conventions of Patrick H. Alexander, et al. (eds.), *The SBL Handbook of Style* (Peabody, MA, 1999), though when biblical texts are abbreviated, a period is used. The editions used are those from the Loeb Classical Library unless otherwise indicated.

CHAPTER 1: APPROACHES TO PAUL'S FINANCIAL POLICY

Introduction

Paul's financial policy has never been the subject of a single monograph. To be sure, many sophisticated approaches have been constructed. Yet they either appear as subsidiary points of a much larger argument (which is primarily the case) or in monographs that present an insufficient treatment of the issue.¹ A sustained, balanced, and narrowly-focused thesis is needed. For among all the perennial issues in Pauline circles, two basic questions concerning Paul's policy have largely gone unresolved: (i) why did Paul refuse pay for the gospel (1 Cor. 9; 1 Thess. 2), but gladly accept financial support from the Philippians (Phil. 4:10-20)?; and (ii) why did he accept from the Philippians and others (2 Cor. 11:8-9), but loudly refuse from the Corinthians, despite the offence this caused (2 Cor. 11-12)?² These questions especially remain open because popular answers have been perpetuated in NT scholarship as the *communis opinio*. Thus, we are constantly reminded in several commentaries and monographs that Paul

1. For example, both Peter Marshall, *Enmity in Corinth: Social Conventions in Paul's Relations with the Corinthians* (WUNT 2/23; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1987) and G.W. Peterman, *Paul's Gift from Philippi: Conventions of Gift Exchange and Christian Giving* (SNTSMS; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) apportion most exegetical space to the specific church under their consideration rather than offering a comprehensive thesis that equally analyses both Paul's relationship with the Philippians and the Corinthians.

2. Although these questions may sound identical, the distinction being drawn here will only become apparent after arguing that 1 Cor. 9 does not presuppose the offer of a gift to Paul. Rather, it records the apostle's policy during his initial entrance into a city. But this will not become evident until Chapter 4.

refused Corinthian support because they sought to become *his patrons*, that he *grudgingly* accepted the Philippians' gift, and that his fiscal decisions were basically *ad hoc* and *inconsistent*.

However popular these lines of argumentation may be, they nevertheless suffer from social-historical and exegetical problems. They misunderstand the rules of exchange in antiquity and impose modern sensibilities of gift anachronistically onto Paul, and they also inadequately resolve the exegetical questions concerning Paul's financial policy, such as: why did Paul always work a trade during his initial visits instead of accepting finances (cf. 1 Thess. 2:9; 1 Cor. 9:12, 15, 18; 2 Cor. 11:7; Phil. 4:15)? Does 1 Corinthians 9 presuppose the offer of a gift to Paul? What did he mean by not wanting to become a burden (ἐγκοπή, 1 Cor. 9:12)? Why did he declare that he would never accept money from the Corinthians (2 Cor. 11:9, 12; 12:14), when he obviously procured funds from them for travel expenses (1 Cor. 16:6; 2 Cor. 1:16)? Did Paul assume different types of support? What distinguished Paul's relationship with the Philippians and other churches (ἄλλας ἐκκλησίας, 2 Cor. 11:8), making them more suitable candidates to assist him financially? Insufficient answers to these crucial questions, in addition to the misinformed social-historical conclusions outlined above, indicate the need to step back and reevaluate the Pauline evidence afresh.

Various approaches have been carved out in the attempt to resolve the quandary of Paul's monetary policy. Some are more convincing than others. But if we are to move further

in this endeavour, we must critically appraise both past and present advancements, teasing out the particular problems of methodology, presuppositions, exegesis, and social history within each. Only then will it become apparent that every attempt to explain Paul's financial practice in the last century, while indeed illuminating in many respects, has largely neglected an essential component — one which challenges the accepted norms of ancient gift-exchange in Pauline scholarship, provides a firmer exegetical foundation, adds a consistent structure to his seemingly inconsistent practice, and thereby creates a new approach to a familiar question.

1. Reappraising Various Approaches

So why did Paul refuse financial support? This question, though simply put, is immensely perplexing and has generated multiple explanations. And yet, as David Horrell bluntly asserts, 'A number of possible explanations of Paul's [financial] behaviour must be rejected because of the direct evidence we have.'³ Convinced of this assessment, we have categorised the 'possible explanations' under the headings of psychological, economical, moral/ethical, theological, and sociological approaches,⁴ all in order to gauge their viability against the 'direct evidence' we have. Although some approaches closely intertwine with others, so that a combination of a few

3. *The Social Ethos of the Corinthian Correspondence: Interests and Ideology from 1 Corinthians to 1 Clement* (SNTW; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 211.

4. This is a slight modification and extension of Peter Marshall's categorisation (cf. *Enmity*, 233).

can be held without any contradiction, the following will be an attempt to disentangle and differentiate clearly the various approaches to Paul's financial policy.

1.1. The Psychological Approach

According to C.H. Dodd, Paul has a psychological complex about money, an inner conflict of the soul.⁵ With the 'feelings of a well-to-do *bourgeois*'⁶ (though he had chosen poverty for ideal ends), he has no need for finances and can only discuss the issue with much embarrassment. This, for Dodd, is confirmed by Philippians 4:10-20, where Paul couches his discussion of money in the technical language of commerce (e.g., εἰς λόγον, 4:17; ἀπέχω. . . πεπλήρωμαι, 4:18), giving 'the transaction a severely "business" aspect' which allows him to skirt around the awkwardness of exchange. After identifying this abhorrence of finances in Phil. 4:10-20, Dodd then reads it into the financial text of 1 Corinthians 9:15-18 and essentially presents a Paul who has a higher-class, snobbish perspective towards money, since he could never think of himself as a member of the poor, 'to whom alms might be offered without suspicion of offence.'⁷ His refusal of aid can therefore be explained by his internal aversion to finances.

5. 'The Mind of Paul: I' in *New Testament Studies* (Manchester: University Press, 1953), 67-82, esp. 71-72.

6. 'The Mind of Paul: I,' 72.

7. 'The Mind of Paul: I,' 72.

Although many notable commentators have followed Dodd, such as F.W. Beare,⁸ R.P. Martin,⁹ and J.-F. Collange,¹⁰ several reasons speak against this approach. To begin with, it is primarily based on an inferential reading of 1 Cor. 9.¹¹ Nowhere does this chapter disclose an intrinsic loathing of money. It merely conveys Paul's freedom to enforce or forgo his apostolic ἐξουσία in the gospel to support. But this decision is solely predicated on whether it will create an obstacle for others (9:12), not on his own personal repulsion towards money. Moreover, Dodd's psychologising of Paul's discourse in Phil. 4:10-20 is ultimately an explanation for the absence of his gratitude in this pericope — that is, rather than saying 'thanks,' he piles up commercial terminology to conceal his embarrassment. Yet Paul often employs commercial terminology to describe his most intimate relationships (e.g., Phil. 4:15).¹² Also, his supposed thanklessness towards the Philippians may actually have been an expression of thankfulness to God, the one who gives *through* the church as mediators of his divine beneficence. But we suspend the possibility of this argument until Chapter 3.

8. *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Philippians* (BNTC; London: A&C Black, 1959), 151–52.

9. *Philippians* (NCB; London: Routledge, 1976), 161.

10. *The Epistle of Saint Paul to the Philippians* (trans. A. W. Heathcote; Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1979), 148–49.

11. More forthrightly, Marshall exclaims, 'Dodd's inference from 1 Cor. 9 is wrong' (*Enmity*, 158).

12. See Peterman, *Gift Exchange*, 51–89.

1.2. The Economical Approach

Could it be that Paul eschews monetary support from some because they had very little to give? David Dungan thinks so.¹³ He contends that Paul could not confidently request help from the Thessalonian or Corinthian communities, because they were impoverished and thus lacked the necessary resources to assist their apostle (cf. 1 Cor. 1:26). If Paul insisted on this ἐξουσία, irrespective of their socio-economic level, it would place an unnecessary ‘burden’ on them and would engender sceptical views towards his ministry, prompting the scathing remark, “‘The Word of Grace comes dear these days!’”¹⁴ For Dungan, then, the apostle’s resolve to leave the gospel unhindered (1 Cor. 9:12b) means that he strategically preaches ‘in places which could not afford to support him,’¹⁵ a philosophy of ministry that eradicates any misgivings about his ministry and keeps him from burdening his churches in Thessalonica (1 Thess. 2:9; 2 Thess. 3:8) and Corinth (2 Cor. 11:9; 12:13, 14).¹⁶

13. *The Sayings of Jesus in the Churches of Paul: The Use of the Synoptic Tradition in the Regulation of Early Church Life* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), who follows Philipp Bachmann, *Der erste Brief des Paulus an die Korinther* (KNT 7; Leipzig: A. Deichert, 1905), 38; Johannes Weiss, *Der erste Korintherbrief* (KEK 5; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1910, repr. 1970), 238.

14. *Sayings*, 31.

15. *Sayings*, 31.

16. Richard Horsley presents a slight modification of this approach. After suggesting that Paul, as a former Pharisee, benefitted from the revenues of Judaeon villagers under the system of tribute, he could not participate in ‘the horizontal economic reciprocity of village communities’ in the early Jesus movement. He therefore refused support to avoid unfairly living off poverty-stricken people (*1 Corinthians* [ANTC; Nashville: Abingdon, 1998], 249–50).

But what about the church at Philippi? Paul conspicuously accepted funds from them while ministering in Thessalonica (Phil. 4:15-16) and Corinth (2 Cor. 11:9). Could they be classified as an impoverished community? Dungan suggests that the Philippians were actually financially stable. And, as the first church that he planted, he purposely began a fiscal relationship with them in order to avoid ‘piling up financial ties as he went along, or working a new one out with each new mission congregation he established.’¹⁷ But even Dungan admits that this argument is hypothetical.¹⁸

Unfortunately, the Economical approach is built entirely on the highly debatable claim that the Corinthians were impoverished, a view that has been challenged recently, with many suggesting that certain figures in the church existed within a socio-economic ‘middle’ level.¹⁹ But even if they were extremely poor, as Dungan contends, Paul still called on them to provide money for the saints in Jerusalem (2 Cor. 8:10-12; 9:3-5). It therefore cannot be the case that he only preached in places without the necessary funds to help him. Conversely, the higher, socio-economic level of the Philippians is based primarily on an inappropriate use of mirror-

17. *Sayings*, 31.

18. See *Sayings*, 31 n1.

19. See, for instance, Bruce Longenecker, ‘Exposing the Economic Middle: A Revised Economy Scale for the Study of Early Urban Christianity,’ *JSNT* 31 (2009): 243–78; idem, ‘Socio-Economic Profiling of the First Urban Christians,’ in *After the First Urban Christians: The Social-Scientific Study of Pauline Christianity Twenty-Five Years Later* (ed. Todd Still and David Horrell; London: T&T Clark, 2009), 36–59; idem, *Remember the Poor: Paul, Poverty, and the Greco-Roman World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010); Steven Friesen, ‘Poverty in Pauline Studies: Beyond the So-Called New Consensus,’ *JSNT* 26 (2004): 323–61, though the counter-arguments of Justin Meggitt should be seriously considered (*Paul, Poverty and Survival* [SNTW; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998]). Yet this is beyond the scope of this chapter.

reading.²⁰ This can be seen in Dungan's reasoning that since Paul did not feel confident enough to ask for money at Thessalonica and Corinth, they must have been destitute. If they were destitute, then 'we may assume,' he deduces, 'that just the opposite was the case with the Philippian congregation.'²¹ Clearly, this latter conclusion is based on the speculative premise that the Corinthians were poverty-stricken, and so renders this approach infeasible.

1.3. The Moral/Ethical Approach

The reason Paul refrains from accepting support, according to this approach, stems from his desire to validate the moral or ethical nature of his ministry. He did not want to be affiliated with those who rapaciously sought personal gain. This perspective has been endorsed by multiple scholars in a variety of ways.

J.C. Hurd claims that Paul denied himself support in order to remove any appearance of greed in the collection for the Jerusalem saints. Hurd begins by rejecting the idea that 1 Cor. 9 is a response to an offer of a gift. If that were the case, he would not have been 'constitutionally opposed to accepting money from his churches' (cf. Phil. 4:15-16, 19),²² which leads Hurd to conclude that 'they had not offered him financial support.'²³ Instead, 1 Cor. 9

20. For an appropriate use and critique of mirror-reading, consult John Barclay, 'Mirror-Reading a Polemical Letter: Galatians as a Test Case,' *JSNT* 31 (1987): 73-93.

21. *Sayings*, 31.

22. John Hurd, *The Origin of 1 Corinthians* (London: SPCK, 1965), 204.

23. *Origin*, 204.

represents a counter-argument to those who perceive the collection as a façade for his own travelling needs.²⁴

Yet even though Hurd correctly refutes the notion that Paul replies to an offer of a gift in 1 Cor. 9, neither does this chapter say anything about the collection or his travelling needs. This position rests entirely on implication, as even Hurd admits.²⁵ Rather, 1 Cor. 9 relates his stance towards accepting finances during his *initial visit* at Corinth and in every other city he founded. The importance of this point will be teased out in Chapter 4.

C.K. Barrett concurs with Hurd's connection between Paul's policy and his efforts in the collection but takes it a step further. He claims that Paul refused in order not to misrepresent the gospel message before unbelievers. If accepting the gospel led to the obligation of supporting missionaries, potential converts may construe the gospel of grace, a message which conveys the unilateral and self-sacrificial gift of Christ for humanity, as a crooked avenue for profit among self-interested preachers.²⁶ Echoing Barrett's position,²⁷ Nils Dahl notes that the apostle's sacrifice in refusing support 'removed a possible stumbling block from the path of

24. *Origin*, 205.

25. Cf. *Origin*, 204.

26. *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (BNTC; London: A&C Black, 1971), 207.

27. Others who follow Barrett include: Gerhard Dautzenberg, 'Der Verzicht auf das apostolische Unterhaltsrecht: Eine exegetische Untersuchung zu 1 Kor 9,' *Bib* 50 (1969): 212–32; Ernst Käsemann, *New Testament Questions of Today* (trans. W.J. Montague; London: SCM, 1969), 233–34; Bengt Holmberg, *Paul and Power: The Structure of Authority in the Primitive Church as Reflected in the Pauline Epistles* (Sweden: Studentlitteratur AB, 1978), 92; Hans Lietzmann and W.G. Kümmel, *An die Korinther I/II* (HNT 9; Mohr Siebeck: Tübingen, 1969), 42; Archibald Robertson and Alfred Plummer, *I Corinthians* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1914), 186–87; F.F. Bruce, *1 and 2 Corinthians* (NCB; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1971), 85; G. Stählin, ἐγκοπή, *TDNT* 3:857.

prospective converts; they had no cause to believe that he was motivated by greed.²⁸ Likewise, Robinson Butarbutar contends that ‘it is Paul’s own perception of the gospel that motivates his refusal of financial support.’²⁹ The gospel is Christ crucified, thus Paul crucifies his right to support, for he embodies the gospel. The connection between message and messenger is lucidly explained by Paul Gardner. He writes, Paul ‘did not want anyone to think they had to pay to hear the “gospel.” This would have denied the fundamental gospel concept of *grace*.’³⁰ In other words, the messenger must be conformed to the message. Since Paul preaches a free gospel, the gospel must be given freely. He cannot receive a return. Doing so only creates a distortion of grace.

Refusing support as an embodiment of the gospel also serves a paradigmatic purpose for those in the church. Emphasising the paradigmatic rather than defensive role that 1 Cor. 9 plays in the larger context of 8:1-11:1,³¹ Wendell Willis concludes that Paul’s refusal of funds, a

28. *Studies in Paul* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1977), 34.

29. *Paul and Conflict Resolution: An Exegetical Study of Paul’s Apostolic Paradigm in 1 Corinthians 9* (PBM; Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2007), 206.

30. *The Gifts of God and the Authentication of a Christian: An Exegetical Study of 1 Corinthians 8–11:1* (Maryland: University Press of America, 1994), 84.

31. Other scholars who, like Willis, argue against the thesis of an apologetic emphasis in 1 Cor. 9 include: Hurd, *Origin*, 126–31; Gordon Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987), 390 n71, 392–94; Margaret Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1991), 244–45; Anthony Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 666. But one wonders whether it is necessary to understand this chapter as either paradigmatic or a defence, since Paul could present a paradigmatic example within a polemical context. This possibility will be explored further below in Chapter 4, section 4.1.

practice he had the right to enforce, operates as an implicit appeal to the Corinthians (cf. 8:13; 11:1). He hopes that his example of forsaking his right in the gospel will encourage them to do the same for one another and so exhibit the selfless love of Christ in the church.³²

Focusing more on the conflict at Corinth, Savage looks to Paul's opponents, who skewed the Corinthians' outlook, to uncover the reason for his refusal.³³ Being influenced by the rivals, the Corinthians conformed to the social practices of Hellenistic culture, esteeming the strong traits of physical presence, boasting, and rhetoric, and so became immensely dissatisfied with their lowly apostle who worked a trade. They reasoned that 'an impoverished leader was a contradiction in terms.'³⁴ Instead, they supported the Corinthian rivals, who gladly accepted their support (cf. 2 Cor. 11:20). Thus, for Savage,³⁵ Paul's refusal accomplished multiple purposes: (i) it turned these rivals into a negative example, while he became a positive example by foolishly boasting in his abstention of aid; (ii) it also prevented his converts from boasting in their own generosity towards Paul; and (iii) it forced 'his converts to participate in his humility and thus to conform, albeit unwillingly, to the pattern of Christ.'³⁶

32. 'An Apostolic Apologia?: The Form and Function of 1 Corinthians 9,' *JSNT* 24 (1985): 33–48.

33. *Power Through Weakness: Paul's Understanding of the Christian Ministry in 2 Corinthians* (SNTSMS; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 80–99.

34. *Power Through Weakness*, 87.

35. Following the contributions of Wilhelm Pratscher, 'Der Verzicht des Paulus auf finanziellen Unterhalt durch seine Gemeinden. Ein Aspekt seiner Missionsweise,' *NTS* 25 (1979): 284–98.

36. *Power Through Weakness*, 93.

As a model conformed to the gospel, the apostle draws the Corinthians into that same Christocentric pattern of living.

Another slant on the moral/ethical approach is that Paul's denial of money can be identified as an anti-sophistic stand, as he endeavours to distinguish himself from those who greedily charge high fees for their teaching. H.D. Betz, for example, although considering Paul's renunciation as an acceptance of Cynic begging and poverty, discovers an anti-sophistic topos in his vitriolic attack against the opponents in 2 Cor. 10-13.³⁷ Bruce Winter advances this view further, interpreting 1 Cor. 2:1-5 and 1 Cor. 9 as subtle critiques of Sophistic practices, which the Corinthians would have picked up on since they were exposed to Sophists who took advantage of their students in Corinthian society.³⁸

To be sure, the Moral/Ethical approach, with its several strands of argumentation, provides insight into the general nature of Paul's refusal. But it should only complement other approaches. On its own, it fails to account for every factor of his financial policy and therefore cannot provide a comprehensive answer to the question of why Paul refuses monetary aid.

One particularly debilitating weakness of this approach must be mentioned: it imposes modern ideals of morality and ethics onto ancient texts about reciprocal exchange. As we

37. *Der Apostel Paulus und die sokratische Tradition: Eine exegetische Untersuchung zu seiner 'Apologie' 2 Korinther 10-13* (BHT 45; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1972), 115-17.

38. *Philo and Paul Among the Sophists* (SNTSMS; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 164; cf. also Holmberg, *Paul and Power*, 90; Hans Windisch, *Der zweite Korintherbrief* (9th edition; K. Meyer; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1924), 298.

noted above, interpreters reason that because the gospel of grace is unmerited, Paul merits no pay for the message he preaches. Gardner's quote is representative here. Paul 'did not want anyone to think they had to pay to hear the "gospel." This would have denied the fundamental gospel concept of *grace*.'³⁹ The problem with this logic is that while it coincides well with 2 Cor. 11:7 ('I preached the gospel of God free of charge [δωρεάν]'), it nevertheless contradicts the chief argument of 1 Cor. 9, which affirms the apostle's right to receive a *return*, a μισθός for preaching the gospel (1 Cor. 9:11, 14, 18; cf. ὁψώνιον, 2 Cor. 11:8). More than this, if Gardner is correct, then we have to assume that the other apostles (ἄλλοι), mentioned in 1 Cor. 9:12 and perhaps 9:5, preach something other than the message of grace, since Paul insinuates that they enforced their right *in* the gospel to receive support *from* the gospel.

This logical inconsistency needs to be rectified. Not only does it betray a modern aversion to reciprocity and entirely disregard the ancient context of Paul's social practice, but it also overlooks the Corinthians' awareness of the apostle's right to material support as completely in line with the gospel itself (1 Cor. 9:11, 14). Closer attention, therefore, needs to be paid to the socio-cultural elements of gift-exchange in antiquity; only then will we be able to reassess the fundamental concept of grace in Paul.

39. *Gifts of God*, 84.

1.4. The Theological Approach

Gerhard Dautzenberg best represents this view by linking Paul's refusal with his theology of suffering (*Leidenstheologie*), insofar as the vivid images of enduring (στέγω) and willingness to die (ἀποθνῆσκω, 1 Cor. 9:12, 15) reflect the redeeming work of Christ in Paul's apostolic existence (cf. 2 Cor. 8:9; 6:10; 4:10-12). The apostle's denial of support is thus construed as part of his suffering on behalf of the Corinthians' ultimate salvation. As Dautzenberg writes,

Paulus versteht seine Arbeit wie sein Leiden als Ausdruck seiner apostolischen Existenz, als Teil seiner besonderen Beziehung zum Leiden Christi. Und wie das Leiden Christi Ausdruck seiner Erlöserliebe zu den Menschen ist, so ist die Arbeit des Apostels, bzw. sein Verzicht auf Unterhalt durch die Gemeinden Ausdruck der Liebe des Apostels zu seinen Gemeinden, für deren Heil er sich nach dem Heilsplan Gottes verantwortlich weiss.⁴⁰

One can detect a slight overlap with the moral/ethical approach here, but the distinctly theological element emerges from the salvific implications of his financial decision.

Instead of highlighting Paul's suffering alone, Timothy Savage, whose argument we previously mentioned under the moral/ethical category, accentuates the significant notion of partnership in suffering between Paul and his churches as the fundamental reason for either accepting or refusing. He explains,

40. 'Unterhaltsrecht,' 225. H.D. Betz also proposes a connection between the Socratic traditions of Hellenistic culture and Paul's Christology in order to explain his financial dealings at Corinth (*Tradition*, 51-57, 67).

It is immediately noticeable that the Macedonians' attitude to giving differs markedly from the Corinthians'. They view their support as an opportunity to participate with Paul in his affliction (συγκοινωνήσαντές μου τῇ θλίψει, Philippians 4:14) and to share in the service of the saints (τὴν κοινωσίαν τῆς διακονίας τῆς εἰς τοὺς ἁγίους, 2 Corinthians 8:4). They give from the depths of their poverty (2 Corinthians 8:2) and beyond their ability (8:3). They beg Paul for the 'favour' of this ministry (τὴν χάριν . . . τῆς διακονίας, 8:4) and thus are *conformed* to the 'favour' of Christ (τὴν χάριν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, 8:9), making themselves poor that others might be made rich (8:9). *It is therefore because they have already conformed themselves to the Lord (8:5) that Paul accepts their money.* To bring the Corinthians to the same position Paul must *refuse* their support. Paul's policy on support thus varies according to *the spiritual maturity of his converts. . . .* The *criterion* in each case is the same. Paul seeks not the gift itself, but the profit which will increase to his converts' account (Philippians 4:17).⁴¹

Paul's acceptance and refusal of funds can therefore be explained on the basis of the church's level of maturity. Savage has, in our opinion, tapped the vein of a propitious thesis which we will pursue in the course of this study.

Overall, the theological approach is certainly commendable. Dautzenberg accurately perceives the integral relationship between the message and the messenger, between God's grace and its recipient, whereas Savage makes a unique connection between Paul's policy and the spiritual maturity of his churches. Nevertheless, in speaking about theological treatments of Paul's fiscal policy, Ronald Hock remarks that they 'tend to isolate Paul from his cultural context and to view the whole matter too abstractly, that is, exclusively in terms of theology with no consideration of the social realities involved.'⁴² We could not agree more with Hock's

41. *Power Through Weakness*, 98–99; my emphasis.

42. *The Social Context of Paul's Ministry: Tentmaking and Apostleship* (Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 1980), 51.

critique.⁴³ Paul's social context is essential for understanding the rationale behind his self-support. In fact, as we will demonstrate later, Savage's proposal offers the middle ground where sociology and theology can meet. Before that, however, we must review certain proposals that primarily account for the sociological dimensions of Paul's refusal.

1.5. The Sociological Approach

This approach is constituted by four subcategories, each offering a plausible explanation for Paul's denial of Corinthian aid relating to (i) rabbinic tradition; (ii) itinerant philosophers; (iii) itinerant missionaries; and (iv) patronal relations.

1.5.1. Rabbinic Tradition

Martin Hengel and A.E. Harvey argue that Paul's denial of monetary aid manifests the influence of his rabbinic education, which emphasised the Jewish ideal to combine the study of Torah with working a trade and endorsed the Jewish perspective of Hillel and Zadok, who exhorted teachers to impart the word of God gratuitously.⁴⁴ 'In the second century,' Hengel notes, 'the rabbis required fathers to teach their sons a craft, a practice which. . .probably goes back to the early Pharisaic period in the first century BCE; for the Pharisaic scribes in the period before 70 also needed a secure way of earning their bread, and at that time crafts

43. Though we will take issue with his unbalanced approach in Chapter 4, section 4.

44. *m. Abot* 1.3, 13; 2.2; 4.5 (ed. H. Danby); cf. George Moore, *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era: The Age of the Tannaim* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1927), 2:97.

already were “golden opportunities.”⁴⁵ According to this view, Paul’s occupation as a leather worker (σκηνοποιός, Acts 18:3), coupled with his rabbinic training, granted him the privilege to expound the law without pay. His decision not to accept money for his preaching and teaching, then, stems from his Jewish heritage. The apostle ‘conducted himself as a true Rabbi.’⁴⁶

Paul may arguably have set aside an injunction by Christ to accept support (1 Cor. 9:14) in favour of a prior Jewish tradition, but the fact that this ‘rabbinical idea itself arose only after the time of Paul’⁴⁷ casts doubt on its validity. This also explains Hengel’s uncertainty above, when advancing the possibility of this custom dating back to the Pharisaic scribes of the first century.

1.5.2. *Itinerant Philosophers*

To explain why Paul decided to work a trade rather than accept pay, many scholars turn to the moral traditions of the Greco-Roman philosophers. The most seminal work on Paul’s trade has been produced by Ronald Hock.⁴⁸ While he acknowledges that the apostle sought to disassociate himself from the popular practices of Sophists, who accepted fees for

45. *The Pre-Christian Paul* (Philadelphia: SCM Press, 1991), 15–16; my emphasis.

46. A.E. Harvey, “‘The Workman is Worthy of His Hire’: Fortunes of a Proverb in the Early Church,” *NovT* 24 (1982): 209–21 at 213.

47. Hock, *Social Context*, 66, who avers that Paul learned his trade in a familial setting rather than an educational context (24).

48. *Social Context*; cf. also idem, ‘Paul’s Tentmaking and the Problem of His Social Class,’ *JBL* 97 (1978): 555–64.

their rhetorical and intellectual prowess,⁴⁹ he situates Paul in the Socratic-Cynic tradition of non-charging philosophers.⁵⁰

Various philosophers in this tradition plied a trade. For instance, the Stoic Cleanthes worked, according to Seneca, ‘at a well and served as a hired man watering a garden,’⁵¹ and Simon the shoemaker, ‘the artisan-philosopher’ and ‘ideal Cynic,’⁵² is depicted as having frequently discussed philosophy in his workshop with Antisthenes, Socrates, Pericles, and other like-minded men.⁵³ These philosophers supported themselves and dispensed their wisdom freely, a philosophical tradition which, for Hock, provides a suitable parallel to Paul, the tentmaking apostle.

Although Hock’s contributions are valuable, his argument that Paul belonged to the Socratic-Cynic traditions of non-charging philosophers, while indeed feasible, is difficult to square with his acceptance of aid from the Philippian church (2 Cor. 11:8; 12:13; Phil. 4:14-19).

49. *Social Context*, 52–53; cf. also the moral/ethical approach above.

50. Hock follows the work of Abraham Malherbe, who locates Paul in the Cynic philosophical traditions of his day, viewing him as a gentle philosopher who disaffiliates himself from the harsh charlatan (cf. *The Letters to the Thessalonians* [AB; New York: Doubleday, 2000]; idem, ‘Determinism and Free Will in Paul: The Argument of 1 Corinthians 8 and 9,’ in *Paul in His Hellenistic Context* [ed. Troels Engberg-Pedersen; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994], 231–55; idem, ‘Gentle as a Nurse: The Cynic Background to 1 Thess. 2,’ *NovT* 12 [1970]: 203–17; idem, ‘Exhortation in First Thessalonians,’ *NovT* 25 [1983] 238–256). Hock also further develops the arguments made by Betz, *Tradition*, and Dieter Georgi, *Die Gegner des Paulus im 2. Korintherbrief: Studien zur religiösen Propaganda in der Spätantike* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1964).

51. *Ep.* 44.3; cf. also Epictetus *Diatr.* 3.26.23; Diogenes Laertius, 7.168–69.

52. Hock, *Social Context*, 39.

53. See Abraham Malherbe, ed., *The Cynic Epistles: A Study Edition* (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1977), 17–26, 29–31, 246, 248, 250, 266; Ronald Hock, ‘Simon the Shoemaker as an Ideal Cynic,’ *GRBS* 17 (1976): 41–53.

This is especially the case because we remain unconvinced by Hock's attempt to interpret ὀψώνιον in 2 Cor. 11:8 and δόμα in Phil. 4:17 as a form of giving that cannot be referred to as a 'salary'; or, otherwise stated, any form of permanent gift-exchange relationship.⁵⁴ Instead, Hock maintains that it was spontaneous and temporary. This argument will be indirectly challenged in Chapter 3, when we discuss the nature of their κοινωνία εἰς λόγον δόσεως καὶ λήψεως (Phil. 4:15). For now, we move to another influential sociological approach.

1.5.3. Itinerant Missionaries

Gerd Theissen constructs a reason for Paul's refusal by positioning him within a conflict between two kinds of primitive Christian preachers, itinerant charismatics and community organisers, each of which adopted a particular attitude toward finances and brandished opposing forms of legitimation.⁵⁵

Itinerant charismatics, arising out of the Palestinian region, held to a demonstrable asceticism, which finds its basis in the Synoptic tradition (Lk. 10:3-8). These charismatic missionaries were 'homeless, roving propagandists without roots or means of livelihood,'⁵⁶ manifesting a true reliance on the grace of God and so a special standing in relationship with God, which entitled them to support. As associates of Jesus, these preachers carefully observed

54. *Social Context*, 50, 92 n1; cf. also Chapter 5 n62.

55. Gerd Theissen, 'Legitimation und Lebensunterhalt: Ein Beitrag zur Soziologie urchristlicher Missionare,' *NTS* 21 (1975): 192-221; ET: *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity: Essays on Corinth* (ed. and trans. John Schütz; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982), 27-67; cf. also Pratscher, 'Verzicht.' at 295-96.

56. *Social Setting*, 27.

the dominical injunction to poverty and the right to support (Mk. 9:41), for they obtained lodging and material assistance from those who received them (Mt. 10:40-42). Theissen calls this “charismatic begging.”⁵⁷

Community organisers, represented by Paul and Barnabas, arose from their mission into Hellenistic territory. Unlike itinerant charismatics, they belonged to the higher strata of society, enjoyed the ability to work for a living, and resided in a particular setting where charismatic begging would be deemed inappropriate.⁵⁸ In fact, because Paul and Barnabas ministered among Hellenistic communities with a strong mistrust of religious charlatans, they renounced ‘the norms of early Christianity’s itinerant-charismatic posture,’ relinquishing their right to financial support. This renunciation, as Theissen concludes, ‘arose from concrete conditions in order to make the pioneering mission as effective as possible in this new territory.’⁵⁹ But itinerant charismatics criticised Paul, as a community organiser, for lacking trust in God’s grace and for disobeying Jesus’ commands regarding the right to support, a critique which surfaces in 1 Cor. 9 and 2 Cor. 11-12.

This position, although intriguingly original, has little support in the text. Nothing in 2 Corinthians suggests that the church is comparing Paul to itinerant preachers from Palestine, despite Theissen’s attempt to interpret ἀμαρτία in 2 Cor. 11:7 and ἀδικία in 2 Cor. 12:13 as the

57. *Social Setting*, 34–35.

58. *Social Setting*, 36–37.

59. *Social Setting*, 40; cf. also 43–44.

failure to uphold Jesus' dominical command in 1 Cor. 9:14 ('Thus also the Lord commanded that those who preach the gospel ought to live from the gospel').⁶⁰ Because Theissen reads too much of 2 Corinthians 11-12 into 1 Corinthians 9, this hypothesis carries little weight. It lacks textual support and mainly focuses on the origin of competing missionaries and their means of support rather than the specific dynamics of the Corinthian conflict.

1.5.4. Patronal Relations

Up to this point, we have seen that the sociological approach contains several and diverse cultural lenses that helpfully illumine neglected aspects of Paul's financial dealings with his churches. Yet the 'inadequacies of many of these explanations,' Marshall rightly asserts, 'are in measure due to the failure to see the social context of giving and receiving,'⁶¹ a sociological lens that has now become the standard among Pauline scholars who investigate the apostle's financial policy.

The first to use the ancient practice of giving and receiving to emit light on Paul's rationale was E.A. Judge.⁶² In a variety of publications, he identified at least forty persons in the

60. *Social Setting*, 45-46.

61. *Enmity*, 242.

62. See the various essays in David Scholer, ed., *Social Distinctives of the Christians in the First Century: Pivotal Essays by E.A. Judge* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008) as well as idem, *The Social Pattern of the Christian Groups in the First Century: Some Prolegomena to the Study of New Testament Ideas of Social Obligation* (London: Tyndale Press, 1960) and 'The Early Christians as a Scholastic Community,' *JRH* (1960-61): 4-15, 125-37: 4-15, 125-37. See also Stephen Mott, 'The Power of Giving and Receiving: Reciprocity in Hellenistic Benevolence,' in *Current Issues in Biblical and*

Corinthian church who belonged to the ‘cultivated social elite,’⁶³ occupying ‘positions of elevated status and conferring benefits on Paul and upon the others who came to his meetings that should have created obligations.’⁶⁴ These well-to-do members, corrupted by the hierarchical structure of patronal relations, familiarised the Corinthian community with the practice of patronage. They functioned as patrons by sponsoring private meetings in their households, providing protection for Paul, and equipping him with all the necessities for preaching in major cities. Coming under the patronage of these members, according to Judge, was the apostle’s regular practice.⁶⁵ His abstention from Corinthian support and decision to ply a trade, therefore, emphatically hints at a serious problem.⁶⁶

Ronald Hock and Peter Marshall have advanced the rich contributions of E.A. Judge, though in different directions. Hock rebuts Judge’s assumption that Paul’s standard practice was to reside in the households of the rich. Instead, he lists four options ancient philosophers

Patristic Interpretation: Studies in Honor of Merrill C. Tenney Presented by His Former Students (ed. G.F. Hawthorne; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1975), 60–72.

63. ‘Scholastic Community’: 128–130.

64. ‘St Paul as a Radical Critic of Society,’ in *Social Distinctives of the Christians in the First Century: Pivotal Essays by E.A. Judge* (ed. David Scholer; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008), 196; *Social Pattern*, 60.

65. ‘St. Paul and Classical Society,’ *JAC* 15 (1972): 19–36 at 28 and 32.

66. ‘Cultural Conformity and Innovation in Paul: Some Clues from Contemporary Documents,’ in *Social Distinctives of the Christians in the First Century* (ed. David Scholer; Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 2008), 166–67. Judge also states, ‘In the case of his claim not to have accepted maintenance from his audience, it can be shown that he only refused it to make a point, that he always insisted on his right to support, and did in fact accept it in the normal way where it was not an issue’ (‘Scholastic Community,’ 136).

had to support themselves.⁶⁷ The first was the practice of charging fees, popularised by philosophers in general and Sophists in particular. The second, used by philosophers, rhetors, and even grammar teachers, consisted of living in the household of an opulent patron and providing instruction for the son(s) of the household as a resident intellectual. The third, less popular option, was begging, a custom widely practised by Cynic philosophers. And the final source of income was working a trade, a socially-demeaning and humiliating option in the Greco-Roman world.⁶⁸ Of the four, Hock concludes (against Judge) that Paul's normal practice was to ply a trade, whereas the Corinthians probably expected him to enter the households of the well-to-do.⁶⁹ To their great dismay, however, Paul opted to work in order to circumvent their socially-binding patronage.

Marshall builds on the work of Judge in a more positive manner, adding a higher degree of sophistication to the general thesis of his *Doktorvater*. He surmises that the offer of a gift by certain wealthy Corinthians was in fact an offer of 'friendship.'⁷⁰ But when closely inspected, their generous gift, offered under the guise of 'friendship,' was in reality an attempt to create an obligatory, patron-client relationship. Since this sort of 'patronal friendship' carried unwanted ties of obligation, Paul quickly refused the offer of his would-be benefactors. For, in

67. Hock, *Social Context*, 52–59.

68. *Social Context*, 52–59.

69. According to Hock, residing at the homes of the wealthy was also the practice of Paul's opponents (*Social Context*, 65).

70. *Enmity*, 232.

the ancient world, accepting a gift obliged a person to the initial giver and required the return of a counter-gift in order not to lose face in society, an exchange that often spiralled into a competitive match of challenge and riposte to maintain the upper-hand over the other.⁷¹ In this context, Paul's denial of support engendered a critical response from opulent givers. They construed it as a refusal of friendship and therefore an acceptance of enmity, since to repudiate a gift in antiquity belittled the honour and status of the one who offered it.⁷² Indeed, it was comparable to declaring war.⁷³ The fact that Paul accepted Philippian gifts only amplified the Corinthians' resentment towards their apostle, a resentment that, for Marshall, can be heard in the supposed rejoinders of 1 Cor. 9 and 2 Cor. 11-12.⁷⁴

The dissimilar arguments promoted by Hock and Marshall, which find their genesis in the work of E.A. Judge, can be distilled into a single sentence: Paul refused Corinthian support to escape the obligations of a patron-client relationship; he will not become their client because he is actually their patron. This argument has become commonplace in Pauline scholarship and has indeed brought us a step closer to discovering the reason for Paul's

71. *Enmity*, 1–13.

72. *Enmity*, 13–21.

73. *Enmity*, 2; cf. also Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies* (trans. W.D. Halls; London: Routledge, 1990), 13.

74. *Enmity*, 284. We will challenge this assumption in Chapter 4, section 4.1.

refusal.⁷⁵ Nevertheless, this popular approach exhibits several exegetical, social-historical, and even philosophical deficiencies which cripples, if not completely nullifies, its methodological legitimacy.

The first is that Paul avoids debt. He preemptively cuts obligatory ties by refusing the Corinthians' gift. But does Paul actually evade debt and obligation? Some passages suggest that the complete opposite is true, that he, like other ancient writers, actually condones obligatory relationships (cf. 2:25-30; 4:10-20).⁷⁶ Does not the Patronal approach, then, impose *modern* ideals of autonomy onto Paul's *ancient* gift-exchange relationships? Does it not force the modern 'pure' gift into the apostle's hands, so that if a hint of self-interest or obligation appears, then that gift can no longer be called a gift? Modern ideals of autonomy and self-sufficiency, as we will demonstrate, can certainly cloud an ancient vision of gift.

75. Although many of these works contain slight modifications, the general thread of the patronal argument is maintained: John Chow, *Patronage and Power: A Study of Social Networks in Corinth* (JSNTSup 75; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992); Andrew Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership in Corinth: A Socio-Historical and Exegetical Study of 1 Corinthians 1-6* (AGJU 18; Leiden: Brill, 1993), 31-36; Peterman, *Gift Exchange*, 8-9, 162-74; Timothy Carter, "'Big Men" in Corinth,' *JSNT* 66 (1997): 45-71 at 63-64, 67; Christopher Forbes, 'Comparison, Self-Praise and Irony: Paul's Boasting and the Conventions of Hellenistic Rhetoric,' *NTS* 32 (1986): 1-30 at 14-15; Horrell, *Social Ethos*, 210-16; Dale Martin, *Slavery as Salvation: The Metaphor of Slavery in Pauline Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 138-39; Lincoln Galloway, *Freedom in the Gospel: Paul's Exemplum in 1 Cor 9 in Conversation with the Discourses of Epictetus and Philo* (CBET; Leuven: Peeters, 2004), 177; Clarence Glad, *Paul and Philodemus: Adaptability in Epicurean and Early Christian Psychagogy* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 269-70. The most notable commentators who subscribe to this reconstruction are Fee, *First Corinthians*, 410, 415, 417, 422; Victor Furnish, *II Corinthians* (AB 32A; New York: Doubleday, 1984), 507-08; Thiselton, *Corinthians*, 689-90.

76. We will support this bold claim in Chapter 3.

The second problem is that money represents patronage. Since the Corinthians offered money, one unspoken assumption is that they attempted to patronise Paul. For, in the ancient world, patrons gave money to clients, and clients never offered money as a return to their patron. But does giving money make a person a patron? Assuming that it does so denies the fluidity of ‘symbolic capital.’⁷⁷ Contrary to modern thinking, money does not always exist as the higher-value commodity. Its value depends on the context. For instance, a higher value is attached to the knowledge of teachers than the payment of pupils. And in the same way, spiritual goods in the divine economy carry a higher value than material payments (cf. 1 Cor. 9:11, 14; Rom. 15:27). So it cannot be that money necessarily represents patronage. It functions within other gift-exchange relationships in contradistinction to the patron-client bond.

The third issue is the claim that the Corinthians’ gift makes them patrons. By promoting this view, advocates presuppose that a client, by giving a gift in return for one received, can be promoted to the social position of a patron, while the initial giver, after accepting the return gift, is demoted to the position of a client. Although they do not knowingly espouse this presupposition, it is the implication of applying the patron-client model to Paul’s gift-giving relationship with the Corinthians. For an exegetical investigation confirms that the apostle gave (or, we shall argue, passed on) the *initial* gift of the gospel, while

77. To use Pierre Bourdieu’s terminology in *The Logic of Practice* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990), 112–21.

the Corinthians reciprocated with money as a *counter-gift*. That would make Paul the patron (from their perspective), and the Corinthians the clients. Consequently, if the Corinthians furnished a return gift, it would not create what Zeba Crook calls an ‘ontological shift.’⁷⁸ That never occurred in the ancient world, and that certainly would not have happened if Paul accepted Corinthian support. It would have been a client’s return to their patron, or, perhaps better, a pupil’s return to their teacher (from the Corinthians’ perspective).⁷⁹

This loophole in the patron-client model calls its legitimacy for analysing Pauline texts into question, not least because it forces every form of exchange into the mould of the patron-client relationship and neglects the wide range of distinct, gift-exchange relationships in the Greco-Roman world (i.e., father-child, friend-friend, teacher-pupil, etc.).⁸⁰

The last, most detrimental deficiency is that it can only account for two parties: the patron and the client. But what about God? God is excluded. Only two-way exchanges can be analysed. Yet God is a vital third party of every relationship in the economy of *χάρις*. He is the essential component that we mentioned in the introduction that no approach has factored into Paul’s policy. But we will show that God is the missing link. When his divine role is factored

78. *Reconceptualising Conversion: Patronage, Loyalty, and Conversion in the Religions of the Ancient Mediterranean* (BZNW 130; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2004), 58.

79. In Chapters 4 and 5, we will attempt to unearth the relational pattern that the Corinthians expected to share with Paul and, against Hock, contend that they, as pupils, most likely desired to support him as their teacher — the first option philosophers had to support themselves.

80. These different relationships will be outlined in Chapter 2, section 1.2.

into Paul's gift-giving relationships, it radically alters the rules of exchange among human interlocutors and further confirms the interpretive limitations of the patron-client model.

1.6. Summary

How, then, do these approaches measure up to the direct evidence we have? For the reasons noted after each section, the psychological and economical approaches can be rejected out of hand, while the approaches pertaining to rabbinic tradition, itinerant philosophers, and itinerant missionaries are certainly feasible but highly unlikely. The most convincing attempts, at least according to our analysis, are the moral/ethical, theological, and patronal approaches, for they rightly emphasise Paul's desire to disaffiliate himself from the less credible practices of Sophists or greedy teachers (moral/ethical), perceptively link the spiritual maturity of his churches with the apostle's financial decisions (theological; specifically Savage's view), and admirably locate Paul in the ancient context of giving and receiving (patronal relations).

And yet, even these approaches are fraught with problems. The moral/ethical approach introduces modern ideals into Paul's ancient thinking, supposing that a material return denies the fundamental concept of grace in the gospel. Underlying this logic, however, is the modern celebration of unilateral giving and a denigration of social reciprocity, which is ironically a cause for mourning in antiquity. Similarly, the modern ideals held by the Patronal approach cause it to misunderstand not only gift-exchange in antiquity but also Paul's specific gift-

giving relationships with his churches. More than this, it excludes God, the crucial third party, from those exchanges. This divine exclusion also appears in the theological approach. Savage brilliantly connects partnership in suffering with becoming partners in giving, with the act of co-suffering with Paul as an indication of spiritual maturity which permits entrance into a gift-giving relationship with him. But Savage does not situate this partnership in the ancient context of giving and receiving, nor does he incorporate God as the crucial third party of Paul's policy. Even so, he has broken new ground in the discussion, and we intend to build on his findings.

To do so, we will combine sociology and theology into a single approach. For the overview of approaches has hopefully shown the necessity to account for the sociological dimensions of Paul's theology as well as the theological dimensions of Paul's sociology, with a particular focus on giving and receiving. This dialectical relationship between sociology and theology will not only demonstrate that Paul, as a theologian, engaged in and influenced the social practices of his cultural milieu, but that his social context also naturally influenced his theology. Both played a pivotal role in constructing Paul's monetary policy. This fresh angle on the familiar can therefore be called a *socio-theological* approach.

2. Offering a Combined Alternative — A Socio-Theological Approach

Before expounding the precise nature and anticipated outcomes of this approach, it is worth briefly considering the complicated relationship between sociology and theology.

2.1. Sociology and Theology — Friends or Foes?

These disciplines share a checkered history of methodological distrust.⁸¹ Theologians have accused sociologists of producing empiricist techniques that reductionistically misinterpret religious phenomena, whereas sociologists have accused theologians of unjustly legislating what questions may be asked of the text.⁸² Among Pauline scholars, especially since the renewal of interest in social history in the 1970's,⁸³ the salient works of Gerd Theissen,⁸⁴ Wayne Meeks,⁸⁵ and John Gager⁸⁶ have done much to allay the relational tension between

81. See the seminal article by Robin Scroggs, 'The Sociological Interpretation of the New Testament: The Present State of Research,' *NTS* 26 (1980): 164–79.

82. See, for example, the sharp criticisms made by John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), 51–143 and David Martin, 'Jesus Christ and Modern Sociology,' in *Crisis in Christology* (ed. W.R. Farmer; Livonia, MI: Dove, 1995), 39–46. See also Robin Gill, *The Social Context of Theology: A Methodological Enquiry* (London: Mowbrays, 1975); idem, *Theology and Sociology: A Reader* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1987).

83. Methodologically speaking, there is no distinction between sociology and history. In fact, Horrell contends that 'we should abandon the unsustainable attempt to distinguish and separate historical and sociological research. Such a division is both intellectually untenable and practically unhelpful. The value of "sociological" approaches,' Horrell suggests, 'is not to stand as an alternative, but rather to challenge, to broaden and to reformulate the methods of historical criticism' (*Social Ethos*, 30; *contra* Bengt Holmberg, *Sociology and the New Testament: An Appraisal* [Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1990], 4).

84. *Social Setting*.

85. *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983).

86. *Kingdom and Community: The Social World of Early Christianity* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1975).

sociology and theology (though critical voices may still be heard).⁸⁷ In any case, many have come to realise the theological payoff sociology can provide, allowing a new set of questions to be put to the text and reaping exegetical insights as a result.⁸⁸ As such, socio-historical works no longer demand a ‘methodological atheism.’ To the contrary, their work has the capacity to enhance our understanding of Pauline theology.⁸⁹ The long, complicated relationship between sociology and theology has therefore recently improved. They now exist peaceably as friends rather than antagonistically as foes.

2.2. The Nature of this Approach

Intrinsic to the *socio-theological* approach is the dialectical relationship between Paul’s social context and his theology of giving and receiving. But to present a more refined definition of this approach, it needs to be broken down into its two composite parts: the social and the theological.

87. Especially over the use of sociological models to examine Pauline churches (e.g., Bengt Holmberg, ‘Sociological Versus Theological Analysis of the Question Concerning a Pauline Church Order,’ in *Die Paulinische Literatur und Theologie* [ed. Sigfred Pedersen; Aros: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1980], 187–200; Clarke, *Leadership*, 4 n12).

88. As evident from the recent works of Jerome Neyrey, ed., *The Social World of Luke-Acts* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), 97–122; Philip Esler, *Modelling Early Christianity* (London: Routledge, 1995); Gerd Theissen, *Social Reality and the Early Christians: Theology, Ethics, and the World of the New Testament* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993); Horrell, *Social Ethos*.

89. See, for example, Wayne Meeks, ‘The Social Context of Pauline Theology,’ *Int* 36 (1982): 266–77; Andrew Clarke, *A Pauline Theology of Church Leadership* (LNTS; London: T&T Clark, 2008).

2.2.1. The Social Aspect

Paul and his churches were embedded within the cultural fabric of society. They therefore would have been influenced by the expectations and apprehensions of gift-exchange in antiquity. This is not to say that Paul or his churches did not deviate from these social norms. They certainly did. The gospel that dictated their lifestyle was, after all, counter-cultural.⁹⁰ But neither should we assume that they remained oblivious to the culturally-acceptable practices around them. As adherents of the patronal approach have argued, they would have been aware of the need to reciprocate benefits, the enmity created by refusing a gift, and the social debt incurred by accepting a favour. They would also have known about the several options teachers and philosophers had to earn a living as well as the negative and positive consequences of each. And they would have been exposed to the deceitful practices of those who financially exploited others. All these social elements must be taken into account.

As we mentioned earlier, however, the patronal approach exhibits several exegetical, social-historical, and even philosophical deficiencies in its arguments. We therefore need to reevaluate Paul's social context in the light of a careful, exegetical study of his financial policy. In particular, the rules of exchange in society need to be revisited and compared to the patterns of exchange between Paul and his churches. Once that occurs, it will become evident that the widely-held patronal model, which has misled the majority of Pauline scholars, may

90. In Chapter 4, however, we will show that this was definitely not the case with the Corinthian church.

be replaced with a more fitting relational pattern, one which leaves room for a third party and offers a more cogent reason for Paul's refusal and acceptance of support. More than this, the three-way relational pattern illumines other quandaries of his policy, such as the reason why he always refused when initially entering a city and why he declared that he would never receive Corinthian support.

2.2.2. The Theological Aspect

Paul has a theology of giving and receiving. Although this claim will become clearer after an exegetical and theological analysis of relevant passages is carried out, we can anticipate some of those conclusions here. At the core of this theology of gift is a fundamental relational pattern, one which incorporates God into every gift-giving relationship in the divine economy. He therefore becomes the ultimate giver of every gift on the human level, and this naturally recalibrates two-way exchanges into three-way transactions, with God as the source and Paul and his churches as mediators of his divine commodity. Surprisingly, only a few Pauline scholars mention God's role in Paul's monetary dealings,⁹¹ but none employ the three-way relational pattern between God, Paul, and his churches to discover the rationale behind his aberrant policy. But can this triangulated relationship unlock the rationale for Paul's

91. We will explicitly interact with these scholars in Chapter 3.

financial dealings with the Philippians and the Corinthians as a *consistent* practice and effectively resolve the numerous issues produced by earlier approaches?

2.3. The Anticipated Outcomes of this Approach

Having briefly sketched the *socio-theological* approach, which will be more sharply defined in subsequent chapters, we intend to probe the multifaceted character of Paul's policy. We will do so by challenging the commonly held assumptions that the Corinthians attempted to oblige Paul to himself, that Paul unpredictably accepted and refused gifts, that his gift-giving relationship with the Philippians was an exception to the norm, that he grudgingly accepted from Philippi, and that he eradicated obligation and self-interest from Christian gift-giving. We will also explore new territory, determining whether the Philippians' fellow-suffering with Paul led to a sharing in giving and receiving, and if God, as a third party, plays a part in their partnership of giving and suffering. Conversely, we will examine the reason for the lack of suffering among the Corinthians, ascertain the cause of their spiritual immaturity, and then discover whether or not their practical lifestyle can be linked to Paul's refusal. Furthermore, against the majority of Philippian scholars, we will posit a theological intention behind Paul's socially-offensive thanklessness in Phil. 4:10-20.

3. The Trajectory of this Study

To arrive at the anticipated outcomes of the *socio-theological* approach, this study will set Paul's operative gift-giving relationship with the Philippians in comparison to the inoperative gift-giving relationship with the Corinthians in order to uncover the social and theological rationale behind his fiscal policy. Thus, the following chapters will be outlined as follows:

Chapter 2 begins by contextualising Paul in his ancient socio-economic and ideological climate. Two intentions drive this chapter, both levelled against the patronal and moral/ethical approach. The first is to question the legitimacy of appraising every gift-exchange relationship in Paul through the patron-client framework. We will do so by demonstrating the complexity of patronage, benefaction, and reciprocity and the variety of distinct gift-exchange relationships in antiquity. The second intention will be to situate Paul within ancient, rather than modern, ideals on gift, by introducing Seneca, a suitable dialogue partner on the nature of obligation and self-interest in giving. The main purpose of this chapter will be to establish a reference point that adds argumentative force to the overall contention of this thesis.

Chapters 3-5 will be a social-historical, exegetical, and theological analysis of pertinent Pauline texts on financial support. Chapter 3 will focus on the special relationship with the Philippians, extracting key relational elements from Phil. 1, 2:25-30, and 4:10-20 which granted

them entrance into a partnership of gift with Paul. After determining the shape of this well-functioning gift-exchange relationship, Chapters 4 and 5 will then turn to investigate the lack thereof with the Corinthians. In particular, Chapter 4 will locate the church within the social ethos of Corinth to assess whether they conformed to their cultural surrounding, whether this cultural conformity made them spiritually immature, and whether their spiritual immaturity compelled Paul to refuse their gift. Thereafter, the social and theological dimensions of his policy in 1 Cor. 9 and 1 Thess. 2 will be investigated. Chapter 5 will analyse 2 Cor. 10-12, discerning the sort of gift-giving relationship that the Corinthians expected to have with their apostle and assessing the socio-theological reason for his refusal, with particular attention on his adamant insistence never to accept their support (2 Cor. 11:9, 12; 12:13-14). It will become clear that these exegetical chapters have two primary targets in their sight, the patronal approach and overtly modern interpretations of Paul's financial relationships.

Chapter 6 will summarise the overall thesis of this study and draw out its benefits for comprehending Paul's theology of giving and receiving in other contexts.

CHAPTER 2: CONTEXTUALISING PAUL

Introduction

Context is everything. Without it, an argument will be lost in a sea of subjective hypotheses, the interpretation of a text will be subject to a host of historical inaccuracies, and a historical figure will be separated from the very forces that influence his or her own thinking. Context gives shape to social beings in particular environments, and the same can certainly be said of Paul. In fact, contextualising the apostle within his socio-economic and ideological climate will enlarge our understanding of his theology of giving and receiving in the economy of χάρις.

This chapter will therefore unfold in the following way. We will first situate Paul in his socio-economic climate.¹ This will alert us to the complexities of social institutions, such as patronage, benefaction, and reciprocity, as well as the variety of gift-exchange relationships in antiquity, which, in turn, will demonstrate that the common interpretation of the patron-client model can neither appropriately contain nor fully explain the social dynamics of gift-giving relationships in the Pauline corpus. Then, second, we will locate Paul in his ideological

1. Our focus will not be on the socio-economic level of early Christians. That social ground has been covered thoroughly and bears little relevance for our purposes. For some of the most recent works on this issue, see Chapter 1 n18.

climate by studying a comparable thinker on gift (Seneca) to act as a point of contemporary comparison with the apostle. By doing so, we will find that Seneca is a suitable ideologue for dialogue on gift with Paul. Of particular importance is that both Paul and Seneca add a realistic edge to their ideal gift-exchange relationships: they equally affirm the presence of certain elements in giving which are deemed unethical by moderns.

While the exegetical and theological fruitfulness of contextualising Paul will not be immediately gleaned in this chapter, it will nevertheless operate as a reference point that will be revisited throughout the course of this study to support its primary argument.

1. Paul's Socio-Economic Climate

1.1. Patronage, Benefaction, and Reciprocity: A Tangled Web of Complexity

Systems of reciprocity, such as Roman patronage (*patrocinium*) and Greek benefaction (euergetism), have operated as interpretive frameworks for scholars to analyse and explain gift-exchange relationships embedded within particular social structures, norms, and values.² Due to the complexity of these social relationships, however, many NT scholars conflate these distinct forms of exchange into the single model of 'patronage' or 'patron-client' relations.³

2. John Elliot, 'Patronage and Clientage,' in *The Social Sciences and New Testament Interpretation* (ed. Richard Rohrbaugh; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 144–56 at 150.

3. Two factors most likely caused this general categorisation to arise: first, as Jo-Ann Shelton writes, 'The patronage system was one of the most deep-rooted and pervasive aspects of ancient Roman society' (*As the Romans Did: A Source Book in Roman Social History* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1988], 14); and, second, NT

Although this methodological conflation is, to some extent, necessary — after all, the purpose of employing cultural models is to simplify complex realities — it nevertheless exhibits two fundamental flaws. The first is that it *overly simplifies* the entangled complexity of patronage, benefaction, and reciprocity, a critique which has been frequently voiced by various scholars,⁴ while the second is that, by employing the term *patronage*, these scholars impose (intentionally or unintentionally) the patron-client relationship in antiquity, with its specific rules of exchange, onto every gift-giving relationship in the biblical text.

To legitimate this twofold critique, the immediate section will briefly examine three different entanglements attending the complex web of patronage, benefaction, and the notion of reciprocity. Then, in section 2, we will outline a variety of exchange relationships in

scholars have been heavily influenced by Richard Saller (*Personal Patronage Under the Early Empire* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982]), the edited work of Andrew Wallace-Hadrill (*Patronage in Ancient Society* [London: Routledge, 1989]), and S.N. Eisenstadt and L. Roniger (*Patrons, Clients and Friends: Interpersonal Relations and the Structure of Trust in Society* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984]; S.N. Eisenstadt and L. Roniger, ‘Patron--Client Relations as a Model of Structuring Social Exchange,’ *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 22 [1980]: 42–77), who define patronage broadly enough to include every other form of exchange.

4. Frederick Danker was among the first to raise this concern. ‘It is unfortunate that the narrow term “patron-client” relationship should have entered the discussion rather than the more comprehensive term “reciprocity system” of which patron-client more accurately describes an ancient subset’ (‘Paul’s Debt to the Corona of Demosthenes: A Study of Rhetorical Techniques in Second Corinthians,’ in *Persuasive Artistry: Studies in New Testament Rhetoric in Honour of George A. Kennedy* [ed. D.A. Watson; JSNTSup 50; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991], 262–68 at 230). More recently, Erlend MacGillivray has reiterated Danker’s critique, stating, ‘It has been gradually realized. . . that dependence upon the patronage model and confidence in its comprehensive nature has issued a far too limiting, even misleading, view of ancient reciprocity—ignoring and obscuring its polyvalent nature’ (‘Romans 16:2, Προστάτις/Προστάτης, and the Application of Reciprocal Relationships to New Testament Texts,’ *NovT* 53 [2011]: 183–99 at 186). For other objections, see Claude Eilers, *Roman Patrons of Greek Cities* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 7; Jonathan Marshall, *Jesus, Patrons, and Benefactors: Roman Palestine and the Gospel of Luke* (WUNT 2/259; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 25–53.

antiquity. The sole intention of both sections will be to expose the illegitimacy of employing the patron-client relationship as a universal model for every form of social exchange.

1.1.1. Patronage and Benefaction: Identical or Distinct?

The first entanglement that we encounter is whether Roman patronage (*patrocinium*) supplanted or coexisted with Greek benefaction (*euergetism*) as Rome spread into the Greek East. Scholars are divided on this issue.

Those who view patronage and benefaction as two separate institutions,⁵ while acknowledging the similar components of reciprocity, mutual obligations, and recognition, underscore the following dissimilarities: (i) patronage was comprised of individual relationships in personal exchange of goods and services,⁶ whereas *euergetism* was public benefaction, given to all citizens;⁷ (ii) patronage was self-interested and exploitative, while benefaction, like parenthood, exhibited selflessness for the collective good;⁸ (iii) patronage

5. Stephan Joubert, 'One Form of Social Exchange or Two? "Euergetism," Patronage, and New Testament Studies—Roman and Greek Ideas of Patronage,' *BTB* 31 (2001): 17–25 at 23; cf. also Donald Engels, *Roman Corinth: An Alternative Model for the Classical City* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 87; Erlend D. MacGillivray, 'Re-Evaluating Patronage and Reciprocity in Antiquity and New Testament Studies,' *JGRChJ* 6 (2009): 37–81 at 55.

6. Anton Blok, 'Variations in Patronage,' *Sociologische Gids* 16 (1969): 365–78 at 366.

7. Paul Veyne, *Bread and Circuses: Historical Sociology and Political Pluralism* (trans. Brian Pearce; London: Penguin, 1992), 10–13, though he does not distinguish *patrocinium* and *euergetism*.

8. T.R. Stevenson, 'The Ideal Benefactor and the Father Analogy in Greek and Roman Thought,' *CQ* 42 (1992): 421–36 at 430. Stephan Joubert appeals to Aristotle (*Nic. Eth.* Books 3–4) and Seneca (*De Beneficiis*) to support this argument (cf. *Paul as Benefactor: Reciprocity, Strategy and Theological Reflection in Paul's Collection* [WUNT 2/124; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000], 37–51; idem, 'Coming to Terms with a Neglected Aspect of Ancient Mediterranean Reciprocity: Seneca's Views on Benefit-Exchange in *De Beneficiis* as the Framework for a Model of Social Exchange,' in *Social Scientific Models for Interpreting the Bible: Essays by the Context Group in Honor of Bruce J. Malina* [ed. John J. Pilch; Leiden: Brill, 2001], 47–63).

terminology, such as *patronus* and *cliens*, took a long time to appear in Greek circles, suggesting that it must have been distinct from benefaction;⁹ (iv) although Greeks called the Romans οἰκοῖνοι εὐεργέται after they became the dominant force in the East,¹⁰ this does not mean that εὐεργέτης amounts to *patronus*;¹¹ rather, it just means that patronage coexisted with other forms of exchange;¹² and (v) literary evidence suggests that Romans and Greeks alike considered patronage to be a distinctly Roman phenomenon.¹³

Those who insist that *patrocinium* supplanted *euergetism* respond with the following counter-arguments, each corresponding to the points above: (i) patronage and benefaction were public *and* private systems of exchange, the former displayed in community patronage,¹⁴

9. Only after the Third Punic War did *patronus* appear in Greek honorary inscriptions in reference to Roman officials (cf. J. Touloumakos, 'Zum römischen Gemeindepatronats im griechischen Osten,' *Hermes* 11 [1988]: 304–24; Eilers, *Patrons*, 17–18).

10. Andrew Erskine, 'The Romans as Common Benefactors,' *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* 43 (1994): 70–87.

11. J.-L. Ferrary, 'The Hellenistic World and Roman Political Patronage,' in *Hellenistic Constructs: Essays in Culture, History, and Historiography* (ed. P. Cartledge, P. Garnsey, and E.S. Gruen; Hellenistic Culture and Society 26; Berkeley: University of California, 1997), 105–19 at 110 and 112. Moreover, Eilers investigates 396 benefaction inscriptions in the province of *Africa Proconsularis*, of which only 11 contain the dual appellation of 'patron and benefactor' (*Patrons*, 98–102, 105–08), a title that became more frequent after the first century (cf. E. Rawson, 'The Eastern Clientelae of Clodius and the Claudii,' *Historia* 22 [1973]: 219–39 at 230). But rather than viewing these rare instances as confirmation that patronage came to include euergetism, Eilers insists that the title patron was solely a reward for generosity (Eilers, *Patrons*, 107–08; cf. also Touloumakos, 'Gemeindepatronats' at 318–19).

12. Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, 'Patronage in Roman Society: From Republic to Empire,' in *Patronage in Ancient Society* (ed. Andrew Wallace-Hadrill; London: Routledge, 1989), 63–87 at 69.

13. Cicero expected to be honoured by his Greek subordinate with the titles patron and savior, because the Roman title alone was not satisfying enough (*Verr.* 2.2.154). Also, many writers criticised Roman patronage (cf. Lucian, *Nigr.* 22; Polybius, *Hist.* 30.18).

14. John Nicols, 'Patrons of Provinces in the Early Principate: The Case of Bithynia,' *ZPE* 80 (1990): 101–81; L. Harmand, *Un aspect social et politique du monde romain: Le Patronat sur les collectivités publiques des origines au Bas-*

the latter in ritualised friendship;¹⁵ (ii) the idea of selfless benefaction is not only a modern anachronism, which fails to consider the balance of ideology and reality in the writings of Aristotle and Seneca,¹⁶ but it also falsely assumes that a seemingly selfless practice does not, at one point or another, operate as a means of exploitation; (iii) even if Roman terminology is absent or delayed in its appearance in Greek circles, it does not negate the presence of the practice itself;¹⁷ (iv) if some inscriptions contain the dual appellation ‘patron and benefactor,’¹⁸ then we have some instances in which the terms apply to a single, social phenomenon;¹⁹ (v) the writings of Roman and Greek authors vilifying the practice of patronage as a distinctly Roman relationship can be explained as promoting one’s ideology²⁰ or employing satire.²¹ In contradistinction to the opposing view above, then, this position accepts a similarity in

Empire (Publications de la Faculté Des Lettres de l’Université de Clermont, Ser. 2; Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1957).

15. G. Herman, *Ritualised Friendship and the Greek City* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 10–13. Osiek even mentions a private correspondence with classicist John Bodel, who notified her of various inscriptions and literature, which have not been analysed, that evidence Greek private patronage (‘The Politics of Patronage and the Politics of Kinship: The Meeting of the Ways,’ *BTB* 39 [2009]: 143–52 at 147).

16. See n8 above.

17. M. I. Finley, *Politics in the Ancient World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 41; Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, ‘Patronage,’ 69. Saller suggests that ‘the infrequent appearance of *patronus* and *cliens* in literature lies in the social inferiority and degradation implied by the words’ (*Personal Patronage*, 9). Erich Gruen explains the absence by contending that ‘[p]atrocinium was not a Roman invention,’ but that the Romans found a pre-existing model of patronage already established in the East, which they reinterpreted for their own purposes (*The Hellenistic World and the Coming of Rome* [CA: University of California Press, 1984], 183–84).

18. See n11 above.

19. See Crook, *Conversion*, 64–65.

20. As in the case with Cicero, *Verr.* 2.2.154 (cf. K. Verboven, ‘Review of Claude Eilers, *Roman Patrons of Greek Cities*,’ *BMCR* 6.19 [2003] <http://bmcr.brynmawr.edu/2003/2003-06-19.html> [accessed 05/04/2011]).

21. As in the case of the satirist Lucian of Samosata (cf. Osiek, ‘Politics,’ 146).

‘substance’ but dissimilarity in ‘form.’²² Roman *patrocinium* ultimately converged with Greek euergetism.

This brief sketch reveals the perplexing difficulty in determining the convergence or divergence of patronage and benefaction. These social practices, to be sure, shared general, structural similarities, such as reciprocal exchange, mutual obligations, and honour, but they also retained their distinct institutional forms of exchange, regardless of the appearance of specific terminology. In fact, the stress on terminology is misleading. The *same* terms can cover a range of *different* forms/institutions, and *different* terms can be applied to the *same* forms/institutions. In any case, we hope that the intricacy and inconclusiveness of this discussion confirms the obvious problem with stretching the ‘patron-client’ relationship over every form of exchange without any qualification.²³ It is much more complicated than that.

1.1.2. Defining ‘Patronage’

The second entanglement of social exchange concerns the definition of patronage. The issue is that patronage lends itself to limitless variations and distinctions, for it ‘shares characteristics with other categories of relations into which it merges.’²⁴ This makes it nearly

22. John Nicols, ‘Pliny and the Patronage of Communities,’ *Hermes* 108 (1980): 365–85 at 380, who follows the seminal work of Matthias Gelzer, *The Roman Nobility* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969) and E. Badian, *Foreign Clientelae (264–70 B.C.)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

23. E.g., Halvor Moxnes, ‘Patron-Client Relations and the New Community in Luke-Acts,’ in *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation* (ed. Jerome Neyrey; Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 1991), 241–68; Bruce Winter, *Seek the Welfare of the City: Christians as Benefactors and Citizens* (MI: Eerdmans, 1994), 42–60.

24. Saller, *Personal Patronage*, 1.

impossible to pin down a universal definition of patronage,²⁵ a fact attested to by the perennial debate among classicists and social historians.²⁶

At the core of this debate is the appropriate source for one's definition of *patrocinium*. The 'classical' approach derives its definition from ancient sources, while the 'social historical' approach applies sociological theories to ancient texts in order to produce a transcultural definition. The most notable yet highly criticized socio-historical definition is that of Richard Saller. He contends that a patron-client relationship is (i) reciprocal; (ii) asymmetrical; and (iii) long-term,²⁷ a threefold structure which has become widespread, even commonplace, among NT scholars.²⁸

While acknowledging the value of Saller's analysis, Claude Eilers nevertheless challenges this popular definition,²⁹ insisting that it erroneously permits any relationship that

25. Nicols, 'Patronage,' 365: 'Few historians would disagree with the statement that patronage is one of the most important, and yet elusive bonds in Roman society. . . it is not easy to define what patronage is.'

26. In addition to the references on Roman *patrocinium* cited in the previous section, see G.E.M de Ste. Croix, 'Suffragium: From Vote to Patronage,' *BJS* 5 (1954): 33–48; Koenraad Verboven, *The Economy of Friends: Economic Aspects of Amicitia and Patronage in the Late Republic* (Brussels: Latomus, 2002); Theodor Mommsen, 'Das römische Gastrecht und die römische Clientel,' in *Römische Forschungen* (2 vols.; Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1864), 1.326–90; A. Brunt, 'Clientela,' in *The Fall of the Roman Republic and Related Essays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 382–442.

Other helpful studies on socio-historical patronage include: S.W. Schmidt, et al., *Friends, Followers, and Factions: A Reader in Political Clientelism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977); E. Gellner and J. Waterbury, eds., *Patrons and Clients in Mediterranean Societies* (London: Duckworth, 1977).

27. *Personal Patronage*, 1. Two other components are usually added: (iv) a voluntary relationship; and (v) a relationship that can also exist among individuals and communities, even between communities (cf. Miriam Griffin, 'Of Clients and Patrons,' *CR* 40 (1990): 399–403 at 400).

28. See, for example, Chow, *Patronage and Power*, 31–33.

29. Cf. also Griffin, 'Patrons.'

meets this threefold criterion to be labelled 'patronage,' even relationships, such as *suffragium*-patronage and literary patronage, which were not recognized by the Roman world as *patrocinium*. Saller's approach, according to Eilers, robs patronage of its specificity and lacks correct knowledge of the Roman world, which is necessary to develop a general definition.³⁰ In the end, Eilers writes, 'Definitions are valuable not only for what they include, but also for what they exclude. The above definition disallows almost nothing. Our pullover has been stretched into a circus tent.'³¹ But as significant as Eilers' work may be, it, too, has not escaped scholarly assail,³² leaving the definition of patronage open for discussion.

It seems, however, that both approaches are speaking right pass each other. The cause of this miscommunication is that Eilers, for instance, scrutinizes *patrocinium* from an emic perspective, which greatly depends on the actual term itself, but Saller investigates the institution from an etic perspective, which emphasises the general social dynamics of *patrocinium* and can therefore apply them to other relational forms.³³

30. *Patrons*, 1–18; cf. also Jonathan Marshall, *Jesus*, 43–44.

31. *Patrons*, 7.

32. Verboven, 'Review of Claude Eilers': 'Eilers. . . firmly places himself in the "classical" tradition. The reasons why are revealed in the introduction, where he makes a number of objections to the sociological concept of patronage. Not all arguments are to the point, and Eilers doesn't always seem to have a sufficient grip on the concept itself.'

33. See Sydel Silverman, 'Patronage as Myth,' in *Patrons and Clients in Mediterranean Societies* (ed. E. Gellner and J. Waterbury; London: Duckworth, 1977), 7–19 at 10, who suggests that an etic and emic point of view, and the interrelation between the two, are necessary to define the phenomenon of patronage.

At any rate, the lack of resolution of this discussion has led many to turn their attention to the broader notion of reciprocity — of which both *patrocinium* and euergetism were a part — as a more promising way to describe social interchange.

1.1.3. *The Shape of 'Reciprocity'*

Reciprocity marks the third and final entanglement. Generally speaking, classicists and NT scholars adopt one of two methodological approaches in appraising the precise contours of reciprocity. Some search the literary works of Greek authors, ranging from the 8th to 3rd century B.C., to arrive at a definition,³⁴ while others rely on Roman authors, such as Cicero (106-43 B.C.), Seneca (4 B.C.-A.D. 65), and Dio Chrysostom (A.D. 40-120), as well as inscriptional evidence.³⁵ But the problem with ancient sources is that they lack terminological precision and fail to explain the various factors, ideologies, and social forces involved in antiquity,³⁶ and can thus only offer a broad definition such as Richard Seaford's: 'Reciprocity is the principle and practice of voluntary requital, of benefit for benefit (positive reciprocity) or harm for harm

34. The most substantial work on this topic is Christopher Gill, Norman Postlethwaite, and Richard Seaford, eds., *Reciprocity in Ancient Greece* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), which adequately demonstrates the diversity of Greek thought on reciprocity.

35. According to Danker (*Benefactor: Epigraphic Study of a Graeco-Roman and New Testament Semantic Field* (St. Louis: Clayton, 1982), 28–29) and Harrison (*Paul's Language of Grace in Its Graeco-Roman Context* [WUNT 2/172; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003], 24), this sort of evidence has the advantage of presenting a non-élite perspective, while literary works only possess a view from the top down.

36. A point made by Joubert, *Paul as Benefactor*, 14–15.

(negative reciprocity).³⁷ Recognising this generality, classicists and NT scholars adopt a third method by applying cross-cultural, anthropological taxonomies in order to add form to the amorphous phenomenon of ancient reciprocity.³⁸

Marshall Sahlins has produced the most notable taxonomy of reciprocity, manifested in three genres: (i) *general* reciprocity, occurring among kinship and friends, exhibits unilateral and altruistic giving of ‘pure gifts,’ with a discreet yet indefinite expectation of a return; (ii) *balanced* reciprocity is a less personal and calculable exchange of commensurate gifts without delay, attended by the economic interests of each party; and (iii) *negative* reciprocity features overt exploitation, with each party looking to maximise their own utility at the other’s expense.³⁹

Yet Sahlins’s threefold taxonomy has been modified by Wolfgang and Ekkehard Stegemann,⁴⁰ who emphasise the social status of the interlocutors involved. Four types of reciprocal exchange are postulated: (i) *familial* reciprocity (egalitarian status, non-

37. ‘Introduction,’ in *Reciprocity in Ancient Greece* (ed. C. Gill, N. Postlethwaite, and R. Seaford; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 1–11 at 1.

38. Many scholars nevertheless discourage the use of cross-cultural models, insisting that they better represent the ‘primitive’ culture of hunter and gatherer tribes than the ancient culture of the Greco-Roman world, with its centralised form of government (e.g., Zeba Crook, ‘Reflections on Culture and Social-Scientific Models,’ *JBL* 124 [2005]: 515–20 at 515–16; cf. also the forthright critique of E.A. Judge, ‘Rank and Status in the World of the Caesars and St Paul,’ in *Social Distinctives of the Christians in the First Century: Pivotal Essays by E.A. Judge* [ed. David Scholer; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008], 140).

39. *Stone Age Economics* (NY: Aldine, 1972), 193–96.

40. *The Jesus Movement: A Social History of Its First Century* (trans. O.C. Dean Jr.; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), 36; cf. also George Dalton, ed., *Primitive, Archaic and Modern Economies: Essays of Karl Polanyi* [Boston: Beacon, 1968], esp. ch. 1 and 7). Sahlins, Polanyi, and the Stegemanns nevertheless build on the well-known work of Marcel Mauss, *The Gift*.

competitive);⁴¹ (ii) *balanced* reciprocity (equal status, symmetrical relationship); (iii) *general* reciprocity (unequal status, asymmetrical relationship); and (iv) *negative* reciprocity (hostile relationship).⁴² The most relevant outcome of this model — especially for the purposes of this study — is that it offers a categorical distinction between gift exchange and patron-client relations, subsuming the former under *balanced* reciprocity and the latter under *general* reciprocity.⁴³

Zeba Crook helpfully parses this categorical distinction between gift exchange and patronage. He explains that a gift is not patronage, ‘since receiving a gift does not make one a client.’ Conversely, he continues, ‘reciprocating a benefaction on the part of a client does not result in an ontological shift in which patron or benefactor suddenly becomes client and vice versa.’⁴⁴ ‘Gift,’ then, for Crook, belongs to the realm of ‘equals or close equals’ and requires a counter-gift of ‘equal or greater value’ (i.e., *balanced* reciprocity),⁴⁵ whereas ‘benefaction’ and ‘patronage’⁴⁶ belong to the realm of ‘unequals’ and necessitate a return of ‘honour, gratitude,

41. This needs to be qualified. Obviously, a father and a child were unequal in status, but, in comparison to those in the outside world, they shared a closer proximity of social position.

42. *Jesus Movement*, 36.

43. Sahlins collapses both under *general* reciprocity, insofar as the exchanges of patrons and clients are not commensurate in worth.

44. *Conversion*, 58. By ‘benefaction,’ Crook refers to patronage, since he recognises their difference but affirms that ‘they are often extraordinarily difficult to distinguish from one another’ (ibid, 66).

45. One wonders how participants would appraise the value of each other’s gifts, though. Would good advice count as much as or more than saving a friend’s life? If so, who decides?

46. These social institutions are not identical for Crook, but, because of their multiple commonalities, he places both under general reciprocity (*Conversion*, 59).

and loyalty' (i.e., *general reciprocity*).⁴⁷ Gift exchange, therefore, features two (more or less) equal parties, who share a mutual obligation to give to one another and who take turns being the one in debt to the other, while dependent clients were primarily obliged to elite patrons or benefactors, with both parties residing in asymmetrically-fixed social positions. No 'ontological shift' in status occurs when a client furnishes a return to a patron. The client remains a client and the patron a patron.

Yet the patronal interpretation, which seems to be ubiquitous among Pauline scholars, assumes, albeit unconsciously, that a client could become a patron after giving a counter-gift, since they contend that the Corinthians attempted to become Paul's patron by offering him a gift with 'strings attached.' But if the patron-client model is applied to their relationship, then Paul would obviously represent the patron. After all, he is the *higher-status apostle* who gave the *initial* gift of the gospel to them. Providing a return, then, would not transform the ontology of the Corinthians into patrons. Far from it. It would instead solidify their role as dependent clients, whose duty it is to reciprocate gratitude, loyalty, and honour. In Chapter 4 and 5, we will consider whether the patron-client model is even applicable to the apostle's financial dealings with his churches. For the time being, we only highlight the necessity for a categorical distinction to be made between being in debt (or social obligation) to another in

47. Nevertheless, see Alan Kirk, 'Karl Polanyi, Marshall Sahlins, and the Study of Ancient Social Relations,' *JBL* 126 (2007): 182-91, who presents a perceptive challenge to Crook's dependence on and the validity of the Stegemann's model.

gift exchange and becoming a dependent client in a *patronage* relationship. The two are not synonymous.

1.1.4. Summary

The main endeavour of this section was to relay the complexities of social exchange rather than resolve them by describing three complex issues: (i) the identical or disparate nature of *patrocinium* and euergetism, (ii) the definition of patronage, and (iii) the shape of reciprocity. In so doing, we sought to confirm the claim with which we began, that the patron-client model, as a conflation of all forms of social exchange, is an oversimplification that not only confuses social history but also wrongly imposes a specific relational pattern, with its particular rules of exchange, onto relationships that more accurately mirror other patterns of reciprocal exchange in antiquity.⁴⁸ In the end, gifts need a historical context before being situated in a particular mould. Natalie Zemon Davis's assessment of the patterns of gift-giving in sixteenth-century France is instructive here. 'The spirit of gifts was carried out not by names alone, but by whole situations.'⁴⁹ The historical situation of any given relationship must therefore be evaluated. Who is giving, and who is returning? Are they equal or unequal? And what is the relational sphere in which they are exchanging? These questions concerning the

48. As a result, many NT scholars have taken, what Harrison calls, "a city by city" approach' (*Paul's Language of Grace*, 16 n63), specifically analysing patron-client and/or benefactor-beneficiary relations in specific geographic locations (e.g., Holland Hendrix, 'Benefactor/Patronage Networks in the Urban Environment: Evidence from Thessalonica,' *Semeia* 56 [1992]: 39-58; Lukas Bormann, *Philippi: Stadt und Christengemeinde zur Zeit des Paulus* [NovTSup 78; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995]).

49. *The Gift in Sixteenth-Century France* (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin, 2000), 14.

route of the gift, the status of participants, and the relational sphere in which they participate can be better assessed by exploring the various gift-exchange relationships in the Greco-Roman world and their distinct social dynamics, to which we now turn.

1.2. Patterns of Reciprocal Exchange in the Ancient World

The patron-client relationship was one of many ancient forms of reciprocal exchange. Though many NT scholars affirm this in theory, they deny it in practice. The purpose of this section, therefore, will be to offer a general description of the various relationships in the Greco-Roman world that involved giving and receiving, with the twofold intention of, first, emphasising the distinct nature of each relationship and then, second, offering a more suitable model through which to examine Paul's financial dealings with his churches.

1.2.1. Patron-Client

This reciprocal exchange features two asymmetrical parties with varying degrees of power, resources, and responsibilities.⁵⁰ The patron possessed the tangible means to express his influence by meeting the social, economic, and political *needs* of the client, whereas the client, though unable to reciprocate in kind, provided what the patron *desired*, namely, honour, loyalty, political allegiance, and public gratitude. Although both parties were bound by 'social

50. Patron-client relations appeared in several different shapes: Emperor/empire; landlord/tenant; patrician/freedman; patron/*collegia*; patron/communities; patron/free-born individuals of lower social standing; and patronage in legal advocacy.

obligation and the inner force of honour,⁵¹ this relationship may actually have been an exploitative transaction couched in terms of personal loyalty or reciprocity.⁵² In any case, the client was obliged to express gratitude, and the patron, at least in theory, ‘was obligated to fulfil his responsibilities to his clients and promote their well-being.’⁵³

1.2.2. Friend-Friend

Aristotle identifies three kinds of friendships: those based on utility, pleasure, and virtue.⁵⁴ Of the three, he considers the bond of virtue to be ‘the perfect form [τελεία] of friendship,⁵⁵ being grounded in love rather than gain or enjoyment.⁵⁶ This virtuous friendship consists of two parties possessing ‘one soul’ (μία ψυχή) and sharing all things in common (κοινὰ τὰ φίλων), such that this sort of ‘friendship is equality’ (ισότης φιλότης). In line with Aristotle, Cicero maintains that friends ‘think the same thing’⁵⁷ and participate in reciprocal exchange.⁵⁸ These relational characteristics, although representing ideology rather than

51. Jonathan Marshall, *Jesus*, 45.

52. Peter Garnsey, *Famine and Food Supply in the Graeco-Roman World: Responses to Risk and Crisis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 58.

53. Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 87. See Nicols, ‘Patronage,’ 377, 385, who distinguishes between ‘patronage in theory and patronage in practice.’

54. *Nic. Eth.* 8.3.1-9. For other ancient perspectives, see the various essays in John T. Fitzgerald, ed., *Greco-Roman Perspectives on Friendship* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1997).

55. *Nic. Eth.* 8.3.6.

56. *Nic. Eth.* 7.3.1-2.

57. *Amic.* 15; cf. *Planc.* 5.

58. *Amic.* 26, 58; cf. *Off.* 1.15.47-48; 2.17.59; Aristotle, *Nic. Eth.* 8.13.8-9; 8.14.3; 9.2.3.

reality,⁵⁹ differentiate friendship from other relational patterns. To be sure, a single definition of ancient friendship is, at the moment, nonexistent, especially since ancient friendship assumed diverse forms in the classical world.⁶⁰ Nevertheless, the core of the relationship could be understood as two-way, reciprocal exchange of gifts, which was characterised as a mutually intimate, obliging, and loving bond among more or less equal parties marked by native solidarity rather than kinship ties.⁶¹

1.2.3. Parent-Child

The Greco-Roman household was ‘the basis of social obligations, the means by and through which both status and wealth were essentially transmitted.’⁶² The father (*paterfamilias*) especially played a major role in the family, financially supporting and exercising authority over his children, known as *patria potestas*. In return, children were obliged to reciprocate gratitude, loyalty, honour, and even provision when their parents became unable to support

59. Classicists debate whether fluidity existed between patronage and friendship, insofar as the congenial title of ‘friend’ often disguised the humiliating label ‘client’ (cf. Saller, *Personal Patronage*, 11–15; David Konstan, ‘Patrons and Friends,’ *CP* 90 [1995]: 328–42; P.A. Brunt, ‘“Amicitia” in the Late Roman Republic,’ *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philosophical Society* 11 [1965]: 1–20).

60. Such as, for example, political friends, philosophic friends, and fictive-kinship friends.

61. See David Konstan, *Friendship in the Classical World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 1. Much debate, however, revolves around the issue of whether friendship actually existed separately from kinship, citizenship, and other roles in antiquity (cf. Julian Pitt-Rivers, ‘The Kith and the Kin,’ in *The Character of Kinship* [ed. Jack Goody; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973], 89–105 at 90).

62. Tim G. Parkin and Arthur J. Pomeroy, eds., *Roman Social History: A Sourcebook* (London: Routledge, 2007), 72.

themselves, known as *pietas* (i.e., the obligation to fulfil one's duties).⁶³ As such, the father-child relationship was an asymmetrical, ongoing circle of exchange, sealed by the bond of kinship and maintained by mutual obligations towards one another. However, the combination of the father's authority as *paterfamilias* over the child, the etymological connection between *pater* and *patronus*,⁶⁴ and ancient writers who occasionally parallel patronage with kinship has led many NT scholars to blur the lines between the two relationships. They rhetoricise the father-child relationship as a patron-client alliance and thereby unreasonably compound two distinct entities.⁶⁵ For instance, patrons and clients enact a bond voluntarily and on the basis of utility, with clients having the right to transfer their allegiance to another patron, but the father and child enter into relationship by necessity⁶⁶ and on the basis of familial love,⁶⁷ with the

63. Because they owed their existence and upbringing to their parents, and because they received financial help throughout their lifetime, children accrued a 'debt' to support them in their old age (cf. Aristotle, *Nic. Eth.* 9.2.7-10; Cicero, *Off.* 1.17.58, 45.160; Seneca, *Ben.* 6.23.5).

64. For example, Dionysius of Halicarnassus points out that Roman patrons ought to do for their clients what 'fathers do for their sons with regard both to money and to the contracts that are related to money' (*Rom. Ant.* 2.10.1). But this is only a parallel and not meant to be understood as making the two kinds of relationship identical. Also, although the personal title *Pater Patriae* is widely attested in epigraphic, numismatic, literary evidence as an honorific title accorded to Roman emperors, we wonder if the impersonal designation *patronus* was ever applied to fathers in antiquity? But this exceeds the boundaries of this chapter.

65. As will be shown in Chapter 5, this is a prevalent practice among NT scholars when interpreting 2 Cor. 12:14 ('For children are not obligated to save up for their parents, but parents for their children') in light of Paul's refusal of the Corinthians' gift.

66. Of course, some have proposed a form of patronage which was hereditary (Saller, *Personal Patronage*, 186-87), but this, according to Eilers, is more complex than some have made it seem (cf. *Patrons*, 61-83).

67. Seneca writes that 'a duty is performed by a son, or a wife, or by persons that are stirred by the ties of kinship, which impels them to bear aid' (*Ben.* 3.18.1).

theoretical threat of death if the child transferred his/her allegiance to another other than his/her own father.⁶⁸

1.2.4. Teacher-Pupil

For an advanced education, students travelled to metropolitan cities to seek out a teacher of grammar (*grammaticus*) or rhetoric (*rhetor*).⁶⁹ If a student desired to enter professional and political life, they were sent to the schools of the Sophists,⁷⁰ who were famous for their oratorical skills.⁷¹ Alternatively, they could hire a private tutor.⁷² In either case, most educators followed the regular pattern of charging their students a fee for their teaching,⁷³ though the Sophists were frequently accused of exploitation.⁷⁴ Itinerant Sophists and teachers also made grand entrances into cities, where they would deliver speeches, be surrounded by throngs of interested pupils, and not incur a single expense.⁷⁵ Consequently, irrespective of teaching privately or publicly, to individuals or to crowds, a reciprocal exchange of commodity occurred between the two. The teacher distributed education, while the pupil/audience

68. Shelton, *Source Book*, 18.

69. Parkin and Pomeroy, *Social History*, 136.

70. J.W.H. Walden, *Universities of Ancient Greece* (London: Routledge, 1912), 78–79.

71. G.W. Bowersock, *Greek Sophists in the Roman Empire* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 13.

72. Winter, *Sophists*, 25–30.

73. See Clarence A. Forbes, *Teachers' Pay in Ancient Greece* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1942), 43–45.

74. See Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 8.9; 35.1; Philo, *Mos.* II.212; Plato, *Prot.* 313c-d; *Menex.* 92A; *Euthyd.* 277B; Xenophon, *Mem.* 1.2.7; Plutarch, *Mor.* 131a.

75. Dio recounts that, 'when he visited the great cities of the empire,' he was 'escorted with much enthusiasm and honour, the recipients of my visits being grateful for my presence and begging me to address them and advise them flocking about my doors from early dawn, all without my having incurred any expense or having made any contribution, with the result that all would admire me' (*Or.* 47.22). See also Bruce Winter, 'The Entries and Ethics of Orators and Paul (1 Thessalonians 2:1–12),' *TynB* 44.1 (1993): 55–74.

reciprocated money or material goods. Nevertheless, before we are tempted to perceive the student/audience as the 'patron' and the teacher as the 'client,' largely because a patron provided money and a client returned services, we have to consider a distinguishing factor. In the scholastic realm, the teacher occupied the superior position because he/she possessed the higher-value symbolic capital of education and, unlike the patron-client bond, was in no way beholden to the student/audience just because they gave money. Different social settings attribute varying degrees of status to the commodity exchanged. It is therefore important to note that the teacher-pupil relationship, while sharing close affinities with the patron-client model, is still distinct from it.⁷⁶ This relational demarcation will prove beneficial as we progress into Chapters 4 and 5, where we will critique many NT scholars for not acknowledging this vital distinction.

1.2.5. Patron-Broker-Client

Various ancient relationships have been outlined above which feature two-way forms of exchange. But the patron-broker-client relationship, which has been largely neglected in Pauline studies, distinguishes itself by including a three-way bond between a source (patron), a mediator (broker), and a beneficiary (client). While the rules of exchange between the patron

76. *Contra Crook, Conversion*, 186–92, who merges the two as 'the Patronage of Philosophy.' There is danger in coalescing these practices. The fact that they exhibit similar characteristics does not mean that they share the same symbolic capital.

and client remain intact, the inclusion of a broker modifies the contours of this patronage relationship.⁷⁷

The broker, like a telegrapher,⁷⁸ provides a profitable link between two parties or segments of society, transmitting the patron's material goods and services to the client and, likewise, the client's gratitude and loyalty back to the patron.⁷⁹ As a 'telegrapher' connecting higher- and lower-ranking people or groups, the broker facilitates access to an otherwise unattainable resource and therefore bridges the social chasm in a way that is profitable for both parties.⁸⁰ Various examples from the letters of the younger Pliny, who enjoyed an analogous relationship with the emperor Trajan as well as others,⁸¹ illustrate this intermediary practice in the Greco-Roman world.⁸² For example, *Ep.* 2.13 captures Pliny's right to solicit the patronage (*fortuna*) of Priscus for Voconius Romanus. Pliny's access to emperor Trajan's patronage is projected in *Ep.* 10.4, where Pliny entreats Trajan to grant a senatorial office to Romanus, of which Pliny, by virtue of his connection with the emperor, confidently awaits

77. This model is a subset of Roman *patrocinium*. For a more exhaustive analysis of the brokerage model, see my article: 'Mutual Brokers of Grace: A Study of 2 Cor. 1.3–11,' *NTS* 56 (2010): 536–56 at 539–43.

78. Jeremy Boissevain, *Friends of Friends: Networks, Manipulators and Coalitions* (Pavilion; Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1974), 148, 153.

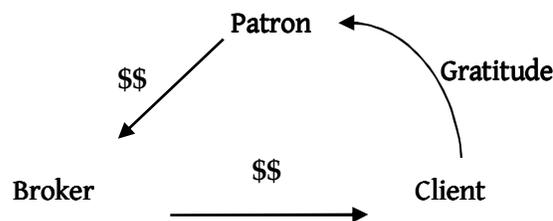
79. Eric Wolf, 'Kinship, Friendship, and Patron-Client Relations in Complex Societies,' in *Friends, Followers, and Factions: A Reader in Political Clientelism* (ed. Steffen W. Schmidt, et al.; Berkeley: University of California, 1977), 167–76 at 174.

80. Boissevain calls this a 'second order resource,' which pertains to strategic contacts with patrons who possess the 'first order resource' of land, jobs, and protection (*Friends*, 147–48).

81. See Saller, *Personal Patronage*, 75–77.

82. See *Ep.* 6.32; 2.4, 18; 3.2, 8, 11; 10.11, 21, 23, 26, 33, 37, 51, 58, 85, 86a and b, 87, 93, 94, 95, 96, 104, 106; cf. also Fronto, *Ad Amicos* 1.5; 2.8.

Trajan's 'favourable judgment,' not only for himself but also for Romanus, the client. In another letter, Pliny brokers a Praetorship for his friend, Accius Sura, whose high view of Trajan 'prompts him to hope [that] he may experience [receiving a Praetorship] in this instance' (*Ep* 10.12). Viewed together, these examples of unwavering certainty in receiving what has been petitioned, by the client and Pliny alike, and of Pliny's right to make requests of opulent members of society, demonstrate the broker's privileged access to the rich storehouse of patrons on behalf of clients. Consequently, this three-way relational pattern can be diagrammed as follows:



We have argued elsewhere that the classical model of brokerage does not precisely fit the Pauline vision of gift-exchange relationships, primarily because Paul radically fabricates his own version of 'mutual brokerage.'⁸³ Without rehearsing the argument here, we simply want to assert that this three-way relationship serves as a more fitting model than the patron-client relationship. For the patron-client model (like every other relationship mentioned above) can only measure reciprocal exchange between two parties. Nevertheless, as will be demonstrated in the next three chapters, every gift-exchange relationship in the divine

83. See 'Mutual Brokers,' 543-56.

economy necessarily involves a third party — God. It will be argued, therefore, that the patron-client model obscures rather than clarifies matters, and that the brokerage model offers a clearer heuristic lens through which to analyse Paul's financial policy with his churches.⁸⁴

1.2.6. Summary

What then emerges from this succinct outline of various relationships in the Greco-Roman world? One important discovery is that, even though some ancient relationships shared certain characteristics of the patron-client alliance, they nevertheless retained their own distinctive identity. This means that stretching 'patronage' as a universal model for every form of unequal social exchange is methodologically faulty, with the term itself being based on criteria that do not line up with historical facts.⁸⁵ Once again, simplifying complex realities is the purpose of models, but Pauline scholarship has, by and large, been misled by the oversimplification of 'patronage,' turning it into a chameleon-like model that adjusts its properties according to its relational environment. We therefore aim to dismantle this prevalent interpretive method and offer a more fitting relational framework through which to appraise Paul's financial policy.⁸⁶ Before that, we enter another climate which helps contextualise the apostle.

84. We are not presenting the brokerage model as a universal model to replace patronage. Instead, we are only affirming that it more closely resembles the tripartite relational pattern found in financial texts in Paul.

85. See section 1.2 above.

86. This framework mirrors the brokerage model but will be extracted from the text itself.

2. Paul's Ideological Climate

Seneca's *De Beneficiis*, as the only exhaustive treatment of gift exchange in the first century, creates an ancient and thus a more fitting climate in which to situate Paul. While many scholars assume that Seneca only offers unreachable ideals, he actually sets ideal goals at the end of realistic paths. Put differently, he aims to turn the bad man (*vir malus*) into a good man (*vir bonus*) or wise man (*sapiens*) by providing practical steps towards a more virtuous lifestyle,⁸⁷ and one can detect the same pedagogical technique in Paul's writings.⁸⁸ But instead of viewing the apostle in line with ancient ideological methods, many interpreters impose modern ideals of gift onto Paul, especially when it comes to self-interest and obligation in gift-giving. They automatically assume that because these elements deprive gifts of their inherent philanthropy in the Western, modern world, they must have done so in Paul's day. Yet, as we will see, these interpreters have wrongly located Paul in a modern environment and analysing Seneca's *De Beneficiis* will help us substantiate this fact.

In what follows, therefore, we will pay close attention to the issues in gift exchange that Seneca confronted and sought to reform, beginning with general aberrations in society

87. A point helpfully explained in Miriam Griffin, 'Seneca's Pedagogic Strategy: *Letters* and *De Beneficiis*,' in *Greek and Roman Philosophy 100 BC - 200 AD* (eds. Richard Sorabji and Robert W. Sharples; London: Institute of Classical Studies, 2007), 89–113.

88. For an example of this, see Troels Engberg-Pedersen, *Paul and the Stoics* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), though we are not entirely convinced of the extent of Pauline dependence on Stoic philosophy that Engberg-Pedersen affirms.

and moving to the more pertinent elements of self-interest and obligation. After determining his ancient perspective, we will then compare it with the modern conception of gift. The purpose in doing so will be to lay the groundwork of subsequent chapters, where we will challenge scholars who impose modern categories of gift onto Paul's ancient gift-giving relations with his churches.

2.1. Patterns of Reciprocity in Seneca's *De Beneficiis*

Although *De Beneficiis* 'is a somewhat neglected work in the corpus of an often undervalued author,'⁸⁹ it is nevertheless hailed as a 'masterpiece.'⁹⁰ Written between AD 56 and mid-64 during Nero's reign,⁹¹ this social-political and ethical treatise examines the 'highly practical mechanisms of social relations.'⁹² Being motivated by the fact that the giving, receiving, and returning of benefits 'constitutes the chief bond of human society' (*maxime humanam societatem alligat*),⁹³ Seneca offers a *lex vitae* for interlocutors in exchange, a code of beneficence meant to curtail the serious problems in ancient society and promote the ongoing cycle of gifts.

89. Brad Inwood, 'Politics and Paradox in Seneca's *De Beneficiis*,' in *Reading Seneca: Stoic Philosophy at Rome* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005), 69.

90. Troels Engberg-Pedersen, 'Gift-Giving and Friendship: Seneca and Paul in Romans 1–8 on the Logic of God's Χάρις and Its Human Response,' *HTR* 101 (2008): 15–44 at 18.

91. Miriam Griffin, *Seneca: A Philosopher in Politics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), 396.

92. Griffin, 'Pedagogic Strategy,' 93.

93. *Ben.* 1.4.2. The translations of this section come from the LCL edition and translation of *De Beneficiis* (trans. J.W. Basore; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1935), though a few changes are made and Latin key phrases are added in certain places.

2.1.1. Aberrations of Gift Exchange in Seneca's Ancient Economy

When assessing the state of Roman society, Seneca observes a rapid decline of morality and virtue. Citizens are obstinately self-focused, unjustly oppressive towards the weak and poor, adultery is glamourised as 'the most seemly sort of betrothal',⁹⁴ and he anticipates a day when chastity will no longer be prized, the shameful scourge of feasting will prevail, and honour will be bestowed on the person who can hold the most wine.⁹⁵ Indeed, times will change but the verdict will always remain the same: 'wicked we are, wicked we have been, and, I regret to add, always shall be.'⁹⁶

For Seneca, however, describing the macrocosm of a profligate society is merely a philosophical stepping stone into the microcosm of impaired gift-exchange relationships. For above all the immorality in society, such as 'homicides, tyrants, thieves, adulterers, robbers, sacrilegious men, and traitors,' the most heinous vice, and perhaps the root of all these other vices, is ingratitude,⁹⁷ among both givers and receivers alike. If this bilateral ungratefulness persists, the indispensable system of social exchange, a system which undergirds all of society,⁹⁸ will inevitably collapse. Foreseeing this great catastrophe, Seneca delivers an illuminating critique of givers and recipients of gifts.

94. *Ben.* 1.9.4-5.

95. *Ben.* 1.10.2.

96. *Ben.* 1.10.3; cf. 5.15.1-5.17.7; 7.27.1-3.

97. *Ben.* 1.10.4.

98. See *Ben.* 1.4.2; 1.15.2.

2.1.1.1. Givers Critiqued

Everyone hates ingratitude, and yet everyone is held by its grasp,⁹⁹ not least *givers* of gifts. Three critiques are particularly illuminating. The first is that, although disgruntled givers were blaming recipients for not reciprocating gratitude,¹⁰⁰ Seneca ironically blames givers as the cause for the ingratitude of receivers. From the several causes of ungratefulness in society, he insists that the chief and foremost is that *givers* ‘do not pick out [*non eligimus*] those who are worthy [*dignos*] of receiving [their] gifts.’¹⁰¹ They lack discernment (*iudicium*) and reason (*ratio*) in their giving, failing to consider ‘to whom to give [a benefit], and how and why.’¹⁰² He forthrightly calls this kind of giving, ‘thoughtless benefaction’ and ‘the most shameful sort of loss,’ explaining that it is certainly ‘the fault of another if we have received no return,’ but, ‘if we did not select [*non elegimus*] the one to whom we were giving, *the fault is our own*.’¹⁰³ His line of reasoning is that ‘if [benefits] are ill placed, they are ill acknowledged.’¹⁰⁴ In other words, they ‘reap what they sow,’ or, more precisely, they ‘reap *how* they sow,’ for the cause of ingratitude lies in the manner of givers, not the return or lack of it from recipients.

99. *Ben.* 1.1.2; cf. 1.10.4; 5.15.1-5.17.7; 7.27.3.

100. *Ben.* 1.1.9-10.

101. *Ben.* 1.1.2; cf. 3.11.1.

102. *Ben.* 4.10.2-3; cf. *Ep.* 89.15.

103. *Ben.* 4.10.3; cf. 1.14.1. My italics.

104. *Ben.* 1.1.1.

The second critique is that, when bestowing their benefits, wealthy givers would shame their beneficiaries in several ways. They would delay their gifts;¹⁰⁵ or worse, hesitate in granting them, ‘with the air of one who was robbing himself,’ a dreadful act that Seneca considers ‘the next thing to refusing’¹⁰⁶ and that also forces the recipient to beg for the promised gift before lowering his eyes in shame for uttering the words.¹⁰⁷ More degrading than this, givers would incessantly mention the favours that have been granted. For example, Seneca paints an amusing picture of a man, who, after being exonerated from the hand of Caesar by a benefactor, screams, ‘Give me back to Caesar!’ For this liberated person could no longer endure the egotism of his liberator, who repeatedly declares, “‘It is I who saved you, it is I who snatched you from death.’” Annoyed with such pomposity, the freed person replies, ‘I owe nothing to you if you saved me in order that you might have someone to exhibit. How long will you parade me? How long will you refuse to let me forget my misfortune? In a triumph, I should have had to march but once!’¹⁰⁸ This comical script discloses the culturally acceptable means to honour by broadcasting one’s munificence and parading one’s beneficiaries before the public eye like a conquered enemy. But from Seneca’s philosophically-

105. *Ben.* 2.6.1-2.

106. *Ben.* 2.1.2.

107. *Ben.* 2.2.1.

108. *Ben.* 2.11.1-2.

trained eye, these sorts of givers only do violence to their conferred benefits,¹⁰⁹ permitting their pride to turn every benefit into an injury.¹¹⁰

The third critique concerns the proclivity to give with purely self-interested motives.

'It is a contemptible act,' Seneca exclaims,

without praise and without glory, to do anyone a service because it is to our own interest [*quia expedit*]. What nobleness is there in loving oneself, in sparing oneself, in getting gain [*adquirere*] for oneself? The true desire of giving a benefit summons us away from all these motives, and, laying hand upon us, forces us to put up with loss, and, forgoing self-interest [*utilitates*], finds its greatest joy in the mere act of doing good.¹¹¹

Although self-interest will be discussed extensively below, it is worth simply noting here that this vice is a point of contention for Seneca and a prevalent issue in his society. This is in addition to the first critique of indiscriminately disseminating gifts that generate ingratitude and the second about shaming recipients at the moment of giving. Together, these three critiques help steer givers towards virtuous giving.

2.1.1.2. Recipients Critiqued

Seneca turns his critical eye towards two particular manifestations of ingratitude among recipients. To begin with, ungrateful beneficiaries accept gifts in an unacceptable manner. Instead of humbly receiving benefits, they embody an air of pride, 'a mistake,' Seneca

109. *Ben.* 2.5.1.

110. *Ben.* 2.13.1; cf. 2.11.16.

111. *Ben.* 4.14.3-4.

insists, ‘which is never excusable.’¹¹² They accept with an air of fastidiousness, pretentiously asserting, “I really do not need it, but since you so much wish it, I will surrender my will to yours.” Or they accept in submission and humility, ironically showing themselves ‘more ungrateful than if [they] had kept silent.’¹¹³ Some recipients possess too high an opinion of themselves, assuming that they deserve what they are given and so receive a gift as an outstanding payment rather than as a generous benefit.¹¹⁴ Others jealously compare themselves with competing recipients,¹¹⁵ and still others, unsatisfied with the benefits already received, avariciously seek out further gifts. True is Seneca’s critique in this regard, ‘the more we get, the more we covet,’¹¹⁶ with the devastating result that beneficiaries forget the giver’s past beneficence.

Failing to recall previously bestowed gifts constitutes the second critique. As Seneca testifies, ‘I cannot deny that, while some fall into the vice [of ingratitude] from a natural perversity, more show it because remembrance disappears with the passing of time; for benefits that at first lived fresh in their memory wither as the days go by.’¹¹⁷ Again, while there

112. *Ben.* 2.18.1.

113. *Ben.* 2.24.3.

114. *Ben.* 2.26.2.

115. *Ben.* 2.28.1.

116. *Ben.* 2.27.3.

117. *Ben.* 3.1.2.

are many kinds of ingrates,¹¹⁸ ‘the most ungrateful of all is the man who has forgotten a benefit.’¹¹⁹ Why? Because ‘there is no possibility of a man ever becoming grateful, if he has lost all memory of his benefit.’¹²⁰ As memory diminishes so does gratitude rightly owed to the giver.

With the prevalent and variegated manifestations of ingratitude among givers and receivers, Seneca must administer a philosophical treatment to cure his readership of the disease of ungratefulness and thereby restore the essential, social practice of interpersonal gift exchange.¹²¹ But how does he perform this operation in *De Beneficiis*?

2.1.2. Seneca’s Two-Level, Philosophical Framework: Paradox as a Solution

Although many have criticised Seneca’s ‘high-minded nonsense,’¹²² perceiving *De Beneficiis* to be an amalgamation of loosely connected philosophical musings,¹²³ Brad Inwood¹²⁴

118. Seneca mentions three kinds of ingrates: (i) one who denies that he received a benefit, when, in fact, he has received one; (ii) one who pretends that he has not received one; and (iii) one who fails to return a benefit (*Ben.* 3.1.3; cf. 7.26.1-7.27.3).

119. *Ben.* 3.1.3.

120. *Ben.* 3.1.4.

121. Likening philosophy to an art concerned with the cure or therapy of the soul is a recurrent theme in the work of Epicurean and Stoic thinkers (cf. Galen *PHP* 5.2.23; Cicero *Tusc.* 3.6; Epictetus *Diatr.* 1.15.2). Among Stoics specifically, Martha Nussbaum explains, ‘Philosophy’s medical function is understood as, above all, that of *toning up* the soul—developing its muscles, assisting it to use its own capabilities more effectively’ (*The Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994], 317).

122. Ramsey MacMullen, ‘Personal Power in the Roman Empire,’ *AJPh* 107 (1986): 512–24 at 521.

123. A criticism that reaches as far back as Caligula’s description of Seneca’s literary works as ‘sand without lime’ (Suetonius *Cal.* 38).

124. Inwood refers to it as ‘a two-level mode of discourse,’ with protreptic value (‘Politics and Paradox’ at 90).

and Miriam Griffin¹²⁵ have uncovered a two-level mode of paradoxical discourse.¹²⁶ One level promotes the social ideal,¹²⁷ while the other acknowledges the social reality. To give one example of this pedagogical strategy, Seneca writes, ‘For, in the case of the benefit, this is a binding rule for the two who are concerned—the one should immediately forget [*oblivisci*] that it was given, the other should never forget that it was received.’¹²⁸ By the time you reach Book VII, however, he clarifies what he really means. ‘Yet it is a mistake to suppose that, when we say that the person who has given a benefit ought to forget [*oblivisci*], we would rob him of all memory [*memoriam*] of his act, especially if it was a very honourable one.’ This sounds contradictory, but here is the key. ‘We overstate some rules in order that in the end they may reach their true value [*quaedam praecipimus ultra modum, ut ad verum et suum redeant*]. . . . Hyperbole never expects to attain all that it ventures, but asserts the incredible in order to arrive at the credible [*sed incredibilia adfirmat, ut ad credibilia perveniat*].’¹²⁹ Otherwise stated,

125. Griffin calls it ‘the pedagogical technique of hyperbole’ (‘De Beneficiis and Roman Society,’ *JRS* 93 [2003]: 92–113 at 94).

126. Paradoxical, of course, not in the sense of involving illogical oddities but in the sense of being at odds with the common opinion, for, from a Stoic perspective, paradoxes were simply true (cf. Inwood, ‘Politics and Paradox,’ 74 n40).

127. Although Griffin contends that Seneca’s (and Cicero’s) ideals appear in the more theoretical writings of Pliny and others, suggesting that the ideals of the former could actually be considered the ‘social ideal’ (‘De Beneficiis,’ 102–06).

128. *Ben.* 2.10.4.

129. *Ben.* 7.22.1–7.23.2. On Seneca’s pedagogical use of hyperbole, see Inwood, ‘Politics and Paradox,’ 90–92; Griffin, ‘De Beneficiis,’ 94.

Seneca sets the bar of morality obscenely high so that his readers will reach an attainable goal and so perpetuate the fundamental practice of reciprocal exchange.

This philosophical tactic is made possible by the fact that ‘there are two levels of activity in any social exchange, the material and the intentional.’¹³⁰ As Seneca claims, ‘Goodwill we have repaid with goodwill; for the object we still owe an object [*Voluntati voluntate satis fecimus; rei rem debemus*]. And so, although we say that he who receives a benefit gladly has repaid it, we nevertheless also bid him return some gift similar to the one he received.’¹³¹ In this way, paradox has the practical purpose of healing fractured gift-exchange relationships by encouraging givers to give freely despite the possibility of no return and receivers to endure the burden of indebtedness with confidence and dignity.¹³² As Inwood explains, ‘the metaphysically bound ethics of pure intention can actually strengthen social and political ties in the real world.’¹³³

While space prevents a full explanation of how Seneca’s two-level philosophical framework resolves all the relational tensions noted above, we will focus on two issues with direct relevance to Paul’s vision of gift-giving relationships: self-interest and obligation. The purpose in doing so will be to lay the groundwork of subsequent chapters, where we will

130. Inwood, ‘Politics and Paradox,’ 89.

131. *Ben.* 2.35.1.

132. ‘Politics and Paradox,’ 92; cf. also *Ben.* 4.40.5.

133. ‘Politics and Paradox,’ 91.

challenge scholars who impose *modern* categories of gift onto Paul's *ancient* gift-giving relationship with the Philippians and the Corinthians. What we will discover is that when it comes to the matter of gift exchange, Paul shares more in common with Seneca than with his modern interpreters. Before doing so, however, a word must be said about Seneca's overall view of gift-giving.

2.1.2.1. The Perpetual Cycle of Grace: Giving, Receiving, and Returning

Two apt images in *De Beneficiis* epitomise gift-giving relationships in Seneca's philosophical economy: (i) the three Graces (1.3.4-5); and (ii) the ball game illustration (2.17.3-7), both borrowed from Chrysippus.¹³⁴

The three Graces — sisters who joyously dance with hands joined in a perpetual circle — represent giving, receiving, and returning, with the gift flowing through each party and always returning to the giver. If the perpetual cycle is anywhere broken, 'the beauty of the whole is destroyed,' since 'it has most beauty if it is continuous and maintains an uninterrupted succession.'¹³⁵ As such, certain characteristics of the three Graces represent different aspects of giving and receiving. As Seneca explains,

Their faces are cheerful, as are ordinarily the faces of those who bestow or receive benefits. They are young because the memory of gifts ought not to grow old. They are virgins because benefits are pure and undefiled and holy in the

134. Inwood, 'Politics and Paradox,' 92.

135. *Ben.* 1.3.4.

eyes of all; and it is fitting that there should be nothing to bind or restrict them, and so the maidens wear flowing robes, and these, too, are transparent because benefits desire to be seen.¹³⁶

The ball game illustration presents a similar picture. The game is comprised of a thrower (i.e., giver) and a catcher (i.e., recipient), with the ball symbolising a gift. The aim of the game is to keep the ball in the air. If it drops to the ground, the game is ruined. To prevent that from happening, the more skilled player must assess the skills (i.e., character [*persona*]) of the other. He/she does so by determining whether the other player is dexterous of hand, can catch long, firm throws, and immediately throw it back. Or, if the player is a novice who requires a short, gentle lob, basically guiding the ball directly into his/her hand. If skilled players do not follow this course of benefits, they prove to be the cause of ingratitude in others, insofar as their throws are impossible to catch, let alone return.¹³⁷ As a result, the success of the ball game rests on cooperation (*consentium*), which, in turn, demands givers and receivers to adapt their performance to the skills of the other and therefore keep the ball in the air.

Proceeding from these illustrations are a few noteworthy dynamics of gift-giving relationships. For Seneca, a *beneficium* binds two parties together,¹³⁸ creating a common bond

136. *Ben.* 1.3.5.

137. *Ben.* 2.17.5.

138. *Ben.* 6.41.2; 7.19.7-8.

that places equal demands on both to give, receive, and return.¹³⁹ The giver should then toss the gift in such a way that will engender gratitude, verbally and materially, while the catcher should always seek opportunities to show gratitude, even if not yet materially. In this sense, mutual cooperation is necessary for the beauty of reciprocal exchange to be preserved.

With the general contours of giving and receiving in *De Beneficiis* outlined, we can now discern whether, for Seneca, self-interest and obligation disrupt or preserve the course of gifts in social relations.

2.1.2.2. *Self-Interest in Ideal Perspective*

At first glance, Seneca completely eradicates *all* self-interest from giving. After all, the golden rule of gift exchange in *De Beneficiis* is that ‘the one should immediately forget [*oblivisci*] that it was given, the other should never forget that it was received.’¹⁴⁰ Forgetting implies disinterestedness, which, in turn, displays virtue. For *virtus* does not invite ‘by the prospect of gain [*lucro*];’ on the contrary, she ‘is more often found in voluntary contributions. We must go to her, trampling under foot all self-interest [*calcatis utilitatibus*].’¹⁴¹ Unless a person strips him- or herself of self-interest,¹⁴² they cannot furnish a benefit, since a *beneficium* ‘has in view only

139. *Ben.* 2.18.1-2.

140. *Ben.* 2.10.4; cf. also 1.4.3, 5; 2.6.2.

141. *Ben.* 4.1.2.

142. See *Ben.* 4.11.2-6.

the advantage of the recipient [*accipientis utilitas*].¹⁴³ Disinterested givers therefore imitate the gods, who give with no thought of any return (*sine spe recipiendi*)¹⁴⁴ or regard for their own advantage (*commodum*).¹⁴⁵ Yet those with self-interested motives emulate ‘money-lenders [*feneratores*],¹⁴⁶ placing their so-called benefits where they ‘can derive the most gain [*quaestuosissime habeas*].¹⁴⁷ And yet, Seneca exclaims, *feneratores* are incapable of giving benefits, for that ‘which has gain [*quaestum*] as its object cannot be a benefit [*non est beneficium*].¹⁴⁸ Instead, a ‘benefit views the interest [*commodum*], not of ourselves, but of the one upon whom it is bestowed; otherwise, it is to ourselves that we give it.’¹⁴⁹ Clearly, then, self-interested givers hand out loans, disinterested givers bestow benefits.

The disease of self-interest, however, plagues gift exchange on both ends, for recipients also exhibit self-interested motives. ‘Tell me,’ Seneca asks, ‘what is the motive that leads to [repayment of good services with gratitude]? Gain [*Lucrum*]? But he who does not scorn gain is ungrateful.’¹⁵⁰ ‘And what is the aim of one who is grateful?’, he inquires. ‘Is it that his gratitude

143. *Ben.* 4.9.1.

144. *Ben.* 4.9.1.

145. *Ben.* 4.3.2.

146. *Ben.* 3.15.4.

147. *Ben.* 4.3.3.

148. *Ben.* 4.13.3; cf. 3.13.2.

149. *Ben.* 4.13.3. If gifts were given solely with the expectation of receiving a return, Seneca reasons, ‘we should give, not to the most worthy, but to the richest, men.’ Moreover, if it were ‘only self-interest [*sola nos invitaret utilitas*] that moved us to help others. . .the rich and powerful and kings, who need no help from others, would not be under the least obligation to bestow them’ (*Ben.* 4.3.1-2).

150. *Ben.* 4.17.1.

may win for him more friends, more benefits? . . . He is ungrateful who in the act of repaying gratitude has an eye on a second gift—who hopes while he repays.¹⁵¹

What becomes evident from these examples is that, *ideally*, self-interest should never attend the exchange of gifts. Only disinterested interlocutors convey the glory, honour, and virtue inherent in gift-giving. On closer inspection, though, Seneca has a specific kind of self-interest in mind — the kind that *exploits others for the sake of selfish gain*, indicated by the terms *lucrum, utilitas, commodum, and quaestus*. But as one progresses through *De Beneficiis*, another level of discourse slowly emerges.¹⁵²

2.1.2.3. *Self-Interest in Real Perspective*

After stating the *ideal*, namely, that exploitative self-interest is inherently evil, Seneca redefines (rather than abolishes) self-interest by adding a level of *reality* in his paradoxical discourse. Unlike most moderns who consider *any* kind of self-regard to be unethical, Seneca affirms a philanthropic mode of self-interest, one which we will call, *other-oriented self-interest*.

This sort of other- and self-regard begins to emerge as early as Book II, when he states,

Let us never bestow benefits that can redound to our shame. Since the sum total of friendship consists in putting a friend on an equality with ourselves, consideration must be given at the same time to the interests of both [*utriusque simul consulendum est*]. I

151. *Ben.* 4.20.2-3; cf. also 4.24.2.

152. Griffin envisages an educational strategy in *De Beneficiis* which matches the moral progress of his readership, possibly personified in Aebutius Liberalis (who Griffin argues is a real addressee). The end of Book IV marks a shift in pedagogical strategy, with Books V-VII being comparable to ‘a graduate level course in *officia* aimed at the advanced progressive (*proficiens*)’ (‘Pedagogic Strategy’ at 109-10). If this is the case, it is striking that the level of *real* discourse on self-interest primarily appears in Books V-VII.

shall give to him if he is in need, yet not to the extent of bringing need upon myself; I shall come to his aid if he is at the point of ruin, yet not to the extent of bringing ruin upon myself, unless by so doing I shall purchase the safety of a great man or a great cause.¹⁵³

But it becomes clearer in a couple of passages at the end of Book IV and in Book V:

It is not true, therefore, that that which has also some extraneous profit [*cui aliquid extra quoque emolumentum adhaeret*] closely attached to it is not something to be desired in itself; for in most cases the things that are most beautiful are accompanied by many accessory advantages [*multis et adventiciis comitata sunt dotibus*], but they follow in the train of beauty while she leads the way.¹⁵⁴

A benefit. . . possesses this commendable, this most praiseworthy, quality, that a man forgets for the time being his own interest [*utilitatis interim suae oblitus est*] in order that he may give help to another.¹⁵⁵

Nevertheless, the clearest example of other-oriented self-interest appears in Book VI:

I am not so unjust as to feel under no obligation to a man who, when he was profitable to me, was also profitable to himself. For I do not require that he should consult my interests without any regard to his own; no, I also desire that a benefit given to me should be even more advantageous to the giver, provided that, when he gave it, he was considering us both, and meant to divide it between himself and me. Though he should possess the larger part of it, provided that he allowed me to share in it, provided that he considered both of us, I am, not merely unjust, I am ungrateful, if I do not rejoice that, while he has benefited me, he has also benefited himself.

non sum tam iniquus, ut ei nihil debeam, qui, cum mihi utilis esset, fuit et sibi; non enim exigo, ut mihi sine respectu sui consulat, immo etiam opto, ut beneficium mihi datum vel magis danti profuerit, dum modo id, qui dabat duos intuens dederit et inter me seque dividerit. Licet id ipse ex maiore parte possideat, si modo me in consortium admisit, si duos cogitavit, ingratus sum, non solum iniustus, nisi gaudeo hoc illi profuisse, quod proderat mihi.¹⁵⁶

For Seneca, gleaning some form of profit (*utilitas*) from granting a gift is acceptable, as long as the receiver also obtains a share in the profit (*si modo me in consortium admisit*) and the giver, at the moment of giving, acknowledges the interests of both parties (*si duos cogitavit*).

153. *Ben.* 2.15.1.

154. *Ben.* 4.22.4.

155. *Ben.* 5.11.4-5. The term *interim* reminds the reader of the necessity to reciprocate a material counter-gift and, at the same time, the primitivism of demanding one (cf. 2.35.1).

156. *Ben.* 6.13.1-2.

Unlike the majority of Westerners who place every kind of self-interest under the category of ‘exploitative,’ Seneca actually draws a fine distinction here between acting for oneself and acting for oneself *and* another, between self-interest and self- *and* other-interest. Self-interested givers, who exploit others with gifts for their *own advantage*, certainly lack virtue. But self-interested givers, who place the interests of recipients above their *own honourable interests*, actually embody virtue.¹⁵⁷ And this *other-oriented self-interest*, from Seneca’s perspective, adorns rather than corrupts the gift and preserves the perpetual cycle of reciprocal exchange forged by *beneficia*.

2.1.2.4. *Obligation in Ancient Perspective*

The presence of obligation in gift exchange does not necessitate Seneca’s two-level mode of paradoxical discourse. Like most ancient writers, he never questions its existence. This can be distilled from the three Graces or the ball game illustration, which calls for the active and necessary participation of each party. But a couple of examples make this point even clearer. ‘The giving of a benefit is a social act,’ explains Seneca, ‘it lays someone under obligation [*obligat*].’¹⁵⁸ ‘To return [a gift] is to give something that you owe [*debeas*] to the one to whom it belongs when he wishes it.’¹⁵⁹ And lastly, ‘I am able to place a man under obligation

157. Following ‘in the train of beauty while she leads the way’ in 4.22.4 above is a reference to being led by virtue and reason.

158. *Ben.* 5.11.5.

159. *Ben.* 7.19.2.

[*obligare*] only if he accepts; I am able to be freed from obligation only if I make a return [*reddidi*].¹⁶⁰ What is striking about these passages is that Seneca has no qualms about transferring legally-binding language of loans, such as *debeo* and *obligo*, to the realm of *beneficia*.¹⁶¹ To be sure, he distinguishes between the two,¹⁶² but the common characteristic in both is the social dynamic of obligation. So, while there are ‘strings attached’ to gifts, they are not ‘legal’ strings, since a person could not send someone to court for not returning a gift.¹⁶³

Indeed, in Seneca’s day, many beneficiaries refused to play the social game of gift exchange, attempting to cut obligatory ties and free themselves from their indebtedness to givers. Some did so by making really quick returns,¹⁶⁴ others by repudiating gifts preemptively,¹⁶⁵ and still others by praying that some harm may come upon the giver, so that the tables might be turned and they might assist them as the superior party.¹⁶⁶ But there was a reason for this evasion of obligation, and it was due to the detestable manner in which givers

160. *Ben.* 7.18.2.

161. Later, however, Seneca discourages language linked to debt, preferring *gratiam referre* (voluntary return) over *gratiam rederre* (payment on demand, *Ep.* 81.9), though this distinction may simply be a way to express that the first phrase was more common than the second (cf. Griffin, ‘De Beneficiis,’ 99 n52).

162. For instance, a gift is incalculable (3.10.2, 15.3), selfless (5.11.4-5), engenders friendship (2.18.5), and not returning a counter-gift is not punishable by law (3.14.2). Conversely, a loan is calculable (3.10.1, 15.1-2; 4.39.2), interested in selfish gain (2.10.2, 31.2; 4.3.3, 13.3), engenders no lasting relationship (2.18.5), and non-payment of a loan is punishable by law (3.7.1-2).

163. *Ben.* 3.6-17. While Seneca discusses at length the possibility of making ingratitude illegal because of its frequent appearance, he ultimately concludes that such sanctions would be impractical for three reasons: it would be difficult to assess various cases of ungratefulness, giving and receiving would lose moral ground, and citizens would be discouraged from the act of gift giving.

164. *Ben.* 4.40.1-5.

165. *Ben.* 6.25.1.

166. *Ben.* 6.25.1-6.41.2; cf. also 6.27.1-2; 6.35.3; 6.41.1.

were bestowing gifts — they gave *self-interestedly*. For instance, anticipating a question that may be raised by his addressee, Aebutius Liberalis, Seneca writes:

I already know what you wish to ask; there is no need for you to say anything; your countenance speaks for you. “If anyone has done us a service for his own sake [*sua . . . causa*], are we,” you ask, “under any obligation to him [*debetur aliquid*]? For I often hear you complain that there are some things that people bestow upon themselves, but charge them up to others.”¹⁶⁷

Beneficiaries were fed up with receiving gifts that only served the interests of the ones who bestowed them, and so sought to be released from the ties of obligation to these self-interested benefactors. Consequently, then, Seneca’s call to embrace *mutual obligation* and *other-oriented self-interest* operate as the glue that holds ruptured social bonds of gift together and thereby secure the success of gift exchange in a very complex and fragile society.

2.1.3. Seneca, Paul, and ‘the Modern Myth of the Pure Gift’¹⁶⁸

If we were to imagine Seneca’s *De Beneficiis* on one side of the gift-exchange spectrum and the modern conception of the ‘pure’ gift on the other, where would we situate Paul? To determine the answer, we first need to understand both positions before matching Paul’s vision of gift-giving relationships with its appropriate counterpart.

167. *Ben.* 6.12.1.

168. A phrase borrowed from one of John Barclay’s *De Carle Lectures*, entitled, ‘Paul, Reciprocity, and the Modern Myth of the Pure Gift’ (University of Otago, 31st March 2010).

2.1.3.1. *The Modern Perception of the 'Pure' Gift*

The notion of the 'pure' gift, a gift that is given spontaneously, voluntarily, and 'free of charge,' with 'no strings attached,' is held by Western, modern society to be the most virtuous (or, if you like, 'altruistic') kind of gift. Conversely, the 'impure' gift comes with 'strings attached,' the inextricable ties of 'self-interest' and 'obligation' which corrupt its inherent virtue and turns a so-called 'gift' into a problem. It becomes a problem because these strings make the gift look like *pay*. For when a benefit possesses traces of self-regard and the obligation to return, moderns immediately locate it in an entirely different, more exploitative sphere — *the sphere of the market place*, where little, if any, relationship exists, where an item can be bought without any regard for the person behind the till but with total regard for one's own needs, and where a material exchange, a *quid pro quo*, a 'tit for tat' can take place, with each party looking out for their best interests.

The question, however, is why moderns presuppose that if any element of pay or reward appears in what is called gift-exchange, then that gift is no longer a gift? It is now a unilateral, destructive form of pay. But if that were the case, would not all gifts be considered pay? Can a gift be given without expecting one in return? Can anyone receive a gift without feeling compelled to furnish a counter-gift, lest one seem ungrateful? These mixed emotions reveal a double-mindedness on gift-giving in Western society. *Ideally*, the disinterested,

unconditional gift is praiseworthy. The anonymous giver of an enormous check to charity, to whom a return cannot be made, is honoured. But, in *reality*, we acknowledge the inescapable truth that our giving possesses the very ‘impure’ elements that we abhor: self-interest and the expectation of reciprocity.

Pierre Bourdieu calls this ideal/reality bifurcation ‘the *dual truth* of the gift’ but attempts to resolve the apparent tension by exposing a collective and individual self-deception that is made possible by the lapse of time between gift and counter-gift. In other words, although gifts ought to be granted disinterestedly, they also require a return of gratitude, so a ‘common misrecognition’ of the gift’s logic must attend the exchange of gifts, as givers and receivers deceive one another and themselves by pretending to be motivated by altruism.¹⁶⁹ At the level of individual intentions, however, Bourdieu denies that an entirely gratuitous gift is possible.

In line with Bourdieu, Jacques Derrida exclaims that ‘for there to be a gift, there must be no reciprocity, return, exchange, counter-gift, or debt. If the other *gives me back* or *owes me* or has to give me back what I give him or her, there will not have been a gift, whether this restitution is immediate or whether it is programmed by a complex calculation of a long-term

169. ‘Marginalia—Some Additional Notes on the Gift,’ in *The Logic of the Gift: Toward an Ethic of Generosity* (ed. Alan D. Schrift; New York: Routledge, 1997), 231–43 at 231–34.

deferral or difference.¹⁷⁰ Even recognising a gift as ‘gift’ suffices to annul it.¹⁷¹ The exact minute one says “thank you,” those very words begin to destroy its ‘gift’ properties.¹⁷² ‘Consequently,’ he classically remarks, ‘if there is no gift, there is no gift, but if there is gift held or beheld as gift by the other, once again there is no gift; in any case the gift does not exist and does not *present* itself. If it presents itself, it no longer presents itself.’¹⁷³ Thus, for both Derrida and Bourdieu, a gift that is not wholly gratuitous cannot be considered a gift. Self-concern and obligation only corrupt the virtue of gift-giving.

Troels Engberg-Pedersen, nevertheless, accurately contends that

both Derrida and Bourdieu start from a false presupposition, which has its roots in Kant: the idea that for an act to be truly other-regarding and altruistic—and a gift is necessarily that—it must not involve any self-regarding concern whatsoever. In Kant that idea is famously expressed in the claim that a moral act must be done exclusively from duty and not from inclination. That idea, I think, underlies the modern insistence on the complete gratuitousness of a gift. But both the Kantian idea itself and its modern transference to gift-giving are false.¹⁷⁴

Nothing could be closer to the truth. The reason it is false is that modern Westerners recognise ‘the *dual* truth of the gift,’ the *ideal* and the *reality*, but permit the questionable nature of the *reality* (i.e., gifts contain self-interest) to taint indelibly the virtue of the *ideal* (i.e.,

170. ‘The Time of the King,’ in *The Logic of the Gift: Toward an Ethic of Generosity* (ed. Alan D. Schrift; New York: Routledge, 1997), 121–47 at 128; author’s italics.

171. Derrida, ‘King,’ 129.

172. Jacques Derrida and John D. Caputo, eds., *Deconstruction in a Nutshell: A Conversation with Jacques Derrida* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1997), 18–19.

173. ‘King,’ 131; cf. also idem, *The Gift of Death* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1995).

174. ‘Gift-Giving,’ 16.

gifts ought to be purely disinterested). The *reality* is therefore eradicated in order to preserve the gift's *ideal* purity. By doing so, however, they are only left with the *ideal* and are forced to turn a blind eye to *real*, empirical facts. At the base of this subconsciously-widespread philosophical view is, therefore, a tenuous premise that the *ideal* is also the *reality*.

2.1.3.2. Seneca's Ancient Perception of the Gift

On a cursory reading of *De Beneficiis*, Seneca appears, *prima facie*, to be a 'pre-modern modern,' with his view of disinterested giving coalescing with the modern 'pure' gift perspective. But this, as we have seen, is solely on the *ideal* level of discourse. On the level of *reality*, he allows for *other-oriented self-interest* and also assumes the presence of *mutual obligation*.¹⁷⁵ So, in contrast to the one-sidedness of the puristic conception of gift, Seneca refrains from trumping the *reality* with the *ideal*. Instead, his two-level mode of paradoxical discourse holds ideology and reality together on a systemic level, all in the effort to oil, as it were, the social mechanism of gift-exchange and to celebrate the capability of furnishing a virtuous gift as gift.

2.1.3.3. Paul's Vision of Gift: Modern or Ancient?

Having laid out the landscape of gift, with the modern notion of a 'pure' gift on one side and Seneca's ancient conception of gift on the other, we can now survey Paul's position on the

175. Even on the *ideal* level, he primarily discourages *exploitative* self-interest (see section 2.1.2.3 above).

matter in the following chapters. Is his vision of gift closer to a modern or ancient perspective?

This question may seem trivial, but the majority of Pauline scholars attribute a puristic conception of gift to the apostle. Could it be, though, that Paul affirms the *reality* of other-oriented self-interest and mutual obligation in his *ideal* gift-exchange relationship, thereby more closely aligning with his philosophical counterpart, Seneca?

Although the points of convergence between Paul and Seneca will become apparent later, one fundamental point of divergence may be noticeable already — they ultimately reside within two different gift economies. Seneca's economy consists of *two-way* transactions which uphold society, while, for Paul, the divine economy is upheld by *three-way* relationships, with God as the crucial third party who actively distributes *χάρις* *through* participants in reciprocal exchange. In this triangulated bond of gift, the social dynamics of *mutual obligation* and *other-oriented self-interest* are necessarily redefined 'in Christ,' having been created by the Christ-event that, as Friedrich Nietzsche perceptively noted, entails 'a reevaluation of antique values.'¹⁷⁶ How this comes about, and what relational impact this has on participants in the economy of *χάρις*, will be discussed in the next chapter.

176. *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future* (trans. R.J. Hollingdale; London: Penguin Books, 1973), 75.

3. Conclusion

Two problems in Pauline scholarship set the tone of this chapter. One is the common practice of subsuming every form of exchange under the overly-simplified model of patronage. To this, we responded by accentuating the neglected complexities of reciprocity, *patrocinium*, and euergetism, and by describing the wide array of gift-exchange relationships in the Greco-Roman world, both of which, in my opinion, definitively speak against the legitimacy of the methodological conflation promoted by the patronal approach. Even if one is not yet convinced by this claim, the strongest proof will come from Paul himself in the exegetical chapters to follow. The other problem concerns the anachronistic imposition of modern categories of gift onto Paul's ancient perspective. Seneca helpfully cleared the air by demonstrating that the presence of self-interest and obligation (rightly defined, of course) does not annul a gift. To the contrary, these elements actually create and sustain giving, receiving, and returning. But can one prove that Paul would readily agree with this claim? This question will partly occupy the focus of the next chapter.

Having created a reference point here, which will support and enhance the overall argument of this thesis, we will now explore the reason for Paul's acceptance and refusal of monetary support by closely examining his positive bond with the Philippians, before investigating his negative relationship with the Corinthians.

CHAPTER 3: PAUL'S POSITIVE GIFT-GIVING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PHILIPPIANS

Introduction

Rudolf Pesch's 1985 monograph, entitled *Paulus und seine Lieblingsgemeinde*, is a clear indication of how the majority of scholars have perceived the relationship between Paul and the Philippians. One chief reason for this positive assessment is that the Philippians were the *only* community who enjoyed a gift-giving relationship with Paul. 'And you yourselves know, Philippians, that. . .no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you alone [εἰ μὴ ὑμεῖς μόνοι]' (4:15).¹⁷⁷ But this begs the question, *why* were the Philippians the only church to partake in this financial privilege?

Markus Bockmuehl provides a common answer. '*Why* Paul should. . .have entered such a financial partnership with Philippi in the first place, despite his principles in the matter, and *why* only with Philippi, *is of course impossible to answer*.'¹⁷⁸ Gordon Fee shares his agnosticism and

177. Reconciling the mention of 'other churches' (ἄλλας ἐκκλησίας, 2 Cor. 11:8), from whom Paul accepted support, with Phil. 4:15 will be dealt with in Chapter 5.

178. *The Epistle to the Philippians* (BNTC; London: A&C Black, 1998), 257; latter italics mine.

adds, 'That [Paul] did so, is what we learn from this passage [i.e., 4:15-16], and nothing more.'¹⁷⁹

But unlike Bockmuehl, Fee, and a host of other scholars, Bengt Holmberg refuses to cast the *why* question irretrievably into the depths of impossibility. Instead, he propounds a provocative thesis. He claims that the Philippians were admitted into a financial relationship with their apostle because 'a full, trusting *κοινωνία*' had been previously established.¹⁸⁰ This hypothesis, while certainly ambitious, has the potential to be confirmed by the text and offers a promising entry point into the question of Paul's financial policy. Yet it also raises three additional questions that Holmberg does not address: (i) what does 'a full, trusting *κοινωνία*' look like, and (ii) is this a relational criterion that Paul applies in his financial policy? If so, (iii) can a relational pattern be uncovered in Philippians, compared to his relationship with the Corinthians, and then applied to the much larger question of why Paul accepts and refuses financial support?

While questions (ii) and (iii) can only be answered after examining Paul's relationship with the Corinthian church (Chapters 4-5), this present chapter will attempt to answer the first question: what does 'a full, trusting *κοινωνία*' look like? To do so, we will need to reconstruct the relational pattern of their *κοινωνία*, presenting the history of their relationship through textual evidence before critiquing disparate interpretations of the nature

179. *Paul's Letter to the Philippians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 447.

180. *Paul and Power*, 91.

of that relationship (i.e., disunified, legal, friendship, equal, unequal, non-obligatory). After laying that foundation, the core of this chapter will be dedicated to an exegesis of relevant passages that reveal the characteristic relational pattern of *κοινωνία* in the divine economy. Once that has been uncovered, its relational features will come to the fore and ‘a full, trusting *κοινωνία*’ will be displayed, a relationship that manifests a criterion which Paul expects his churches to conform to before supporting him financially.

1. The Relational History of Paul and the Philippians

Every relationship has a history. Within that history, particular relational features evolve through life’s trials and joys, features that serve to distinguish one relationship from another. The following section is an attempt to recount the history of Paul’s relationship with the Philippians. Beginning with Acts and moving into Philippians itself, we will pinpoint the specific features that classify this relationship as ‘a full, trusting *κοινωνία*.’ Attention will first be paid to the positive nature of this close bond and then the financial aspect of their exchange.

1.1. Evidence of a Positive Relationship from Acts

If Acts 16 is thought to be historically reliable,¹⁸¹ it recounts the founding of the church at Philippi, with Paul preaching the gospel to three individuals: a merchant of luxurious goods named Lydia (Acts 16:13-15), a frightened jailer (16:25-34), and (possibly) a clairvoyant slave girl (16:17-18). Out of this narrative, two pertinent facts about the Philippian church may be culled, both of which contribute to the portrait of their positive relationship with Paul.

The first is that the church most likely had the financial means to assist Paul in his missionary efforts.¹⁸² Given that Philippi was ‘a leading city of the district of Macedonia’ (16:12), and that Lydia was capable of housing Paul, Silas, and Timothy as a ‘seller of purple goods’ (πορφυρόπωλις, 16:14-15),¹⁸³ the church at Philippi possessed the necessary resources to support Paul. The second fact, however, is even more noteworthy. From the very beginning, Paul and the Philippians shared a common experience of suffering. After casting a demon out of the slave-girl, Paul and Silas were beaten with rods before the magistrates and eventually thrown into the inner prison, their feet fastened in the stocks (16:19-24; cf. 1 Thess. 2:2). Conversely, the Philippians, we may assume, encountered the same fate as Paul and Silas,

181. Appraising the historicity of Acts is beyond the limits of this section. For a discussion on the matter, see Martin Hengel, *Acts and the History of Earliest Christianity* (London: SCM, 1979); Colin Hemer, *The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1989), 1–29.

182. On the socio-economic level of Macedonian women, see Bockmuehl, *Philippians*, 5, 8, 18.

183. Lydia’s involvement with the luxury of purple dye reflects her wealth (David W.J. Gill, ‘Acts and the Urban Élites,’ in *The Book of Acts in Its First Century Setting* [ed. David W.J. Gill and Conrad Gempf; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994], 105–18 at 114).

intimated by the magistrates' abhorrence of Jewish practices (16:20-21). What is already beginning to emerge, albeit implicitly, is a mutual relationship that involves finances and suffering — a peculiar combination for a positive relationship.

1.2. Evidence of a Positive Relationship from Philippians.

What follows will inevitably be relational *ideals*. Unlike some, we will not try to reach beyond Paul's ideology and into the *reality* of their well-functioning relationship.¹⁸⁴ Our primary concern in this chapter is with Paul's ideal gift-giving relationship and with his perception of the Philippians.

1.2.1. Reciprocity of a Mutual Φρόνησις¹⁸⁵

Relationships are reciprocal. Without reciprocity, without giving and receiving, there is no relationship — only solitude. While the reciprocation of material commodities will be surveyed below, this section will explore the reciprocal exchange of immaterial goods, stemming from a mutual φρόνησις between Paul and the Philippians.

φρονέω is a highly significant and theologically-packed term. The verbal form appears ten times (1:7; 2:2 [2x]; 2:5; 3:15 [2x]; 3:19; 4:2; 4:10 [2x]) and 'reflects the patterns of thinking,

184. E.g., Joseph Marchal, 'With Friends Like These...: A Feminist Rhetorical Reconsideration of Scholarship and the Letter to the Philippians,' *JSNT* 29.1 (2006): 77-106, though he ends up with a very negative assessment that we will critique below.

185. Although the verbal form φρονέω does not appear in Philippians, it will be used for the sake of grammatical accuracy.

feeling, and acting.¹⁸⁶ Two verses plainly convey the exchange of φρόνησις between Paul and the Philippians. In 1:7, Paul declares that it is right for him to think (φρονέω) with confidence about God’s activity in the Philippians, whereas, in 4:10, the Philippians express their concern (φρονέω) through their gift to Paul in prison. φρόνησις travels from one party to the other, and then returns on the same route, producing a mutual bond. Yet this word carries more relational depth than first meets the eye. For exactly what constitutes φρόνησις is fleshed out by a rich variety of endearing phrases and reciprocal acts throughout the letter. Analysing each side of this φρόνησις-exchange will allow us to reach some conclusions as to the positive nature of their relationship.

1.2.1.1. Paul’s Φρόνησις for the Philippians

Paul earnestly loves the Philippian community. Whenever he recalls their gospel partnership (1:5), he thanks God and consistently prays for them ‘with joy’ (μετὰ χαρᾶς, 1:3-4). He ‘holds them in his heart [καρδία],¹⁸⁷ ‘yearns [ἐπιποθέω] for all of them with the affection [σπλάγχνον] of Christ Jesus’ (1:7-8), and desires to be with them (1:25-27; 2:24). Being in prison, he sends Timothy to hear about their progress in the faith, so that his heart may be

186. Stephen Fowl, *Philippians* (THNTC; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), 28.

187. The grammar of this clause is ambiguous, but Jeffrey Reed has shown that, when an infinitival construction is followed by two accusatives, the first is the subject and the other is the object (‘The Infinitive with Two Substantival Accusatives: An Ambiguous Construction?’ *NovT* 33 [1991]: 1–27).

encouraged (εὐψυχέω, 2:19).¹⁸⁸ And through his letter, he dispels their anxiety (μέριμνα) with comforting exhortations to pray and to receive the peace of God (4:6-7). Whether present or absent, whether imprisoned or free, they remain his beloved (ἀγαπητοί), whom he ‘loves and longs for’ (ἀγαπητοὶ καὶ ἐπιπόθητοι, 4:1; cf. 2:12), his joy (χαρά), crown (στέφανος, 4:1), and boast (καύχημα, 2:16) on the day of Christ.

More than this, Paul’s affection for the community prompts his willingness to suffer on their behalf, suppressing his desire to be with Christ and instead remaining and continuing with them for their ‘progress and joy of faith’ (προκοπήν καὶ χαρὰν τῆς πίστεως, 1:23-25). This sacrificial ministry, driven by the selfless love of the Christ-event (cf. 2:5-8), is, for Paul, necessary and becomes an offering (θυσία) and service (λειτουργία) for their faith (πίστις, 2:17), which is directly linked to their joy (2:17-18; cf. 1:25). In a word, Paul’s other-oriented ministry is a resolute commitment to the spiritual progression and ultimate salvation of the Philippians. He therefore prays for their love to abound in order to ‘approve what is excellent’ and to become ‘pure and blameless on the day of Christ’ (εἰλικρινεῖς καὶ ἀπρόσκοποι εἰς ἡμέραν Χριστοῦ, 1:9-11). To this end, he implores them to become imitators (συμμιμηταί) of his Christ-centred example and to guard their faith and pattern of living against the practices of his adversaries (3:2-19). And even though they have always obeyed, he still beckons them to

188. Even his plan to send Timothy displays Paul’s own affections for the Philippians, since only a ‘like-minded person’ (ἰσόψυχος), who will ‘genuinely be concerned’ (γνησίως . . . μεριμνήσει) for the community (2:20), is a suitable candidate to visit the beloved congregation.

‘work out [their] salvation [τὴν ἑαυτῶν σωτηρίαν κατεργάζεσθε] with fear and trembling’ (2:12), and so become ‘pure and blameless’ (ἄμειπτοι καὶ ἀκέραιοι) in the midst of a world gone awry (2:14-15). These sorts of exhortations, which are usually matched with an equal confidence in God for the progression of their faith (cf. 1:6, 2:13; 3:20-21), unveil a soteriological commitment to the Philippians’ spiritual growth. He voluntarily suffers for their perseverance in the faith.

Consequently, these passages present a more comprehensive view of Paul’s φρόνησις for the community. It includes the immaterial acts of sacrificial service, prayer, affection, and joy. In turning to the Philippians’ φρόνησις towards Paul, a corresponding concern may be detected, adequately demonstrating their positive relationship.

1.2.1.2. The Philippians’ φρόνησις for Paul

The community’s φρόνησις matches Paul’s in three ways. To begin with, they reciprocate sacrificial service that leads to joy. Just as Paul’s sacrificial ministry is likened to a θυσία and λειτουργία on the Philippians’ behalf, so, too, their gift for Paul, which springs from their φρόνησις (4:10), is also considered a θυσία (4:18) and λειτουργία (2:30), the outcome of which is their mutual joy (χαίρω καὶ συγχαίρω, 2:17-18). Next, they reciprocate prayer that leads to salvation. Just as Paul prays (δέησις/προσεύχομαι) for their final salvation (1:4, 9-11; cf. 1:28; 2:12), so they will also pray (δέησις) for his salvation (σωτηρία), physically from prison as

well as eschatologically from death (1:19).¹⁸⁹ Lastly, they reciprocate affectionate concern. This emerges from the nexus of emotions in 2:25-30, where Epaphroditus functions as a mediator of Paul and the Philippians' mutual affection. The Philippians' affection is displayed through the sending of their envoy (ἀπόστολος) and minister (λειτουργός) for Paul's spiritual and financial need (χρεία, 2:30; 4:18), whereas Paul's affection manifests itself through sending Epaphroditus back to the community, so that the anxieties of both Epaphroditus and the Philippians may be relieved (2:26). The outcome of this mutual affection is the collective joy of all, including Paul himself (cf. 2:27-28).

The community therefore exhibits a corresponding φρόνησις for Paul, expressed through the reciprocal acts of affection, prayer, sacrificial ministry, and joy, all of which contributes to Paul's affirmative appraisal of their relationship as one of κοινωνία.

1.2.2. The Κοινωνία of Paul and the Philippians

The positive nature of their relationship is crystallised by the prevalent use of the word κοινωνία.¹⁹⁰ In Phil. 1:5, Paul commends them for their 'partnership in the gospel' (κοινωνία εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον), revealing the more striking reality of being 'joint partakers of grace' (συγκοινωνοὺς τῆς χάριτος, 1:7). When closely examined, this κοινωνία involves entering into

189. For the bivalent use of σωτηρία, as deliverance from prison and eschatological salvation, see section 3.1.3.1.

190. Κοινωνία and its cognates appear more in Philippians than in any other Pauline letter (1:5, 7; 2:1; 3:10; 4:14, 15).

the apostle's sufferings in prison as well as the 'defence and confirmation of the gospel' (1:7). Later in the letter, he recounts how they sacrificially 'shared in [his] affliction' (συγκοινωνήσαντές μου τῇ θλίψει, 4:14), and how they alone 'shared [with him] in the matter of giving and receiving' (ἐκοινώνησεν εἰς λόγον δόσεως καὶ λήψεως, 4:15). Constituting their κοινωνία, therefore, is a mutual sharing in gospel advancement, grace, suffering, and finances; a strange combination, to say the least, but one which positively distinguishes the Philippians from any other Pauline community.

1.3. Evidence of a Financial Relationship from Philippians

Having shown the evidence for a positive relationship, we will now outline its financial aspect, since the Philippians were the *only* church to engage the apostle in a κοινωνία of giving and receiving. This monetary relationship appears in 1:3-6, 2:25-30, and 4:10-20. Briefly sketching each of these texts here will serve as the foundation for the exegetical section to follow.

1.3.1. Philippians 1:3-6

While it will be argued in greater detail that an implication of the Philippians' gift to Paul resides in this text, we advance those conclusions here. Three key phrases, in particular, reveal an allusion to the gift that Paul discusses in greater detail in 4:10-20. The first is μνεία in 1:3. Rather than being Paul's 'remembrance' of the Philippians, μνεία refers to the Philippians'

remembrance of Paul, disclosing, at least in part, the care they showed him through their gift. The second key phrase is *κοινωνία εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον* (1:5). Once again, while this includes more than just the gift for Paul, it nevertheless reveals their partnership in gospel advancement through their financial giving. The last phrase is *ἔργον ἀγαθόν* (1:6). In this verse, Paul expresses his confidence in God's faithfulness to carry out the Philippians' work. When compared to the 'work of Christ' (*τὸ ἔργον Χριστοῦ*) that Epaphroditus — the courier of their gift — completes on behalf of the community (2:30), it seems likely that the gift partially comprises what Paul means by *ἔργον ἀγαθόν* in 1:6.

1.3.2. *Philippians 2:25-30*

This passage emits light on their financial relationship, insofar as it elucidates the *transmission* and *purpose* of the gift. The Philippians' gift is transmitted through Epaphroditus, who nearly died delivering it to the imprisoned apostle (2:25, 30). The purpose of this delivery is twofold: (i) to meet Paul's need (*χρεία*, 2:25); and (ii) to 'fill up what was lacking in their service' to him (*ἀναπληρώση τὸ ὑμῶν ὑστέρημα τῆς πρὸς με λειτουργίας*, 2:30). While both purposes describe how the community supplied Paul with the necessities of life, since prisoners would have been deprived of food and provision, the second specifically includes an overlooked element in their relationship: the task of providing for Paul was obligatory.

Although this relational element will be further expounded below, it is worth mentioning that their *κοινωνία* binds them together in an obligatory relationship.

1.3.3. *Philippians 4:10-20*

This passage contains Paul's response to their generous gift. He begins, quite appropriately, by drawing attention to God who revived their concern to give to Paul, because, for some unknown reason, they previously lacked the opportunity (*ἀκαιρέομαι*) to be charitable (4:10). In response to their gift, Paul warmly declares, 'I have received all things and abound' (4:18a). They have met his need (*χρεία*) once again, just as they did more than once in Thessalonica (*ἐν Θεσσαλονίκη καὶ ἅπαξ καὶ δις εἰς τὴν χρεῖαν μοι ἐπέμψατε*, 4:16).¹⁹¹ Only this time, they shamelessly assisted him during his shameful imprisonment, which filled Paul with immense joy (*χαίρω*, 4:10). However, wanting to distance himself from their material gift (4:11-13, 17), he places the accent on what their gift represents — a *κοινωνία* in his affliction (*θλιψις*, 4:14), which, for Paul, is a 'pleasing aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God [*εὐάρεστον τῷ θεῷ*]' (4:18).

A new relational feature, one which faintly appeared in the previous sections, is now clearly discernible. Not only is their relationship positive, including the exchange of finances, but it also entails a mutuality of suffering. Nevertheless, the scale of their *κοινωνία* in

191. Leon Morris, 'Καὶ ἅπαξ Καὶ Δίς,' *NovT* 1 (1956): 205–08.

suffering, especially its significance in relation to the gift in 4:10-20, remains indiscernible without understanding the shameful circumstances that surround Paul's suffering in prison.

1.4. Paul's Circumstances in Prison

Before detailing the shameful conditions of ancient imprisonment, as well as the financial needs of prisoners, a brief word must be said about the location of Paul's incarceration. This will help us understand Paul's financial policy within the chronology of his letters.

1.4.1. *The Location of Paul's Imprisonment*

Determining the precise locality of Paul's confinement remains a complex endeavour. There are plenty of historical reconstructions to choose from,¹⁹² though each position has its own set of problems. Given that the argument of this chapter does not rest on the exact location of Paul's imprisonment,¹⁹³ and since 'it is not clear that one's decision on these

192. The most plausible options are Rome (cf. Peter O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* [NIGTC; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991], 19–21; Dodd, 'The Mind of Paul: I,' 83–108) and Ephesus (cf. G.S. Duncan, *St Paul's Ephesian Ministry: A Reconstruction* [London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1955]; Frank Thielman, 'Ephesus and the Literary Setting of Philippians,' in *New Testament Greek and Exegesis: Essays in Honor of Gerald F. Hawthorne* [ed. Amy M. Donaldson and Timothy B. Sailors; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003], 205–23). Less probable is a Caesarean imprisonment, a view first proposed by H.E.G. Paulus in 1799 and later supported by Ernst Lohmeyer, *Die Briefe an die Philipper, an die Kolosser und an Philemon* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1930), 3–4, 15–16, 40–41 and W.G. Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament* (London: SCM Press, 1965), 229–35. Even less likely is Corinth (cf. A. Moda, 'La lettera a Filippesie gli ultimi anni di Paolo prigioniero,' *BeO* 27 [1985]: 17–30).

193. Silva rightly warns scholars that any theory on Paul's imprisonment 'remains little more than a theory, and any exegetical conclusions that lean heavily on it must be regarded as methodologically weak or even invalid' (*Philippians* [BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005], 7).

matters makes much interpretive difference,¹⁹⁴ we tentatively promote an Ephesian incarceration as the most probable hypothesis. If this is true (though it could only ever dwell in the realm of possibility), then Philippians would have been written at the end of Paul's Ephesian ministry (AD 56-57), sandwiched chronologically between 1 and 2 Corinthians, with the contrast between the Philippian and Corinthian congregations at the forefront of the apostle's mind — two congregations where he exercised dissimilar approaches to financial support. By provisionally subscribing to an Ephesian imprisonment, however, we are not promoting the view that Paul changed his financial policy over time. To the contrary, it will be argued that he maintained a consistent policy with his churches. But before arriving at this conclusion, we must first grasp the full significance of the Philippians' gift to Paul by examining the socially-grievous conditions and material needs that he most likely experienced as a prisoner.

1.4.2. The Socially-Grievous Conditions of Imprisonment

1.4.2.1. Shameful Pain of Chains

In addition to the cramped, sweltering days and the pitch-black nights of ancient jail cells, prisoners experienced the physical anguish of chains. Being fettered by bonds, either

194. Fowl, *Philippians*, 9.

singly, in pairs, or in groups, around the leg(s), wrist(s), or neck,¹⁹⁵ caused intense physical agony. Chains were fashioned from iron and varied in weight, depending on the size and offence of the criminal, in order to obstruct mobility and prevent escape.¹⁹⁶ These heavy clamps, which became rusty in damp environments, sent excruciating pain through the frail limbs of malnourished prisoners. Plutarch captures the unimaginable torment of chains well. In speaking of the joys of sleep, he writes, ‘Sleep makes light the chains of prisoners, and the inflammations surrounding wounds, the savage gnawing of ulcers in the flesh, and tormenting pains are removed from those who are fallen asleep.’¹⁹⁷

Suffering from inflammatory wounds, gnawing ulcers, and tormenting pains, however, did not compare to the social humiliation that arose from imprisonment. The first-century Greco-Roman world highly prized the social currency of honour and shame.¹⁹⁸ Residing in a place of dishonour such as prison¹⁹⁹ — a place only fitting for malefactors — depreciated one’s social status and resulted in public shame. For at the moment of receiving iron manacles, the

195. See Lucian, *Tox.* 29, 32, 33.

196. Brian Rapske, *The Book of Acts and Paul in Roman Custody* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994), 207.

197. *Mor.* 165e; cf. Lucian, 72f.; Cyprian, *Ep.* 76.2.

198. For a comprehensive discussion on honour and shame, consult the excellent works of Carlin A. Barton, *Roman Honor: The Fire in the Bones* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001) and J.E. Lendon, *Empire of Honour: The Art of Government in the Roman World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

199. Incarceration and dishonour were inextricably linked (cf. Epictetus, *Diatr.* 2.6.25; 1.4.23f; Cicero, *Caec.* 100; Seneca, *Ad Lucilium Ep.* 85.41).

honour rating of the alleged social deviant instantly fell in the eyes of society.²⁰⁰ To be convicted of a crime was to receive the perennial sentence of public ridicule, since, before the public eye, former felons remained felons, never escaping the inexorable shame their crime had merited.²⁰¹ Thus, whether a person was imprisoned or freed, shameful reproaches and negative consequences followed,²⁰² not least for those closely affiliated with them.

1.4.2.2. Shameful Affiliations with the Imprisoned

Family and friends encountered immense pressure to abandon the imprisoned, largely because, like an infectious disease, shame was easily transmitted. Euxitheus, for instance, regrets that, as a result of his imprisonment, his accusers ‘have brought lifelong disgrace on [him] and [his] family.’²⁰³ Seneca, in his renowned epistle on friendship, advises the reader to avoid becoming friends with purely self-interested fellows, for ‘at the first rattle of the chain such a friend will desert him.’²⁰⁴ ‘[W]hen Lucius Scipio was being taken to prison,’ Livy

200. E.g., Josephus, *Ant.* 18.189–19.295; *War.* 7.36; Suetonius, *Vit.* 7.17.1; Tacitus, *Ann.* 1.58; 4.28; 11.1; Pliny, *Ep.* 10.57.

201. Rapske, *Roman Custody*, 289–90. In speaking of the life-long degradation of prisoners, Rapske also notes, ‘Terms for prison and its accoutrements were applied derisively, including “jail guard” (*custos carceris*), “fetter farmer” (*catenarum colonus*), “exconvict and jail bird” (*ex compedibus atque ergastulo*) and “jail bird” (*desmotes*)’ (‘Prison, Prisoner,’ in *Dictionary of New Testament Background* [ed. Craig Evans and Stanley Porter; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000], 829).

202. Honour was so highly valued that prisoners committed suicide to avoid the indignity of prison, trial hearings, and especially the disdainful probability of living the rest of their lives in shame (Craig Wansink, *Chained in Christ: The Experience and Rhetoric of Paul’s Imprisonments* [JSNTSup 130; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996], 58–59).

203. Antiphon, *De caed. Her.* 18.

204. *Lucil.* 9.9.

recounts, 'no one of his colleagues was coming to his assistance.'²⁰⁵ Abandoning the shameful of society, therefore, occurred most often among those who guarded themselves from public opprobrium.

Another reason for deserting the imprisoned was because caring for them placed the welfare of family and friends at risk. Brian Rapske points to a number of sources that provide numerous instances of the dangers in helping prisoners.²⁰⁶ Of particular interest is the danger of associating oneself with formerly influential figures. Merely visiting them or, even worse, publicly adopting their political or religious views implicated oneself in criminal activity. For instance, before Apollonius' arrest, the number of his students decreased from thirty-four to eight, because they were scared to affiliate themselves with a soon-to-be social outcast.²⁰⁷ The incarcerated Musonius, recognising that informers monitored conversations for subversive plots, only spoke indirectly to Apollonius, so that 'their lives might not be endangered.'²⁰⁸

From these examples, one fact becomes obvious: shame was communicable to the close acquaintances of prisoners, and this shame oftentimes jeopardized their social status, their

205. 38.57.3f.

206. 'Helpers,' 23–29.

207. Philostratus, *Vit. Apoll.* 4.37.

208. *Vit. Apoll.* 4.46.

property, even their well-being, prompting friends and family to evade harm and possibly death by forsaking the incarcerated.²⁰⁹

1.4.2.3. *The Material Needs of Prisoners*

In ancient confinement, the state barely provided life's necessities, especially food and drink, compelling prisoners to depend on the generosity of those outside prison walls. Unlike modern incarceration, the responsibility to feed prisoners fell on friends and relatives.²¹⁰

Without recourse to external help, impecunious convicts were seized by absolute misery, for it meant 'depending upon the prison ration which, because of its lack of variety, quality and quantity, often put life in peril.'²¹¹ Even when rations were provided, they were so meagre that 'even the heartiest were gradually enfeebled by hunger, thirst and illnesses which resulted from such niggardly portions.'²¹² Against this backdrop, one can sense a grateful cry of relief in Paul's reception of Philippian goods via Epaphroditus — 'I received all things, and I abound!' (4:18).

209. No wonder affiliation with the imprisoned is deemed admirable in the New Testament. The parable of the sheep and the goats commends those who visit (and presumably care for) prisoners, but condemns those who, either out of fear or shame, neglect this indispensable practice (Mt. 25:34-36, 41-45). Also, the author of Hebrews applauds Christians who 'sympathized with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of [their] property' (Heb. 10:34), exhorting them to persist in this work and calling them to '[r]emember the prisoners, as though in prison with them, and those who are ill-treated, since you yourselves also are in the body' (Heb. 13:3).

210. Rapske, *Roman Custody*, 214.

211. Rapske, *Roman Custody*, 210.

212. Rapske, *Roman Custody*, 212.

But Epaphroditus not only met Paul's material needs, he also 'provided the material presence of a brother in Christ (2:25).'²¹³ Even though access to prisoners may have proved difficult at times,²¹⁴ either because of prison regimens or inimical personnel,²¹⁵ friends and relatives were generally admitted to visit their loved ones. This explains how Epaphroditus gained access to minister to Paul in a personal manner, informing him of specific situations in Philippi later addressed in this letter (e.g., Euodia and Syntyche, 4:2) and encouraging his heart, downtrodden by his grim predicament.²¹⁶ Neither shame nor fear prevented Epaphroditus, and thus the Philippians who sent him, from being affiliated with a social deviant. They shared in his suffering. In response to this selfless act of bearing his shame, Paul directly honours Epaphroditus (2:29) and, in so doing, indirectly commends the Christ-followers in Philippi for their support (4:14, 18).

1.5. Summary

We have drawn attention to three important aspects of Paul's *κοινωνία* with the Philippians from Acts, Philippians, and the social conditions of ancient confinement. First, being bound by a mutual *φρόνησις* for one another, their relationship is *positive* and *reciprocal*, insofar as they exchange affectionate concern, sacrificial service, prayer, and joy. Second, their

213. Fowl, *Philippians*, 139. This is supported by the verb *ἀναπληρώω* in 2:30 in light of its meaning in 1 Cor. 16:17-18, though *exclusively* interpreting 2:30 this way will be challenged below.

214. *Homil. Clement.* 3.69: '...so far as you can, help those in prison. . . .'

215. Rapske, *Roman Custody*, 381-82.

216. On encouraging prisoners, see Rapske, *Roman Custody*, 385-88.

relationship is *financial*, as evidenced by passages that describe their gifts to Paul (1:3-6; 2:25-30; 4:10-20) and especially the mention of their exclusive relationship in ‘giving and receiving’ (4:15). Third, their relationship is marked by *mutual suffering*, inasmuch as they willingly affiliate themselves with and share in the sufferings of an alleged felon. Otherwise expressed, Paul and the Philippians enjoyed a positive relationship in gift and suffering. Not all scholars agree with this positive assessment, however. In fact, the precise nature of their relationship has been the subject of considerable debate.

2. The Nature of Paul’s Relationship with the Philippians

Several views have been propounded to explain the nature of the relationship between Paul and the Philippian community. Each emphasises one aspect over another, thereby constructing antithetical portrayals of a single relationship. These portrayals may be categorised as follows: (i) a dysfunctional relationship; (ii) a consensual *societas*; (iii) a friendship among (a) equals and (b) unequals, and (c) a non-obligatory friendship.²¹⁷

2.1. A Dysfunctional Relationship

Davorin Peterlin surmises that the relationship between Paul and the Philippians was dysfunctional, insofar as the church split into two strands, one ‘pro-Paul,’ the other ‘anti-

217. Although these perspectives overlap on a number of points, this simplified categorisation is an attempt to demarcate each view clearly.

Paul.²¹⁸ These groups, led by Euodia and Syntyche (4:2-3), influential leaders of ‘house-congregations’ in Philippi,²¹⁹ held conflicting views over whether or not to support Paul financially.²²⁰ Eventually, the ‘pro-Paul’ group sent him a gift, but Paul responds to their generosity in 4:10-20 with considerable unease, reflecting his awareness of the anti-Pauline lobby in the church and their scathing criticisms of him.²²¹ For Peterlin, then, the disunity between Paul and the Philippians unfolds in two ways — among the community itself and between the ‘anti-Paul’ group and the apostle over the issue of financial support.

Peterlin’s reconstruction, however, is tenuous. The major flaw of this thesis stems from his faulty methodological approach, which results in multiple instances of ‘over-interpretation.’²²² He works his way exegetically through the entire letter, detecting allusions to the so-called ‘strife-situation’ and interpreting overt appeals to unity (1:27; 2:2-4) and problems in the church (2:14; 4:2-3) in a way that fits his already pre-established reconstruction. Admittedly, there may have been disagreements among members (2:14; 4:2), provoking Paul to exhort them to be united (1:27; 2:2-4; 4:2), but to leap from these

218. *Paul’s Letter to the Philippians in the Light of Disunity in the Church* (NovTSup 79; Leiden/New York: Brill, 1995), 224.

219. *Disunity*, 123.

220. Taking his cue from G.B. Caird (*Paul’s Letters from Prison* [New Clarendon Bible; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976], 149), Peterlin insists that the contention between Euodia and Syntyche is the primary reason for the ‘widespread’ disunity in Philippi (*Disunity*, 102 n9). Also contributing to this disunity is the Philippians’ general experience of external pressure, their pagan religious background, and their perfectionist tendencies (219).

221. *Disunity*, 216.

222. For this categorical distinction, see Barclay, ‘Mirror-Reading,’ 73-93 at 79-80.

disagreements to the view that an ‘anti-Paul’ group and the apostle were relationally disjointed is a large leap in logic. This is especially true when we consider that every appeal to unity in Philippians refers to the members of the church. Paul never calls them to be united with himself. Also, Peterlin’s ‘pro-Paul’ and ‘anti-Paul’ dichotomy, forcefully read into 4:2-3, does not account for the absence of acclamations, such as ‘I am of Apollos!’ or ‘I am of Paul!’ (1 Cor. 1:12), or any text that even hints in the direction of a divided allegiance at Philippi.

As it stands, then, a dysfunctional relationship between Paul and the Philippians is far from the picture actually displayed in the letter, and it is therefore no surprise that Peterlin’s fanciful portrait has been rejected by many scholars. For instance, Troels Engberg-Pedersen, unconvinced by this ‘overbold,’ ‘one-sided,’ and ‘fullblown picture drawn by Peterlin,’ considers it ‘too speculative,’²²³ and Markus Bockmuehl accurately calls it a ‘considerable “overkill.”’²²⁴

2.2. A Roman Consensual *Societas*

Paul Sampley²²⁵ situates the relationship between Paul and the Philippians within a Roman consensual *societas*, a verbal agreement, made between two or more participants, to

223. *Paul and the Stoics*, 312–13.

224. *Philippians*, 239.

225. The *societas* relationship between Paul and the Philippians, as Sampley acknowledges, was noticed earlier by J. Fleury, ‘Une société de fait dans l’Eglise apostolique (Phil. 4:10 à 22),’ in *Mélanges Philippe Meylan* (Lausanne: Université de Lausanne, 1963), 41–59.

maintain a legally binding, reciprocal partnership toward a common goal.²²⁶ Three chief characteristics of *societas* undergird Sampley's hypothesis that Paul established a *societas Christi* with the community.²²⁷

The first characteristic is the legal obligation among participants to meet one another's needs. In *societas*, 'the expenses incurred by one of the partners in his work on behalf of the partnership are to be reimbursed by the remaining partners.'²²⁸ Panning over to Paul's receipt of the Philippians' gift, Sampley discovers the same social act in 4:10-20, particularly in the terms *χρεία* and *ἀπέχω*. *χρεία* is translated as 'need-request,' denoting his legal right to remuneration by requesting payment from his partners;²²⁹ while *ἀπέχω* amounts to a 'formal receipt' ('I have received [*ἀπέχω*] full payment, and more' [4:18]) in response to their 'gift-payment' (*δόμα*),²³⁰ which was only delivered after receiving his 'need-request' (*χρεία*).²³¹

The second analogous characteristic is that the Greek equivalent of *societas* is *κοινωνία*.²³² For Sampley, this becomes evident when one examines the commercial terminology revolving around *κοινωνία* in Phil. 4:10-20 (e.g., *εἰς λόγον δόσεως καὶ λήμψεως*,

226. *Pauline Partnership in Christ: Christian Community and Commitment in Light of Roman Law* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), 11–20; esp. 13. He derives his information for *societas* from Cicero, *Pro Roscio Comoedo* and *Pro Quinctio*; Gaius, *Institutes*; and *Digest 17.2 Pro Socio*.

227. *Pauline Partnership*, 72.

228. *Pauline Partnership*, 52.

229. *Pauline Partnership*, 54–55.

230. Similarly, Sampley translates *δόμα* (4:17) as 'both gift and payment' (*Pauline Partnership*, 54).

231. *Pauline Partnership*, 54–55.

232. *Pauline Partnership*, 12–13, 60–62.

4:15; εἰς λόγον, 4:17; ἀπέχω, 4:18). Indeed, he asserts that ‘the commercial technical terms associated with κοινωνία [in 4:15-16 specifically] leave it unmistakable that the partnership is *societas*.²³³

The third characteristic is the notion of like-mindedness. The idea of being ‘of the same mind’ (*in eodem sensu*) is constitutive of *societas*. It is a ‘shorthand way of saying that the aim of the *societas* remains central and functional for the partners.’²³⁴ Neither party can turn this mutual relationship into a self-centred enterprise. If the interests, reciprocity, and mutual trust between both parties toward a common goal are not maintained, then the relationship can be legally terminated.²³⁵ Sampley reads the notion of φρονέω into this framework, a prevalent theme in Philippians as already mentioned, which depicts their mutuality ‘in Christ’ (1:7; 2:2; 2:5; 3:15; 3:19; 4:2; 4:10).²³⁶ In fact, through the gift given to Paul, the Philippians confirmed their mutual partnership (τὸ ὑπὲρ ἑμοῦ φρονεῖν) toward the same objective of spreading the gospel (4:10).²³⁷ Viewed together, these three characteristics, according to Sampley, prove that the ‘Philippians and Paul understood themselves as *societas Christi*.’²³⁸

There are many admirable components of Sampley’s application of *societas* to Philippians 4:10-20. He rightly understands the positive nature of their relationship, their

233. *Pauline Partnership*, 60–61.

234. *Pauline Partnership*, 15.

235. *Pauline Partnership*, 15.

236. *Pauline Partnership*, 62–72.

237. *Pauline Partnership*, 70–72.

238. *Pauline Partnership*, 72.

mutual trust, the mutual obligation to reciprocate, the need to be self- and other-interested, and the like-mindedness among participants towards a common goal. Nevertheless, many counter-arguments have been levelled against his reconstruction.²³⁹ The most detrimental is that, while *κοινωνία* can be a *possible* analogue for *societas*, it does not necessarily imply that Greek speakers used *κοινωνία* as a label for *societas*, nor that Paul himself employed the term with this in mind.²⁴⁰ Moreover, his translation of *χρεία* as ‘need-request’ does not coincide with Paul’s explicit statement that he did not seek the gift (*οὐχ ὄτι ἐπιζητῶ τὸ δόμα*, 4:16). Furthermore, many have recognised that the commercial terminology need not be understood within the parameters of a legally-binding relationship.²⁴¹ It may also be read within a social context, such as the intimate bond of friendship.²⁴²

239. See, for instance, Peterman, *Gift Exchange*, 123–27; Bormann, *Philippi*, 181–87.

240. Peterman, *Gift Exchange*, 125. Also, Peterman rightly draws attention to a text in Seneca (*Ben.* 4.18.1–2), where *societas* functions as the basis of a social exchange of goods and services rather than a legal relationship (126).

241. Following Sampley, Brian Capper also argues that the commercial terminology unveils a *societas* relationship between Paul and the Philippians. Yet Capper argues that, because Paul’s travelling ministry had been cut short by imprisonment, the Philippians accused Paul of being in breach of his legal contract and so withheld their support. In response, Paul negotiated a settlement in order to maintain their partnership, argues that imprisonment was not a violation of their agreement in Phil. 1–2, and calls the community to embody Christ-like humility (‘Paul’s Dispute with Philippi: Understanding Paul’s Argument in Phil 1–2 from His Thanks in 4.10–20,’ *TZ* 49 [1993]: 193–214). But the same critique levelled against Peterlin applies here. There is little evidence of the dispute that Capper uncovers, especially since 4:10 does not convey a ‘lack of concern’ but a ‘lack of opportunity’ (*ἀκαιρέομαι*).

242. See Peterman, *Gift Exchange*, 56–65.

2.3. A Friendship Relationship

Abraham Malherbe's ground-breaking address at the 1990 SBL Annual Meeting, in which he suggested that friendship language in the Greco-Roman world merited further investigation, prompted several works to appear on Paul's monetary relationship with the Philippians.²⁴³ Friendship proponents generally subscribe to one of two views. They either consider Paul's friendship with the community as an (i) equal or (ii) unequal gift-exchange relationship. Which view they adopt is determined by their understanding of ancient friendship parallels in connection to Philippians.

2.3.1. Textual Parallels between Ancient Friendship and Philippians

Those who advocate for the *topos* of friendship as the epistolary genre of Philippians, or simply apply the Hellenistic moral paradigm of *φιλία* to the letter, read the financial relationship in 4:10-20 through the lens of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* (though the writings of Plato, Cicero, Plutarch, Seneca, and others are also consulted). In Books VIII and IX on Friendship, Aristotle identifies three categories: (i) friendships based on 'utility';²⁴⁴ (ii)

243. Even before this, Malherbe had already promoted the topic of friendship in *Ancient Epistolary Theorists* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1988), though long before Malherbe's work, the topic of friendship was already well-known among classicists (cf. John Reumann, 'Philippians, Especially Chapter 4, as a 'Letter of Friendship': Observations on a Checkered History of Scholarship,' in *Friendship, Flattery, and Frankness of Speech: Studies on Friendship in the New Testament World* [ed. John T. Fitzgerald; Leiden: Brill, 1996], 84).

244. This utilitarian category, coupled with Cicero's comments that a friendship should not be cultivated on the basis of need (*Amic.* 51), leads Malherbe to hypothesise that the Philippians may have sent a letter with the gift expressing their desire to meet his need (*χρεία*), which, to Paul, disclosed a utilitarian and therefore erroneous perspective on their relationship ('Paul's Self-Sufficiency [Philippians 4:11],' in *Friendship, Flattery, and*

friendships based on ‘pleasure’; and (iii) friendships based on ‘virtue,’²⁴⁵ of which the virtuous friendship is considered by Aristotle to be ‘the perfect form [τελεία] of friendship.’²⁴⁶

The textual parallels between Aristotle and Philippians are quite striking.²⁴⁷ For instance, just as Aristotle asserts that friends share ‘one soul’ (μία ψυχή),²⁴⁸ so also Paul calls on the community to strive together with ‘one soul’ (μία ψυχή). More than this, he calls them to stand ‘in one spirit’ (ἐν ἐνὶ πνεύματι, 1:27) and even to become ‘fellow souls’ (σύμψυχοι) with one another (2:2). He also expresses his friendship with Timothy by designating him, ‘of equal soul’ (ἰσόψυχος, 2:20). What is more, Paul describes his relationship with the Philippians as one of κοινωνία (1:5, 7; 4:14, 15), sharing the same semantic field as Aristotle’s famous dictum: κοινὰ τὰ φίλων.²⁴⁹

Depending on how one applies these parallels to Philippians determines the stance one takes on whether their friendship exhibits equality or inequality.

Frankness of Speech: Studies on Friendship in the New Testament World [ed. John T. Fitzgerald; Leiden: Brill, 1996], 137–38). John Fitzgerald builds on this and more confidently asserts, ‘In denying that he is in need, Paul is rejecting any suggestion that his friendship with the Philippians is utilitarian, which is how some of the Christ-believers in Philippi quite likely construed their relationship with the apostle’ (‘Christian Friendship: John, Paul, and the Philippians,’ *Int* 61 [2007]: 263; cf. John Reumann, ‘Contributions of the Philippian Community to Paul and to Earliest Christianity,’ *NTS* 39 [1993]: 455–56).

245. *Nic. Eth.* 8.3.1–9.

246. *Nic. Eth.* 7.3.6.

247. For friendship language in Philippians chs. 1–3, see John T. Fitzgerald, ‘Philippians in the Light of Some Ancient Discussions of Friendship,’ in *Friendship, Flattery, and Frankness of Speech: Studies on Friendship in the New Testament World* (ed. John T. Fitzgerald; Leiden: Brill, 1996), 144–47; for ch. 4, see Ken Berry, ‘The Function of Friendship Language in Philippians 4:10–20,’ in *Friendship, Flattery, and Frankness of Speech: Studies on Friendship in the New Testament World* (ed. John T. Fitzgerald; Leiden: Brill, 1996), 107–24.

248. Cf. also Plutarch, *Amic. mult.* 96f.; *Diog. Laer.* 5.20.

249. A saying that goes back to Pythagoras (*Diog. Laert.* 8.10).

2.3.2. Friendship among 'Equals'

Some latch on to the idealistic descriptions of ancient friendship and argue that equality characterised Paul's relationship with the Philippians. L.M. White, for example, considers them equal friends, insofar as 'he is their spiritual patron, just as they are his economic patron,' a reciprocity of patronage which is 'the basis for their bond of friendship with one another, just as with Christ.'²⁵⁰ For Luke T. Johnson, equality constitutes a fundamental component of reciprocity, which undoubtedly characterised Paul's dealings with Philippi.²⁵¹ And Stanley Stowers claims that Philippians 'displays a remarkable *symmetry* between the relationship of Paul and of the Philippians.'²⁵² To be sure, these scholars admit that almost every ancient source stresses equality among friends as an *ideal* rather than as a *reality*,²⁵³ and that, by this time, friendship basically merged with the exploitative nature of patronage. But they nevertheless maintain that equality characterised Paul's financial friendship with the community, albeit paradoxically. Paul employs the language of friendship,

250. 'Morality Between Two Worlds: A Paradigm of Friendship in Philippians,' in *Greeks, Romans, and Christians: Essays in Honor of Abraham J. Malherbe* (ed. David Balch, Everett Ferguson, and Wayne Meeks; Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1990), 214–15 n59.

251. 'Making Connections: The Material Expression of Friendship in the New Testament,' *Int* 58 (2004): 160, 164–65, 167. Other supporters of this position include: Abraham Malherbe, 'Self-Sufficiency'; John T. Fitzgerald, 'Ancient Discussions'; idem, 'Christian Friendship'.

252. Stanley Stowers, 'Friends and Enemies in the Politics of Heaven: Reading Theology in Philippians,' in *Pauline Theology, Volume I: Thessalonians, Philippians, Galatians, Philemon* (ed. Jouette M. Bassler; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 119; my italics.

253. See L.M. White, 'Paradigm of Friendship,' 211; Stowers, 'Friends and Enemies,' 111.

'but with a novel twist'²⁵⁴ or in a 'creative' way,²⁵⁵ which is to say, without the oppressive brand of inequality and exploitation so prevalent in antiquity.²⁵⁶

2.3.3. Friendship among 'Unequals'

Others are not so optimistic (or, perhaps better, idealistic), insisting that amiable words of equality only disguise a patently asymmetrical relationship. For instance, Peter Marshall traces the social conventions of friendship in antiquity, which clearly contained inequality and obligation,²⁵⁷ and contends that 'Paul does not dismiss the practice of friendship and that many of its conventions continue to govern his relationships with others.'²⁵⁸ Though Marshall does not take an explicit stand on the equality or inequality of Paul's relationship with the Philippians, since his monograph focusses on the Corinthian church, many have followed his implicit trajectories towards unequal friendships, otherwise known as a 'patronal friendships.'

Ben Witherington, for example, deduces an unequal friendship from the apostle's authority to send Epaphroditus back to Philippi. It demonstrates, he writes, that 'Paul has ultimate authority over them all,' indicating that his 'partnership with the Philippians is not one of complete equality. He is the senior partner and has the power to override, correct, or

254. Stowers, 'Friends and Enemies,' 120.

255. Johnson, 'Making Connections,' 164.

256. Fee insists that Paul skews the Greco-Roman conventions of gift. He concedes that, since the Philippians assisted Paul materially, Paul 'became "client" to their "patronage," in this sense.' 'But,' he continues, 'precisely because their "friendship" was predicated on their mutual belonging to Christ, these two expressions of "patron-client" relationship were *leveled by total mutuality and reciprocity*' (*Philippians*, 445; my italics).

257. See Saller, *Personal Patronage*, 11, 75.

258. Marshall, *Enmity*, 134.

reverse decisions made at the local level.²⁵⁹ That is why, in 4:10-20, Paul simultaneously receives and removes himself from their gifts. He must remind them that ‘he is not his audience’s client and, even after receiving and accepting this gift, is *not in their debt*.’²⁶⁰ Along the same lines, Morna Hooker surmises that Paul intentionally eschews Philippian patronage, so as not to become their client and they his superior ‘paymasters.’²⁶¹

Lukas Bormann examines 4:10-20 through Seneca’s framework of patron-client ties in *De Beneficiis* and *Epistulae Morales*,²⁶² concluding that the Philippians, as a Roman colony under Julio-Claudian patronage, operate with a *quid pro quo* mentality characteristic of *amicitia*, which Paul forthrightly rejects.²⁶³ Paul does not want to become their patron or be further indebted to them, so, instead, he attempts to make the Philippians an ‘emancipated clientele’ (*emanzierte Klientel*) by correcting their faulty understanding of gift exchange in 4:10-20, while simultaneously maintaining his superiority over them as his children.²⁶⁴

A more antagonistic approach to an unequal friendship has been taken by Joseph Marchal, who extracts four hierarchical strategies among the oppressive elite from Paul’s

259. *Friendship and Finances in Philippi* (The New Testament in Context; Pennsylvania: Trinity Press, 1994), 168 n19; cf. 123.

260. *Finances*, 126; my italics. Ken Berry also suggests that Paul maintains his independence ‘in case some of the Philippians might be tempted to become proud in supposing Paul was dependent on their patronage’ (‘Function of Friendship Language,’ 123).

261. ‘The Letter to the Philippians,’ in *The New Interpreter’s Bible* (ed. L.E. Keck et. al.; 12 vols.; Nashville: Abingdon, 2000), 11:543.

262. Though many doubt that Seneca’s writings have patronage in view (cf. Griffin, ‘De Beneficiis’).

263. *Philippi*, 11–84.

264. *Philippi*, 205–06.

rhetoric in Philippians: (i) the prioritising of himself as authority and model; (ii) his exclusive alignment with the divine; (iii) elevation of authoritative status; and (iv) his demands for obedience and subjection in their ‘friendship.’²⁶⁵ The end result of this hermeneutic of suspicion is that Paul closely resembles his aristocratic, cultural counterparts. He manipulatively exploits the Philippians and enforces a stark hierarchy between himself and the church.

While the friendship paradigm certainly illumines the relational dynamics of Philippians within its particular social context, it typically downplays one significant detail — God’s presence in the relationship. Paul’s friendship with the Philippians, as will be argued, is a three-way bond with God. This is precisely where the friendship model, like the patron-client model,²⁶⁶ falls short. Both of these relational frameworks can only account for two parties in exchange. To be sure, supporters of the friendship paradigm note the presence of three parties in Philippians. Gordon Fee, for example, regards the three-way relationship as the ‘glue that holds the letter together from beginning to end,’²⁶⁷ and Stephen Fowl, speaking specifically of 4:10-20, observes that it ‘lies at the root of this entire passage.’²⁶⁸ And yet, they do not tease out the relational modifications that the divine third party generates in the two-way relationship

265. ‘Friends,’ 96–99.

266. See Chapter 1, section 1.5.4.

267. *Philippians*, 13.

268. *Philippians*, 200. Other scholars who detect a third party include: Peterman, *Gift Exchange*, 49, 104–05 n65; Witherington, *Finances*, 131–32; Walter Hansen, *The Letter to the Philippians* (PNTC; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 310.

between Paul and the community. For God's presence, we will argue, resolves the equal/unequal tension in their relationship.

2.3.4. A Non-Obligatory Friendship

Just as there has been unceasing debate over the issue of equality and inequality, so, too, many have questioned whether Paul's monetary relationship carried obligatory ties to reciprocate. Though the nature of obligation, self-interest, and reciprocity, three interwoven elements of gift-giving, will be further explicated in the exegetical sections on 2:25-30 and 4:10-20 below, we offer a brief account of the non-obligatory friendship advocated by Martin Ebner and G.W. Peterman.

Ebner contends that the Philippians had been tainted by 'der *Verpflichtungscharakter der Freundschaft*,'²⁶⁹ but that Paul corrects this obligatory understanding of *φιλία* by connecting friendship, money, *κοινωνία*, and especially *αὐτάρκεια* in 4:10-20. For Ebner, by proclaiming his 'Autarkie,' that is, his dependence on God (4:13), Paul invites the Philippians to become self-sufficient as well, thereby transforming their two-way 'Freundschaftskoinonia' into a three-way 'Koinonia mit Gott.'²⁷⁰ Consequently, this triangular relationship or, as Ebner puts it, this 'Beziehungsdreieck' cuts the ties of any 'moralische Verpflichtung' between Paul and the

269. *Leidenslisten und Apostelbrief: Untersuchungen zu Form, Motivik und Funktion der Peristasenkataloge bei Paulus* (FB 66; Würzburg: Echter, 1991), 358; cf. also his helpful diagram of this relationship on 359.

270. *Leidenslisten und Apostelbrief*, 364.

Philippians.²⁷¹ Against Ebner, however, it will be argued below that, rather than cutting the horizontal ties of debt and obligation, Paul reties them into a three-way knot, with God as the third party to whom Paul and the church share a mutual obligation.

In the same vein, G.W. Peterman insists that Paul's letter to the community 'contains no mention of debt or obligation, neither on the Philippians' part nor on Paul's.'²⁷² The language of obligation is missing, either generally in the content of the letter or specifically in wording such as ὀφείλω ('I owe') or ἀποδιδόναι χάριν ('to repay a favour').²⁷³ So, to assume that obligation triggers the Philippians' gift, for Peterman, well exceeds the dynamics of this gift-exchange relationship.²⁷⁴ While his argument will be challenged later at length, it becomes apparent that Peterman, like Ebner, considers debt and obligation to be part of Paul and the Philippians' *social* world but a foreign element to the world of *Christian* gift-giving.

2.4. Conclusion

Conflicting views over the nature of Paul's relationship with the Philippians have been surveyed above. Peterlin renders it dysfunctional, Sampley considers it a legally-bound *societas Christi*, friendship proponents, depending on whether they apply an idealistic or realistic

271. *Leidenslisten und Apostelbrief*, 363.

272. *Gift Exchange*, 148.

273. *Gift Exchange*, 148.

274. Those who have followed Peterman's argument include: Witherington, *Finances*, 126–28; esp. 131; Stephen Fowl, 'Know Your Context: Giving and Receiving Money in Philippians,' *Int* 56 (2002): 45–58.

reading of *φιλία/amicitia*, either promote an equal or unequal relationship, while Ebner and Peterman eradicate any sort of debt or obligation from their gift-exchange relationship.

From this analysis and critique of various positions, one pressure point in the discussion becomes evident. Whatever stance one takes on the nature of their financial relationship, the need remains for scholars to consider God's role as the third party and its relational implications for Paul and the Philippians. We therefore intend to show how the insertion of a vertical party modifies horizontal dealings, an exegetical task that will occupy the rest of this chapter. We will begin by first extrapolating the three-way relational pattern from Phil. 1:7 and 1:12-30, before turning to detect this same relational pattern in the gifts from Philippi to Paul, mentioned in 1:3-6, 2:25-30, and 4:10-20. Only then will we be able to discern how the inclusion of a divine third party naturally reconfigures Paul's 'full, trusting *κοινωνία*' with the Philippians, and *why* they were allowed entrance into a gift-giving relationship with their apostle in the first place.

3. Exegetical Investigation of Philippians 1:7, 1:12-30

In order to comprehend the complex triangulated relationship between God, Paul, and the Philippians, two primary questions will govern the exegesis that follows. First, what is the shape of Paul's *κοινωνία* with the Philippians? That is, are there particular relational features that comprise their partnership? Second, what is the trajectory of *χάρις* in their partnership of

the gospel?²⁷⁵ More specifically, where does χάρις begin and end? Does it end? Through whom does it travel? To whom does it go? And does God play a role in its progression? Tracing the route of χάρις among its participants will enable us to define their three-way relationship more sharply.

Outlining the route of χάρις seems especially appropriate for the letter of Philippians because Paul very unusually brackets this correspondence with a χάρις greeting in the beginning (paired with εἰρήνη; 1:2) and a χάρις wish at the end (4:23).²⁷⁶ Although Philippians is not unique when compared to his other letters (cf. Rom. 1:7; 16:20; 1 Cor. 1:3; 16:23; 2 Cor. 1:2; 13:13; Gal. 1:3; 6:18; 1 Thess. 1:1; 5:28; Phlm. 1:3, 25), it is unique in comparison to Greco-Roman conventions. Consequently, the effect of this bracketing of χάρις is to place the apostle's theology of grace within a dynamic in which grace is continually expected to be supplied from God/Christ (ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, 1:2). This will prove significant for the exegetical sections that follow. And yet, what this does in terms of the text-pragmatics

275. Stephan Joubert rightly notes that 'χάρις and εὐαγγέλιον, without being synonyms, are often used interchangeably' ('ΧΑΡΙΣ in Paul: An Investigation into the Apostle's 'Performative' Application of the Language of *Grace* within the Framework of his Theological Reflection on the Event/Process of Salvation,' in *Salvation in the New Testament: Perspectives on Soteriology* [ed. Jan G. van der Watt; NovTSup 121; Leiden: Brill, 2005], 187–211 at 194). Although we recognise a distinction between χάρις and εὐαγγέλιον, we will employ the phrase 'χάρις in the gospel' and other similar expressions throughout our exegetical analysis. This is meant to retain the gift aspect of the gospel, since a gift in antiquity, not least in Paul (cf. 2 Cor. 8–9), was often referred to as a χάρις. In support of this is the greeting formula: χάρις ὑμῖν. . . ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (Phil. 1:2).

276. This "grace" formula,' as Judith Lieu refers to it, is 'unparalleled in non-Christian letters, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ [be] with you all" ('Grace to You and Peace: The Apostolic Greeting' *BJRL* 68 (1985/86): 161–78).

is just as significant.²⁷⁷ By bracketing his letter with χάρις, Paul calls into their present situation, and surrounds their present on-going relationship with, a grace-dynamic that makes real his theology of sharing in χάρις.

In order to trace the trajectory of χάρις in the letter, however, we must first determine the form of Paul's κοινωνία with the Philippians. Identifying the relational contours of their partnership will provide insight into the cause of their well-functioning bond of gift. In this regard, the most informative passage is Phil. 1:7.

3.1. The Trajectory of Χάρις in the Gospel through their Κοινωνία

3.1.1. *Philippians 1:7 — The Shape of Paul's Κοινωνία with the Philippians*

After rendering thanks to God for the Philippians' partnership in gospel advancement 'from the first day until now' (1:5), Paul moves into greater detail about the shape of their κοινωνία εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, the essence of which is a mutual participation in divine χάρις. He writes,

Καθὼς ἐστὶν δίκαιον ἔμοι τοῦτο φρονεῖν ὑπὲρ πάντων ὑμῶν διὰ τὸ ἔχειν με ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ ὑμᾶς, ἔν τε τοῖς δεσμοῖς μου καὶ ἐν τῇ ἀπολογίᾳ καὶ βεβαιώσει τοῦ εὐαγγελίου συγκοινωνοῦς μου τῆς χάριτος πάντας ὑμᾶς ὄντας (1:7).

277. On whether or not the style of Paul's greetings points to a Jewish pre-Pauline tradition, see Lieu, 'Apostolic Greeting,' 167-70; Ernst Lohmeyer, 'Probleme paulinischer Theologie: I. Briefliche Grußüberschriften,' ZNW 26 (1927): 158-73; Cilliers Breytenbach, "'Charis" and "Eleos" in Paul's Letter to the Romans,' in *The Letter to the Romans* (ed. U. Schnelle; BETL 226; Leuven: Peeters, 2009), 247-77.

But what does χάρις mean in this context? It can either refer to God's saving activity²⁷⁸ or Paul's apostolic ministry.²⁷⁹ It all depends on whether one construes the possessive genitive μου as modifying συγκοινωνούς (translated as 'my fellow-sharers of grace [i.e., God's saving activity]') or as modifying χάριτος (translated as 'fellow-sharers of my grace [i.e., Paul's apostolic ministry]').

Peter O'Brien presents the strongest case for the former translation ('my fellow-sharers of grace' = God's saving activity), garnering support from (i) the order of the pronouns, (ii) the fact that, when Paul speaks of grace peculiar to himself, he never says, 'my grace' but 'the grace given to me' (cf. Rom. 12:3; 15:15; 1 Cor. 3:10; Gal. 2:9; 1 Cor. 15:10), (iii) the article (τῆς) before χάρις, showing that the well-known grace of God is primarily in view, and (iv) a similar construction of a noun with a double genitive, of the person and the thing, which occurs at Phil. 1:25 and 2:30.²⁸⁰

But we remain unconvinced. Although one could contend that μου, like the other instance in 1:7 (i.e., δεσμοῖς μου), should follow χάριτος, it nevertheless precedes the noun in 4:14, where the community shares Paul's affliction (καλῶς ἐποιήσατε συγκοινωνήσαντές μου τῆ θλίψει). Also, in response to (ii) and (iv), Paul characteristically appeals to χάρις in

278. See, for example, Marvin Vincent, *Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles to the Philippians and to Philemon* (ICC; T&T Clark, 1922), 10; O'Brien, *Philippians*, 69–70.

279. See, for example, Martin Dibelius, *An die Thessalonicher I II, an die Philipper* (HNT 11; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1937), 63; Silva, *Philippians*, 47; Akira Satake, 'Apostolat und Gnade bei Paulus,' *NTS* 15 (1968–69): 96–107 at 99; Collange, *Epistle*, 47.

280. *Philippians*, 70.

reference to his apostolic ministry (cf. Rom. 1:5), and it is primarily *his ministry* that 1:7 has in view ('the defence and confirmation of the gospel').²⁸¹ This explanatory clause also outweighs argument (iii) that a single article (τῆς) points to the saving χάρις of God. And lastly, Brent Nongbri, in favour of the reading 'fellow-sharers of *my grace*,' calls attention to some neglected *Wirkungsgeschichte*, a textual variant in the so-called Western witnesses of Paul's letters which places μου *after* χάριτος (συγκοινωνοὺς τῆς χαριτός μου). Lamentably, Nestle-Aland's critical apparatus excludes this reading, due to the fact that a single fourth-century witness does not trump a reading supported by P⁴⁶, Codex Sinaiticus, Codex Alexandrinus, and Codex Vaticanus. Against this textual exclusion, however, Nongbri avers that even though

there is. . .insufficient evidence to suggest that συγκοινωνοὺς τῆς χαριτός μου represents the *earliest recoverable text* of Phil 1:7, this reading could represent an early *clarification* of the verse and thus could provide evidence for how some early readers of the ambiguous συγκοινωνοὺς μου τῆς χάριτος understood that phrase.²⁸²

Further bolstering his case is a fragment from Theodore of Mopsuestia's commentary on Phil.

1:7, in which he includes δέ to allow μου to modify χάριτος (συγκοινωνοὺς δέ μου τῆς χάριτος).²⁸³ Thus, finding the reading 'fellow-sharers of *my grace*' more persuasive, we maintain

281. Silva, *Philippians*, 47.

282. 'Two Neglected Textual Variants in Philippians 1,' *JBL* 128 (2009): 803–08 at 805; author's italics.

283. 'Textual Variants,' 806.

that, in 1:7, Paul integrates the Philippians into the χάρις of his apostleship,²⁸⁴ with the result that their κοινωνία exhibits two grace-shaped dimensions.

The first dimension is a mutual sharing in suffering. According to 1:7, the Philippians are συγκοινωνοί in Paul's 'chains.' But how? Each instance of δεσμός in the letter recounts the apostle's physical suffering in imprisonment (1:7, 13, 14, 17), whereas the Philippians are hundreds of miles removed from his dire predicament.²⁸⁵ Their gift to Paul provides the answer. It closes the gap of distance and permits the Philippians to enter into his suffering, as they lovingly despise the shame of affiliating themselves with a social outcast and express their interconnected dependence with Paul, being bound together by χάρις. Within this nexus of grace, when the apostle suffers, the entire community (πᾶς) suffers. The fate of one naturally affects the other. The gift, therefore, becomes more than just financial help. It reinforces their mutual ties of χάρις and suffering²⁸⁶ — a κοινωνία that will become clearer as we move exegetically through the letter.

284. Interestingly, Nongbri likens Paul as to a 'broker of divine benefaction,' yet implicitly assumes that the Philippians are not brokers in the same sense, and that their participation in this grace 'accrues glory and praise for Paul' instead of God ('Textual Variants,' 808). But, as will be demonstrated, Paul and the Philippians equally distribute divine benefaction to one another (1:18d-26). In this sense, they are 'mutual brokers' of divine beneficence.

285. *Contra* Ernst Lohmeyer who maintains that Paul connects their experience to his because the Philippians share the same ἀγών of imprisonment in 1:30 and the same prospect of 'Martyrium' (*Der Brief an die Philipper* [Göttingen: Dandenhoed & Ruprecht, 1956], 22–27). See section 3.2.1.2.2 below.

286. Concluding his discussion on 1:29-30, Lohmeyer accurately states, 'So sind sie in Leid und Gnade verbunden' (*Philipper*, 80), though we disagree with his definition of 'Leid' as 'Martyrium.'

The second grace-shaped dimension is a mutual sharing in gospel advancement. They are συγκοινωνοί with Paul in the defence (ἀπολογία) and confirmation (βεβαίωσις) of the gospel. These nouns form a hendiadys, being closely connected by the preposition ἐν, the single governing article τῆ, and the genitival phrase τοῦ εὐαγγελίου.²⁸⁷ Together, these forensic terms²⁸⁸ contribute to the creative interplay between Paul and the gospel in the courtroom. ‘To the question how it is with *him*,’ writes Karl Barth, ‘an apostle *must* react with information as to how it is with the *Gospel*,’²⁸⁹ since, as Morna Hooker asserts, ‘he sees his own imminent trial as part of a much greater event in which the gospel itself is on trial.’²⁹⁰ Paul will expand on this in 1:12-27. For now, he intentionally draws the Philippians into this interplay, heightening their participation in his χάρις and suffering for the gospel, as he takes a stand for Christ — or, perhaps better, ‘in Christ’ (ἐν Χριστῷ, 1:13). And, once again, even though the community is not physically present with Paul, they are said to be ‘fellow-sharers’ in this extension of χάρις in the gospel through *his* ‘chains,’ undoubtedly by virtue of their union in χάρις.

287. BDF, 442(16); Silva, *Philippians*, 48. Against this interpretation, see O’Brien, *Philippians*, 69. Having adopted this position, however, we deny that the *entire* clause ἐν τε τοῖς δεσμοῖς μου καὶ ἐν τῇ ἀπολογίᾳ καὶ βεβαίωσει τοῦ εὐαγγελίου is a hendiadys. The construction τε. . .καί and the repeated preposition ἐν prohibits such a view (although ἐν is missing from some manuscripts). Instead, ‘chains,’ a metonymy for imprisonment, is the sphere through which ‘defence and confirmation of the gospel’ is carried out.

288. Adolf Deissmann, *Bible Studies* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1901), 108–09.

289. *The Epistle to the Philippians* (trans. James Leitch; London: SCM Press, 1962), 26; author’s italics.

290. ‘Philippians,’ 11:484.

With this two-dimensional partnership laid out, as a mutual sharing in gospel advancement and suffering, the essence of which is divine χάρις, we now turn to trace the trajectory of χάρις in the gospel through their κοινωνία in the present (1:12-18c) and in the future (1:18d-26). This will permit the divine third party to take centre stage.

3.1.2. *Philippians 1:12-18c: The Present Trajectory of Χάρις through their Κοινωνία*

While their κοινωνία εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον was simply mentioned in 1:5, Paul now provides a concrete example of his partnership with the Philippians in 1:12-18c. The surprising feature of their gospel partnership is that they are not alone. A divine third party undergirds and even propels their ministry endeavours. Paul and the Philippians are actually mediators of God's χάρις to others.

3.1.2.1. *Χάρις from God through Paul and the Philippians to Others*²⁹¹

Paul begins 1:12-18c by informing the community that his imprisonment, rather than capping the flow of grace in the gospel, actually (μᾶλλον)²⁹² contributes to its advancement

291. This is not a four-party relationship between God, Paul, the Philippians, and others, since Paul and the Philippians constitute the second party that mediates the gospel to others. They are co-workers in its advancement.

292. Some translate μᾶλλον as 'more,' implying that some expected Paul to embrace suffering and martyrdom 'more' than he actually did (cf. John Reumann, *Philippians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* [AB 33B; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008], 193). Collange translates it as 'rather,' indicating that the adverb is 'opposing. . .two conflicting views about the actual consequences of the events in question' (*Epistle*, 53), which Hawthorne attributes to hearing rumours (*Philippians* [WBC 43; Waco, TX: Word, 1983], 34) and Capper to a relational rift ('Paul's Dispute,' 208–09). By contrast, it seems more plausible to interpret μᾶλλον as denoting the opposite of what they *might* have expected, translating the phrase 'actually' but without presupposing a conflict

(προκοπή, 1:12). The term προκοπή, appearing in 1:12 and 1:25, forms an *inclusio* and discloses the main thrust of this section — the progression of χάρις in gospel advancement. Importantly, the mysterious subject behind this graceful thrust in 1:12 is God, who advances the gospel *through* the hostile impediments of Paul’s imprisonment (of which the Philippians are συγκοινωνοί) *to others*. Χάρις or εὐαγγέλιον, therefore, flows from God’s beneficence and streams *through* their partnership, making its powerful presence known inside and outside prison walls.

Inside prison walls, χάρις is communicated through Paul’s chains to non-Christ believers. ‘[I]t has become known,’ he declares, ‘throughout the whole praetorium and to all the rest²⁹³ that my chains are *in Christ*’ (1:13). The precise function of ἐν Χριστῷ in this verse has been vigorously debated, though it seems best to take it adverbially, modifying the entire clause and not solely τοὺς δεσμούς μου or φανερούς. . .γενέσθαι.²⁹⁴ Accordingly, this verse

among the Philippians (cf. R.L. Omanson, ‘A Note on Phil. 1:12,’ *BT* 29 [1978]: 446–48). If anything, it may simply express their earnest desire to see the gospel advance.

293. τοῖς λοιποῖς πάσιν ‘takes in a wider circle, probably of pagans, who heard of Paul’s imprisonment and its reasons’ (O’Brien, *Philippians*, 94).

294. Those who link ἐν Χριστῷ with φανερούς emphasise the *spirit* in which Paul endured his imprisonment (‘my chains have become manifest in Christ’; cf. James H. Michael, *The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians* [MNTC; London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1928], 31), but the word order of the sentence rules this out. Conversely, those who connect the phrase with τοὺς δεσμούς μου highlight the *cause* of his ‘chains’ (‘my chains-in-Christ have become manifest’; cf. Hansen, *Philippians*, 68), yet the separation of these phrases by φανερούς makes this unlikely. Instead, we follow Fritz Neugebauer, who states, ‘Die Bezugsverhältnisse sind darum ganz eindeutig, sofern eben “in Christo” hier zu dieser prädikativen Verbindung gehören muss’ (*In Christus: Eine Untersuchung zum paulinischen Glaubensverständnis* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1961], 121; cf. Joachim Gnllka, *Der Philipperbrief* [HTKNT 10/3; 2nd ed.; Freiburg: Herder, 1968], 56–57). In this way, ἐν Χριστῷ signifies the death and resurrection of Christ, the saving activity of God which determines Paul’s apostolic existence.

comes to mean that Paul's confinement, with its painful as well as disgraceful sufferings, somehow manifests the χάρις of God, either through his teaching or through hearing about his reasons for his charge. In any case, one thing is certain. Paul's existence ἐν Χριστῷ became known through his sufferings for Christ.²⁹⁵ This is because the humiliating act of God in Christ determines, shapes, and imbues Paul's entire life and thought. He therefore exists as an embodiment of the Christ-event, a reenactment of the 'sufferings of Christ' (cf. 3:10; 2 Cor. 1:5),²⁹⁶ which derive from embracing the weakness and power of the cross (cf. 1 Cor. 1:18-25). Like the cataclysmic Christ-event in history, which issues life-giving glory through agony, shame, and death, so, too, Paul's disgraceful imprisonment functions as a rich opportunity for the grace in the gospel to spread to others. Ironically, *disgrace* gives way to *grace*.

Outside prison walls, χάρις in the gospel extends through Paul's chains and generates a new impulse for gospel proclamation through two Christ-believing groups. Being unified in their content, these groups are disunified in their motivations. One group evangelises 'on account of good will,' 'out of love,' and 'truthfully' (1:15-16, 18), 'knowing that [Paul] has been appointed for the defence of the gospel' (1:16) and therefore 'trust in the Lord because of [his]

295. More than likely, those in the *praetorium* would not have interpreted his 'chains' in this way, but Paul here is giving a divine perspective on suffering for the Philippian Christians that will extend into 1:27-30.

296. John Schütz, in speaking of Phil. 3:10, perceptively writes, 'Not only is ἐν Χριστῷ shown here literally to mean being shaped by Christ's death and resurrection; it also is clear that being so shaped, being ἐν Χριστῷ, is interpreted by Paul as experiencing power and suffering in the same indissoluble unity that characterizes Christ's death and resurrection as salvation events' (*Paul and the Anatomy of Apostolic Authority* [SNTSMS 26; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975], 221; cf. also 207-08; Robert Tannehill, *Dying and Rising with Christ: A Study in Pauline Theology* [BZNW 32; Berlin: Töpelmann, 1967], 114-29).

chains' (1:14).²⁹⁷ The other group does so 'out of envy and strife' and under 'pretence' (1:15, 18), 'supposing'²⁹⁸ to afflict [him] in [his] chains' (1:17). And yet, both 'proclaim Christ' (τὸν Χριστὸν κηρύσσουσιν, 1:15). Although their preaching methods and motives conflict, they equally participate in its advancement. Neither ulterior motives nor projected ambitions can successfully deter the προκοπή of χάρις through gospel proclamation, a progression which ultimately leads Paul to rejoice (χαίρω, 1:18c). His passion is for Christ to be proclaimed, for χάρις to continue flowing *through* Christ followers, and for this divine commodity to abound *towards others*. This is the trajectory of χάρις. It is constantly moving towards the other, either in prison or in the church, and breaks through any obstacle in its path, whether chains or corrupt motives. It is, after all, God who is behind its προκοπή.

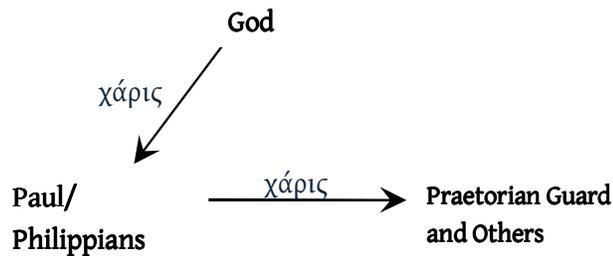
297. Since Paul normally addresses fellow believers 'in Christ' as brothers and sisters, it would be superfluous for ἐν κυρίῳ to modify ἀδελφοί. Rather, ἐν κυρίῳ modifies πεποιθότας (cf. Vincent, *Philippians*, 17).

298. οἰόμενοι. . ἐγείρειν in 1:17 is set in antithetical parallelism with εἰδότες. . ὅτι εἰς ἀπολογίαν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου κεῖμαι in 1:16. Those who know (εἰδότες) rightly interpret Paul's incarceration as a divine appointment (κεῖμαι) to defend the gospel, whereas those who imagine (οἰόμενοι) 'stumble at Paul's captivity and weakness, not recognizing that Christ's saving activity is manifested in his imprisonment, and so through it the gospel advances' (O'Brien, *Philippians*, 101-02).

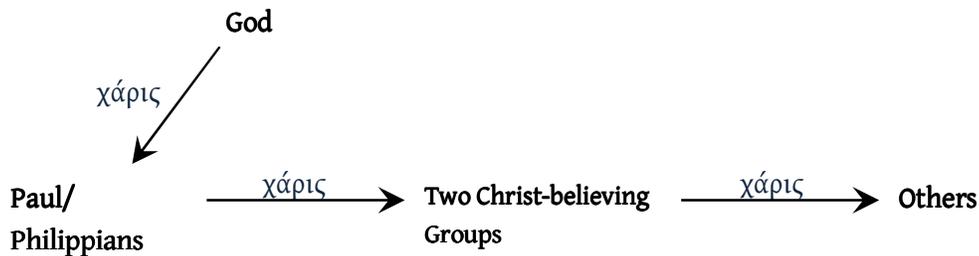
The relational pattern arising from this section would therefore resemble the following

diagram:

Inside Prison Walls:



Outside Prison Walls:



3.1.3. *Philippians 1:18d-26: The Future Trajectory of Χάρις through their Κοινωνία with One Another*

The shift in tense (χαίρω » χαρήσομαι, 1:18c-d) not only marks a shift in time but also a shift in direction.²⁹⁹ Paul presently rejoices in his partnership with the Philippians and God in mediating χάρις to others, but he anticipates a time in the future when they will mediate God's χάρις to one another, the outcome of which will be their mutual and ultimate salvation to the glory of God. This is a shift in the προκοπή of χάρις, a change of direction in their κοινωνία εἰς

²⁹⁹ The majority of commentators affirm a break at the end of 1:18 (Bockmuehl, *Philippians*, 81).

τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, which reveals a vital, reciprocal relationship between God, Paul, and the Philippians.

3.1.3.1. *Χάρις from God through the Philippians to Paul (1:18d-20)*

The first part of their reciprocal relationship appears in 1:18d-20. Looking out into the unforeseeable future, Paul grounds (γάρ) his anticipated joy in God's progression of the gospel. He writes: Ἀλλὰ καὶ χαρήσομαι, οἶδα γὰρ ὅτι τοῦτό μοι ἀποβήσεται εἰς σωτηρίαν (1:18d-19a). τοῦτο points back to ἐν τούτῳ in 1:18c, not τὰ κατ' ἐμέ in 1:12,³⁰⁰ continuing Paul's emphasis on the προκοπή of χάρις in the gospel, as the *inclusio* of 1:12 and 25 suggests. Only now, χάρις takes on the form of σωτηρία. Some commentators interpret σωτηρία solely as Paul's physical 'deliverance' from prison,³⁰¹ which partially does justice to the context (cf. 1:25-26). But it neglects the soteriological import of the term.³⁰² Indeed, Moisés Silva convincingly demonstrates that σωτηρία denotes physical *and* eschatological salvation.³⁰³ In fact, the

300. Against O'Brien and many others, who argue that Paul has his present situation of suffering in mind (cf. *Philippians*, 109 and n9).

301. E.g., Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 40.

302. Satake, 'Gnade,' 104: 'Es gibt nur eine einzige Stelle, wo Paulus direkt mit dem Wort σωτηρία sein eigenes Heil bezeichnet: Phil. 1.19.'

303. Without completely denying that Paul expected to be physically released from prison, Silva lists five convincing reasons for also understanding σωτηρία eschatologically: (i) Paul's adversity *will result* in his deliverance, which makes little sense if physical deliverance is in view; (ii) the phrase, εἴτε διὰ ζωῆς εἴτε διὰ θανάτου, implies a deliverance beyond the grave; (iii) the blaring resonance of Job 13 in Paul's discourse (τοῦτό μοι ἀποβήσεται εἰς σωτηρίαν, Phil. 1:19; Job 13:16 [LXX]) portrays a heavenly vindication (cf. Richard Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989], 21-24); (iv) the emotive comment, κατὰ τὴν ἀποκαταδοκίαν καὶ ἐλπίδα μου, surpasses a mere reference to physical liberation; and (v) the combination of ἀποκαταδοκία and ἐλπίς parallels Rom. 5:5, where ἐλπίς appears with καταισχύνω and promotes the notion of

eschatological overtones of the term heighten the pivotal role that the Philippians play in this exchange — they occupy the *intermediary role* of God’s supply that leads not only to Paul’s deliverance from prison but also from eschatological death.

This becomes evident from the following prepositional clause, where Paul explains how his σωτηρία will be enacted: διὰ τῆς ὑμῶν δεήσεως καὶ ἐπιχορηγίας τοῦ πνεύματος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (1:19). The preposition διὰ indicates a intermediary role, while the single article (τῆς) governs ὑμῶν δεήσεως and ἐπιχορηγίας τοῦ πνεύματος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, revealing a quasi partnership between God and the Philippians.³⁰⁴ As such, God and the Philippians relate to one another as ‘human “petition” and divine “supply,”’ writes Bockmuehl, with the remarkable outcome that ‘both serve as contributing, not to say instrumental, factors in Paul’s “salvation.”’³⁰⁵ God will ‘provide [ἐπιχορηγία]³⁰⁶ the spirit of Jesus Christ’³⁰⁷ through (διὰ) the Philippians’ prayers,³⁰⁸ to produce boldness (παρρησία) in the apostle to undergo the only

shame found in Isa. 28:16, not the ‘subjective feeling of guilt’ but the ‘objective disgrace experienced by those on whom the judgment of God falls’ (*Philippians*, 69–72).

304. Though the term κοινωνία is absent, one discerns a co-working on the divine and human level conceptually, especially if 1:7 is understood as an incorporation into Paul’s χάρις as an apostle, a role which, in 1 Cor. 3:9, may arguably be conceived as a co-partnership with God. This is not completely foreign to Paul, seeing that he envisages a co-working (συνσπουργέω) between the Corinthians and God in 2 Cor. 1:11 (cf. Briones, ‘Mutual Brokers,’ 549 n55).

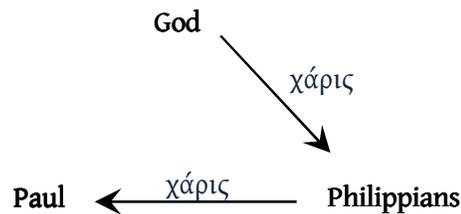
305. Bockmuehl, *Philippians*, 83; author’s italics.

306. The translation ‘help’ is sustained on the grounds of ancient marriage contracts. But, in light of the use of ἐπιχορηγία in Gal. 3:5, it most likely means ‘provide’ or ‘supply’ (Fee, *Philippians*, 133 n30).

307. The genitive, τοῦ πνεύματος, is an objective rather than subjective genitive, denoting the provision of the Spirit to the apostle (Fee, *Philippians*, 132; Bockmuehl, *Philippians*, 84; pace Vincent, *Philippians*, 24; Gnllka, *Philippenerbrief*, 67–68).

308. Note the same relational (and prayerful) pattern in 2 Cor. 1:11.

shame that matters, that which is endured for the sake of Christ.³⁰⁹ In the end, this mediation will result in Paul's σωτηρία. Thus, just as Paul prays to God for the Philippians' final salvation in the introductory thanksgiving (1:4-6, 9-11), the Philippians will likewise pray to God for Paul's ultimate salvation. Through this intermediary exchange,³¹⁰ a three-way bond emerges, and the mutuality that χάρις produces between Paul and the Philippians is, once again, apparent. God in *Christ*, through the Philippians, provides the spirit of *Christ* to Paul (πνεύματος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, 1:19), culminating in his present/final salvation and ultimately glorifying *Christ* (Χριστός μεγαλυνθήσεται, 1:20).³¹¹ This relational pattern may be diagrammed as follows:



3.1.3.2. Χάρις from God through Paul to the Philippians (1:20-26)

Previously, in 1:12-18c, God, being the implied agent behind ἐλήλυθεν, advances the gospel through Paul's suffering to manifest *Christ* (ἐν Χριστῷ, 1:13-14) and also works

309. In view of Greco-Roman society, it is safe to assume that Paul, released or executed, will indeed be shamed to some degree. But earthly shame pales in comparison to the possibility of being shamed before God. Paul's chief and only fear is not remaining loyal to Christ (cf. Beare, *Philippians*, 62).

310. As noticed by Fee, *Philippians*, 127.

311. What Paul means by Christ being glorified through his life or death (μεγαλυνθήσεται Χριστός . . . εἴτε διὰ ζωῆς εἴτε διὰ θανάτου) carries various nuances in 1:18d-26: (i) Christ is glorified 'now as always' (ὡς πάντοτε καὶ νῦν) in prison, possibly before an earthly tribunal; (ii) since Paul expects to live through his imprisonment, Christ will also be glorified when he ministers among the Philippians again; and (iii) Paul will glorify Christ at the heavenly tribunal.

sovereignly *through* disparate motivations to proclaim *Christ* (τὸν Χριστὸν κηρύσσουσιν, 1:15-18). In turning to the second half of their reciprocal relationship in 1:18d-26, nothing changes. As we have just seen in 1:18d-20, God advances χάρις in the gospel *through* the Philippians' prayers to magnify *Christ* in Paul. And now, in 1:20-26, God will also work *through* Paul in order to glorify *Christ* in the Philippians (1:20-26). This mediating exchange between Paul and the community becomes clear from the phrase μεγαλυνθήσεται Χριστός. O'Brien sums it up nicely:

The wording is carefully chosen, for instead of using the first person active construction of the verb μεγαλύνω [Χριστόν], which would correspond with αἰσχυνθήσομαι but which would have given undue prominence to himself, the apostle changes to the third person. Christ becomes the subject (μεγαλυνθήσεται Χριστός) and Paul is simply the *instrument* by which the greatness of Christ shines out: *behind the passive voice the activity of God is implied, with Paul being the instrument in the divine hands.*³¹²

But if God glorifies Christ *through* Paul's body, *how* is Christ glorified? The obvious answer is 'whether through life or through death' (εἴτε διὰ ζωῆς εἴτε διὰ θανάτου, 1:20). Yet Paul is genuinely torn (συνέχω) between the two in 1:21-24, fluctuating between both prospects:

Ἐμοὶ γὰρ τὸ ζῆν Χριστὸς καὶ τὸ ἀποθανεῖν κέρδος. εἰ δὲ τὸ ζῆν ἐν σαρκί, τοῦτό μοι καρπὸς ἔργου, καὶ τί αἰρήσομαι οὐ γνωρίζω. συνέχομαι δὲ ἐκ τῶν δύο, τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν ἔχων εἰς τὸ ἀναλῦσαι καὶ σὺν Χριστῷ εἶναι, πολλῶ [γὰρ] μᾶλλον κρεῖττον· τὸ δὲ ἐπιμένειν [ἐν] τῇ σαρκὶ ἀναγκαιότερον δι' ὑμᾶς.³¹³

312. *Philippians*, 115; my italics. See also J.B. Lightfoot, *Saint Paul's Epistle to the Philippians: A Revised Text with Introduction, Notes, and Dissertations* (London: Macmillan, 1896), 91.

313. This text is an exegetical and syntactical minefield which cannot be fully explored at the present moment, such as the 'extremely complex sentence' of 1:18-26 (cf. Fee, *Philippians*, 128-30), the obscure wording of 1:22 (cf. O'Brien, *Philippians*, 124-25), and whether or not Paul contemplated suicide (cf. Arthur J. Droge and James D. Tabor, *A Noble Death: Suicide and Martyrdom Among Christians and Jews in Antiquity* [San Francisco: Harper, 1991]).

Yes, life and death equally magnify Christ. But, for Paul, dying means gain (κέρδος), not in the sense of escaping earthly troubles,³¹⁴ but because death permits deeper fellowship with Christ.³¹⁵ It means ‘to be with Christ’ (σὺν Χριστῷ εἶναι), so, naturally, his desire (ἐπιθυμία) is to embrace this ‘far greater’ (πολλῶ. . . μᾶλλον κρεῖσσον) reality. Nevertheless, he stifles this desire, revealing a close conformity to the pattern of the Christ self-gift in 2:5-11, as he willingly gives himself on account of the Philippian community (δι’ ὑμᾶς).³¹⁶

Two reasons explain this selfless decision. The first is that this (τοῦτο) — that is, remaining ‘in the flesh’ (ἐν σαρκί)³¹⁷ — means ‘fruitful labour.’ καρπὸς ἔργου, an agricultural metaphor, is not in antithetical parallelism with the financial metaphor κέρδος in 1:22.³¹⁸ Paul never hesitates to mix metaphors in order to speak of a single concept (cf. 1 Cor. 9:7 and 19-22), which, in this case, is Christ (cf. κέρδος, Phil. 3:7-8). Either Christ will be gained *by Paul through death*, or Christ will be reaped *by the Philippians through Paul’s ministry*. To paraphrase 1:21 accordingly: ‘To live is Christ *for you* to die is Christ *for me*.’ To be sure, all parties in this exchange will (in some sense and in different ways) enjoy the fruit that is reaped in the

314. Contra D.W. Palmer, “‘To Die is Gain’ (Philippians 1:21),” *NovT* 17 (1975): 203–18, who compiles list of quotes from lyric poetry, drama, philosophy, and rhetoric to show that death was commonly understood as gain (κέρδος) in Greek literature, because it relieves people from their earthly troubles. He then wrongly attributes this common belief to Paul.

315. O’Brien, *Philippians*, 123, 130.

316. Notice the Christological overtones of δι’ ὑμᾶς in 2 Cor. 8:9, which also appear in 2 Cor. 4:15.

317. τοῦτο points back to εἰ δὲ τὸ ζῆν ἐν σαρκί rather than to καὶ τί αἰρήσομαι οὐ γνωρίζω.

318. Collange, *Epistle*, 63.

process,³¹⁹ but Paul gives special prominence to the Philippians' experience of this fruitful labour, especially since καρπός points back to the καρπὸν δικαιοσύνης τὸν διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ in 1:11 and ahead to τὸν καρπὸν τὸν πλεονάζοντα εἰς λόγον ὑμῶν in 4:17.

Even more significant is how Paul depicts his work among the church as a joint effort, a co-working, we might say, between him and God. This subtly appears in the word ἔργον. Every instance of this term in the letter denotes God's doing. God begins and completes the 'good work' (ἔργον ἀγαθόν) in and through the community (1:6), and he also, paradoxically, works (ἐνεργέω) within the working of their salvation (2:12-13). Epaphroditus even spends himself on behalf of the 'work of Christ' (ἔργον Χριστοῦ, 2:25). Additionally, the emphatic placement of μοι in 1:22 encompasses more than just Paul's doing. If it was only that, we would have expected to read: τοῦτό μου καρπὸς ἔργου.³²⁰ Evidently, then, God will labour *through* Paul's toil on Philippian soil, a co-operation that will fruitfully benefit the community.

Paul's second reason for remaining and labouring among the Philippians is that it is 'more necessary for [their] sake' (ἀναγκαιότερον δι' ὑμᾶς, 1:24). Necessity — dare we say obligation — drives the apostolic office (cf. 1 Cor. 9:16), not a social obligation due to humanity in general (although, obviously, Paul does not deny this [cf. Gal. 2:10; 6:10]), but a soteriological

319. God in Christ will be glorified, praised, and magnified in the community's bearing of fruit (1:11, 19, 26), Paul will obtain an eschatological boast by labouring among them (2:16; cf. 4:1), and the Philippians will be established in the gospel (1:25, 27).

320. O'Brien, *Philippians*, 126 n52. Paul could have co-workers in mind, as O'Brien suggests, but this is foreign to Phil. 1:12-26, where the accent falls on God's progression of the gospel through his labourers. More than likely, a human-divine co-working is implied.

commitment due to humanity ἐν Χριστῷ. Within this Christo-sphere, Paul and the Philippians are bound by the mutual, obligatory ties of κοινωνία in grace, suffering, and gospel advancement, vulnerably depending on one another to meet each other's needs.³²¹ This is partly why Paul considers it necessary (ἀναγκαῖος) to minister among them. As we will see in the following section, the community is experiencing some sort of suffering (πάσχω, 1:29), sharing the same ἀγών as their apostle (1:30). Whatever their 'agony' turns out to be, it obviously threatens their faith in the gospel, which is exactly what moves Paul to 'remain [μένω] and continue [παραμένω] for [their] progression and joy of faith' (1:25).³²²

The expression εἰς τὴν ὑμῶν προκοπὴν καὶ χαρὰν τῆς πίστεως has been interpreted in a variety of ways.³²³ Breaking down the phrase, it seems best to consider προκοπὴν καὶ χαρὰν as a single unit, being governed by τὴν ὑμῶν, and τῆς πίστεως as an objective genitive. It therefore takes on a creedal sense like τῇ πίστει τοῦ εὐαγγελίου in 1:27,³²⁴ translated as 'for your progress and joy in the faith.' The προκοπή of χάρις in the gospel, then, began behind bars and moved outside through two evangelistic groups in 1:12-18c. It changed its course in 1:18d-20, working through the Philippians' prayers for the apostle's salvation. Now, in 1:20-26, it

321. Gerald Hawthorne, *Philippians* (WBC 43; Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Rev. ed. 2004), 62: 'Need determines the direction his life is to take.'

322. Paul Hoffmann suggests that the καρπός, in line with Rom. 1:13 and 1 Cor. 9:19-23, refers to gaining new converts (*Die Toten in Christus: Eine religionsgeschichtliche und exegetische Untersuchung zur paulinischen Eschatologie* [Münster: Aschendorff, 1966], 292), but this cannot be the case. It refers to the community's 'progression and joy in the faith.' The καρπός is Christian perseverance, not conversion.

323. For the three major interpretive options, see O'Brien, *Philippians*, 140.

324. Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 52.

moves in the opposite direction, flowing through Paul's labour *for* the Philippians' ultimate salvation. This becomes evident from the purpose clause of 1:26: ἵνα τὸ καύχημα ὑμῶν περισσεύῃ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ ἐν ἐμοὶ διὰ τῆς ἐμῆς παρουσίας πάλιν πρὸς ὑμᾶς. What God will accomplish *through* (διὰ) Paul's presence³²⁵ and ministry will serve as the grounds of the Philippians' καύχημα, a boast which will 'abound in Christ Jesus' (περισσεύῃ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ).³²⁶ ἐν Χριστῷ is both the *sphere* in which they reside and the *object* of their boast.³²⁷ God does the work *through* Paul, so God in Christ gets the glory.

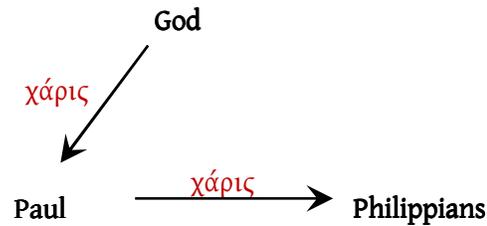
Nevertheless, when placing their καύχημα in conjunction with Paul's in 2:16, we discover that their boast will not only occur when their apostle arrives into Philippi but also on the day of Christ, that is, the day of final salvation. Since Paul links his eschatological boast (καύχημα ἐμοὶ εἰς ἡμέραν Χριστοῦ) with his labour (κόπος) among the Philippians in 2:16, and since his labour serves as the basis of their καύχημα in 1:26 (διὰ τῆς ἐμῆς παρουσίας πάλιν πρὸς ὑμᾶς), it necessarily follows that if they continue in the 'progress and joy in the faith,' and therefore do not render the apostle's work void (εἰς κενόν), then both of them will retain their boast. This intricately interdependent relationship manifests a significant relational dynamic in the economy of χάρις — the eschatological σωτηρία/καύχημα of one party lies in the mutual

325. Of course, even in Paul's absence, God will work (ἐνεργέω) with the community (κατεργάζομαι) to bring about their σωτηρία (2:12-13).

326. ἐν ἐμοί, taking on a causal sense ('because of me'), also contributes to the grounds of their καύχημα.

327. Fee, *Philippians*, 155.

concern of the other,³²⁸ with both parties directing their gaze to God in Christ as the main supplier of χάρις through the other. This three-way, mutual relationship in 1:18d-26 can be diagrammed as follows:



3.1.3.3. Summary

Throughout 1:12-26, Paul incorporates God as a third party into their κοινωνία εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον for others in the present (1:12-18c) and for one another in the future (1:18d-26). For Paul, the progression of χάρις is an unstoppable force, enveloping everything in its path, both pagans and Christians, and magnifying Christ at every point of contact. Nothing can frustrate this divine momentum of χάρις. It flows from God *through* the mediation of human agency to others, in the form of preaching (1:12-18c), prayer (1:18d-20), or ministry activity (1:21-26). It never remains in one spot. It is never fully possessed by one person. It is always being received in order to be passed on. And the Philippians, being caught up into this divine momentum,

328. In contrast to A. Satake, who argues that ‘Paulus sieht also sein eigenes Heil in engstem Zusammenhang mit seinem Dienst als Apostel,’ insofar as his salvation necessarily depends on the progress of the gospel (‘Gnade,’ 104), we offer a slight yet substantially different approach. Paul’s eschatological salvation does not rely on the progression of the gospel as such, but it depends, at least partially, on his relationship with the community, their κοινωνία εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον. He depends on their mutual relationship that furthers the gospel, particularly in the lives of one another (cf. 1:18d-27), rather than the furtherance of the gospel itself. For a similar distinction, see Seyoon Kim, *The Origin of Paul’s Gospel* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1981), 293.

participate in Paul's apostolic χάρις. They are bound to their apostle, and their apostle is bound to them, as they further the gospel, enter into one another's suffering, and labour for the sake of the other's final salvation. In short, Paul and the Philippians enjoy a κοινωνία of gift and suffering, with God, the divine third party, circulating χάρις in this triangulated relationship.

3.2. The Power of Χάρις in their Three-way Κοινωνία

'The gift. . . is never at any time separable from its Giver. It partakes of the character of power, in so far as God himself enters the arena and remains in the arena with it.'³²⁹ But how does God exert his power through the gift in the arena of a three-way κοινωνία? Phil. 1:27-30 provides an answer.

3.2.1. *Philippians 1:27-30: A Bond of Gift and Suffering Leading to Salvation*

As we approach this text, one which has been deemed the 'linchpin' of the letter,³³⁰ we need to keep the divine initiative of God in 1:12-26 foremost in view. For Paul now sets his theological gaze on this crucial third participant. He specifically centres his discussion on the relation between divine gift and suffering, since the divine gift of the Christ-event (or, the Christ-gift) — the very instantiation of χάρις (cf. 2 Cor. 8:9) — powerfully institutes a new manner of life in the Christian community, one marked as much by grace (or, gift) as by suffering. Paul expounds on this new existence 'in Christ' in order to exhort the Philippians to

329. Käsemann, *Questions*, 174.

330. Fowl, *Philippians*, 59.

unity in the midst of hostility (1:27-28) and to explain the Philippians' present suffering within a three-way perspective (1:29-30).³³¹

3.2.1.1. *The Christ-Gift from God to the Heavenly Πόλις in Philippi (1:27-28)*

Whether Paul actually arrives at Philippi or simply hears about them, he exhorts the community to do one (μόνον) thing: ἀξίως τοῦ εὐαγγελίου τοῦ Χριστοῦ πολιτεύεσθε (1:27). By employing πολιτεύομαι (derived from πόλις),³³² Paul evokes the image of a city. According to Aristotle, the πόλις in ancient Greece was a sort of partnership (κοινωνία τις), whereby each citizen incurred the mutual obligation to carry out civic duties by using their gifts for the corporate good of all.³³³ As we have seen, some of the social dynamics within the ancient πόλις are carried over to the heavenly one by Paul, such as mutuality, interdependence, and obligation.³³⁴ Even so, he distances this city from all others in one monumental way — the constitution of this πόλις is τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ, a legislation to which the Philippians, with citizenship (πολίτευμα) of a heavenly πόλις (3:20), must conduct themselves worthily (ἀξίως).

331. O'Brien envisages two themes in 1:27-30: (i) 'standing firm' against the world; and (ii) 'being united' with one another (*Philippians*, 144). But Jervis argues against O'Brien, insisting that Paul explicates 'the meaning and significance of suffering as a believer' (*At the Heart of the Gospel: Suffering in the Earliest Christian Message* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007), 53). But unless a reconstruction is posited, such as Paul having to correct their false notions about suffering, then we are unsure whether these options are mutually exclusive.

332. The precise meaning of this term has been vigorously debated (cf. Silva, *Philippians*, 80 n1).

333. *Pol.* 1252a.

334. See Beare, *Philippians*, 66; Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 69.

What Paul means by living ἀξίως is explained by the ὅτι-clause in 1:27c:

ὅτι στήκετε
ἐν ἐνὶ πνεύματι,
μιᾷ ψυχῇ
συναθλοῦντες
τῇ πίστει τοῦ εὐαγγελίου
καὶ μὴ πτυρόμενοι ἐν μηδενὶ ὑπὸ τῶν ἀντικειμένων,
ἥτις ἐστὶν αὐτοῖς ἔνδειξις ἀπωλείας, ὑμῶν δὲ σωτηρίας (1:27c-28c).

With ‘one spirit’ (ἐνὶ πνεύματι) and ‘one mind’ (μιᾷ ψυχῇ), Christ-followers at Philippi, like that of ancient societies, constitute a single body.³³⁵ But unlike other societies, they stand (στήκω) and strive (συναθλέω) for the ‘faith of the gospel’ (τῇ πίστει τοῦ εὐαγγελίου).³³⁶ In other words, the Philippians are to stand united in their suffering for ‘the cause of the faith — its spread and growth,’³³⁷ without becoming frightened (μὴ πτυρόμενοι) by their opponents (τῶν ἀντικειμένων),³³⁸ which (ἥτις) serves as a sign of destruction to them but of salvation for the community (1:28). While ἥτις grammatically anticipates ἔνδειξις, the whole of 1:27c-28 is most likely its antecedent.³³⁹ Cast in this way, their united, steadfast resolve for the gospel in the midst of opposition and suffering is what Paul means by living ἀξίως, which operates as a sign (ἔνδειξις) of their ultimate salvation (σωτηρία).

335. For the prominence of the body metaphor to describe the πόλις in Greco-Roman society, see Dale Martin, *The Corinthian Body* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 3–37.

336. Following O’Brien, we interpret τῇ πίστει as a dative of advantage and τοῦ εὐαγγελίου as a genitive of origin (*Philippians*, 152).

337. O’Brien, *Philippians*, 152.

338. For a comprehensive list of how scholars have identified these rivals, see O’Brien, *Philippians*, 26–35.

339. Bockmuehl, *Philippians*, 101; Fee, *Philippians*, 168.

If we were to stop there, it would logically follow that if they, out of some innate worth, prove themselves ἄξιοι, then their actions will result in their σωτηρία. Paul, however, inserts a critical phrase that undercuts that line of reasoning — καὶ τοῦτο ἀπὸ θεοῦ (1:28d). In this divine economy, ἀξία is divinely created rather than naturally cultivated. τοῦτο not only points back to σωτηρία but to the whole of their worthy conduct in 1:27c-28,³⁴⁰ demonstrating that it is God who enables their steadfast unity in the gospel through hostility, and this gift (ἀπὸ θεοῦ) will result in their ultimate salvation. Sensing the need to provide a reason for this theologically-weighty claim, Paul continues: ὅτι ὑμῖν ἐχαρίσθη τὸ ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ, οὐ μόνον τὸ εἰς αὐτὸν πιστεύειν ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ πάσχειν.

The term ἐχαρίσθη (a cognate of χάρις) depicts God as the primary giver in this heavenly πόλις, who graces the community with a threefold gift of faith, suffering, and salvation: (i) πίστις in the gospel grants entrance into the πόλις (1:29); (ii) πάσχειν, coupled with the divinely-granted perseverance of the community in 1:27c-28, characterises Christian life within this economy (1:29); and (iii) σωτηρία is the ultimate end of their heavenly πολίτευμα (1:28). All of this, from start to finish, is energised by the power of God's χάρις. Truly, as 1:6 makes plain, God begins (ἐνάρχομαι) and ends (ἐπιτελέω) all Christian doing. Whereas, for Aristotle, doing precedes being,³⁴¹ for Paul, being (made worthy) precedes doing

340. Silva, *Philippians*, 83.

341. *Nic. Eth.* 2.1.4.

and doing confirms being (made worthy) (cf. 2:12-13). This is the unnerving logic of χάρις, a radical rationale which subverts every cultural notion of ἀξία. Unlike Seneca's economy, recipients do not need to become *digni* (worthy) before receiving gifts in the economy of χάρις.³⁴² Instead, they receive the Christ-gift in order to become *digni*. Thus, the source of the community's ἀξία resides efficaciously in τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ. Once recipients take hold of the Christ-gift (or, perhaps better, once the Christ-gift takes hold of them), they then become what they are, as it calls 'worth' into being that did not previously exist and reconstitutes civic life in the heavenly πόλις.³⁴³

3.2.1.2. *Christian Life ἐν Χριστῷ (1:29-30)*

A necessary word of clarification. By speaking of a heavenly πόλις, Paul ultimately speaks of the sphere in which he and the Philippians reside, most easily, albeit ambiguously, described by the phrase ἐν Χριστῷ (cf. 1:13, 26). This mutual participation 'in Christ' helps clarify the interrelated three-way bond between God in Christ, the community, and the apostle in 1:29-30. In these verses, Paul moves into a theological explanation of their present suffering, first in relation to Christ and then in relation to himself, both of which expose the triangulated relationship ἐν Χριστῷ.

342. Ben. 4.10.5.

343. John Schütz, *Apostolic Authority*, 50.

3.2.1.2.1. *The Suffering of the Philippians in relation to Christ (1:29)*

After stating that the Philippians' final σωτηρία will be achieved by God in 1:27-28, Paul provides the reason: 'because it has been granted [ἐχαρίσθη] to you on behalf of Christ [ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ], not only to believe in him but also to suffer on behalf of him [τὸ ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ πάσχειν]' (1:29). Astonishingly, Paul frames the Philippians' suffering as a reciprocal response to Christ's. Just as Christ suffered on behalf of (ὑπὲρ) the ungodly (cf. Rom. 5:6), so, now, the Philippians suffer on behalf of (ὑπὲρ) Christ.³⁴⁴ With this, Paul makes suffering ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ part and parcel of life ἐν Χριστῷ.

Through faith, believers participate in Christ's humiliation, suffering, and death (cf. 3:10; Rom. 6:3), physically embodying, even reenacting, the sufferings of Christ in the world. But that is only one side of the picture. Sharing in the dying of Christ necessarily means that they share in the resurrection life of Christ. This is precisely why Paul grounds God's ultimate σωτηρία of the community with the ὅτι-clause of 1:29.³⁴⁵ Just as the pattern of the Christ-event

344. 'This reciprocal relationship,' Hooker exclaims, 'is extraordinary.' 'Suffering "for Christ," means. . . that the Philippians—because they are "in Christ"—are granted the privilege of sharing in the redemptive work of Christ' ('Philippians,' 498). This is, of course, not in any absolute sense, as if their suffering carries 'atoning efficacy' (*contra* Anthony Hanson, *The Paradox of the Cross in the Thought of St Paul* [JSNTSup 17; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1987], 141), but in the sense that their suffering occurs 'in Christ' and for the propagation of the gospel of Christ.

345. Although some link the ὅτι-clause to μὴ πτυρόμενοι in 1:28, giving the reason why the community ought not be intimidated by their opponents (cf. N. Walter, 'Christusglaube und heidnische Religiosität in paulinischen Gemeinden,' *NTS* 25 [1979]: 425-36 at 425), we connect ὅτι with καὶ τοῦτο ἀπὸ θεοῦ, which, in turn, modifies all of 1:27c-28, explaining how their suffering will result in σωτηρία (cf. Vincent, *Philippians*, 35).

is *exaltation through humiliation* (2:5-11), so also the pattern of the Philippians' life ἐν Χριστῷ is *glorification through suffering* (cf. Rom. 8:17).

This road of suffering, however, is not travelled alone. Although the term does not appear in 1:27-30, the κοινωνία of 1:7, which joins Paul and the Philippians in a mutual relationship of gift and suffering, conceptually and concretely manifests itself in 1:30.

3.2.1.2.2. *Mutuality of Suffering between Paul and the Philippians ἐν Χριστῷ (1:30)*

Although miles apart, Paul and the community 'share the same conflict' (τὸν αὐτὸν ἀγῶνα ἔχοντες, 1:30).³⁴⁶ Bemused scholars have attempted to explain the nature of this shared experience. Ernst Lohmeyer, for example, understands τὸν αὐτόν literally. Certain members of the community experienced Roman confinement and expected to be martyred, just as Paul did during his imprisonment. 'Es ist der "gleiche Kampf," den die Gemeinde zu Philippi und den Paulus im Kerker durchzufechten hat; hier wie dort ein Martyrium "für Christus."³⁴⁷ Yet nothing in the letter suggests that the community had either suffered the agonies of

346. V.C. Pfitzner maintains that the ἀγών word group depicts the apostle's incessant conflict for the gospel and faith (*Paul and the Agon Motif: Tradition Athletic Imagery in the Pauline Literature* [Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1967], 126-29; cf. also 1 Thess. 2:2).

347. *Philipper*, 79. More recently, Stephen Fowl, 'Believing Forms Seeing: Formation for Martyrdom in Philippians,' in *Character and Scripture: Moral Formation, Community, and Biblical Interpretation* (ed. William P. Brown; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 317-30 promotes a milder Lohmeyerian reading of Philippians, claiming that 'while Lohmeyer might be wrong in thinking Philippians is directly about martyrdom, he was on the right track to the extent that Philippians is about the habits and dispositions that would enable people to offer their lives back to God in the face of intense hostility with martyrdom as a possible consequence' (318; cf. also idem, 'Philippians 1:28b, One More Time,' in *New Testament Greek and Exegesis* (ed. Amy M. Donaldson and Timothy B. Sailors; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 167-79).

incarceration or awaited martyrdom.³⁴⁸ Other explanations have also been proposed, such as external persecution,³⁴⁹ economic hardship caused by a breakdown of financial relationships,³⁵⁰ and political oppression for failure to participate in the imperial cult.³⁵¹ Although informed, these reconstructions remain speculative, with a paucity of hard evidence making it impossible to ascertain the precise *nature* of their suffering. Even so, some conclusions may be drawn about the *form* of their joint suffering.

The ἄγων that Paul and the Philippians experience most likely refers to a similar, though not identical, form of suffering. Joachim Gnilka convincingly argues,

Die Gleichsetzung beruht nicht auf einer Gleichheit der Fakten, sie ist theologisch begründet. Leiden und Bedrängnisse der Gläubigen, mögen sie hart oder leicht sein, sind Leiden und Bedrängnisse um Christi willen. Der Geist, in dem sie getragen werden oder wenigstens getragen werden sollen, macht sie wesentlich gleich.³⁵²

348. Against Lohmeyer's reconstruction, Gordon Fee bluntly asserts that 'to go so far as Lohmeyer and to see the entire epistle as having to do with *martyrdom*, takes this theme far beyond the realities of the text itself' (*Philippians*, 29; author's italics; cf. also Dibelius, *Philippener*, 69–70; Reumann, *Philippians*, 282).

349. J.E. Stambaugh and D.L. Balch, *The New Testament in Its Social Environment* (LEC; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986), 32–36; Gregory Bloomquist, *The Function of Suffering in Philippians* (JSNTSup 78; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 158.

350. Peter Oakes, *Philippians: From People to Letter* (SNTSMS 110; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 77–102; esp. 89–96.

351. C.S. de Vos, *Church and Community Conflicts: The Relationships of the Thessalonian, Corinthians, and Philippian Churches with Their Wider Civic Communities* (SBLDS 168; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999), 264–65; M. Tellbe, *Paul Between Synagogue and State: Christians, Jews, and Civic Authorities in 1 Thessalonians, Romans, and Philippians* (ConBNT 34; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2001), 250–59; Bormann, *Philippi*, 48–50. For a detailed critique of this view, see Dean Pinter, 'Divine and Imperial Power: A Comparative Analysis of Paul and Josephus' (PhD Thesis, Durham University, 2009), 190–229.

352. *Philippenerbrief*, 101–02.

Their sufferings are ‘theologically grounded’ (*theologisch begründet*) insofar as the community has been united to Christ through the sacramental death of baptism, such that these sufferings are endured in the same spirit (*der Geist*), namely, ‘in behalf of [Christ]’ (ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ). In other words, their joint suffering, though distinct in *nature*, derives from a common origin (i.e., the χάρις of God [ἐχαρίσθη, 1:29]) and carries ‘the same’ (τὸν αὐτόν) vertical purpose — they suffer ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ.

Additionally, however, their mutual suffering also contains a horizontal purpose. As fellow-sharers in χάρις and πάσχειν (or gift and suffering, 1:7), neither Paul nor the Philippians suffer apart from one another. No matter the physical distance, they endure suffering together. ‘The struggle believers know is a joint one,’ Ann Jervis notes, and ‘the Philippians share the same ἀγών as Paul (and Christ, 1:30). The suffering of one “in” Christ mingles with the suffering of the many “in” Christ. Paul does not conceive of solitary suffering “in” Christ.’³⁵³ To help illustrate this, we could imagine two circles as representing their individual sufferings. Both emerge from a mutual participation in χάρις, and both are individually distinct, yet they overlap one another. Where they overlap is the ‘mingling’ point, the point in which the individual sufferings of one come into contact with the sufferings of the other. At

353. *At the Heart of the Gospel*, 62. Miroslav Volf also adeptly notes that ‘solidarity refers to “struggling on the side of,” rather than simply to “suffering together with,” solidarity may not be severed from self-donation’ (*Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* [Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1996], 24).

the very core of each circle is τὰ παθήματα τοῦ Χριστοῦ (3:10), the deepest level of a person ἐν Χριστῷ, which is precisely the location where the community enjoys κοινωνία with Paul. This is an intimate bond indeed.

What is beginning to emerge here is a mutuality of suffering that will become clearer only when we reach 4:10-20. For the time being, Paul merely alludes to this mutual engagement in one another's sufferings, endured on behalf of Christ. Within this co-sharing of suffering, grace passes through one party and reaches the other in need. All the while, it is God who works *in* and *through* human agency to ensure the consummation of their salvation.

4. Exegetical Investigation of Philippians 1:3-6, 2:25-30, and 4:10-20

In the previous exegetical section, we attempted to expose the divine third party in Paul's partnership with the Philippians, demonstrating that their κοινωνία εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον is a three-way exchange, in which χάρις comes from God, streams through one party, and reaches the other. And this three-way bond is no less present in material gifts sent from Philippi to Paul. That the community's gifts are a continuation of the reciprocal, relational pattern of 1:12-30 becomes clear from the similarities between 2:17-18 and 2:25-30. In the former, Paul presents his ministry among the Philippians, which he explicates in 1:20-26, as a sacrifice (θυσία) and service (λειτουργία) for their 'joy and progression in the faith.' In the latter, as we will see, the Philippians send a sacrifice (θυσία, 4:18) with Epaphroditus, their λειτουργός, and

so complete what was lacking in their service (λειτουργία) to him (2:30). This spiritual θυσία is nothing other than their material gifts, and their gifts are nothing other than a tangible expression of their mutual κοινωνία.

To prove this, however, we first need to reconstruct the timing, transmission, and purpose of Philippian gifts, before discerning how Paul figures it in 1:3-6 and 4:10-20. What we intend to find is a theological tactic that involves incorporating God into their gift-giving relationship as a third party. Once that emerges, then the horizontal relational implications that a vertical party creates may be detected. All of this will enable a clearer picture of their ‘full, trusting κοινωνία,’ a triangulated κοινωνία in grace and suffering that arose in 1:7 and 1:12-30 but will now be seen to express itself through the giving of material gifts.

4.1. Gifts from Philippi to Paul

Before focussing on the transmission and purpose of the Philippians’ most recent gift through Epaphroditus, we need to determine *when* Paul would accept gifts from Philippi. This will give us better insight into his financial policy.

4.1.1. *Philippians 4:15 — The Timing of Philippian Gifts*

At what point did Paul start accepting Philippian gifts? Where was he at that time? To arrive at an answer, we must wrestle with a complicated phrase nestled within Phil. 4:15:

οἴδατε δὲ καὶ ὑμεῖς, Φιλιππηῖοι, ὅτι ἐν ἀρχῇ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου, ὅτε ἐξῆλθον ἀπὸ Μακεδονίας, οὐδεμία μοι ἐκκλησία ἐκοινωνήσεν εἰς λόγον δόσεως καὶ λήμψεως εἰ μὴ ὑμεῖς μόνοι.

What does Paul mean by ἐν ἀρχῇ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου, and how does this relate to ὅτε ἐξῆλθον ἀπὸ Μακεδονίας? Had he not been preaching by this time for about fourteen years in Syria and Cilicia (Gal. 1:18-2:1) as well as in Cyprus and Galatia (Acts 13-14), and all this before setting foot in Macedonia? Four views have been posited.

(i) M.J. Suggs considers ἐν ἀρχῇ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου *from Paul's viewpoint*, initiated when he *entered* Macedonia, *not* when he *departed* from there. To arrive at this conclusion, Suggs rejects the witness of Acts, dates Paul's Macedonian ministry in the 40s, and appeals to key phrases in Paul's letters, such as 'from the first day' (Phil. 1:5) and 'first fruits' (2 Thess. 2:13), which strongly suggest that 'Paul's Macedonian ministry came very early in his missionary career, sufficiently early that he could regard Macedonia as "the beginning of the gospel."'”³⁵⁴

(ii) Martin Dibelius promotes the view that Paul writes 4:15 *from the Philippians' viewpoint*, so that ἐν ἀρχῇ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου corresponds to his initial preaching in Philippi. He asserts, 'Einfacher ist die Annahme, dass man in Philippi von jener Zeit als dem "Beginn der

354. 'Concerning the Date of Paul's Macedonian Ministry,' *NovT* 4 (1960): 60–68 at 68. Gerd Lüdemann, however, critiques Suggs's dependence on the connection between Phil. 1:5 and 4:15, which he finds untenable (*Paul, Apostle to the Gentiles: Studies in Chronology* [ed. Stanley F. Jones; London: SCM Press, 1984], 103–07, 137 n193; cf. also Rainer Riesner, *Paul's Early Period: Chronology, Mission Strategy, Theology* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998], 269–71).

Heilspredigt” sprach.³⁵⁵ O’Brien concurs with Dibelius, linking Phil. 4:15 with the active participation in gospel advancement in 1:3-5 (ἀπὸ τῆς πρώτης ἡμέρας ἄχρι τοῦ νῦν). ‘It is appropriate, then,’ O’Brien concludes, ‘to regard the time reference as denoting the beginning of the gospel from the standpoint of the Philippians.’³⁵⁶ Thus, ὅτε ἐξῆλθον ἀπὸ Μακεδονίας includes his ministry in Philippi — since Thessalonica, where the Philippians sent him aid (4:16), is also in Macedonia — as well as his ministry in Achaia after he left Philippi.³⁵⁷

(iii) A slightly different perspective is proposed by Otto Glombitza, who places the accent on the ‘gospel’ rather than ‘the beginning.’ While conceding that Paul preached elsewhere before coming to Macedonia, Glombitza nevertheless insists that the apostle’s work there outweighs in importance all other previous ministry endeavours. ‘Das Evangelium ist erst mit meiner Predigt zu euch und nach Mazedonien gekommen; was zuvor verkündigt wurde, war eben nicht die frohe Botschaft von der Gnade.’³⁵⁸ The expression ἐν ἀρχῇ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου therefore represents the point in which the ‘joyous message of grace’ (*die frohe*

355. Dibelius, *Philippianer*, 96.

356. *Philippians*, 532.

357. To support this interpretation, proponents render ἐξῆλθον as a pluperfect aorist (‘after I had left’), a common practice, according to Fee, in narrative (*Philippians*, 441 n13).

358. ‘Der Dank des Apostels: zum Verständnis von Philippianer iv 10–20,’ *NovT* 7 (1964–65): 135–41 at 140.

Botschaft von der Gnade) began to be preached, with the result that εὐαγγέλιον can only be used from Macedonia onwards.³⁵⁹

(iv) A more convincing position is propounded by Lohmeyer, Gnilka, and Collange, among others.³⁶⁰ During the time of Acts 13-14, Paul was a consultant (*Beauftrager*) next to Barnabas, not yet leading his own evangelistic campaign.³⁶¹ But once he left Philippi, ‘a leading city of the district of Macedonia’ (Acts 16:12), he began a new phase of ministry, and it is at this moment that Paul considers the real ‘beginning’ of gospel proclamation.³⁶² The point of reference for ἐν ἀρχῇ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου is therefore Paul’s *departure* from Philippi.³⁶³ While I generally agree with this position, some proponents wrongly assume that because Paul mentions receiving support in Thessalonica, he also accepted aid during his stay in Philippi.³⁶⁴ But if this were true, why would Paul emphatically mention that the Philippians understood that their gift-giving relationship only began once he departed from Macedonia (ὅτε ἐξῆλθον

359. O’Brien criticises Glombitza, stating that this reconstruction ‘flies in the face of the evidence of Paul’s own letters and of Acts to suggest that the term εὐαγγέλιον can only be used from Macedonia onwards or that what he had preached before was “not the joyful message of grace”!’ (*Philippians*, 532).

360. See also Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 204; Robert Jewett, *A Chronology of Paul’s Life* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 58.

361. Lohmeyer, *Philippianer*, 185. While Lüdemann generally agrees with this position, he nevertheless maintains that ‘Lohmeyer’s statements suffer from an impermissible harmonization of Acts and Paul’s letters’ (*Apostle*, 105).

362. Lohmeyer, *Philippianer*, 185: ‘Sie würde hier so stark betont sein, dass alles früher Geleistete vor diesem “Anfang des Evangeliums” gleichsam aufgehört hätte zu existieren.’ See also Gnilka, *Philippianerbrief*, 177.

363. Although Lohmeyer and Gnilka understand ἀρχή in a punctual manner, it ought to be interpreted temporally (Alfred Suhl, *Paulus und seine Briefe: Ein Beitrag zur paulinischen Chronologie* [StNT 11; Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1975], 103–04).

364. E.g., Lüdemann, *Apostle*, 136 n188.

ἀπὸ Μακεδονίας, 4:15)?³⁶⁵ Instead, we agree with Holmberg, who argues, ‘Only when Paul has left a church he has founded does he accept any money from it, in order to stress the fact that it has the character of support in his continued missionary work.’³⁶⁶ This aligns well with their partnership with Paul in the gospel and his financial policy elsewhere (cf. 1 Thess. 2:9; 1 Cor. 9), as will be argued later. Only after establishing the gospel among them and departing to minister elsewhere does Paul see it fit to engage the Philippians in a gift-giving relationship.³⁶⁷ Consequently, ἐν ἀρχῇ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου relates to ὅτε ἐξῆλθον ἀπὸ Μακεδονίας insofar as it communicates an apostolic policy to refuse support during his initial ministry in any given community.

4.1.2. *Philippians 2:25-30 and 4:18 — The Transmission of the Gift via Epaphroditus*

When the Philippians heard about Paul’s imprisonment, they generously gathered their resources and entrusted them to Epaphroditus. As an appointed envoy (ἀπόστολος) and minister (λειτουργός) of the community, he willingly travelled the perilous route from Philippi

365. This suggests that both Paul and the community understood that the apostle’s departure marked a new phase in his ministry.

366. Holmberg, *Paul and Power*, 91; cf. Dungan, *Sayings*, 32.

367. The objection that this was certainly not the case with the Corinthians may be raised. In fact, Paul explicitly refrains from accepting their gift at his initial visit and in the near future, which may call into question the consistency of his financial policy (cf. 2 Cor. 11:9, 12; 12:14). But we refrain from responding to this objection at the moment, since it will be dealt with at length in Chapter 5.

to the place of Paul's imprisonment,³⁶⁸ contracting a sickness en route that nearly ended his life (cf. 2:26-27, 30). Eventually, though, he arrived at Paul's prison cell and delivered the gift(s) from Philippi (cf. τὰ παρ' ὑμῶν, 4:18), thereby completing his mission. One could imagine the joy that Paul would have expressed on seeing Epaphroditus. Instead of abandoning him for fear of public shame, leaving him to rot in his cell with no recourse to food or provisions,³⁶⁹ Epaphroditus graciously lavished the necessities of life (or the means to attain them) onto the imprisoned apostle. He shamelessly participated in Paul's shameful sufferings of imprisonment (cf. 4:14). No wonder Paul greatly commends Epaphroditus, and even calls the Philippians to do the same (cf. 2:29), for he risked his social standing in society and even his life to complete what Paul calls 'the work of Christ' (τὸ ἔργον Χριστοῦ) and the community's 'service to [him]' (τῆς πρὸς με λειτουργίας, 2:30).

4.1.3. *Philippians 2:25-30 — The Twofold Purpose of the Gift via Epaphroditus*

The most recent gift from Philippi, which is a continuation of a series of gifts (cf. 4:16), possessed two purposes. The first is to meet Paul's need (χρεία) in prison. Judging from the context of 2:25-30, as well as the use of χρεία in 4:16, the apostle's need was primarily material, since, as previously mentioned, prisoners are left to fend for themselves. The appearance of

368. Assuming that Paul was imprisoned in Ephesus, Epaphroditus, according to G.S. Duncan, would have had to travel seven to ten days, averaging as much as fifteen miles a day and travelling 740 land miles in total, not including an intermediate sea-journey with unpredictable connections (*Ephesian Ministry*, 82).

369. See section 1.4.2.2 above.

λειτουργία supports this financial connotation (2:25, 30). According to Paul Veyne, λειτουργία ‘signified *largesses* and services to the public generally — where, in fact, it was almost a synonym of *euergesia*.’³⁷⁰ Their λειτουργία is therefore better understood as monetary assistance, which is why Paul rightly confers on Epaphroditus the appellation λειτουργὸν τῆς χρείας μου (2:25).

The second purpose of their financial λειτουργία is to fulfil their obligation to their apostle. This emerges from the ἵνα-clause of 2:30: ἵνα ἀναπληρώσῃ τὸ ὑμῶν ὑστέρημα τῆς πρὸς με λειτουργίας. This text speaks of lack (ὑστέρημα) that existed in the Philippians’ service (λειτουργία), which Paul expected the community to fill up (ἀναπληρώω), and which they eventually did by sending Epaphroditus. Although the undercurrents of obligation run deep within this verse, many scholars, uncomfortable with the notion of obligation, interpret this shortage (ὑστέρημα) as an ‘absence’ of *physical presence* rather than a ‘lack’ in their financial giving. This common interpretation appeals to the use of ἀναπληρώω and ὑστέρημα in 1 Cor. 16:17, a text that describes how the coming of some Corinthian brothers made up (ἀναπληρώω) for the absence (ὑστέρημα) of the Corinthians. In the same way, Epaphroditus ‘made up’ for the

370. *Bread and Circuses*, 93.

‘absence’ of the Philippians’ *physical presence* in 2:30.³⁷¹ To view this text any other way, runs the argument, is to insinuate that Paul was being critical of the Philippians.³⁷²

While we certainly reject the view that Paul reprimands the community for withholding support, especially since he clearly attributes it to a lack of ‘opportunity,’ not of ‘concern’ in 4:10, several factors nevertheless lead us to conclude that this passage conveys an obligation on the Philippians’ part to assist their imprisoned apostle. In the first place, instead of reverting to 1 Cor. 16:17 as a parallel for 2:30, perhaps a more suitable parallel is the use of terms in the financial contexts of 2 Cor. 8:14, 9:12, and 11:9, where ἀναπληρώω and ὑστέρημα refer to a filling up of a *material* lack, not an absence of *physical presence*. In both of these texts, ὑστέρημα refers to a lack consisting of material needs and provides a better parallel with Phil. 2:30, not least because the word λειτουργία appears in 9:12 (cf. Rom. 15:27).³⁷³ In the Hellenistic world, λειτουργία was an *obligatory* task to the state, a civic duty which, according to some inscriptions, was rewarded with honour (τιμή).³⁷⁴ Small wonder that Paul exhorts the Philippians to give honour (τιμή) to Epaphroditus, the λειτουργός of the community (1:29). Besides this, the letter to the Philippians never commends them for Epaphroditus’

371. O’Brien, *Philippians*, 343–44.

372. E.g., Silva, *Philippians*, 142; Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 120.

373. Silva mentions an interesting parallel in 1 Clement 38:2, where the poor man is exhorted to thank God for providing a rich man ‘through whom his lack might be supplied’ (δὲ οὗ ἀναπληρωθῆ αὐτοῦ τὸ ὑστέρημα; *Philippians*, 142).

374. Edgar Krentz, ‘Paul, Games, and the Military,’ in *Paul in the Greco-Roman World: A Handbook* (ed. Paul J. Sampley; London: Trinity Press International, 2003), 362.

encouraging presence (although this probably took place). Rather, Paul's acknowledgement concentrates on their *κοινωνία* expressed through the material gift (cf. 4:18). Furthermore, throughout the NT, and thus in the Christian tradition surrounding Paul's writings, it was incumbent on Christians, indeed virtuous, to render help to prisoners.³⁷⁵ Therefore, the *ὑστέρημα* that the Philippians filled up through Epaphroditus was not physical presence *per se*, but their obligatory and financial *λειτουργία* to Paul.

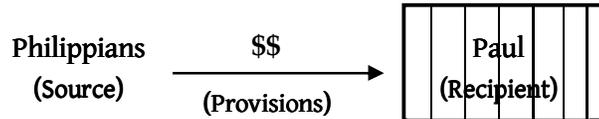
4.2. Paul's Theological Figuring of the Philippians' Gift

When Paul accepted the gift from Philippi, how did he figure it? Did he envisage two parties in exchange or three? If we were to base our answer solely on the empirical level, that is, on the human-human level, their gift-giving relationship would consist only of two parties, with Paul assuming the inferior position.

While languishing in prison (1:7, 12-26), Paul had no other choice but to rely on the community for his well-being. On receiving their gifts, he sent confirmation of reception (cf. 4:18), but his destitute condition prevented him from reciprocating a suitable return. Socially speaking, this would have given the community an advantage over him. Whether they seized this opportunity to exert their social power and position — like some despotic patron over a subservient client — will be discussed below. For present purposes, it may suffice to note that,

375. See Mt. 25:34-36, 41-45; Heb. 10:34; 13:3; Ignatius, *to the Smyrneans* 6.2.

from the empirical perspective, the Philippians operated as the source of the gift, while Paul willingly embraced their generosity as the recipient in the relationship. Much like the picture of a ‘friendship,’ only two parties constitute this relational pattern:³⁷⁶



Paul, however, works from within this two-way relationship and reshapes it from the inside-out by creating a three-way pattern of exchange, one which envisions God as the source of the gift, the Philippians as the mediator or broker, and Paul as the beneficiary. This divine incorporation drastically modifies the contours of their *κοινωνία* and helps disclose the Pauline agenda underlying Philippians 1:3-6 and 4:10-20.

Assuming the integrity of the letter,³⁷⁷ these passages function as parallel texts that bookend the epistle, with the first chapter foreshadowing and paving the way for the latter.

376. Since Epaphroditus, a member of the community, most likely contributed to the gift for Paul, he operated as a representative rather than a mediator or broker. A broker never directly possessed resources. He or she only mediated the resources of another. Of course, this is an argument from silence, because we have no information on whether or not Epaphroditus actually contributed to the gift. Regardless, if he were a broker, this would not disprove the primary argument of this chapter. It would only complicate the picture drawn here.

377. Engberg-Pedersen alludes to a partial consensus concerning the unity of the letter. He asserts that ‘the recent trend—in English-language, though hardly in German scholarship—is towards unity. I think this is right and that it is not just a trend that may move in the other direction in ten years. What we find here in scholarship is a healthy reaction to overconfidence in scholars with regard to the urge towards speculation’ (*Paul and the Stoics*, 82). The chief reasons for partition theories are as follows: (i) the apparent shift in tone in 3.1; (ii) the location and temporal delay of 4.10-20; (iii) the lexical parallels throughout the disputed sections of this letter; and (iv) the genre. But many scholars have presented explanations for these issues, producing a strong case for the unity of the letter (cf. Robert Swift, ‘The Theme and Structure of Philippians,’ *BibSac* 141 [1984]: 234–54; Robert Jewett, ‘The Epistolary Thanksgiving and the Integrity of Philippians,’ *NovT* 12 [1970]: 40–53; David Garland, ‘The

Within these bookends, Paul manages to communicate much more than a ‘formal acknowledgement’³⁷⁸ of their recent gift and affirmation of their *κοινωνία*, as many scholars recognise. He additionally and more significantly factors God — the crucial third participant — into the relational equation.³⁷⁹ This recalculation naturally changes the empirical role of the Philippians as the *source* to occupying the theological role as *mediator*,³⁸⁰ which completely changes the way they relate to Paul. To tease out this reconfiguring tactic and its implications, the theological strategy of Philippians 1.3-6 and 4.10-20 must be explored.

4.2.1. God as the Crucial Third Party in Philippians 1:3-6

From the outset of Philippians 1:3-6, Paul, as Stephen Fowl notes, ‘draws the Philippians into his thanks to God in a way that establishes the three-way nature of this relationship.’³⁸¹

Beginning at 1:3, Paul declares, ‘I thank my God,’ and follows this expression of gratitude with three successive reasons: (i) *because of* (ἐπί) their every remembrance of Paul (1:3); (ii) *because*

Composition and Unity of Philippians: Some Neglected Literary Factors,’ *NovT* 27 [1985]: 157–58; William J. Dalton, ‘The Integrity of Philippians,’ *Bib* 60 [1979]: 102). For an exhaustive overview of the literary debate, consult Jeffrey T. Reed, *A Discourse Analysis of Philippians: Method and Rhetoric in the Debate Over Literary Integrity* (JSNTSup 136; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 124–52, and for the *Teilungshypothesen* in German scholarship since World War II, see Bormann, *Philippi*, 108–18.

378. Paul Holloway, *Consolation in Philippians* (SNTSMS 112; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 155.

379. Mainly noted by Ebner, *Leidenslisten und Apostelbrief*, 331–64; Witherington, *Finances*; Fee, *Philippians*; Peterman, *Gift Exchange*; Fowl, *Philippians*; Hansen, *Philippians*.

380. This categorical distinction, albeit a modern one, is simply an attempt to distinguish the different ways that the relationship between Paul and the community may be interpreted. At the outset, two parties appear to be in gift exchange, but Paul includes a third participant. What we are not arguing is that the Philippians held to an empirical view, which Paul had to correct. This assumes severe, relational tension between them, a claim that finds little support in the text itself.

381. *Philippians*, 22.

of (ἐπί) their partnership in the gospel with him (1:5); and (iii) because (ὅτι) Paul was convinced that ‘the one who began a good work in [them] will complete it until the day of Christ Jesus’ (1:6). Several exegetical decisions constitute this reading of 1:3-6. In verse 3, the ἐπί clause is interpreted causally, ὑμῶν functions as a subjective genitive, rendering μνησία as the Philippians’ ‘remembrance’ of Paul rather than Paul’s ‘remembrance’ of them, and the causal clauses of verses 3, 5, and 6 are subsumed under the principal verb εὐχαριστέω.³⁸²

Εὐχαριστῶ τῷ θεῷ μου

ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ μνησίᾳ ὑμῶν . . .

ἐπὶ τῇ κοινωνίᾳ ὑμῶν εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ἀπὸ τῆς πρώτης ἡμέρας ἄχρι τοῦ νῦν . . .

ὅτι ὁ ἐναρξάμενος ἐν ὑμῖν ἔργον ἀγαθὸν ἐπιτελέσει ἄχρι ἡμέρας Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ.

But before discussing how these interpretive moves manifest the presence of a divine party, two major objections, levelled against the rendering of 1:3 which supports the structural layout of 1:3-6, must be dealt with.

First of all, it has been argued that interpreting ἐπί as introducing a causal clause in verse 3 departs from the conventional Pauline thanksgiving formula.³⁸³ For Paul, ἐπί usually takes on a temporal sense (‘on every remembrance’; cf. Rom. 1:10; 1 Thess. 1:2; Phlm. 4), which would mean that the apostle, in Phil. 1:3, gives thanks to God every time he remembers the

382. Paul Schubert, *Form and Function of the Pauline Thanksgivings* (BZNW 20; Berlin: Töpelmann, 1939), 71–82; Peter O’Brien, *Introductory Thanksgivings in the Letters of Paul* (NovTSup 49; Leiden: Brill, 1977), 20–46. The ὅτι clause of 1:6 can either be subsumed under πεποιθὼς αὐτὸ τοῦτο (1:6) or εὐχαριστέω (1:3). Commentators are split down the middle on this issue, since it can be grammatically dependent on the main verb or the preceding participle (cf. Fee, *Philippians*, 85 n61). Nevertheless, we follow those who subsume the ὅτι-clause of verse 6 under εὐχαριστέω.

383. Michael, *Philippians*, 10. For a concise summary of the arguments against construing ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ μνησίᾳ ὑμῶν as the Philippians’ remembrance of Paul, see O’Brien, *Thanksgivings*, 42–43.

Philippians rather than ‘because’ the Philippians remember him.³⁸⁴ Yet Peter O’Brien asserts that ἐπί only takes on a temporal sense when a genitive proceeds it, as in Rom. 1:10, 1 Thess. 1:2, and Phlm. 4. When ἐπί occurs with the dative, however, as in Paul’s thanksgiving sections (cf. 1 Cor. 1:4; 1 Thess. 3:9; Phil. 1:5), it always carries a causal sense.³⁸⁵ Additional support for this argument is garnered from expressions of gratitude in extra-biblical literature, where ἐπί, followed by the dative, is used after εὐχαριστέω and ‘always expresses the ground for thanksgiving.’³⁸⁶ But perhaps the most compelling case for the causal interpretation of ἐπί in 1:3 is that Paul, only two verses later, gives thanks ‘because’ (ἐπί) of the Philippians’ partnership with him (1:5).

The second and more debatable objection is against ὑμῶν in 1:3 as a subjective genitive. J.T. Reed argues that μνεία with the genitive (ὑμῶν) always refers to *Paul’s remembrance* of the recipient (cf. Rom. 1:9, 1 Thess. 1:2, and Phlm. 4).³⁸⁷ Nevertheless, in each of these instances, μνεία appears with ποιέω or ἔχω, making the subject explicit, whereas these verbs do not appear in Phil. 1:3. Reed acknowledges this fact but still proceeds to base his conclusion on

384. Another way scholars have argued for the temporal sense of ἐπί in verse 3 is by insisting that, because μνεία and προσευχή share the same semantic field, the former ought to be translated as ‘mention.’ If this is correct, the argument runs, then ἐπί must be interpreted temporally, ‘on every remembrance’ (Silva, *Philippians*, 54; Collange, *Epistle*, 43). However, μνεία, according to O’Brien, only means “remembrance” when used in a prepositional phrase and its connotation “mention” when used with ποιέομαι’ (*Philippians*, 60).

385. O’Brien, *Thanksgivings*, 43.

386. O’Brien, *Thanksgivings*, 43; author’s italics. In support, he appeals to Philo, *Rer. Div. Her.* 31; *Spec. Leg.* 1.67, 283, 284; 2.185; Josephus, *Ant.* 1.193. Convinced by O’Brien’s arguments for a causal interpretation of ἐπί, J.T. Reed adds one early, unambiguous epistolary example to the list: UPZ 1.60.8 (*Discourse Analysis*, 200 n169).

387. *Discourse Analysis*, 200, citing *P. Bad.* 4.48.1-3.

these other instances in the New Testament with the verbs ποιέω or ἔχω. Admittedly, the instances where μνεῖα occur with a subjective genitive are infrequent.³⁸⁸ But this does not completely rule out the grammatical, rhetorical, and contextual plausibility of this interpretive option, as many who argue otherwise have pointed out.³⁸⁹ Also, against the further objection that there should be a definite mention of the object of remembrance, it is possible, as O'Brien avers, that the 'allusion would have been quite clear to Paul and his addressees, the Philippians.'³⁹⁰

Having substantiated the plausibility of μνεῖα as the Philippians' remembrance of Paul and the causal reading of ἐπί, we can now turn to analyse the three principle causes of verses 3, 5, and 6 that give rise to Paul's thanksgiving to God,³⁹¹ centring the discussion on how this gratitude serves to incorporate God as the crucial third party.

The first cause for Paul's thanksgiving is the Philippians' 'remembrance' of him (1:3).

While μνεῖα conveys the various ways (πᾶς) that they have expressed their concern for their

388. O'Brien, *Philippians*, 59 n12; Peterman, *Gift Exchange*, 95–96; cf. Baruch 5.5 for an example of a subjective genitive with μνεῖα.

389. For instance, even though Bockmuehl disagrees with this view, he still considers it 'rhetorically plausible' and 'grammatically possible, too, if somewhat unusual' (*Philippians*, 58), while Silva finds this construal 'most intriguing' and 'supported by the immediate context', but he ultimately discards it (*Philippians*, 54). Joining Silva in rejecting this interpretation, *inter alia*, are Barth, *Epistle*, 13–14; Beare, *Philippians*, 52; Collange, *Epistle*, 43; Michael, *Philippians*, 10; Hansen, *Philippians*, 45–46, and especially Fee, *Philippians*, 77–80. Supporters of this view, however, include: Schubert, *Form and Function*, 74; O'Brien, *Thanksgivings*, 41–46; idem, *Philippians*, 58–61; Peterman, *Gift Exchange*, 94–96; Reumann, 'Contributions,' 441; Witherington, *Finances*, 36.

390. *Thanksgivings*, 44. For an exhaustive defence against the objections raised here and many others, see Schubert, *Form and Function*, 71–82; O'Brien, *Thanksgivings*, 41–46.

391. O'Brien, *Thanksgivings*, 25.

apostle, the several acts of financial support on behalf of his ministry play an important part in that concern, as they assist him materially inside and outside prison walls (cf. 4:14-16).

The second cause for Paul's thanksgiving to God is the 'fellowship in the gospel' that Paul shares with the community (1:5). This κοινωνία³⁹² consists of their active participation in contributing to the advance of the gospel, primarily, but not exclusively, through their financial support, which springs from their participation in divine χάρις.³⁹³ For the physical nature of support and the spiritual nature of κοινωνία intertwine, insofar as their tangible gifts concretely express their intangible partnership in χάρις (1:7).³⁹⁴ Astonishingly, though, for this work accomplished by *the Philippians* in verses 3 and 5, Paul renders thanks to God.

392. For the current state of the discussion on κοινωνία, see Andrew Lincoln, 'Communion: Some Pauline Foundations,' *Ecclesiology* 5 (2009): 136–60, and for the primary works on this topic, consult Norbert Baumert, *KOINONEIN und METECHEIN – synonym? Eine umfassende semantische Untersuchung* (SBB 51; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2003); Heinrich Seesemann, *Der Begriff KOINONIA im Neuen Testament* (ZNW 14; Göttingen: Töpelmann, 1933); Josef Hainz, *KOINONIA: 'Kirch' als Gemeinschaft bei Paulus* (Regensburg: Pustet, 1982); George Panikulam, *Koinōnia in the New Testament: A Dynamic Expression of Christian Life* (AnBib 85; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1979); J.Y. Campbell, 'KOINONIA and Its Cognates in the New Testament,' *JBL* 51 (1932): 352–80.

393. O'Brien rightly translates 1:5 as 'your cooperation [in promoting] the gospel.' He offers three reasons for this interpretation: (i) the active meaning of κοινωνία with εἰς appears in other appearances of this construction (cf. Rom. 15:26; 2 Cor. 9:13) and accords well with what follows (ἀπὸ τῆς πρώτης ἡμέρας ἄχρι τοῦ νῦν); (ii) Paul's other 'personal' and 'dynamic' uses of εὐαγγέλιον in introductory thanksgivings (cf. 1 Thess. 1:5); and (iii) in the immediate context, εὐαγγέλιον should be regarded as a noun of agency (*Philippians*, 62). He nevertheless situates this active interpretation of κοινωνία in 1:5 within the passive state of 1:7, where Paul and the Philippians are said to be joint partakers (συγκοινωνοί) of χάρις. 'The Philippians' active commitment to the gospel,' O'Brien explains, 'sprang from their common participation in God's grace and was evidence that God had been mightily at work in their lives' ('The Fellowship Theme in *Philippians*,' *RTR* 37 [1978]: 12; cf. also Michael McDermott, 'The Biblical Doctrine of KOINONIA,' *BZ* 19 [1975]: 71–72; P.C. Borl, *KOINONIA: L'idea della comunione nell'ecclesiologia recente e nel Nuovo Testamento* [Brescia: Paideia Editrice, 1972], 86–126).

394. As Bockmuehl explains, 'Their partnership. . . in the gospel is certainly spiritual in nature. . . . But this spiritual reality has found its concrete expression both in the Philippians' participation in the task of proclamation (1.7) and in their repeated financial contributions to Paul's mission (4.15)' (*Philippians*, 60).

The third and ultimate cause for Paul's thanksgiving to God is the faithful activity of God in the Philippians (1:6). The apostle interprets their various deeds (ἔργων ἀγαθόν) as concrete manifestations of the operative grace of God, which God alone initiated (ἐναρξάμενος) and will bring to completion (ἐπιτελέσει) in or among (ἐν)³⁹⁵ the Philippians.³⁹⁶ In other words, God operates as the originator, provider, and sustainer of the 'good work' carried out through the community (cf. 2:12-13). Although interpretations on the precise meaning of ἔργων ἀγαθόν abound,³⁹⁷ it is best to understand it in a broad sense, pointing back to the initial work of grace in the gospel that prompts their past, present, and future good works, not least their recent contribution.³⁹⁸ This is why Paul affirms their κοινωνία both in gospel advancement and grace

395. Although ἐν can be rendered in the instrumental sense of 'through' (Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 21; cf. BDF §295), it seems best to understand it in a local sense ('in' or 'in your midst'), since the emphasis of this verse falls on the activity of God within the Philippians (O'Brien, *Philippians*, 64 n42). Nevertheless, this does not prohibit the view proposed here, namely, that God works *through* the Philippians to benefit Paul, for what God's operative grace begins *within* them necessarily takes on the external form of ἔργων ἀγαθόν *outside* of themselves.

396. This does not preclude human agency, it only qualifies it. The view taken here coincides with John Barclay's third model of divine agency: *non-contrastive transcendence*. Barclay explains, 'God's sovereignty does not limit or reduce human freedom, but is precisely what grounds and enables it . . . the more the human agent is operative, the more (not the less) may be attributed to God.' He adds, 'But divine transcendence also here implies agencies that are non-identical: God is radically distinct from human agency and not an agent within the same order of being or in the same causal nexus . . . created human agencies are founded in, and constituted by, the divine creative agency, while remaining distinct from God. God's unconditional sovereignty is here operative with regard to creatures who have their own will and their own freedom' ('Introduction,' in *Divine and Human Agency in Paul and His Cultural Environment* [ed. John M.G. Barclay and Simon J. Gathercole; London: T&T Clark, 2006], 7).

397. Cf. Reumann, *Philippians*, 113–14 for the various interpretations of ἔργων ἀγαθόν.

398. Dibelius discerns an allusion to 'die pekuniare Hilfeleistung' (*Philipper*, 26), and Judith M. Gundry Volf perceptively identifies verbal and thematic parallels between 1:6 and other passages in the letter concerning the Philippians' gift to Paul, demonstrating an implicit reference to their gift in chapter 1 (*Paul and Perseverance: Staying in and Falling Away* [WUNT 2/37; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1990], 42–43; cf. esp. 33–47).

(1:5, 7),³⁹⁹ for, in so doing, he attributes every accomplishment in their lives, especially the ostensibly mundane task of providing aid, to the creative activity of God, the ultimate giver of their gift.

Many scholars, however, object to an allusion to the Philippians' gift in 1:3-6. John Schütz forthrightly jettisons this view, insisting that 'it is contradictory to the tenor of the entire thanksgiving to tie it to this particular mundane transaction.'⁴⁰⁰ But perhaps he is reacting against J.B. Lightfoot's statement, which places the financial contribution 'foremost in the Apostle's mind.'⁴⁰¹ Lightfoot certainly overstated his case, and yet to omit any reference to their gift is equally mistaken. On balance, it seems best to discern an inference to their pecuniary support, particularly since phrases such as *μνεία, κοινωνία εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον*, and *ἔργον ἀγαθόν*, although encompassing more than the gift mentioned in 4:10-20, nevertheless contain an intimation, however faint, of their monetary support. And if Paul does have their gift in mind, then he recognises God as the ultimate giver of the Philippians' gift and directs his thanks to a third party. By incorporating this divine participant, the Philippians' relational role shifts from being the source of money to becoming mediators of God's divine beneficence, for, in all three causes (vv. 3, 5, and 6), Paul grounds his thanksgiving in God's creative

399. Pace Peter Oakes, 'Jason and Penelope Hear Philippians 1.1-11,' in *Understanding, Studying and Reading. New Testament Essays in Honour of John Ashton* (ed. Christopher Rowland and Crispin H.T. Fletcher-Louis; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 164, who argues that an implication to their gift is absent from 1:7.

400. *Apostolic Authority*, 49; cf. Wolfgang Schenk, *Die Philipperbriefe des Paulus* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1984), 95.

401. *Epistle to the Philippians*, 83; cf. Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 19.

provision carried out in (or, we could even say ‘through’) the Philippians’ generosity. Cast this way, the triangular, theological pattern emerges from 1:3-6. God is the source and the Philippians are mediators of divine provision to their imprisoned apostle.

4.2.2. God as the Crucial Third Party in Philippians 4:10-20

An identical relational pattern to that found in Philippians 1:3-6 also appears in 4:10-20. What is initially striking about this text is its central focus on God, not least because the discussion revolves around the community’s gift. From the beginning of this pericope to its doxological end, Paul navigates a close course between acknowledging the Philippians’ gift, on the one side, and identifying God as the ultimate source of that gift, on the other, with a view to integrating the most important participant in this three-way bond.

To begin with, although many deny that a theological interpretation of the gift appears before verse 14,⁴⁰² they nevertheless overlook the theological shape of verse 10: Ἐχάρην δὲ ἐν κυρίῳ μεγάλως ὅτι ἤδη ποτὲ ἀνεθάλετε τὸ ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ φρονεῖν, ἐφ’ ᾧ καὶ ἐφρονεῖτε, ἡκαιρεῖσθε δέ. The phrase ‘I rejoice in the Lord’ not only inserts God as the essential third party, as Fowl observes,⁴⁰³ but also identifies this divine participant as the object and cause of Paul’s joy as

402. For example, Silva identifies the theological implications of verses 4:14, 15 but does not include 4:10 (*Philippians*, 206–07), whereas many others focus so exclusively on the commercial language of 4:10 that they lose sight of the theological contours of this passage (e.g., Dodd, ‘The Mind of Paul: I,’ 72, 152f).

403. [H]ere in 4:10 Paul himself rejoices greatly in the Lord. Not only does this clause echo 4:4,’ but it also allows Paul ‘to insert God as the crucial third party in his relationship with the Philippians’ (*Philippians*, 192).

well as the ultimate cause behind the community's 'revived concern.'⁴⁰⁴ Like *μνεία* in 1:3, their concern (*φρονέω*) involves, among other things, the gift delivered to Paul, a generous act that reinforced their already present *κοινωνία*.⁴⁰⁵ For the material gift, in and of itself, meant little to him (as 4:17 demonstrates). What mattered most was what the gift communicated and confirmed:⁴⁰⁶ their *κοινωνία* in gospel (1:5), grace (1:7), affliction (4:14), and finances (4:15). Out of this multifarious *κοινωνία* spawned a deep concern (*φρονέω*) for Paul. The Philippians shared a kind of phronetic *κοινωνία*, an other-oriented *κοινωνία* which owes its revived existence to God's causation and nurture,⁴⁰⁷ without which their support for Paul would never have materialized. Once again, just as the introductory thanksgiving was rooted in God's creative and faithful provision (cf. 1:6), so, too, Paul's joy derives from God's work through the Philippians' contribution, not the supply of material provision *per se* but in what that provision came to represent, their phronetic *κοινωνία*.

404. To arrive at this conclusion, we have connected the intransitive verb, ἀναθάλλω, with the infinitival expression, τὸ ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ φρονεῖν, as an accusative of reference (H.A.W. Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Hand-Book to the Epistles to the Philippians and Colossians, and to Philemon* [New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1885], 211-12; O'Brien, *Philippians*, 516-18; Schenk, *Philippenerbriefe*, 64; Gnllka, *Philippenerbrief*, 173; Norbert Baumert, 'Ist Philipper 4,10 richtig übersetzt?' *BZ* 13 [1969]: 256-62). It is also worth repeating that the Philippians did not lack 'concern' for Paul, as he will go on to explain, but that they lacked opportunity (ἀκαιρέομαι, 4.10).

405. Bockmuehl, *Philippians*, 258: 'Contrary to the impression given in a number of recent treatments, [4:10-20] is not about "finances at Philippi" . . . but about a uniquely comprehensive partnership for the gospel which also expresses itself in material support.'

406. As Peter O'Brien concurs, '[T]he object of his concern was the giver rather than the gift' (*Philippians*, 538).

407. Peterman, *Gift Exchange*, 129: 'Therefore, Paul's joy is in the Lord because, in the final analysis, he will ascribe the cause to God.' Acknowledging the divine cause of human acts is a common Pauline practice which also appears in Phil. 2:12-13 and 2 Cor. 8:1.

To avoid the misunderstanding that his joy somehow stemmed *completely* from their financial gift,⁴⁰⁸ Paul expresses his independence from the Philippians' resources. After noting that he does not speak from 'lack,' for he has 'learned' to be content (αὐτάρκης) in whatever circumstances (presumably through experience rather than esoteric knowledge),⁴⁰⁹ he states that he 'knows' and 'has learned' the secret to contentment (4:12). What is this 'secret'? That whether materially 'abased' or 'abounding,' he can do all things in God who strengthens him (4:13). Paul here defines αὐτάρκης as a term that signifies self-sufficiency within the confines of divine-dependency. At first glance, this may seem to be in line with Stoic philosophy (at least Epictetus).⁴¹⁰ But a vital dissimilarity between the Stoics and Paul is that the latter perceives God as a *separable* participant in this exchange, whereas the former recognise God to be an *inseparable* component of one's being.⁴¹¹ Thus, from Paul's perspective, self-sufficiency is divine-dependence on a *distinct* being who empowers (ἐνδυναμώω) him to endure the polar

408. Gnllka, *Philippenerbrief*, 175.

409. The verbs, ἔμαθον, οἶδα, μύεω, signify a learning process through experiential circumstances. As Barth observes, Paul has been initiated 'into the mystery of life with its ups and downs of having and being without' (*Epistle*, 127).

410. Troels Engberg-Pedersen, 'Self-Sufficiency and Power: Divine and Human Agency in Epictetus and Paul,' in *Divine and Human Agency in Paul and His Cultural Environment* (ed. John M.G. Barclay and Simon Gathercole; London: T&T Clark, 2006), 135. But see John Barclay, 'Security and Self-Sufficiency: A Comparison of Paul and Epictetus,' *Ex Auditu* 24 (2008): 60–72 for the stark differences between Paul and Epictetus.

411. E.g., Epictetus, *Diatr.* 1.14.6: 'Our souls are joined together with God as parts and fragments of him'; Seneca, *Ep.* 62.12: 'Reason is nothing else than a part of the divine spirit sunk in a human body'; Marcus Aurelius, 5.27: 'The soul is a part, an outflow, a fragment, of God'; Philo, *Opif.* 135: the human soul is 'a divine breath that migrated hither from that blissful and happy existence. . .the part that is invisible.'

extremes of the economic spectrum, whether lack (ὕστερέω) or abundance (περισσεύω). But how Paul reaches the state of material ‘abundance’ is conveniently fleshed out with a paradox.

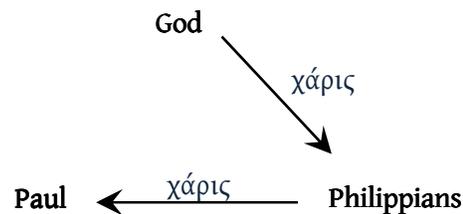
Although Paul declares his independence from the Philippians’ resources by emphasizing his ‘God-sufficiency’ in 4:11-13,⁴¹² the community’s gift nevertheless enables him to experience the God-given state of ‘abundance’! ‘I have received all things,’ Paul announces in 4:18, ‘and I abound [περισσεύω].’ On one level, Paul is dependent on God alone to experience the state of abundance (4:12-13), but, on another level, the Philippians have caused him to ‘abound.’⁴¹³ This two-tiered paradox demonstrates that, behind the community’s provision, resides a divine source who ultimately provides for Paul through human agency.⁴¹⁴ By looking back at the meaning of αὐτάρκης in 4:11-13 in light of 4:18, then, we can now further define his

412. Bockmuehl, *Philippians*, 261.

413. Commentators acknowledge the fact that Paul indeed ‘abounds’ through the gift of the Philippians. Fee states, ‘Paul who knows both how to be “abased” and how to “abound,” has experienced both in his present imprisonment — “humiliation” from the imprisonment itself, *the “abounding” at least in part from their gift*, as he now acknowledges’ (*Philippians*, 451; my italics). Likewise, Peterman observes, ‘The contentment of the apostle is clearly related to material goods, the sort which he has received from the believers in Philippi’ (*Gift Exchange*, 137–38).

414. Although the Philippians mediate God’s commodity to Paul, so that he enters a state of ‘abundance,’ note the strong contrast in 4:14 (πλήν) and his focus on the results of the gift rather than the gift itself in 4:17 (οὐχ ὄτι ἐπιζητῶ τὸ δόμα, ἀλλὰ ἐπιζητῶ τὸν καρπὸν τὸν πλεονάζοντα εἰς λόγον ὑμῶν). Ultimately, Paul detaches himself from the Philippians’ gift. He can do without *it*, but he cannot do without *them*. He longs to maintain the bond that compels them to meet his needs; that is, their κοινωμία with him. ‘[W]e cannot imagine [Paul] saying that he has learned how to enjoy *koinōnia* and how to do without it,’ writes Barclay. ‘Mutual encouragement, mutual struggle, and mutual dependency are for Paul *core constituents* of life in Christ; it is only by this means that his joy can be complete (Phil 2:2)’ (‘Self-Sufficiency,’ 70).

‘self-sufficiency’ as utterly dependent on God through the mediation of others.⁴¹⁵ As with the theological pattern of 1:3-6, the Philippians act as conduits of God’s abundant commodity, a sacrificial act which he considers ‘well-pleasing to God’ (4:18; cf. 2:25-30).⁴¹⁶ Consequently, this theological-relational pattern, found in 1:3-6 as well as 4:10-20, resembles the following diagram:



Having mapped out a theological-relational pattern which envisages the gift flowing *from God through the Philippians to Paul*, it seems appropriate to question whether this pattern runs in the opposite direction and thus contains the element of reciprocity. After all, their partnership is one of giving *and* receiving (κοινωνία εἰς λόγον δόσεως καὶ λήψεως, 4:15), not simply giving. Indeed, Paul alludes to reciprocity when he explains that the route in which their gift came to fill his need (χρεία, 4:16; cf. 2:25) is precisely the same route by which the gift

415. Barclay, ‘Self-Sufficiency,’ 70: ‘The God on whose encouragement he relies supplies his needs *through others*, and he is desperately at a loss when they fail to play their part’ (author’s italics).

416. ‘Paul’s metaphorical use of this sacrificial language,’ O’Brien insists, ‘does not suggest that the gifts from Philippi were *given to God*’ (*Philippians*, 542). But do gifts given to Paul and gifts given to God have to be mutually exclusive options? According to 2 Cor. 8:5, the Macedonians ‘gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us by the will of God.’ It therefore seems that, for Paul, a gift can be given to God in being given to a person. As such, their gift is well-pleasing to God, in that it fills up Paul’s need (χρεία) and so contributes to the advancement of God’s gospel.

will return to supply their ‘every need’ (πᾶσαν χρείαν, 4:19). ‘My God,’⁴¹⁷ Paul confidently exclaims, ‘will supply your every need [πᾶσαν χρείαν ὑμῶν] according to his riches [πλοῦτος] in glory in Christ Jesus.’ While God will clearly be the one who supplies for all their needs, it is less clear whether a mediating party will be involved in this transaction. Yet a linguistic connection between χρεία in 4:16 and 4:19, coupled with the meaning of πλοῦτος, provides some clarity.

There is little doubt that χρεία in 4:16 refers to a *material* lack. The question is whether his use of χρεία three verses later carries the same meaning (4:19), and if πλοῦτος refers to heavenly or material riches. Many argue that, because the phrase ‘in glory’ (ἐν δόξῃ) modifies πλοῦτος, Paul has *heavenly reward* specifically in view,⁴¹⁸ but others insist that he has *material riches* solely in view.⁴¹⁹ Wanting to avoid the interpretive ‘either-or’ pendulum swing, Fee incisively contends that ‘it is the addition of the otherwise unnecessary πᾶσαν, plus the expansive conclusion, “in keeping with his wealth in glory in Christ Jesus,” that makes one think Paul is embracing *both their material needs and all others as well*.’⁴²⁰ In agreement with Fee, it

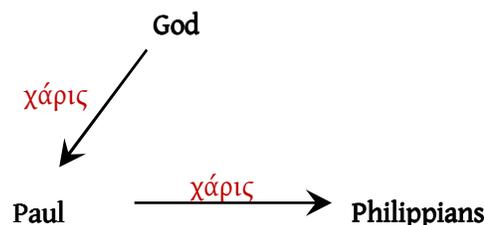
417. Paul is not claiming God for himself here, as if he alone had private access to God, *his* patron. The phrase ὁ θεός μου in 1:3 and 4:19 simply denotes Paul’s access to God through prayer, since God is the one who works within the Philippians (1:6) and fills up (πληρόω) what is lacking in their service to Paul (4:19; cf. ἀναπληρώω, 2:30). Similarly, the Philippians share this direct access to God through prayer (cf. 1:19). With equal access to God, Paul and the Philippians mutually reciprocate the single commodity of God’s χάρις to one another.

418. E.g., Alfred Plummer, *A Commentary on St Paul’s Epistle to the Philippians* (London: Macmillan, 1919), 105–06.

419. E.g., Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 274.

420. Fee, *Philippians*, 452 n12; my italics. *Pace* Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 208–09, who argues that ‘these needs are present material needs, needs that the Philippians have here and now (cf. 2 Cor. 8:2). Hence, ἐν δόξῃ should not be

seems best to regard πλοῦτος as both eschatological reward and physical provision, with χρεία in the first instance referring to material needs, just as it does in 4:16. But this begs the question: how will physical beings receive heavenly riches in time of need? Unless we are to believe that tangible ‘riches’ will miraculously fall from the sky, we must assume that God’s supply will stream through a human conduit, whether Paul or another church,⁴²¹ in order to alleviate the financial straits of the Philippians (whenever hardship may come). In 4:10-18, then, Paul expresses his dependence on God *through* the Philippians, but a time will come when they will trade places and the Philippians, according to 4:19-20, will equally depend on God’s heavenly riches *through* Paul or another, exhibiting a characteristic relational pattern in the economy of χάρις (cf. 2 Cor. 8-9):⁴²²



given any futuristic meaning, but should be curtailed and limited here to a description of God’s wealth: it is magnificent, eye-catching, splendid, renowned. . .’

421. The ambiguity of this verse prohibits a definitive answer, though 4:15 provides more support for the former. If the latter, however, then this widens the meaning of κοινωνία, opening the circle of grace to include more than just God, Paul, and the Philippians.

422. A picture from Romans 11:17 helps illustrate this kind of κοινωνία. In the same way that the Gentiles became joint sharers (συγκοινωνός) with the Jewish people of the root of the olive tree, so Paul and the Philippians equally share in and draw from a single, divine source (cf. Robert Jewett, *Romans* [Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007], 685).

4.3. The Relational Contours of Κοινωνία Reshaped by the Divine Third Party

If, then, as we are suggesting, God is the source of all gifts in the economy of χάρις, while Paul and the Philippians are alternating mediators of his divine beneficence (depending on who is in need), what sort of implications does this relational pattern have on their κοινωνία with one another? In other words, how does the divine inclusion affect horizontal dealings?

4.3.1. Κοινωνία in Suffering — συγκοινωνήσαντές μου τῇ θλίψει (4:14)

Paul commends the community for their gift (καλῶς ἐποιήσατε) and figures their act of generosity as a ‘fellow-sharing in [his] suffering’ (συγκοινωνήσαντές μου τῇ θλίψει). As O’Brien rightly affirms, ‘Through their gift, the Philippians identified with Paul in both his χάρις and his θλίψις.’⁴²³ In other words, having been incorporated into *his* χάρις (1:7), they gain access into his θλίψις.⁴²⁴ The relational dynamic that was alluded to earlier in 1:7 and 1:29-30, where the Philippians were said to be Paul’s fellow-sharers (συγκοινωνοί) of his chains (δεσμοί) and

423. *Philippians*, 530 n107. It is unclear, however, as to whether O’Brien is summarising another person’s view or promoting this interpretation, especially since he denies the reading of 1:7 as ‘fellow-sharers of my grace.’ See section 3.1.1.

424. Some attach eschatological significance to θλίψις (cf. H. Schlier, *TDNT*, 3.144-47). But this, in view of 1:7 and 17, this is unlikely. Paul almost certainly has in mind the θλίψις of imprisonment (Bockmuehl, *Philippians*, 262).

engaged in the same conflict (ὁ αὐτὸς ἀγῶν), now concretely manifests itself through their gift, and this in two ways.

Socially, the Philippians, by implication, bear the shame of Paul's imprisonment through Epaphroditus, being easily transmittable through aiding and affiliating oneself with a felon. Theologically, because they reside ἐν Χριστῷ, they participate in τὰ παθήματα τοῦ Χριστοῦ (3:10), which comprises the deepest level of their being and the precise location of their κοινωνία. In this sphere, as we have already mentioned,⁴²⁵ the sufferings of one coalesce with the sufferings of the other (though they remain distinct), creating a bilateral channel whereby grace may be imparted to alleviate the needs of the other. Both aspects of their intimate κοινωνία comprise the basis of the apostle's commendation of their generosity, as they tangibly express the spiritual bond in the economy of χάρις. But lest we forget who initiates and completes their life in this economy, we recall the critical phrase of 1:28, καὶ τοῦτο ἀπὸ θεοῦ, and the divine actor behind the verb χαρίζομαι in 1:29, who powerfully graces the community with the Christ-gift.

Of particular importance for this study is the fact that Paul could not utter the words of 4:14 in his letter to the Corinthians. They knew nothing about suffering for the gospel, nor anything about co-suffering with their apostle, the absence of which, according to John Barclay, discloses 'a failure to comprehend the counter-cultural impact of the message of the

425. See section 3.2.1.2.2 above.

cross.⁴²⁶ The significant implications of this difference between Philippi and Corinth, especially in relation to Paul's financial policy, will be explicated in the next chapter. For now, we turn to a second relational alteration.

4.3.2. Κοινωνία in Gift — κοινωνία εἰς λόγον δόσεως καὶ λήμψεως (4:15)

Were Paul and the Philippians *obliged* to reciprocate gifts with one another? Did *obligation* undergird their gift-giving κοινωνία? Peter Marshall and G.W. Peterman, two notable scholars on Paul and gift, arrive at two opposing conclusions. To be sure, both agree that the phrase κοινωνία εἰς λόγον δόσεως καὶ λήμψεως does not refer invariably to the commercial world, but that it also belongs to the ancient realm of friendship and social reciprocity.⁴²⁷ They even agree that reciprocal relationships of this sort carry 'serious obligations.'⁴²⁸ Where they part ways is in their conflicting interpretations of how Paul understands and employs the expression in Philippians 4:10-20. Laying out their argumentative routes will helpfully sharpen the profile of the middle course that we will tread.

426. John Barclay, 'Thessalonica and Corinth: Social Contrasts in Pauline Christianity,' *JSNT* 15 (1992): 57–60.

427. The arguments of Marshall and Peterman depend on literary evidence of the phrase, but for an argument from inscriptional evidence that δόσις and λήμψις refer to cultic presentation of honours rather than mutual obligation incurred by friendships, see Peter Pilhofer, 'Philippi, Vol. 1: Die erste christliche Gemeinde Europas' (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995), 245–46. For the purposes of this study, though, we will only deal with literary evidence.

428. Peterman, *Gift Exchange*, 88. According to Peterman, the OT and extra-biblical literature also entailed serious obligations (*Gift Exchange*, 50).

4.3.2.1. Differing Perspectives on Gift and Obligation — Marshall and Peterman

Peter Marshall insists that Paul's monetary friendship with the Philippians entails mutual obligation. He arrives at this conclusion by situating their relationship within the ancient paradigm of patronal friendship. Ancient discussions of friendship among Greek and Roman writers, Marshall explains, placed 'as much stress upon the moral duty of returning a favour as on the virtue of conferring one. . . . The *obligation* to return gifts weighed heavily upon the recipient.'⁴²⁹ From this socially-binding practice among friends, he concludes that, for Paul, *κοινωνία εἰς λόγον δόσεως καὶ λήμψεως* 'is an idiomatic expression indicating friendship,⁴³⁰ which involved reciprocity and 'mutual obligations.'⁴³¹ Marshall, therefore, has no problem considering Paul's friendship — like any other friendship in the Greco-Roman world — as a mutually-binding relationship that entailed a reciprocal exchange of gifts.⁴³²

Peterman, however, levels two primary arguments against Marshall's conclusion and promotes a non-obligatory friendship between Paul and the community.⁴³³ The first is that 'the text of Philippians. . . contains no mention of debt or obligation, neither on the Philippians' part nor on Paul's.'⁴³⁴ Expressions of social debt, such as ἀποδιδόναι χάριν ('to repay a favour'),

429. Marshall, *Enmity*, 9–10; my italics.

430. *Enmity*, 163.

431. *Emity*, 173.

432. *Enmity*, 173: ' . . . it is Paul's mutual obligations with the Philippians, implied by giving and receiving, . . . ' (cf. also 164).

433. See also Ebner, *Leidenslisten und Apostelbrief*, 363; Bockmuehl, *Philippians*, 266.

434. Peterman, *Gift Exchange*, 148.

or terms that clearly denote obligation, such as ὀφείλω ('I owe'), are completely lacking in the letter.⁴³⁵ His second argument is that Paul *intentionally* employs κοινωνία εἰς λόγον δόσεως καὶ λήψεως, a well-known expression of social obligation, precisely within a pericope devoid of any language denoting obligation, debt, or repayment (from the apostle himself).⁴³⁶ This rhetorical move on Paul's part, according to Peterman, is 'to offer instruction on the place of such sharing in the life of the Christian community,'⁴³⁷ largely because the community has a skewed view on giving and receiving, having been debased by the normative conventions of the Greco-Roman world. For Peterman, then, the mention of their κοινωνία in 'giving and receiving,' far from carrying the ties of mutual obligation, actually functions as a corrective, being couched within the instructive, non-obligatory statements of 4:10-20.

Several factors, however, speak against Peterman's conclusion. To begin with, although explicit language, such as ἀποδιδόναι χάριν and ὀφείλω, is lacking in Philippians, the undercurrents of obligation run deep in 2:30, as demonstrated earlier,⁴³⁸ and in 4:15. It is, after

435. Peterman, *Gift Exchange*, 148.

436. Peterman asserts that there is 'reciprocity,' and yet no obligation, because he envisions a three-way relationship. He writes, 'His relationship with the Philippians is unique in that there is reciprocity.' But 'God is the one who repays' (*Gift Exchange*, 149).

437. Peterman, *Gift Exchange*, 158: '. . .should not these statements at least in part be understood as reflecting Paul's desire to avoid the assumption that he has contracted a personal social obligation by accepting this gift? Instead of an expression of debt or of his intention to repay, the apostle relates his personal reflection, gives moral commendation and offers a theological interpretation of the gift. From this it should be clear that *the purpose of Philippians 4:10-20 is not simply to offer a personal response to financial support, but rather to offer instruction on the place of such sharing in the life of the Christian community*' (my italics).

438. See section 4.1.3 above.

all, a *κοινωνία* of giving *and* receiving between Paul and the community, not a reciprocal relationship between God and the Philippians that excludes Paul. As Peterman insinuates,

Paul does not state his intention to repay the Philippians. . . . Nor does he solicit their requests so that he might do them a favour in return. He has said that they supplied his need with their gift. Now in response God will supply their every need. The Philippians do indeed get a return, but, in keeping with the Old Testament on this issue (cf. Prov. 19:17), they get their return from a far greater Benefactor.⁴³⁹

By holding this view, Peterman is indeed hard-pressed to make sense of 4:19-20, especially if he interprets *χρεία* as a *material* 'need' and *πλοῦτος* as *physical* 'riches.'⁴⁴⁰ Divine riches must be physically mediated.⁴⁴¹

More than this, to arrive at his overall conclusion, Peterman must assert that *κοινωνία* in Philippians is not a *material for spiritual* exchange. 'Though Paul's material-spiritual contrast implies debt [or, we could say, obligation] and though he actually draws out this conclusion in Romans 15.27, this is *not precisely* the relationship in Philippians. They are *not exactly* giving back for his teaching but are partners with him to bring the teaching to others.'⁴⁴² Later, however, Peterman seems to come back on himself, stating, 'It was not simply Paul's giving the

439. Peterman, *Gift Exchange*, 157.

440. Though he does not explicitly come down on an interpretation in his section on 4:18b-20.

441. See section 4.2.2 above.

442. Peterman, *Gift Exchange*, 151. My italics highlight Peterman's intention behind this quote, for, in his conclusion, he admits, 'Doubtless we are to understand that the apostle contributed spiritual things and they the material things (cf. Rom. 15.27; 1 Cor. 9.11). Yet the reciprocity is not restricted to this, as we have seen.' While their reciprocity may not be 'restricted to this,' if this element is included, then we find it difficult to maintain such bold assertions as 'obligation is not a concept found in this epistle' (ibid., 147). If Peterman is to remain consistent, a little room must be made for mutual obligation.

gospel to them which has caused this relationship to be formed. Rather, it is his giving, their receiving [of the gospel], their giving in return and finally his acceptance of their return [of money] *which has established their partnership in the gospel.*⁴⁴³ Clearly, then, the Philippians could not have become Paul's 'partners' without first accepting the gospel (i.e., the *spiritual* gift) and then supporting him financially in his missionary endeavours to others (i.e., *material* gift) – *spiritual for material*, the very ingredients of obligation, as in Rom. 15:27. So, even by Peterman's own standards, this relationship still entails the mutual obligation to reciprocate, even if the language of obligation is absent.⁴⁴⁴

All of these factors lead us to reject Peterman's non-obligatory friendship, especially because his position rests on the unverifiable conjecture that Christian giving at Philippi had been demoralised by the cultural ties of social obligation, which the apostle had to rectify. This is not only an argument from silence, as Peterman himself recognises,⁴⁴⁵ but it also presupposes one kind of obligation – the kind that exploits another for the sake of selfish gain.

443. Peterman, *Gift Exchange*, 183; my italics.

444. The cause of Peterman's inconsistency, in my opinion, is his disagreement with Josef Hainz over the meaning of *κοινωνία*. Hainz thinks that he has uncovered 'das paulinische Prinzip *κοινωνία*,' that those who are taught are *obligated* to support their teachers financially (derived from Gal. 6:6), which he imports into the *κοινωνία* of Phil. 4:15 (*KOINΩNIA*, 113). Interpreted this way, the Philippians' gift becomes an expression of their debt of gratitude in return for the preaching of the gospel (i.e., material for spiritual). While Peterman's methodological critique of Hainz is entirely justified, his unspoken assumption, that obligation ceases to exist in Philippians 4:15 once this so-called Pauline principle has been dismantled, is entirely unjustified.

445. Peterman, *Gift Exchange*, 149: 'Though an argument from silence, it surely must be significant that Paul does not express feelings of debt, neither for this particular gift nor the many that he has received in the past.'

As we have seen in our study of Seneca's *De Beneficiis*,⁴⁴⁶ however, this understanding of gift-exchange is neither ancient nor Pauline. It is a modern ideal imposed on an ancient text. At the same time, we also reject Marshall's unqualified, obligatory relationship. For although he alludes to God's presence in their gift-giving relationship,⁴⁴⁷ he nevertheless fails to tease out the horizontal implications caused by the divine inclusion, an illuminating task to which we now turn.

4.3.2.2. Advancing a Middle Route — Obligation and Self-Interest in the Economy of Χάρις

When speaking about reciprocity, the components of obligation and self-interest are intertwined. An explanation of one requires an explanation of the other. So this section will reevaluate these horizontal components of gift within the three-way relational framework outlined above.

4.3.2.2.1. Obligation Retied into a Three-way Knot

Because God provides the immaterial and material benefits that Paul and the Philippians reciprocate, no party can claim ownership of their gifts. All gifts are God's. Recipients merely pass on the commodity of another as mediators or mutual brokers. In this

446. See Chapter 2, section 2.

447. 'We must not simply focus upon the gift and services nor, as some have, see in the phrase a simple two-way transaction. Gifts and services, while of great importance in the initiating and maintaining of a reciprocal relationship, are one part of the total nexus of relations involved in giving and receiving. . . . Though he himself cannot reciprocate in kind, he is confident that God would more than make good the gift out of, and in a manner befitting, his boundless wealth in Christ Jesus (v. 19)' (*Enmity*, 163–64).

way, both mediating parties equally share a vertical tie of obligation to God, which *partly* (though not completely) disentangles the horizontal ties of obligation to each other. Put simply, because of the divine third party, obligation ceases to be *primarily* between Paul and the Philippians. No longer does one party, after giving a gift, hold the superior position over the other as *the source*. No longer does the recipient, after receiving a gift, become subservient to the demands of the giver. When participants exchange gifts in the divine economy, they are caught up into a divine momentum of mediation. God owns everything and gives to those in need through the mediation of those who have already received gifts. This other-oriented movement prevents anyone from hoarding gifts and so accruing social power for themselves. It also preserves relationships from degenerating into destructive competitions of one-upmanship. Instead, in this divine movement, gifts take on a divine purpose. They are received in order to be given away and given away in order to be received, and on goes the cycle of χάρις, with God as the ultimate giver of all gifts and the chief recipient of all gratitude.

This is the sort of κοινωνία εἰς λόγον δόσεως καὶ λήψεως that Paul envisions, one that preserves the element of horizontal obligation and yet undergoes a relational reconfiguration, inasmuch as beneficiaries share a vertical tie of obligation to the benefactor of all goods in the economy of χάρις. In a word, Paul and the community are ‘bound together by webs of need and

of gift,⁴⁴⁸ with the divine party as the unifying factor. Thus, like Seneca and the majority of ancient writers, obligation underlies, even maintains, gift-exchange for Paul. But unlike these writers, the presence of God modifies its relational contours and social expressions.

4.3.2.2.2. *Self-Interest Converted into Other-Oriented Self-Interest*

In Chapter 2, Seneca alerted us to a redefined perspective on self-interest that can be revisited here. In reaction to those who exhibited *exploitative* self-regard, Seneca promotes a self-interest that is *primarily* geared towards the other and *secondarily* interested with the self. This other-oriented self-interest, for Seneca, maintains the threefold flow of gift — giving, receiving, and returning. When it comes to Paul’s perspective on gift, we discover an analogous pattern in the tension between 2:30 and 4:17. In 2:30, Paul acknowledges the community’s λειτουργία to him (πρός με), which suggests (at least to some extent) that he is self-interested, not because he seeks to *exploit* the community for *selfish gain* but because he has a need that they, as fellow-sharers of his suffering, can meet. At the same time, however, in 4:17, Paul considers his interest *secondary* and their interests *primary*, when he writes, ‘Not that I seek [ἐπιζητῶ] the gift, but I seek [ἀλλὰ ἐπιζητῶ] the fruit which abounds to your account [εἰς λόγον ὑμῶν].’ So, according to 2:30 and 4:17, self- and other-interest seem to be held in

448. John Barclay, ‘Manna and the Circulation of Grace: A Study of 2 Corinthians 8:1–15,’ in *The Word Leaps the Gap: Essays on Scripture and Theology in Honor of Richard B. Hays* (ed. J. Ross Wagner, C. Kavin Rowe, and A. Katherine Grieb; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), 409–26 at 425; my italics. Although Barclay applies this to the collection, the model presented in 2 Cor. 8:1-15 is the master paradigm of all gift-giving relationships in the divine economy.

tension, but held together nonetheless. This sort of other-focused self-regard also appears in 1:21-25, where Paul downplays *his own interest* ‘to depart and be with Christ’ because it is *more advantageous for them* that he remain with them.⁴⁴⁹ Yet this results in ‘fruitful labour’ for Paul (τοῦτό μοι καρπὸς ἔργου, 1:22) and for the community (1:25). Again, like 2:30 and 4:17, self- and other-interest leads to mutual gain. In this regard, Paul closely resembles his ancient counterpart, Seneca.

Nevertheless, contrary to Seneca, other-oriented self-interest in the economy of χάρις is patterned after the self-giving love of God in the Christ-gift. Since the Christ-event brought three-way, gift-giving relationships into existence, it is therefore fitting that this creative, cataclysmic event would become the paradigm of Christian behaviour in the community. Or, as John Barclay calls it, ‘the policy for the creation of community,’⁴⁵⁰ a policy which, according to 2:5, calls the community to ‘have the same mind that was in Christ Jesus.’ How? By ‘considering one another more significant than oneself’ (ἀλλήλους ἡγούμενοι ὑπερέχοντας ἑαυτῶν, 2:3) and by looking ‘not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others’ (μὴ τὰ ἑαυτῶν ἕκαστος σκοποῦντες ἀλλὰ [καὶ] τὰ ἐτέρων ἕκαστοι, 2:4). The καί appears in P⁴⁶, Codex Sinaiticus, Codex Alexandrinus, and Codex Vaticanus. But even if it did not, the inclusion of ‘also’ must be assumed. For unless we are to reduce these other-oriented statements to a self

449. Interestingly, Paul uses the word necessary (ἀναγκαῖος) when he speaks of subsuming his interests under theirs.

450. ‘Paul, Reciprocity, and the Modern Myth of the Pure Gift.’

negation of the entire community, then we have to assume that Paul expected everyone in the community to reciprocate this other-oriented self-interest. Put differently, Paul cannot be calling all the Philippians to be other-oriented because no one would receive anything. Only giving to the other would be allowed. The apostle's communal policy, therefore, anticipates an economy where the other is just as eager to meet your needs as you are to meet theirs. This policy, to be sure, is open to dangerous and potentially destructive relationships, for it places your well-being, your state of abundance, if you will, in the hands of another. Nevertheless, because Christian gift-exchange is predicated on the activity of God in and through the community, it is safeguarded. God assures the completion of distributing grace to another. For Paul, then, other-oriented self-regard is deeply rooted in and shaped by the Christ-event, held as the policy of God's economy.

4.3.2.3. Redressing the So-Called 'Thankless Thanks'⁴⁵¹

God's role as a third party not only reties horizontal obligations and converts self-interest into other-oriented self-interest, but it also sheds immense light on Paul's so-called 'Thankless Thanks,' a glaring problem in 4:10-20.

The Philippians graciously delivered a gift, but Paul, whether intentionally or unintentionally, failed to reply with a simple 'thank you' — a flagrant violation of proper

451. For fuller treatment of this issue, especially in relation to the brokerage model, see my forthcoming article 'Paul's Intentional "Thankless Thanks" in Philippians 4.10-20,' *JSNT* 34 (2011): 47-69.

etiquette in ancient (as well as modern) gift exchange. To mitigate this issue, bemused scholars have searched endlessly for the slightest trace of gratitude in 4:10-20. The problem is that εὐχαριστέω and its cognates are completely absent. Despite this absence, however, scholars still claim to have detected faint whispers of gratitude.

Ralph Martin, for example, suggests that Paul implicitly discloses his thankfulness in 4:14, 'you did well' (καλῶς ἐποιήσατε).⁴⁵² Many have rightly criticized this view, however, conceding that this phrase may be commendation, or even, as Paul Holloway states, 'formal acknowledgement,'⁴⁵³ but certainly not gratitude.⁴⁵⁴ Other scholars abandon the search for gratitude altogether and ironically label this pericope a 'thankless thanks' (*dankloser Dank*).⁴⁵⁵ But many have balked at this coined paradox, insofar as it unfairly portrays Paul as thoughtlessly committing the heinous 'crime of ingratitude,'⁴⁵⁶ without providing a rationale for this cultural misdemeanor.

452. *Philippians*, 164; cf. Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 202. Another popular view is proposed by Wolfgang Schenk. He claims that Paul's joy in 4:10 discloses his 'thanks,' since χαίρω shares a common semantic field with εὐχαριστέω (*Philippenerbriefe*, 43). But this semantic connection is an etymological stretch, for although joy may in fact communicate thankfulness, an unequivocal word of thanks is still missing (O'Brien, *Philippians*, 517; Silva, *Philippians*, 208).

453. *Consolation*, 155.

454. Peterman correctly argues that καλῶς ἐποιήσατε cannot be understood as an expression of gratitude, because 'it does not acknowledge social debt,' 'it does not appear that the past tense [of ποιέω with καλῶς] carries the meaning "thank-you,"' and '[i]t does not smack of servility, as a client praising a benefactor' (*Gift Exchange*, 145 n128).

455. E.g., Dibelius, *Philippener*, 95; Lohmeyer, *Philippener*, 178; Gnllka, *Philippenerbrief*, 173.

456. Compared to all the '[h]omicides, tyrants, thieves, adulterers, robbers, sacrilegious men, and traitors,' Seneca contends that the most heinous vice, and perhaps the root of all these vices, is ingratitude (*Ben.* 1.10.4).

In response to these competing views, many have attempted to absolve Paul from the well-known offence of ingratitude⁴⁵⁷ by turning to the Greco-Roman conventions of giving and receiving.⁴⁵⁸ Among the most plausible theories, one in particular has piqued the interests of the majority of scholarship in the last couple of decades:⁴⁵⁹ Peterman’s article entitled “‘Thankless Thanks’: The Epistolary Social Convention in Philippians 4:10-20.”⁴⁶⁰

Peterman advances a plausible reason for the ‘thankless thanks’ by appealing to the social convention of verbal gratitude in non-literary papyri. Among the many papyrus letters he draws upon, the most noteworthy is P. Merton 12.⁴⁶¹ There, a certain Chairas informs Dionysius, a physician-friend, that he will ‘dispense with writing to you with a great show of thanks [μεγάλας εὐχαριστίας]; for it is to those who are not friends that we must give thanks in

457. Ingratitude repeatedly appears in *De Beneficiis* as a vice which *everyone* considers to be the worst committed among men (cf. 3.6.1; 4.16.3; 4.18.1; 5.15.1-2). Even the ungrateful themselves concede to this fact (3.1.1; c.f. also Cicero, *Off.* 2.18.63).

458. See, for example, Fleury, ‘Une Société de Fait’; Sampley, *Pauline Partnership*, 51–57; Capper, ‘Paul’s Dispute’; Bormann, *Philippi*, 161–205; L.M. White, ‘Paradigm of Friendship’; Berry, ‘Function of Friendship Language’; Glombitza, ‘Dank des Apostels.’ For explanations unrelated to ancient conventions of gift, see Loveday Alexander, ‘Hellenistic Letter-Forms and the Structure of Philippians,’ *JSNT* 37 (1989): 87–101 at 98; Dodd, ‘The Mind of Paul: I,’ 71–72; Michael, *Philippians*, 209–10.

459. To name a few who subscribe to Peterman’s view: Holloway, *Consolation*, 156–57 n58; Fee, *Philippians*, 446 n31; Reumann, *Philippians*, 688; Engberg-Pedersen, *Paul and the Stoics*, 319 n39; Jeffrey T. Reed, *Discourse Analysis*, 282–83; Ben Witherington, *Conflict & Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 147 n71, 168 n11.

460. “‘Thankless Thanks’: The Epistolary Social Conventions in Philippians 4:10–20,’ *TynB* 42.2 (1991): 261–70.

461. Because P. Merton 12 is the most compelling piece of evidence for Peterman’s case, there is no need to scrutinize each individual letter he puts forward, especially when the principal argument against his thesis deals with his underlying assumption that Philippians ought to be regarded as a ‘letter of friendship’ (see below).

words [δεῖ γὰρ τοῖς μὴ φίλοις οὐσι διὰ λόγων εὐχαριστεῖν].⁴⁶² From this and some twenty-five other letters, Peterman unearths an epistolary convention in which verbal gratitude was withheld among intimate friends, a popular convention he sees reflected in the so-called ‘thankless thanks.’⁴⁶³

The scholarly approbation of Peterman’s proposal comes as no surprise, given the recent trend to read Philippians in light of the *topos* of friendship.⁴⁶⁴ Nevertheless, although the friendship model is exegetically promising, it becomes problematic when scholars claim (either explicitly or implicitly) that Philippians should be read *exclusively* as a letter of friendship,⁴⁶⁵ which is precisely how Peterman handles Philippians 4:10-20. By solely comparing this text to papyrus letters among friends, he assumes that this section mirrors the literary pattern of friendship letters in antiquity. ‘What is important in connection with Philippians 4:10-20 is that these [friendship] letters allow us to assert that Paul’s response to

462. Text and translation is available in John L. White, *Light from Ancient Letters* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 145.

463. ‘Thankless Thanks,’ 264, though he correctly maintains that material gratitude was still required (*ibid.*, 266-68).

464. But many proponents of the friendship paradigm disagree with Peterman for a number of reasons. See Capper, ‘Paul’s Dispute,’ 208 n33; Reumann, ‘Letter of Friendship,’ 96.

465. Helpful in this regard is the corrective made by Markus Bockmuehl, warning scholars to beware the temptation of employing comparative models ‘schematically and prescriptively,’ for no one social convention ‘adequately captures what is undeniably a new and distinctive social phenomenon’ (*Philippians*, 37–38; cf. also Fee, *Philippians*, 424 n9). For a helpful discussion on the appropriate use of methods and models generally, see Philip Esler, ‘Models in New Testament Interpretation: A Reply to David Horrell,’ *JSNT* 78 (2000): 107–13; David Horrell, ‘Models and Methods in Social-Scientific Interpretation: A Response to Philip Esler,’ *JSNT* 78 (2000): 83–105; David Horrell, ‘Whither Social-Scientific Approaches to New Testament Interpretation? Reflections on Contested Methodologies and the Future,’ in *After the First Urban Christians: The Social-Scientific Study of Pauline Christianity Twenty-Five Years Later* (ed. Todd D. Still and David G. Horrell; London & New York: T&T Clark, 2009), 6–20.

the Philippians' gift is not remarkable owing to the lack of εὐχαριστέω. Among these documents his so-called "thankless thanks" are not at all unusual.⁴⁶⁶ Implied within this statement is the underlying assumption that Paul's socially-offensive silence in 4:10-20 remains socially enigmatic apart from the *topos* of friendship. Four points speak against this line of reasoning, however.

Firstly, Philippians embodies a variety of epistolary features found within familial,⁴⁶⁷ friendship,⁴⁶⁸ and consolation letters,⁴⁶⁹ containing multiple purposes, theological formulations, and moral exhortations.⁴⁷⁰ Its eclectic genre can hardly be pinned down to one distinct form. Secondly, unlike friendship letters in the ancient world, the terms φίλος and φίλη do not appear in the text,⁴⁷¹ despite some recent attempts to translate ἀγαπητοί in 2:12

466. Peterman, "Thankless Thanks," 265–66.

467. Alexander, 'Hellenistic Letter-Forms.'

468. Berry, 'Function of Friendship Language.'

469. Holloway, *Consolation*, 55–83.

470. David Aune, *The New Testament in Its Literary Environment* (LEC; Cambridge: James Clarke & Co, 1987), 203: 'Most early Christian letters are multifunctional and have a "mixed" character, combining elements from two or more epistolary types. . . . Paul in particular was both a creative and eclectic letter writer. The epistolary situations he faced were often more complex than the ordinary rhetorical situations faced by most rhetoricians. Many letters therefore exhibit combinations of styles.' While proponents of the friendship model acknowledge this point (e.g., John T. Fitzgerald, 'Ancient Discussions,' 142), they, nevertheless, on the basis of similarities between Philippians and Hellenistic friendship letters and essays, conclude that it may still be appropriately labelled a 'letter of friendship.' This is why, for instance, Stowers considers Philippians 'a hortatory letter of friendship' (Stowers, 'Friends and Enemies' at 107).

471. Malherbe suggests that Paul intentionally avoids friendship language because of its Epicurean overtones, but this remains pure, though obviously informed, conjecture (*Paul and the Thessalonians: The Philosophic Tradition of Pastoral Care* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987], 101–02).

and 4:1 as ‘dear friends.’⁴⁷² Thirdly, as a letter written to a community, it does not conform in a strict sense to the criteria of Greco-Roman rhetorical and epistolary handbooks or private correspondences.⁴⁷³ Finally, and perhaps most substantially, the friendship model attributes two-way rules of gift exchange to Paul’s relationship with the Philippians. But, as we have seen, Philippians 1:3-6 and 4:10-20 jointly disclose a three-way gift-exchange relationship between God, Paul, and the Philippians, which naturally alters the rules of exchange. For these reasons, interpreting Philippians *exclusively* as a letter of friendship, as Peterman does, is reductionistic and therefore interpretively problematic,⁴⁷⁴ especially if God is excluded from the relational picture.⁴⁷⁵

If, then, a three-way relationship emerges from 1:3-6 and 4:10-20 (with God as the source, the Philippians as mediators, and Paul as the beneficiary), one can easily see how this three-way relationship furnishes a plausible solution to the so-called ‘Thankless Thanks’: Paul’s ‘thanks’ is intentionally ‘thankless’ because the Philippians are mediators of God’s

472. Hansen, *Philippians*, 6, 169.

473. Reed explains, ‘The rhetorical camp treats [Paul’s letters] fundamentally as speeches, that is, orations embodying the canons of the rhetorical handbooks’ (*Discourse Analysis*, 173). But he considers it ‘methodologically suspect to read Paul’s letters *according to the rhetorical handbooks* in the light of (i) the evidence from the rhetorical and epistolary theorists themselves and (ii) the absence of formal parallels between Paul’s letters and other so-called “rhetorical” letters’ (157), a critique he proceeds to develop (cf. 157-78).

474. This is not to say that the friendship model should not be employed at all, especially when it emits much light on certain relational dynamics between Paul and the Philippians. My only contention is that it cannot fully explain the gift-giving relationship, and especially the act of gratitude, without allowing God as the third party to reshape the model.

475. Peterman only considers the role God plays as benefactor in his larger work (*Gift Exchange*, 49, 104–05 n65). The third party does not appear in his article on the ‘Thankless Thanks.’

commodity, not the source. Or, in the perceptive words of Miroslav Volf (who notes in passing): ‘Most likely [Paul] doesn’t thank them directly because he believes that he hasn’t received gifts *from* them but *through* them. The giver is God. They are the channels.’⁴⁷⁶ As a beneficiary of a divine gift, therefore, Paul rightly directs his thanks to God, the ultimate source, in 1:3, before inviting the community, in 4:10-20, to express their gratitude to the primary giver in the economy of χάρις,⁴⁷⁷ only now in liturgical fashion: ‘Glory be to our God and Father forever and ever. Amen’ (4:20).

But if Paul renders his thanks to the ultimate giver in the divine economy,⁴⁷⁸ and instead of thanking the Philippians, welcomes them to do the same, what specific *intention* lies behind this culturally-questionable practice? And should this practice be deemed a corrective or a conviction? One popular proposal explains the apostle’s silence as an intentional desire to eschew Philippian patronage, so as not to become their client and they his superior ‘paymasters.’⁴⁷⁹ This theory, nevertheless, erroneously assumes that a recipient of a gift, upon making a return, automatically becomes a patron in any gift-giving relationship. This was

476. *Free of Charge: Giving and Forgiving in a Culture Stripped of Grace* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 112–13; author’s italics.

477. Although Schenk’s proposal goes too far (see n273 above), gratitude may still be expressed through χαίρω in 4:10. Silva explains the position taken here: ‘Without leaning on the etymological connection between χαίρω and εὐχαριστέω, we should recognize that this expression of joy certainly *communicates* thankfulness’ (*Philippians*, 208; my italics). But the contention of this investigation is that this thankfulness is directed solely to God for reviving their concern via their monetary gift. After all, Paul’s ‘joy’ is found ἐν κυρίῳ (4.10).

478. Though he rightly commends the community in 4:14 (καλῶς ἐποιήσατε).

479. Hooker, ‘Philippians,’ 11:543; cf. also Witherington, *Finances*, 123, 168 n19; Fee, *Philippians*, 445; Berry, ‘Function of Friendship Language,’ 123.

clearly not the case in ancient society,⁴⁸⁰ nor was it the case in Paul's relationship with the Philippians. Simply because the community reciprocated a favour in response to Paul's initial gift of the gospel does not automatically make them his patron. He certainly would have been in debt to them,⁴⁸¹ but accruing a debt is categorically different than becoming a client.

Furthermore, this reconstruction casts unfavourable light on Paul's relationship with the community, when internal evidence⁴⁸² does not portray a strained relationship caused by conformity to exploitative conventions of gift, unlike that of his dealings with the Corinthians.

Instead, judging from the favourable tone of the letter, the social rules of gift giving, and the nature of their intimate *κοινωνία*, it seems best to regard his so-called 'thankless thanks' as a theological conviction (rather than a corrective) that only God occupies the position of benefactor.⁴⁸³ He is the one who deserves all gratitude, while the church distributes his commodity among one another. That is why, throughout his other letters, Paul goes to great lengths to integrate and highlight God's role as provider and those 'in Christ' as channels

480. This view oversimplifies the multidimensional enterprise of gift exchange in antiquity, assuming that every reciprocal relationship can and ought to be classified a patron-client relationship. However, a client never became the patron in an established patron-client relationship. This view also neglects the variety of gift-giving relationships in ancient society (e.g., teacher-pupil, parent-child, etc.). For a critique of this methodology, see Chapter 2, section 1.

481. Giving a gift made one superior in the ancient world, insofar as the recipient occupies the position of the debtor (see, e.g., Seneca, *Ben.* 2.13.2).

482. Indeed, the multiple occurrences of *κοινωνία* and its cognates throughout Philippians suggests otherwise, sharply demarcating their distinguished gift-giving relationship from that of other churches.

483. This conviction nevertheless becomes a theological corrective in the case of the Corinthian church, which we will explore in the next chapter.

of χάρις. In 1 Cor. 4:1, for instance, he emphasises his mediation of God's gospel, echoing the claim of 9:17, that he is a 'steward [οἰκονόμος; or mediator] of the mysteries of God [μυστηρίων θεοῦ]'. In 1 Thess. 2:1-13, the phrase, 'the gospel of God' (τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ), emphatically appears three times at crucial points in the argument, stressing the origin of his gift to the community (cf. 11:7). In 2 Cor. 9:12, the Jerusalem saints, after receiving gifts from the Corinthians, will render 'many thanksgivings to God' (πολλῶν εὐχαριστιῶν τῷ θεῷ). The Corinthians give, but God unexpectedly receives the gratitude — precisely because God gives *through* the Corinthians.

All this suggests that, for Paul, inhabitants within God's economy are drawn into a 'pay it forward' momentum of χάρις, a momentum set in motion by the grace of the Christ-event (2 Cor. 8:9), which powerfully transforms Christ-followers into conduits of grace for one another. This not only alleviates the needs of others but also empowers others to flourish in this interdependent work of abounding grace. Accordingly, the circle of χάρις could be mapped out as follows. Grace cascades from God the benefactor, flows in, through, and among participants 'in Christ,' and eventually returns back as εὐχαριστία to God, the supreme giver. Ironically, then, a rich theology of grace-shaped relationships may be heard from the apostle's loud silence.

5. Conclusion: Paul's Κοινωνία with the Philippians

We began this chapter with the question, what does 'a full, trusting κοινωνία' look like?

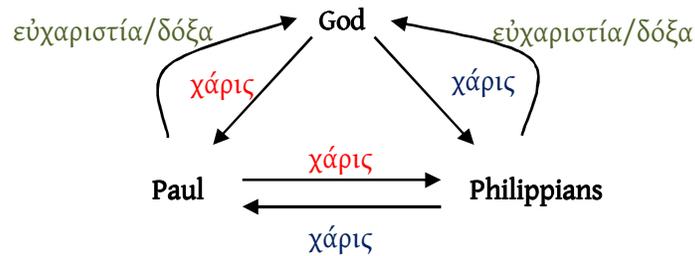
Having exegetically trekked through Phil. 1:3-30, 2:25-30, and 4:10-20, we are now in a position to provide some conclusions and tease out some implications for Paul's financial policy. It is worth noting that these conclusions are based on Paul's perception of his κοινωνία with the Philippians, not the reality of that relationship. Yet, for our purposes, we are only concerned with Paul's perceptions, since his policy depends on them.

5.1. The Inclusion of the Third Party

Tracing the trajectory of χάρις solidified the three-way nature of Paul and the Philippians' κοινωνία. The movement of χάρις in the gospel begins and ends with God. He is the one who initiates Paul's κοινωνία εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον with the Philippians (1:3, 5; cf. 1:29), the one who supplies the commodity of χάρις in all its varied forms,⁴⁸⁴ the one who maintains its progression (προκοπή, 1:12, 26) through hostile impediments to reach those in the world (1:12-18c) as well as those 'in Christ' (1:18d-30), and the one who ultimately receives thanks (εὐχαριστία, 1:3), glory (δόξα, 1:11; 2:11; 4:20; cf. 1:20, 26), and praise (ἔπαινος, 1:11) from mediating recipients in the divine economy. Givers and receivers, then, are caught up into a divine momentum, a circle of χάρις, with God working *in* and *through* human agency to mediate

484. E.g., the boldness to preach (1:14, 20), joy (1:18), present and future deliverance (1:19), faith, perseverance in suffering, ultimate salvation (1:27-30), and material gifts (1:3-6, 4:10, 19).

his divine resources to those in need (1:3-6, 19; 2:12-13; 4:10, 19). A full picture of the trajectory of χάρις in the divine economy can therefore be illustrated as follows:



5.2. Social Dynamics of Giving and Receiving ‘in Christ’

After establishing the incorporation of a divine third party in their κοινωνία, we examined the horizontal implications that God’s presence generated. We unearthed four relational alterations. The first is that, because God is the source of all commodity, Paul and the Philippians, as mediators of divine goods, share a mutual obligation to this source, a vertical tie which modifies, but does not sever, the horizontal ties of obligation (2:25-30; 4:15). The second modification is that, because God aims to meet needs, gifts carry the obligation to be distributed, especially since Paul and the community are bound within a nexus of gift and suffering. Third, because God mediates gifts *through* them, they cannot use them to accrue social power for themselves. Gifts are meant to be passed on, meant to meet needs, which ensures that the inherent power within gifts is constantly being transferred into the hands of another. Finally, because God works *through* one to meet the needs of others, such as the gift

from Philippi to Paul, an oscillating asymmetry emerges, with one party in a position of need, while the other has the abundance to meet their need. But since no one can act as the *source*, and both parties will equally have needs that the other can fill, this asymmetry will constantly be in flux. Consequently, all of these relational alterations, created by the incorporation of the divine third party, allow us to reach a conclusion as to the nature of Paul's financial relationship with the Philippians that differs from the proposals listed at the beginning of this chapter.

5.3. The Nature of Paul's Financial Relationship with the Philippians

Paul and the Philippians share 'a full, trusting *κοινωνία*' of gift and suffering. They exhibit mutual concern and affection for one another. They spend themselves in sacrificial ministry and in prayer on behalf of each other's faith, joy, and ultimate salvation in the midst of suffering. And they willingly exchange gifts with one another in order to meet pressing needs. These positive, reciprocal acts cancel out Davorin Peterlin's dysfunctional relationship, Joseph Marchal's antagonistic evaluation, and any other reconstruction that proposes a negative assessment of their relationship. Also, the non-obligatory relationship advocated by Ebner and Peterman does not do justice to 2:25-30 and 4:10-20, as we have shown. Paul and the Philippians share a *κοινωνία* of giving *and* receiving, and even though God is singled out as the one who will repay the Philippians, his divine commodity nevertheless requires an earthly

conduit (4:19).⁴⁸⁵ Consequently, God's presence propels rather than eradicates social reciprocity on the human level. Lastly, the three-way relational pattern calls into question the legitimacy of the friendship and patron-client model as appropriate frameworks for understanding monetary relationships in Pauline texts. Since every relationship in the divine economy includes God as the crucial third party, two-way relationships — and thus two-way rules of exchange — no longer apply *directly*. Conversely, the brokerage model serves as a more accurate heuristic lens through which to examine Paul's financial dealings, though this social framework carries its own set of problems.⁴⁸⁶ Moreover, the issue of whether Paul and the Philippians had an equal or unequal friendship becomes superfluous. Both are true, if viewed through the 'oscillating asymmetry' outlined above, an asymmetrical relationship which, in 2 Cor. 8:14, Paul paradoxically calls equality (ἰσότης).

What we have uncovered in this chapter, then, is a theological, three-way relational pattern between God, Paul, and the Philippians that informs the shape of their 'full, trusting κοινωνία.' Although many relational dynamics have been unearthed, the essence of their κοινωνία can be summed up in two words: *gift* and *suffering*. Interestingly, the Corinthians lacked both. They neither suffered for the gospel or with their apostle, nor were their gifts accepted by Paul. They had no κοινωνία in *gift* and *suffering*. The aim of the next chapter,

485. See section 4.2.2.

486. We explore the 'fitting' and 'unfitting' parts of this model with regard to 2 Cor. 1:3-11 in Briones, 'Mutual Brokers.'

therefore, is to determine why this was the case, and whether the absence of these relational components directly relates to Paul's financial policy at Corinth.

CHAPTER 4: Paul's Negative Relationship With the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 9)

Introduction

In the previous chapter, we asked *why* the Philippians were the only church with whom Paul entered into a gift-giving relationship. To provide an answer to this seemingly impossible question, we examined the positive nature of their relationship and deduced the key features of their 'full, trusting *κοινωνία*.' What emerged was a three-way relational pattern between God, Paul, and the Philippians, being distinguished by a mutuality in *gift* and *suffering*. In other words, the community embraced the gift of the gospel, willingly endured suffering on behalf of it, entered into Paul's ministry of suffering through their gift, and helped mediate the gift of the gospel to others. All of this led the apostle to render thanks to God, the vital third party, for actively working in and through the Philippians.

Now that we have uncovered the relational dynamics of an operative gift-exchange relationship with Paul, we can turn the *why* question onto the Corinthians: *why* did Paul refuse Corinthian gifts? And embedded within the *why* is a *what*. *What* were the determining factors that prevented the Corinthians from supporting their apostle? To answer these questions, we will take a *socio-theological* approach. Our investigation will begin with the social ethos of

Corinth, starting with its historic legacy of prosperity and moving into the celebrated conventions of wealth and honour among its people in the first century. We will then demonstrate the resemblance between the interactions of ancient society and the interactions of the Corinthian church, proving that they indeed were conformed to the dominant culture around them. After confirming their culturally-conditioned lifestyle from specific passages in 1 Corinthians, we will bring in Paul's appraisal of their spiritual state, his reconfiguration of their worldly perspective, and lastly the *socio-theological* strategy behind his financial policy in 1 Cor. 9. What will become apparent is that the relational features found at Philippi, that of God's active role in their partnership with Paul and their shameless commitment to the counter-cultural gospel of the Christ-event, was completely absent at Corinth, an absence which discloses Paul's reason for refusing their gifts.

1. The Social Ethos of Corinth

1.1. The City – Corinth's Legacy of Prosperity

Corinthian history is a tale of two prosperous eras. Prior to 146 BC, Corinth flourished as the leading Greek city-state of the Achaean league. By virtue of its prime location between two harbours (Lechaeum to the west and Cenchreae to the east), the city controlled overland movement between Italy and Asia and so operated as a vital intersection for Mediterranean

trade.¹ Naturally, this strategic position led to material prosperity,² raising Corinth to the zenith of economic glory and civic honour.³ That is, of course, until Lucius Mummius plundered their treasures and virtually decimated this defiant city⁴ – a catastrophic event which brought Corinth’s first prosperous era to a close.⁵

In March 44 BC, however, Julius Caesar renewed the faded glory of Greek Corinth by refounding the city as a Roman colony, ushering in a new era of prosperity in Corinthian history. M.E.H. Walbank explains,

The refounding of Corinth, a great commercial centre of the past, was in keeping with Julius Caesar’s economic and colonial policies of relieving economic distress at home, particularly at Rome, and of developing the provinces. Since the suppression of piracy by Pompey, the east Mediterranean had become, in effect, a free trade area in which Corinth, with its unique situation, was a key factor.⁶

1. The paved roadway (*diolkos*) alongside the Isthmus connecting the two harbours, which permitted merchant ships to circumvent the dangerous six-day alternative voyage around the Southern Cape of the Peloponnese, ‘assured Corinth of an early, important role in ancient commerce’ (James Wiseman, ‘Corinth and Rome, 1:228 B.C.-A.D. 267,’ in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* II, 7.1 [ed. H. Temporini; Berlin: De Gruyter, 1979], 438–548 at 446; cf. G.D.R. Sanders, ‘Urban Corinth: An Introduction,’ in *Urban Religion in Roman Corinth* [ed. Daniel Schowalter and Steven Friesen; HTS 53; Harvard, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005], 11–24 at 13–14).

2. Thucydides called Corinth ‘a market [ἐμπόριον] for the exchange of goods,’ which, in his estimation, was ‘powerful and rich’ (*War* 1.13.5), while Homer sang of ‘Wealthy Corinth’ (*Il.* 2.570).

3. On civic pride and rivalry, see Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 44.9, 46.3; Aristides, *Or.* 26.97–99; Cicero, *Off.* 2.17; cf. C.P. Jones, *The Roman World of Dio Chrysostom* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1978), 86–90.

4. Corinth rebelled against Rome’s campaign to dissolve the Achaean league (cf. Cicero, *Agr.* 1.5; Strabo, *Geogr.* 8.4.8; 8.6.23; Pausanias, *Descr.* 2.1.2).

5. According to Strabo, Corinth was laid waste for 102 years (*Geogr.* 8.6.23).

6. M.E.H. Walbank, ‘The Foundation and Planning of Early Roman Corinth,’ *JRA* 10 (1997): 95–130 at 99.

By recolonising Corinth with primarily Greek-speaking freedmen,⁷ most of whom were eager entrepreneurs,⁸ Julius Caesar regained ‘the mercantile glories of the city that Mummius had destroyed in 146.’⁹ With inhabitants to ensure its commercial success and its strategic location reclaimed, Corinth once again became the epicenter of commercial trade.¹⁰ Between 7 BC and AD 3, the biennial Isthmian games were also reinstated. This athletic festival, being second in importance only to the Olympian games, attracted members of élite families, participants, and spectators from all over the Mediterranean¹¹ and generated an influx of profit to local businesses, increasing the city’s opulence.¹² Arguably, this revival of economic glory made Corinth one of the wealthiest cities in the Greco-Roman world.¹³ Small wonder that the apostle Paul decided to centre his missionary efforts there.

Two factors, in particular, most likely compelled Paul to consider Roman Corinth as an optimum location for ministry. To begin with, as the central market of the Mediterranean as well as the host of the Isthmian games, Paul would have encountered numerous traders and

7. There may have been some veterans, but ‘they would have been a small minority’ (Jerome Murphy-O’Connor, *St. Paul’s Corinth: Texts and Archaeology* [3rd ed.; Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2002], 64).

8. Walbank, ‘Roman Corinth,’ 107.

9. Edward Salmon, *Roman Colonization Under the Republic* (Aspects of Greek and Roman Life; London: Thames and Hudson, 1969), 135. Aristides comments on Corinth’s renewed splendour: ‘Not even the eyes of all men are sufficient to take it in’ (*Or.* 46.25; cf. 46.27-28).

10. Antony Spawforth explains, ‘By the late 1st cent. AD the colony was a flourishing centre of commerce, administration, the imperial cult, and entertainment’ (‘Corinth: Roman,’ in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* [ed. Simon Hornblower; 3rd edition; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003], 390–91 at 391).

11. Pausanias, *Descr.* 2.2.2; Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 8.5-10; Aristides, *Or.* 46.23; cf. Murphy-O’Connor, *St. Paul’s Corinth*, 12–15; Oscar Broneer, ‘The Apostle Paul and the Isthmian Games,’ *BA* 25 (1962): 2–31.

12. Murphy-O’Connor, *St. Paul’s Corinth*, 54.

13. See Aristides, *Or.* 46.23.

travellers with various religious backgrounds, who, converted or not, ‘could take word of the new religion to many distant places.’¹⁴ The other reason is that there would have been a high demand for leather workers during the games, providing countless evangelistic opportunities.¹⁵ Throughout the rest of the year, Paul’s workshop would have been one of three venues in which to share the message of Christ.¹⁶ But, ironically, while the benefits of Corinth’s economy primarily drew Paul to the Corinthians, the city’s preoccupation with wealth and honour, as we will see, was precisely what drew the Corinthians away from Paul.

1.2. The People — The Social Conventions of Wealth and Honour at Corinth

‘The city is not a cause but a consequence; not an active entity but an entity that is acted upon by its people. It is a mirror in which their social, economic, and political institutions and values are reflected.’¹⁷ Corinth’s drive for economic glory simply reflects the social values of its people. One particular avenue for honour, which is especially noteworthy for the purposes of

14. Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 112.

15. Although Engels accurately states that the Corinthian church was neither composed of ‘transient merchants, travelers, and tourists’ nor ‘spectators and participants at the Isthmian games’ (*Roman Corinth*, 113), a leather workshop nevertheless provided a setting in which ‘intellectual discourse’ could take place with some from these groups, as Ronald Hock demonstrates (*Social Context*, 37–42; cf. Murphy-O’Connor, *St. Paul’s Corinth*, 192–98).

16. Stanley Stowers argues that the private home was the most important locus for Paul’s preaching activity, primarily because ‘[p]ublic speaking and often the use of public buildings required status, reputation, and recognized roles which Paul did not have’ (‘Social Status, Public Speaking and Private Teaching: The Circumstances of Paul’s Preaching Activity,’ *NovT* 26 [1984]: 59–82 at 81; esp. 66–70). David Horrell, however, combines the arguments of Hock and Stowers and accurately identifies three social settings for Paul’s missionary activity in Corinth: ‘the workshop, the house and probably the synagogue’ (*Social Ethos*, 73–77).

17. Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 66.

this chapter, was through the exchange of gifts and services, ‘the chief bond of human society.’¹⁸ In fact, the social system of gift exchange, embedded within an honour and shame culture, played an integral role not only in the Greco-Roman world but also in Corinthian life.

In separate studies, Peter Marshall, John Chow, and Andrew Clarke have aptly shown the importance of patronage practices for understanding the church at Corinth,¹⁹ but it is not the intention of this section to reiterate their arguments or even challenge them (for the time being).²⁰ Here, we will supply a broad brush-stroke of the attainment of honour through wealth within the agonistic environment of the Greco-Roman world, before discerning the level of assimilation to these social values in the Corinthian church.

1.2.1. Patronage and Honour

‘Honor,’ writes John Lendon, ‘was a filter through which the whole world was viewed, a deep structure of the Greco-Roman mind,’²¹ and patronage greatly informed this embedded framework. According to H.A. Stansbury, the Roman system of patronage is one of four major sources for the ethos of honour and shame in the world of the first century and especially in Corinth.²² Indeed, patronage allowed the élite, semi-élite, and non-élite, albeit within their

18. Seneca, *Ben.* 1.4.2.

19. See *Enmity; Patronage and Power; Leadership*, respectively.

20. See Chapter 5, section 3.1 for an exegetical critique of the patronal interpretation.

21. Lendon, *Empire*, 73.

22. ‘Corinthian Honor, Corinthian Conflict’ (PhD Thesis, University of California, 1990), 31–32. The others include: ‘the warrior culture of the Homeric age,’ ‘the institution of slavery,’ and ‘the authoritarian patriarchal family.’

respective circles,²³ to accrue honour, status, and worth *for oneself and before others*. This twofold quest is succinctly explained by Julian Pitt-Rivers. ‘Honour is the value of a person in his own eyes, but also in the eyes of society. It is his estimation of his own worth, his *claim* to pride, but it is also the acknowledgement of that claim, his excellence recognized by society, his *right* to pride.’²⁴ So, in short, *claim* must be turned into *right*. For a persons’s *self-estimation* as worthy (*dignus*) to become a *social-estimation*,²⁵ it had to be confirmed by those whose opinion mattered.²⁶ One way to achieve this honorific outcome, at least within élite circles, was by displaying one’s social worth through acts of generosity. As Andrew Clarke rightly notes,

First century Graeco-Roman society was a society where success at many levels depended on status, reputation and public estimation, which in turn depended entirely on friendships [i.e., patronage among so-called ‘equals’]. Such friendships were maintained through a continuous flow of generosity in two directions. It may therefore be seen that success [i.e., honour and status] was dependent at root on wealth, even considerable wealth.²⁷

23. Carlin Barton notes that the élite were most preoccupied with honour, but, emotionally, the slave ‘was every bit as sensitive to insult as his or her master. The plebeian was as preoccupied with honor as the patrician, *the client as the patron*, the woman as the man, the child as the adult’ (*Roman Honor*, 11; cf. 13; my italics).

24. ‘Honour and Social Status,’ in *Honour and Shame: The Values of Mediterranean Society* (ed. J.G. Peristiany; London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1965), 21–77 at 21; cf. 27; my italics.

25. Barton, *Roman Honor*, 219: ‘*Dignitas* was worthiness of honor.’

26. ‘Honor,’ Bruce Malina writes, ‘is the value of a person in his or her own eyes (that is, one’s claim to worth) *plus* that person’s value in the eyes of his or her social group. Honor is a claim to worth along with the social acknowledgement of worth’ (*The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology* [Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993], 31). Similarly, Halvor Moxnes explains, ‘When someone’s claim to honor is recognized by the group, honor is confirmed, and the result is a certain status in society’ (‘Honor and Shame,’ *BTB* 23 [1993]: 167–76 at 168).

27. *Leadership*, 32. Timothy Savage further notes that, because the aggressive citizens of Corinth ‘pride themselves on their wealth’ (*Or.* 9.8) and are ‘ungracious. . . among their luxuries’ (*Alciphron Ep.* 3.15.1), [h]ere, more than elsewhere, wealth was a prerequisite for honour and poverty a badge of disgrace’ (*Power Through Weakness*, 88; cf. Ramsay MacMullen, *Roman Social Relations: 50 B.C. to A.D. 284* [New Haven, MA: Yale University Press, 1974], 109).

1.2.2. Patronage and Honour in an Agonistic Environment

Carlin Barton describes the cultural milieu of Rome as ‘a contest culture, a sometimes brutally competitive, hierarchical society in which one’s status and being were perpetually tested.’²⁸ The road to glory was therefore marked indelibly by competition, so that ‘Roman honor required will, determination, and effective energy [*virtus*].’²⁹ In a contest culture where every Roman ‘had to be the best, the greatest, the first, the *unus vir*,’³⁰ striving to prove their *dignitas* and *virtus*,³¹ there was always an adversary to be conquered, one who stood in the way of *gloria*, *laus*, and *decus*. For ‘without an adversary,’ Seneca asserts, ‘*virtus* shrivels. We see how great and how viable *virtus* is when, by endurance, it shows what it is capable of.’³² Those competing for social worth, then, were ‘simultaneously a tiger on a leash and a bug under a glass’³³ – intimidating and being intimidated, overcoming to attain and protecting to retain.

To the modern mind, this competition for honour, where one person’s honour was another person’s shame, may seem socially barbaric. Yet it becomes comprehensible ‘if,’ as Stansbury insists, ‘honor is thought of as a commodity in limited supply. A person must then

28. *Roman Honor*, 237.

29. Barton, *Roman Honor*, 37. ‘*Virtus*,’ Barton explains, ‘was, in the words of Georges Dumézil, “la qualité d’homme au maximum.” There was no *virtus* in the Republic without the demonstration of will’ (36; citing *Horace et les Curiaces* [Paris: Gallimard, 1942]).

30. *Roman Honor*, 47 n70.

31. ‘The whole glory of virtue,’ according to Cicero, ‘resides in activity’ (*Off.* 1.6.19).

32. *De Prov.* 2.4.

33. Barton, *Roman Honor*, 229.

compete for it, perhaps utilizing conventional methods such as *gifts*, valor, or demonstrations of rhetorical skill and philosophical insight.³⁴ Gifts, in particular, often instigated a competitive, though outwardly dignified, contest. Competition of one-up-manship, for example, flared up amongst social equals,³⁵ with both seeking to outdo the other by granting a greater gift than the one they received.³⁶ In this sense, gifts were not unlike honourable duels. Both parties competed with one another to retain or restore one's honour in society, each risking their wealth to save face in society.

1.3. Conclusion

Having outlined the cultural values of patronage (or wealth) and honour (or worth) in the ancient world generally, which appeared within the prosperous city of Corinth, we can now conclude by listing three socially dangerous side effects that wealth, honour, and competition produced in Corinthian society that will reemerge when we analyse the Corinthian church.

34. 'Honor,' 418; my emphasis.

35. 'It is very important to note,' writes Malina, 'that the interaction over honor, the challenge-response game, can take place only between social equals' (*New Testament World*, 35; author's italics).

36. 'It was the thirst for honor, the contest for applause, that worked so powerfully to impoverish the rich' (MacMullen, *Social Relations*, 62; cf. Peter Garnsey and Richard Saller, *The Roman Empire: Economy, Society and Culture* [London: Duckworth, 1987], 155–56).

(i) Roman emphasis on social stratification developed criteria for measuring worth, clearly demarcating the worthy (i.e., *honestiores*) from the unworthy (i.e., *humiliores*) on the basis of wealth.

(ii) Since worth, honour, and status were attained through the exchange of wealth, especially through the parading of one's fortune before the public eye,³⁷ outward expressions of pride were encouraged, such as the culturally-acceptable practice of boasting.

(iii) Individuals competing for honour promoted themselves while neglecting others, creating a self-promoting atmosphere.³⁸

With these social ramifications of wealth and honour in mind, that of the outward displays of fortune through one's gifts and boasting, the social criteria of worth, and the indifferent attitudes of the competitive towards the other, we will now determine whether the Corinthians, after their encounter with the gospel, stripped themselves of these cultural values of gift and worth or integrated them into the life of the church.

2. The Cultural Conformity of the Corinthians Post-Conversion

After Paul proclaimed the *counter-cultural* gospel of the Christ-event at Corinth, and they willingly accepted this gift of grace, did it produce a *counter-cultural* people? Or did they, after

37. MacMullen, *Social Relations*, 61–62.

38. Savage notes that 'people began to focus on themselves and in particular on cultivating self-worth. For many, self-appreciation became the goal and self-glorification the reward' (*Power Through Weakness*, 19).

genuinely converting (cf. 1 Cor. 15:1-2), retain the cultural framework of the Greco-Roman world rather than adopt Paul's apocalyptic worldview? To provide an answer, we will investigate the Corinthians' understanding of conversion before analysing specific texts in 1 Corinthians which suggest that the church adopted the norms of gift and worth outlined above.

2.1. Conversion at Corinth

Stephen Chester has provided an incisive assessment of the Corinthians' understanding of conversion within the Greco-Roman context. He draws on B. Jules-Rosette's definition of conversion as 'an experience rooted in both self and society. It involves a personally acknowledged transformation of self and a socially recognised display of change,'³⁹ and then sets it within structuration theory developed by Anthony Giddens. His conclusion on the Corinthians' interpretation of conversion is worth quoting at length:

The Corinthians responded to Paul's advocacy of conversion and adopted a new Christian set of religious symbols. Yet the significance which they granted to these specifically Christian symbols was not solely determined by Paul. *The Graeco-Roman society and culture in which they lived also played a part.* At the level of discursive consciousness transformation dominates but, at the level of practical consciousness, there is also a significant degree of reproduction. The Corinthians' understanding of their own conversion and its consequences inevitably indigenises their new faith to some degree.⁴⁰

39. B. Jules-Rosette, 'The Conversion Experience: The Apostles of John Maranke,' *Journal of Religion in Africa* 7 (1976): 132-64 at 132.

40. *Conversion at Corinth: Perspectives on Conversion in Paul's Theology and the Corinthian Church* (SNTW; London: T&T Clark, 2003), 317.

In other words, the Corinthians reside on the same ‘discursive level of consciousness’ as Paul, having embraced the religious symbols of his message.⁴¹ But the problem stems from *how* they construed the significance of these symbols on the ‘practical level of consciousness,’ where they exhibit little ‘transformation’ (i.e., *modification* of previous social structures) but plenty of ‘reproduction’ (i.e., *continuity* of previous social structures).⁴² This imbalance of discursive and practical consciousness manifests the presence of another force at work on their practical behaviour other than Paul’s counter-cultural message. According to Chester, this force is the cultural norms of Greco-Roman society.

This substantiates a seminal claim made previously by John Barclay. ‘The [Corinthians’] perception of their church and of the significance of their faith could correlate well with a lifestyle which remained fully integrated in Corinthian society.’⁴³ Chester, however, makes Barclay’s claims more pronounced, particularly identifying the quest for status through patronage in voluntary associations and mystery-cult initiation rites as the primary (though not the only) factors behind the underlying issue that Paul confronts in 1 Corinthians — discord in the church but concord with the world.⁴⁴ Chester’s analysis is particularly insightful,

41. Chester, *Conversion*, 215.

42. For a definition of these terms, see Chester, *Conversion*, 36–38.

43. ‘Thessalonica and Corinth,’ 71.

44. ‘One of the most significant, but least noticed, features of Corinthian church life,’ Barclay affirms, ‘is the absence of conflict in the relationship between Christians and “outsiders”’ (‘Thessalonica and Corinth,’ 57, esp. 56–60; cf. Chester, *Conversion*, 318).

especially since he identifies patronage and status — or, we could say, gift and worth — as the principal causes of Paul’s uneasy relationship with the Corinthians. To be sure, other causes have been advocated,⁴⁵ such as Gnosticism,⁴⁶ Hellenistic Judaism,⁴⁷ ‘over-realized eschatology,’⁴⁸ Stoicism,⁴⁹ and even Paul’s earlier preaching ministry.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, it has been convincingly argued that the majority of the problems at Corinth stem from a close conformity to the dominant culture around them,⁵¹ of which gift and worth operated as a sub-cause that put their practical consciousness at odds with the counter-cultural shape of the gospel.⁵² Yet we intend to build on previous research by particularly identifying the Corinthians’ deficient

45. Wolfgang Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther* (EKKNT 7/1–3; Neukirchen-Vluyn/Zürich and Düsseldorf: Neukirchener Verlag/Benziger Verlag, 1991), 47–63.

46. E.g., Walter Schmithals, *Gnosticism in Corinth: An Investigation of the Letters to the Corinthians* (trans. John E. Steely; Nashville: Abingdon, 1971).

47. E.g., R.A. Horsley, ‘Wisdom of Word and Words of Wisdom in Corinth,’ *CBQ* 39 (1977): 224–39; idem, ‘Consciousness and Freedom Among the Corinthians: 1 Corinthians 8–10,’ *CBQ* 40 (1978): 574–89; James Davis, *Wisdom and Spirit. An Investigation of 1 Corinthians 1:18–3:20 Against the Background of Jewish Sapiential Traditions in the Greco-Roman Period* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1984).

48. Anthony Thiselton, ‘Realized Eschatology at Corinth,’ *NTS* 24 (1978): 510–26. Although he maintains this hypothesis, Thiselton has recently acknowledged the cultural influence that Corinth may have had on the church (cf. *Corinthians*, 40–41).

49. E.g., Albert Garcilazo, *The Corinthians Dissenters and the Stoics* (SBL 106; New York: Peter Lang, 2007); Will Deming, *Paul on Marriage & Celibacy: The Hellenistic Background of 1 Corinthians 7* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004); Abraham Malherbe, ‘Determinism and Free Will.’

50. Hurd, *Origin*.

51. In addition to the works of Barclay and Chester, as well as those in the following note, see also Edward Adams, *Constructing the World: A Study in Paul’s Cosmological Language* (SNTW; Scotland: T&T Clark, 2000), 85–103.

52. Admittedly, the conventions of gift and worth simply represent one facet of the Corinthian situation among (and even as a part of) many other conventions, such as, for instance, leadership (Clarke, *Leadership*), sophistry (Winter, *Sophists*), rhetoric (Duane Litfin, *St. Paul’s Theology of Proclamation: 1 Corinthians 1–4 and Greco-Roman Rhetoric* [SNTSMS 79; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994]), Roman *persona* (Henry Nguyen, *Christian Identity in Corinth* [WUNT 2/243; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008]), and ancient politics (L.L. Welborn, ‘On the Discord in Corinth: 1 Corinthians 1–4 and Ancient Politics,’ *JBL* 106 [1987]: 85–111).

practical consciousness as part of the reason for Paul's refusal of their financial support, a connection that will become clearer as we continue. At the moment, we need to explore key texts within 1 Corinthians that reveal the 'indigenised faith' of the Corinthians. What we will find is that the cultural influences of gift and worth distorted their view of the gospel, severely disrupted the unity of the church, and tragically crippled their relationship with Paul.

2.2. The Corinthians' Culturally-Conditioned Lifestyle

Several passages in 1 Corinthians reflect the cultural influences of gift and worth within the social interactions of the church, albeit in slightly different ways. Whereas material possessions are used in society to obtain honour, the Corinthians, as we will discover, used material *and* spiritual possessions to achieve status in the church.⁵³ They permitted their surrounding culture, one which prizes wealth as a primary means to glory, to infiltrate the ecclesial sphere, cultivating a corporate mindset dictated by the social structures of Corinthian society and ultimately dismembering the body of Christ. Three passages, in particular, disclose

53. Since we are comparing *social* practices involving material possessions with *ecclesial* practices involving material *and* spiritual possessions, this may be a methodological stumbling block for some. However, many scholars have noticed a direct correlation between the two at Corinth. Margaret Mitchell, for instance, perceptively notes, 'Not only worldly possessions, but also "spiritual" goods are part of the disputes.' She continues, 'Boasting in one's own possessions (spiritual or material) is to be seen as another component of the party conflicts within the Corinthian church' (*Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 94–95). Mitchell builds on Peter Marshall's previous claim that the principal source of opposition in the church were elite members who, being influenced by the ὑβρις tradition in society (Philo, *Virt.* 177), elevated aspects of social status such as material wealth and oppressed those in the community of a lesser social value (*Enmity*, 182–218). Although Marshall does not incorporate the misuse of spiritual possessions in his monograph, holding Mitchell and Marshall in balance helps substantiate the validity of our methodological approach.

the Corinthians' culturally-conditioned lifestyle and its spiritual side effects: 1 Cor. 1-4, 11:17-34, and 12:12-31.

2.2.1. 1 Corinthians 1-4: Competitive Boast in Leaders for Honour

Two cultural attitudes exhibited in these chapters betray the cultural sway that Greco-Roman society held over the church. The first was the promotion of status-enhancing affiliations. In their search for honour, they formed opposing factions (σχίσματα) in support of particular leaders in the community, each (ἕκαστος)⁵⁴ verbalising their competitive rivalry (ἔρις) against one another. They proclaimed, “I am of Paul,” or “I am of Apollos,” or “I am of Cephas,” or “I am of Christ” (ἐγὼ μὲν εἰμι Παύλου, ἐγὼ δὲ Ἀπολλῶ, ἐγὼ δὲ Κηφᾶ, ἐγὼ δὲ Χριστοῦ, 1:12).⁵⁵ Scholars have attempted to read these competitive slogans through various relational frameworks in the ancient world. For instance, in light of the similar terminology in ancient politics (e.g., σχίσματα, ἔρις, and ζῆλος), Larry Welborn and Margaret Mitchell interpret these party slogans as representing the relationship between political figures and

54. This may include the entire community rather than a select few, especially with the addition of ὅμων and the phrase τὸ αὐτὸ λέγητε πάντες in 1:10 (J.B. Lightfoot, *Notes on Epistles of St Paul from Unpublished Commentaries* [London: Macmillan, 1895], 153), though some rightly warn against pressing this point (cf. Hans Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* [Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975], 32; Theissen, *Social Setting*, 148).

55. There is no indication that these parties were divided by theological differences (cf. Johannes Munck, *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind* [Atlanta: John Knox, 1959], 138–39; Clarke, *Leadership*, 91–92), nor were there four distinct groups, since the latter two (Cephas and Christ) were most likely an instance of ‘rhetorical hyperbole’ (Stephen Pogoloff, *Logos and Sophia: The Rhetorical Situation of 1 Corinthians* [SBLDS; Georgia: Scholars Press, 1990], 178–80; cf. 3:3–5). This, however, should not lead us to limit the number of parties to two (Paul and Apollos). σχίσματα could entail more.

their supporters.⁵⁶ Others situate these rivalrous allegiances within the ancient Sophist/teacher-pupil relationship, where students competitively sought to be trained by famous Sophists.⁵⁷ Whichever interpretive approach one adopts,⁵⁸ both affirm a common practice in the ancient world — whether one was a pupil, a political supporter, or even a client, associating oneself with a wealthy, high-ranking superior raised the honour and social status of the inferior party.⁵⁹

The second cultural attitude in the church was the practice of boasting. This was the culturally acceptable means, both in the political⁶⁰ and rhetorical sphere,⁶¹ to make one's lucrative associations evident to all and to accrue honour as a result.⁶² Andrew Clarke has perceptively shown the similarity between boasting in ancient society and boasting in the

56. Welborn, 'Discord'; Mitchell, *Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 68–111.

57. E.g., Winter, *Sophists*, 31–43; Litfin, *Proclamation*; Pogoloff, *Logos and Sophia*.

58. Though it seems best to adopt the Sophist/teacher-pupil framework, largely because it accounts for the σχίσματα over teachers in the Christian ἐκκλησία rather than political figures in a secular assembly, and it adequately explains the Corinthian fascination with σοφία throughout the entire letter (cf. Witherington, *Conflict & Community*, 100 n4). To be sure, Paul, as Welborn and Mitchell point out, employs political terminology in 1 Cor. 1–4, but to assume that he therefore envisions a political assembly at Corinth may be carrying too much over from the world of ancient politics.

59. Andrew Clarke, *Leadership*, 92–95, succinctly describes the conventions of patronage, sophistic loyalty, and politics in connection to the benefits of belonging to a superior member of society.

60. Mitchell, *Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 91–95.

61. See Winter, *Sophists*, 186–202; A. Strobel, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther* (ZBK; Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1989), 38–39.

62. Savage, *Power Through Weakness*, 41: 'In Corinth, perhaps more than anywhere else, social ascent was the goal, boasting and self-display the means, personal power and glory the reward.'

Corinthian church.⁶³ Both, he argues, extend in two directions: in leaders and in symbols of status. Boasting in leaders clearly appears in 3:21 (ὥστε μηδεὶς καυχάσθω ἐν ἀνθρώποις) and 4:6 (ἵνα μὴ εἶς ὑπὲρ τοῦ ἐνὸς φυσιοῦσθε κατὰ τοῦ ἑτέρου), drawing our attention back to the party slogans of 1:10, while their boasting in status symbols emerges from 1:29 and 31 in conjunction with 1:26 and the paraphrase of Jeremiah 9:23-24. From these texts, Clarke rightly concludes that the Corinthians elevated the labels σοφός, δυνατός, and εὐγενής as symbols of social status in the church, the very aspects of status highly valued in ancient society.⁶⁴

The cultural practices of status-enhancing affiliations and competitive boasting for honour come to a head in 3:1-4, where Paul attributes these manifestations of society to a culturally-conformed worldview. From Paul's perspective, the Corinthians suffer from a misguided zeal (ζήλος) which cultivates strife (ἔρις)⁶⁵ and ultimately leads to factionalism.⁶⁶ This kind of behaviour is fleshly (σαρκικός) and worldly (κατὰ ἄνθρωπον περιπατεῖτε, 3:3),⁶⁷ 'for,' Paul asks, 'when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not

63. Boasting is a common theme in the Corinthian Correspondence (cf. 1 Cor. 1:29, 31; 3:21; 4:7; 5:6; 9:15, 16; 13:3; 15:31; 2 Cor. 1:12, 14; 5:12; 7:4, 14; 8:24; 9:2, 3; 10:8, 13, 15-17; 11:10, 12, 16-18, 30; 12:1, 5-6, 9). On boasting generally, consult Betz, *Tradition*; Christopher Forbes, 'Paul's Boasting'; Kate Donahoe, 'From Self-Praise to Self-Boasting: Paul's Unmasking of the Conflicting Rhetorico-Linguistic Phenomena in 1 Corinthians' (PhD Thesis, University of St. Andrews, 2008); Michael Wojciechowski, 'Paul and Plutarch on Boasting,' *JGRChJ* 3 (2006): 99-109.

64. *Leadership*, 97.

65. ζήλος progresses into ἔρις rather than forming a synonymous unit of thought (Robertson and Plummer, *I Corinthians*, 53; Thiselton, *Corinthians*, 293; pace Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 72 n32).

66. Mitchell, *Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 97: 'The terms ζήλος and ἔρις make explicit reference to Corinthian factionalism.'

67. Mitchell, *Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 81-82.

mere men [οὐκ ἄνθρωποι ἐστε]?’ (3:4). By describing the community as ‘fleshly,’ ‘worldly,’ and ‘mere men,’ due to the divisive acts of ζῆλος and ἔρις, Paul deems their lifestyle entirely consistent with the values of their society.⁶⁸ Which cultural values specifically is difficult (if not impossible) to ascertain.⁶⁹ It is nevertheless noteworthy that, whether one identifies the Corinthians’ behaviour with the conventions of sophistic loyalty, ancient politics, or patron-client relations, these social practices involved the exchange of money or gifts. Students paid fees to renowned teachers to be taught by them and to boast in them, while clients or supporters provided political allegiance in return for monetary gifts from wealthy patrons. In this regard, the norms of gift and worth may be discerned in the fractious behaviour of the Corinthians in 1 Cor. 1-4. Of particular importance for this study is one devastating outcome of their behaviour — they neglect the vital third party in their social relations. They boast in men rather than in God (cf. 1:31).

68. Mitchell, for instance, maintains that ζῆλος and ἔρις amount to ‘subscribing to earthly and secular values of political glory and strength’ (*Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 81–82, 97–99; cf. also Welborn, ‘Discord,’ 87), while Winter attributes the phrase οὐκ ἄνθρωποι ἐστε to the Corinthians adapting to the lifestyle of the Roman world (*After Paul Left Corinth: The Influence of Secular Ethics and Social Change* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001], 40–43).

69. Many have tried to pin down one convention. Winter, for instance, argues that the Corinthians were ‘influenced by the secular educational mores of Corinth’ (*After Paul Left Corinth*, 43), whereas Welborn holds ancient politics as the supreme influence in the church (‘Discord’).

2.2.2. 1 Corinthians 11:17-34: Competition for Honour at the Lord's Supper

Recent exegesis of 11:17-34, according to Stephen Chester, 'has paid little attention to competition for honour as a possible cause of the problems.'⁷⁰ Of course, Gerd Theissen alludes to competition in his perceptive work on this passage. He explains how the well-to-do displayed their social status and wealth before the poor during the common meal,⁷¹ 'shaming those who have nothing' (καταισχύνετε τοὺς μὴ ἔχοντα, 11:22) and thereby gaining honour for themselves.⁷² Yet, against Theissen, little competition can exist within asymmetrical relationships, where the rich display their social worth before the poor who can only watch passively. More than this, Theissen's bifurcation of 'rich' and 'poor' is too simplistic.⁷³ It does not account for the divisions (σχίσματα) and factions (αἰρέσεις) at the Lord's Supper, which could imply more than two parties.⁷⁴ Nor does it clarify Paul's mystifying comment that divisions are necessary (δεῖ) so that those who are approved (οἱ δόκιμοι) may become evident among the community (11:19). This seems to introduce another party in addition to the two

70. *Conversion*, 246.

71. For a critical assessment of Theissen, see Meggitt, *Poverty*, 118-22.

72. '[W]ealthier Christians,' Theissen explains, 'made it plain to all just how much the rest were dependent on them, dependent on the generosity of those who were better off. Differences in menu are a relatively timeless symbol of status and wealth, and those not so well off came face to face with their own social inferiority at a most basic level. It is made plain to them that they stand on the lower rungs of the social ladder. This in turn elicits a feeling of rejection which threatens the sense of community' (*Social Setting*, 160; my italics).

73. Cf. D.E. Smith, *Meals and Morality in Paul and His World* (SBLSP; Chico, CA: Scholar's Press, 1981), 328; Pogoloff, *Logos and Sophia*, 254-55.

74. Pace Theissen, *Social Setting*, 148: 'It is only from 1 Cor. 11:22 that we learn that there are two groups opposed to one another, those who have no food, the μὴ ἔχοντα, and those who can avail themselves of their own meal, ἴδιον δεῖπνον.'

already mentioned. These gaps in Theissen's work lead Chester to posit an alternative interpretation.⁷⁵

Instead of considering the problem as between the 'rich' and the 'poor' in 1 Cor. 11:17-34 (specifically verses 17-22), Chester contends that the real issue is between the wealthier members of the community, who competed for honour amongst themselves and, in so doing, neglected the needs of poorer members. In his own words,

those of higher social status compete against themselves for honour and influence. . . . [And as] the elite focus on the distribution of honour amongst themselves, the poorer members of the church are neglected. 11:20-22 describe not the problem but its symptoms; not a competition between richer and poorer, but the consequences of a competition for honour between the richer members.⁷⁶

The ensuing picture is one of wealthy members vying against one another for honour in the Christian community, while the less fortunate are shamed by neglect.

While Chester presents a compelling case for competition among the élite, rightly incorporating the key phrases *σχίσματα* and *αἰρέσεις* (11:18-19), he nevertheless fails to mention the integral role that gifts or possessions play in this quest for honour.

When you come together,' Paul avers, 'it is not the Lord's Supper [*κυριακὸν δεῖπνον*] that you eat. For in eating, each one goes ahead with his own meal [*ἴδιον δεῖπνον*]. One goes hungry, another gets drunk. Do you not have houses to eat and drink in [*τὸ ἐσθίειν καὶ πίνειν*]? Or do you despise [*καταφρονεῖτε*] the church of God and shame those who have nothing [*καταισχύνετε τοὺς μὴ ἔχοντας*]?' (11:20-22).

75. Though Chester builds on, what he considers, 'the solid exegetical conclusions reached by Theissen in relation to vv. 20-22' (*Conversion*, 249).

76. *Conversion*, 249-50.

It becomes clear from this passage that food is simultaneously a means of honour and a cause of shame. The quality and quantity of food and drink displays one's social status and accrues more honour in the competition among the élite, but it also serves to demarcate the richer from the poorer, since the latter would have received a less elegant meal.⁷⁷ In this sense, food carries the same social power as gifts or possessions in the ancient world. This is especially true when one considers that the wealthier would have contributed the food consumed at the Lord's Supper, which is exactly why Paul excoriates them. It is not the κυριακὸν δεῖπνον that they eat, Paul exclaims, but ἴδιον δεῖπνον (11:20-21).

Theissen rightly notices the intentional contrast between κυριακὸν δεῖπνον and ἴδιον δεῖπνον.⁷⁸ He argues that, because the sacred meal was not regulated, the wealthier began eating and drinking before the words of institution could be uttered over their food and drink (cf. 11:23-26). These words effectively converted private possessions into community property, so that '[b]read which has its origin ἐκ τῶν ιδίων is thus publicly declared to be the Lord's own, to be κυριακὸν δεῖπνον.'⁷⁹ And since ἴδιος and κυριακός refer to questions of ownership,⁸⁰ it

77. Theissen, *Social Setting*, 153–59. For a recent exchange between Theissen and Meggitt on 11:17-34, see Gerd Theissen, 'Social Conflicts in the Corinthian Community: Further Remarks on J.J. Meggitt, Paul, Poverty and Survival,' *JSNT* 25 (2003): 377–81; Justin Meggitt, 'Response to Martin and Theissen,' *JSNT* 24 (2001): 94; cf. idem, *Poverty*, 118–22.

78. On whether the private meal differed from the Lord's supper, see Theissen, *Social Setting*, 152–53, 159; Paul Neuenzeit, *Das Herrenmahl. Studien zur paulinischen Eucharistie-auffassung* (München: Kösel, 1960), 71–72; Fee, *First Corinthians*, 541 n52.

79. Theissen, *Social Setting*, 148–49.

80. *Social Setting*, 148.

becomes essential for the entire community, especially wealthy contributors, to recognise that all things, including their own possessions, come from God (cf. 4:7; 10:26). This ritual serves to incorporate God as the source of all the community's goods, to acknowledge him as the crucial third party, the one who provides for every need. By not acknowledging God's ownership over the community's goods, as well as his role as the divine host of the sacred meal, the wealthy capitalise on their private possessions by gaining honour and status for themselves⁸¹ through food, drink, and perhaps seating arrangements.⁸² These opulent members, therefore, exhibited a faulty practical consciousness, influenced by the cultural mores of gift and worth within household meals, which they implemented into church life. By their actions, they removed God as the source of all things and assumed his divine role in community worship.

2.2.3. 1 Corinthians 12:12-31: Spiritual Gifts and the Competitive Hierarchy for Honour

The indigenised faith of the Corinthians can also be seen in the use of spiritual gifts within the community. According to 1 Cor. 12:12-31, the church at Corinth understood their

81. Theissen notes, 'Those who through their contribution made the common meal possible were in fact acting like private hosts, like patrons, supporting their dependent clients' (*Social Setting*, 158). Stephen Barton also asserts that the divisions at Corinth 'are between households or groups of households, with the pace set by the rich household heads competing for dominance' ('Paul's Sense of Place: An Anthropological Approach to Community Formation in Corinth,' *NTS* 32 [1986]: 225-46 at 238).

82. Jerome Murphy-O'Connor describes the Roman villa as composed of two sections. The more prestigious group would dine in the *triclinium*, while the majority ate their meals outdoors in the *atrium* (*St. Paul's Corinth*, 153-61). This evidence, however, rests on the supposition that the Corinthians regularly met in the homes of the more elite, which seems unlikely if the majority of the church came from non-élite circles (cf. David Horrell and Eddie Adams, 'The Scholarly Quest for Paul's Church at Corinth: A Critical Survey,' in *Christianity at Corinth: The Quest for the Pauline Church* (ed. Edward Adams and David Horrell; London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 1-47 at 130).

gifts in a manner consistent with the values of Corinthian society rather than the divine intentions of the giver.

God granted gifts to the church ‘for the common good’ (πρὸς τὸ συμφέρον, 12:7),⁸³ so that ‘the eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you [χρείαν σου οὐκ ἔχω],” nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you [χρείαν ὑμῶν οὐκ ἔχω]”’ (12:21). Having been united by a common participation in the σῶμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ (cf. 1:9), divine gifts were intended to engender mutual concern and interdependence within a socially-diverse community (12:17, 19-20).

Yet the Corinthians had other plans for these gifts. They first developed a spiritual hierarchy. The diversity of gifts/roles⁸⁴ was interpreted as indicating varying degrees of worth within the body, just as in society.⁸⁵ In the ancient world, the higher end of the social ladder (i.e., *honestiores*) was accorded more *dignitas* than the lower end (i.e., *humiliores*). This is primarily because wealth is power, and the richer could display it bombastically. The less

83. Mitchell has thoroughly demonstrated that Paul’s use of τὸ συμφέρον, as is common in deliberative rhetoric, moves from carrying the sense of self-interest in 6:12 and 7:35 to conveying a community-interest or ‘common advantage’ in 10:23, 33 and especially in 12:7 (*Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 33–39).

84. The hierarchy established at Corinth comprises both gifts and persons, not merely one or the other (Horrell, *Social Ethos*, 182; cf. Fee, *First Corinthians*, 618–20; Dale Martin, ‘Tongues of Angels and Other Status Indicators,’ *JAR 59* [1991]: 547–89 at 569 n45).

85. Martin has shown that the human body was a widespread analogy for society in the Greco-Roman world, which ‘explained how unity can exist in diversity within the macrocosm of society,’ and how it ‘functioned as conservative ideology to support hierarchy and to argue that inequality is both necessary and salutary’ (‘Tongues,’ 563–64; idem, *Body*, 92–96; cf. Mitchell, *Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 157–64, 266–70). Yet Paul, as David Horrell has argued, aligns himself with this ancient view of the body, not to eradicate superiority and inferiority but to show the need for diversity in the united body of Christ (*Social Ethos*, 179–81).

fortunate, however, could only acknowledge such persons as honourable and stay clear of their relentless quest for glory.⁸⁶

The same distribution of honour and rank can be detected in the Corinthian church.⁸⁷ Members who possessed ‘high-status’ gifts — most likely ‘wisdom,’ ‘knowledge,’ and ‘tongues’⁸⁸ — prospered as the spiritual élite, whereas those with ‘dispensable’ or ‘less honourable’ gifts were marginalised, considered extraneous and inferior parts of the body (12:22-23). This hierarchy naturally produced *σχίσμα* in the church (12:25). The more respectable parts of the body (*τὰ εὐσχήμονα*, 12:23) were self-sufficient, without any need for other members (*χρείαν σου οὐκ ἔχω*, 12:21),⁸⁹ while the less presentable members were humiliated to the point of not feeling like part of the body at all (*οὐκ εἰμὶ ἐκ τοῦ σώματος*, 12:15).⁹⁰ Consequently, what emerged in the church was a pecking order of spiritual status, like that of Roman society, which ranked certain gifts/roles within a spectrum of honour and shame.

86. ‘Wealth,’ writes Ramsay MacMullen, ‘declared itself as one of many signs of rank. . . . Such a person [of wealth] went about with a grand and showy retinue. His motive hardly needs explanation: he sought status’ (*Social Relations*, 106).

87. Martin draws attention to various terms in 12:22-24 which carry ‘status significance’ but are often ‘lost in translation’: *τὰ δοκοῦντα, ἀσθενέστερα, ἀναγκαῖα, ἀτιμότερα, τιμὴ περισσοτέρη, ὑστερούμενος* (*Body*, 94).

88. Martin argues that the gift of ‘tongues’ was a symbol of higher-status at Corinth (‘Tongues,’ 558; cf. Horrell, *Social Ethos*, 176–78). He makes a compelling case, especially in the light of Paul’s subversive priority of gifts in 12:8-10, where ‘tongues’ occupies the lowest place. Fee, however, rejects this hypothesis (*First Corinthians*, 612, 615, 622).

89. ‘Both the direction and content of what is said [in 12:21] imply a view “from above,”’ says Gordon Fee, ‘where those who consider themselves at the top of the “hierarchy” of persons in the community suggest that they can get along without some others, who do not have their allegedly superior rank’ (*First Corinthians*, 612).

90. ‘Where there is a hierarchy of honour,’ Julian Pitt-Rivers explains, ‘the person who submits to the precedence of others recognizes his inferior status’ (‘Honour,’ 23).

Second, some of the Corinthians exhibited a competitive drive for the more honourable gifts. Within a hierarchical community, where selected gifts/roles are accorded more honour than others, it follows that a competitive impulse for ‘high-status’ gifts would evolve, at least among those in the higher strata.⁹¹ This may be extrapolated from Paul’s statement in 12:31, ‘Eagerly desire the greater gifts’ (ζηλοῦτε δὲ τὰ χαρίσματα τὰ μείζονα),⁹² where he argues ‘tongue-in-cheek,’ as Thiselton puts it, to continue pursuing their so-called ‘greater gifts’ but invites them to transpose their ‘understanding of what counts as “the greatest.”’⁹³ In so doing, he attempts to redirect their ‘zeal’ from considering the greater gifts to be those at the top of the hierarchy to those administered within the sphere of love and for the purpose of edifying the body.⁹⁴ As mentioned in our discussion on 3:1-4, the Corinthians suffered from a misguided

91. This competition for honour and status was not necessarily between the spiritually ‘rich’ and ‘poor,’ but among those of the upper echelon of the community. If this were not the case, Paul would have only created more problems for himself and for the church by promoting a hierarchy of status reversal, in which the less honourable members are granted more honour ‘by God’ (12:24). This conclusion is compatible with Chester’s reconstruction of the competition for honour among the élite at the Lord’s Supper (see above).

92. Many have understood ζηλοῦτε in 12:31 as an indicative that introduces ch. 13 (e.g., G. Iber, ‘Zum Verständnis von 1 Cor. 12.31,’ *ZNW* 54 [1963]: 43–52; Christian Wolff, *Der erste Brief des Paulus an die Korinther* [THKNT 7; Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1982], 116; Arnold Bittlinger, *Gifts and Graces: A Commentary on 1 Corinthians 12–14* [London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1967], 73–75). Yet, because of the imperatives in 14:1 and 39, it is best to regard ζηλοῦτε as an imperative, marking a transition into the next chapter (Weiss, *Korintherbrief*, 390; Fee, *First Corinthians*, 623–24). Interpreted this way, ‘Paul,’ J.F.M. Smit concludes, ‘continues to teasingly stimulate the ambition of the Corinthians, while at the same time directing their zeal at a useful gift, which reaps little glory. With fine irony he asks his ostentatious public to strive zealously for serving the community inconspicuously’ (‘Two Puzzles: 1 Corinthians 12.31 and 13.3: A Rhetorical Solution,’ *NTS* 39 [1993]: 246–64 at 255).

93. *Corinthians*, 1024. Smit has convincingly argued that 12:31 conforms to the rhetorical device of irony in the ancient handbooks, in which ‘the speaker urgently recommends the listeners to be sure of doing as they like with all the evil consequences thereof, although the speaker personally is in complete disagreement’ (‘Two Puzzles,’ 252).

94. Bittlinger, *Gifts*, 74–75.

ζῆλος, the cause of their competitive boasting in 1 Cor. 1-4. Only now in 1 Cor. 12, their competitive drive, their earnest zeal centres on obtaining spiritual possessions that produce an honourable standing in the community. As in 4:6, they continue to be ‘puffed up one against another,’ competing for high-ranking χαρίσματα and embodying the ethos of their surrounding culture. But, worse of all, they did so at worship meetings, the very place where they were meant to express their unity ‘in Christ.’ Thus, the divinely sacred became culturally profaned.

Having considered specific texts in 1 Corinthians, we can therefore summarise our findings as follows:

(i) *1 Cor. 1-4*: Within this section, we discovered that the fractious Corinthians built *status-enhancing alliances with and competitively boasted in* respected leaders of superior and spiritual rank in the community (1:10, 12; 3:4, 21).

(ii) *1 Cor. 11:17-34*: In this passage, we noted the presence of *competition for honour* among the élite, who, through their *possessions* at the Lord’s Supper, created discord among the community, shaming poorer members by neglect and assuming God’s role as the host of the sacred meal. Because of their quest for honour, ownership of their property was never transferred. It was ἴδιον δεῖπνον, not the κυριακὸν δεῖπνον (11:20-21).

(iii) *1 Cor. 12:12-31*: Some of the Corinthians disregarded the divine intention for spiritual gifts, establishing a *gift-hierarchy* that generated a *competitive zeal for honour* and clearly demarcated between the *honourable* and *dishonourable* members of the community, an act which spiritually stratified the church.

In view of these telling passages,⁹⁵ we can safely assume that the Corinthian church embodied the social values of Corinthian society rather than the values of the divine economy.

2.3. Conclusion

Two chief conclusions can be made concerning the overall state of the Corinthian church. First, God is being neglected as the primary giver. Human leaders (1:12; 3:21; 4:6), and even the Corinthians themselves (4:7), occupy God's exclusive position as the only worthy object of boasting in 1 Cor. 1-4, whereas the wealthy play 'God' by offering their goods to the community at the Lord's supper in 11:17-34. This reveals a deficiency in their understanding of divine gifts. 2:12 is instructive in this respect:

ἡμεῖς δὲ οὐ τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ κόσμου ἐλάβομεν ἀλλὰ τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ, ἵνα εἰδῶμεν τὰ ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ χαρισθέντα ἡμῖν.

95. Other texts could obviously be included. In 5:1-13, the sexually immoral man, in whom some were boasting, was most likely a leading figure in the community who may have had financial interests in his incestuous relationship (Clarke, *Leadership*, 85-88; Chow, *Patronage and Power*, 130-41). In 6:1-11, Clarke contends that those of relatively high social standing brought their legal disputes before secular authorities to restore their social honour over and against their fellow brothers (*Leadership*, 71). And the controversy in 1 Cor. 8-10 may also have much to say about their conformity to gift and worth, since the disagreement over eating meat offered to idols was triggered by '[c]lass-based variations in diet and social practice' (Horrell, *Social Ethos*, 105-09; cf. also Theissen, 'Social Conflicts,' 381-89; *pace* Meggitt, *Poverty*, 107-12).

Interpreted positively, if a person possesses τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ θεοῦ, they understand (οἶδα) the things with which God has graced (χαρισθέντα) them. Interpreted negatively — since Paul expects to be heard this way — if they do not understand the things with which God has bestowed on them, they prove to be behaving like those who possess τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ κόσμου,⁹⁶ that is, those who live in accordance with worldly values.⁹⁷ Of course, which divine gifts Paul specifically has in view (i.e., the nature of the gift, the indebtedness one receives with a gift, or the appropriate use of the gift) cannot be known with absolute certainty. Judging from the context of 1 Cor. 1-4, however, this text, at the least, highlights the Corinthians' failure to acknowledge God as the chief and only giver in the divine economy, though this is already deducible from the passages previously mentioned (1:12; 3:21; 4:7; 11:17ff.).

Significantly, gift transactions and the competition for honour were predominately between two parties in ancient society, whether that be between a benefactor and a city, a patron and a client, a teacher and a pupil, a parent and a child, or two friends.⁹⁸ In the same

96. By the 'spirit of the world,' Paul does not have demonic spirits in mind (*pace* E.E. Ellis, *Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Early Christianity* [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1993], 29–30). Rather, he highlights the origin of the Spirit of God. It is τοῦ θεοῦ, not τοῦ κόσμου. God is the giver of this χάρις.

97. Since Margaret Mitchell rightly understands ἡ σοφία τοῦ κόσμου as closely synonymous with τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ κόσμου, her general definition of human 'wisdom' equally applies to 'the spirit of the world': 'The wisdom of the world is the set of values and norms which divide persons of higher and lower status into separate groups, a wisdom which prefers dissension to unity, superiority to cooperation' (*Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 211–12; cf. Barrett, *1 Corinthians*, 75).

98. See Chapter 2, section 1.2.

way, a two-way relational framework dominated the social interactions of the church, leaving the third party out of the relational equation. They merely operated on the horizontal plane.

Second, even on the horizontal plane, the spiritual élite failed to recognise others in the body as rightful recipients of their divine possessions. God, the one who purposely configured the body's diversity, intended that spiritual gifts be used for the sake of others, 'for the common good' (πρὸς τὸ συμφέρον, 12:7). As such, the Corinthians were meant to be mediators of grace or, more specifically, of God's gifts (χαρίσματα). But instead, they constructed a competitive hierarchy in 12:12-31, neglected the needs of the 'have-nots' in 11:17-34, and thus obstructed the trajectory of divine gifts. They acted as if gifts ended with them rather than handing them on to others. So, unlike the Philippians, the Corinthians repressed the divine momentum of χάρις. Of course, these conclusions are based on Paul's perception of them, which may or may not represent reality. Yet we are only concerned with Paul's perspective, since his financial policy depends on it.

Just how Paul attempts to overturn this culturally-informed framework of relationships and roles, so deeply embedded within the Corinthians' practical consciousness, will constitute the focus of the next section.

3. Paul's Response to the Corinthians' Culturally-Conditioned Lifestyle

3.1. An Appraisal of their High Spiritual Status

'[M]en in general judge more from appearances than from reality. All men have eyes, but few have the gift of penetration.'⁹⁹ This saying of Machiavelli rings true for the situation at Corinth, albeit anachronistically. Based on appearances, the Corinthians consider themselves σοφοί, τέλειοι, and πνευματικοί (2:6; 3:18-23; 4:10; 14:36-38), but Paul's penetrating eye sees beyond the shroud of externality and into their indigenised faith.

For my part, brothers, I could not address you [οὐκ ἠδυνήθην λαλῆσαι ὑμῖν] as people of the Spirit [ὡς πνευματικοῖς] but as people moved by entirely human drives [ὡς σαρκίνοις], as infants in Christ [ὡς νηπίοις ἐν Χριστῷ]. I gave you milk to drink, not solid food [γάλα ὑμᾶς ἐπότισα, οὐ βρῶμα]; for you could not take it. Indeed, even now you still cannot manage it. You are still people moved by human drives [ἔτι γὰρ σαρκικοί ἐστε]. For where jealousy and strife prevail among you, are you not centred on yourselves and behaving like any merely human person? When someone declares, 'I am of Paul,' and another asserts, 'I am of Apollos,' are you not all too human [οὐκ ἄνθρωποί ἐστε]? (3:1-4).¹⁰⁰

By unabashedly identifying the Corinthians as σάρκινοι, ἄνθρωποι, and especially νήπιοι ἐν Χριστῷ, all of which are reminiscent of the ψυχικός ἄνθρωπος in 2:14, Paul provides a biting diagnosis of their current state — the Corinthian church suffers from spiritual immaturity.

99. Niccolò Machiavelli, *The History of Florence and the Prince* (London: H.G. Bohn, 1847), 80–81.

100. Slightly adapted from Thiselton's translation in *Corinthians*, 286.

Although the precise nature of the Corinthians' immaturity has long been a question of debate, we champion the view propounded most notably by James Francis¹⁰¹ that, rather than interpreting 3:1-4 as a criticism of their failure to progress intellectually in the Christian faith,¹⁰² this passage discloses a failure of comprehension.¹⁰³ Stated otherwise, the 'milk' and 'solid food' mentioned here represent two different perspectives on the gospel from the community's perspective, not two different levels in the content of Paul's teaching.¹⁰⁴ In comparison to the wisdom of the world, the Corinthians thought Paul's teaching of the gospel tasted more like 'milk' than 'solid food.'¹⁰⁵ In their own estimation, they were too 'mature' for

101. "As Babes in Christ" - Some Proposals Regarding 1 Corinthians 3.1-3,' *JSNT* 7 (1980): 41-60.

102. This position, advocated by Walter Grundmann ('Die νήπιοι in der Urchristlichen Paränese,' *NTS* 5 [1958-59]: 188-205) and followed by various commentators (e.g., James Moffatt, *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians* [MNTC; London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1938], 36; Barrett, *1 Corinthians*, 79-80; Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 71-72), argues that the Corinthians are Christians but possess a very basic sense of Christianity ('Die νήπιοι,' 191), which leads Paul to consider them νήπιοι ἐν Χριστῷ (3:1) as opposed to τέλειοι (2:6), and σάρκιννοι instead of πνευματικοί (3:1). They require 'milk' (i.e., basic instruction of the gospel) before they can digest 'solid food' (i.e., advanced instruction of the gospel). By calling them mere νήπιοι and drawing a distinction in the content of his own teaching (milk/solid food), Paul chides the Corinthians for failing to advance in their Christian understanding. Spiritual immaturity is therefore a deficiency in their intellectual progression, an inability to grow out of the rudimentary truths of the gospel and toward the deeper teachings of God.

103. Francis, 'Babes in Christ,' 43. Unlike Grundmann's view, 'Paul is rebuking his readers not because they are babes still, and had not progressed further, but because they were in fact being childish, a condition contrary to being spiritual' (Ibid; cf. Weiss, *Korintherbrief*, 74).

104. Morna Hooker, 'Hard Sayings, I Corinthians 3:2,' *Theology* 69 (1966): 19-22 at 20. On the relationship between 3:1-3a and Paul's apostleship, consult Beverly Gaventa, *Our Mother Saint Paul* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007), 41-50; Brendan Byrne, 'Ministry and Maturity in 1 Cor. 3,' *ABR* 35 (1987): 83-87.

105. 'Yet,' Hooker remarks, 'while he uses their language, the fundamental contrast in Paul's mind is not between two quite different diets which he has to offer, but between the true food of the Gospel with which he has fed them (whether milk or meat) and the synthetic substitutes which the Corinthians have preferred' ('Hard Sayings,' 21).

the bottle and preferred to feast on the meat offered at Corinth (most likely the σοφία of gifted orators and Sophists).

To combat this miscomprehension of the gospel, Paul first recalls his initial preaching at Corinth (3:1-2a), when they existed as ‘people of the world,’ and then begins reproving them in 3:2b-4 for reverting back — as Christians — to that prior existence.¹⁰⁶ They accepted the paradoxical σοφία τοῦ θεοῦ but seek the σοφία τοῦ κόσμου; they received the πνεῦμα τοῦ θεοῦ but live by the πνεῦμα τοῦ κόσμου. Their discursive and practical levels of consciousness were misaligned on account of their alignment with the κόσμος. This is why, as Dale Martin has convincingly shown, Paul delineates in 1 Cor. 1-4 between ‘two opposing realms of reality and their value and status systems,’ the world’s and God’s.¹⁰⁷ In 2:1-16, Paul shows himself to be ‘the exemplar of the other realm and its different values.’¹⁰⁸ But, in 3:1-4, he places the Corinthians on the other side of that divide, since they strive after ‘a new exalted religious status’¹⁰⁹ by means of the status symbols of the κόσμος rather than the status symbols granted to them ‘in Christ’ (1:27-28).¹¹⁰ Paul’s appraisal is therefore unsurprising. Seeking an exalted, religious status through worldly criteria, he confers on them the lowest, worldly status without denying

106. Francis, ‘Babes in Christ,’ 55.

107. *Body*, 55. This apocalyptic antithesis has recently been considered a consensus (cf. James G. Samra, *Being Conformed to Christ in Community: A Study of Maturity, Maturation and the Local Church in the Undisputed Pauline Epistles* [London: T&T Clark, 2008], 56).

108. Martin, *Body*, 63.

109. Chester, *Conversion*, 303.

110. Samra describes the mature believer as a person ‘whose life conforms to his/her status as an heir of God’s kingdom’ (*Maturity*, 59).

their conversion — νήπιοι ἐν Χριστῷ (3:1),¹¹¹ an infantile way of life completely at odds with the gospel. In fact, it is ‘a state without the gospel, a state ruled by the wisdom of the world and not the wisdom of God revealed in the Cross,’¹¹² since, to the apostle’s dismay, they ‘display neither the degree of internal unity nor the degree of separation from unbelievers desired by Paul.’¹¹³ In a word, the church resided far too comfortably within the κόσμος for Paul’s apocalyptic tastes.¹¹⁴

3.2. A Theological Reconfiguration of Roles and Status in the Divine Economy

Every relationship in the divine economy includes a crucial third party — God. But due to their culturally-indigenised faith, the Corinthians disregarded their vertical tie to God, as seen in their status-enhancing affiliations with superior leaders. They therefore operated within two-way exchanges that exploited rather than benefitted others. From Paul’s view, this unacceptable behaviour betrays their low status as νήπιοι ἐν Χριστῷ. So, to overturn their worldly categories of relational roles and status, he carves out the three-way relational pattern of the economy of χάρις, with God as the *source* of all possessions, Paul as the *mediator* of divine

111. Martin, *Body*, 64: ‘The Corinthians are implicated in the lowest possible form of human existence.’

112. Francis, ‘Babes in Christ,’ 49. As John Barclay observes, ‘In the Corinthians’ easy dealings with the world Paul detects a failure to comprehend the counter-cultural impact of the message of the cross (1.18-2.5); the wisdom of the world to which they are so attracted is, he insists, a dangerous enemy of the gospel’ (‘Thessalonica and Corinth,’ 59).

113. Chester, *Conversion*, 318–19.

114. Barclay, ‘Thessalonica and Corinth,’ 60: ‘The Corinthians, however, seem to understand the social standing of the church quite differently. They see no reason to view the world through Paul’s dark apocalyptic spectacles and are no doubt happy to enjoy friendly relations with their families and acquaintances.’

goods, and the Corinthians as *unworthy recipients*. Indeed, establishing this tripartite relationship will not only rectify their culturally-conditioned perspective but also illumine the theological strategy behind Paul's refusal of financial support.

3.2.1. *God is the Source of All Possessions*

That Paul desires the Corinthians to recognise that the gift of χάρις, which produces their χαρίσματα, comes from God and not from them is evident from 1 Cor. 1:4-9.¹¹⁵ From the very beginning of this thanksgiving, Paul purposely designates God as the direct object of his gratitude ('Thanks be to my God [τῷ θεῷ μου], 1:4a), before disclosing the primary reason for his thankfulness: 'because of the grace of God [τῆ χάριτι τοῦ θεοῦ] given to you [τῆ δοθείσῃ ὑμῖν] in Christ Jesus' (1:4b).¹¹⁶ Paul then lists three divine acts accomplished among the Corinthians that stem from this initial gift of χάρις.

The first is that God spiritually enriched (ἐπλουτίσθητε) them 'in all speech and all knowledge' (1:5).¹¹⁷ Next, by manifesting these gifts of the Spirit, God confirmed (ἐβεβαιώθη)

115. Alexandra Brown writes, 'The focus of his thanksgiving [in 1:4-9] falls on what God graciously has done among them in Christ, not on their own particular qualities (cf. 4:7). He gives credit where credit is due, to God, *the source of these eschatological blessings*' (*The Cross and Human Transformation: Paul's Apocalyptic Word in 1 Corinthians* [Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1995], 67 n5; my italics). Also, Peter O'Brien remarks, 'Paul's thanksgiving was directed to God, based on His activity in His Son and looked forward to the future with a confidence based on God's faithfulness. In this thanksgiving there was no attention paid to the achievements of the Corinthians—and with good reason!' (*Thanksgivings*, 137).

116. 'In no other introductory thanksgiving,' O'Brien observes, 'is the grace of God found to be the basis or ground for the giving of thanks' (*Thanksgivings*, 111).

117. The ὅτι-clause is not dependent on εὐχαριστέω as a second reason for thanksgiving (*pace* BDAG, 416). Rather, ὅτι further explicates τῆ χάριτι τοῦ θεοῦ. As Philipp Bachmann states, 'fügt. . . der explikative Satz mit ὅτι einen mehr konkreten Zug an' (*Korinther*, 44).

the testimony of Christ among them (1:6), insofar as they did ‘not lack’ (μὴ ὑστερεῖσθαι) in anything as they patiently await the revelation of the Lord Jesus (1:7).¹¹⁸ And finally, in the future, God will display his faithfulness by confirming (βεβαιώσει) them blameless until the end, and solely because he called (ἐκλήθητε) them into the fellowship of his Son (1:9).¹¹⁹ Paul’s gratitude for these multiple acts accomplished by God, as indicated by the five divine passives,¹²⁰ extol him as the supreme giver and indispensable source of χάρις to the community.¹²¹

God’s exclusive role as source also appears in 4:7.¹²² ‘What do you have that you did not receive [ἔλαβες]?,’ Paul asks. ‘And if you indeed received it [ἔλαβες], why do you boast [καυχᾶσαι] as if you did not?’ The irony is quite obvious. Paul stresses the passive nature of spiritual gifts in 1:4-9, he even highlights God’s role as the source of all things throughout chs. 1-4. But the Corinthians, with these *God-given* possessions at their disposal,¹²³ illogically ‘boast’ *in themselves* rather than *in the Lord* (cf. 1:31). They wrongly declare themselves to be self-

118. O’Brien, *Thanksgivings*, 116: ‘God’s grace had been bestowed on the Corinthians in Christ. Thus they were rich in every way, and the presence of such wealth was a sign that grace had been given.’

119. For an assessment of Paul’s distinctive use of καλέω, see Chester, *Conversion*, 77–111.

120. ‘Paul had stressed the divine initiative at almost every point in the passage [i.e., 1:4-9]’ (O’Brien, *Thanksgivings*, 133: cf. Raymond Collins, *First Corinthians* [SP 7; Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1999], 58).

121. Against the view that this whole section exhibits sarcasm on Paul’s part, see Fee, *First Corinthians*, 36.

122. Arguments resting on this passage are admittedly based on mirror-reading. On the appropriate use and dangers of this method, see Barclay, ‘Mirror-Reading.’

123. Granted, Paul does say ‘all things are yours’ in 3:21, but this statement should be balanced out with 3:23, ‘you are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.’ They indeed possess wealth, but only because God in Christ, who owns all things, possesses them.

sufficient, to be the source of divine gifts.¹²⁴ So Paul sternly reminds them, with rhetorically-piercing questions, that their gifts find their origin in God alone. They have no right to boast. Whether they recognise it or not, their gifts are ‘not expressions of [their] own autonomous spiritual capacity or brilliance.’¹²⁵ God is the source of both χάρις and χαρίσματα.

Paul’s discussion on χαρίσματα in ch. 12, while not explicating God’s role as the source of gifts explicitly, at the least implies that all gifts find their origin in God. It is, after all, ‘the same Spirit,’ ‘the same Lord,’ and ‘the same God who works all of them in everyone’ (12:4-6; cf. 12:11), and who intentionally places (τίθημι) them in their specific location (12:18, 28). As a result, every part of the body shares a common source — the God who sovereignly designs, gifts, and sustains it. To think otherwise, as the Corinthians erroneously did, is to dethrone the preeminent giver of the divine economy, to lack the necessary posture of dependence before God, and, most devastatingly, to misunderstand the nature of grace completely.¹²⁶

Furthermore, other parts of the letter consistently describe God as the source from whom all good things flow, whether it be the gospel of Christ (1:18-25; 2:1-5), the Spirit (2:10-

124. ‘Underlying [1 Cor. 4:7],’ Marshall correctly affirms, ‘is the idea of God as the benefactor who bestows all things upon the human race’ (*Enmity*, 205).

125. Richard Hays, *First Corinthians* (IBC; Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1997), 18.

126. Fee, *First Corinthians*, 171: ‘Instead of recognizing everything as a gift and being filled with gratitude, they possessed their gifts—saw them as their own—and looked down on the apostle who seemed to lack so much. Grace leads to gratitude; “wisdom” and self-sufficiency lead to boasting and judging. Grace has a leveling effect; self-esteem has a self-exalting effect. Grace means humility; boasting means that one has arrived. Precisely because their boasting reflects such an attitude, Paul turns to irony to help them see the folly of their “boasting” (author’s italics).

12; 6:19-20), wisdom (2:6-7, 12), or salvation itself (1:21, 27-31; 6:11). ‘All things,’ Paul emphatically declares, ‘belong to God’ (3:18-23; 8:6; 11:12)!¹²⁷

3.2.2. Paul is the Mediator of God’s Commodity of Χάρις

While God is indeed the source of all things, he nevertheless resolves to distribute his gift of χάρις *through* Paul’s apostolic preaching to the Corinthians. God sent (ἀποστέλλω) Paul as an apostle to ‘proclaim the gospel’ at Corinth (1:17; cf. 1:1), the content of which is ‘Jesus Christ and him crucified’ (2:2; cf. 1:17, 23), ‘the mystery of God’ (2:1; cf. 4:1), and, albeit paradoxically, the very ‘power [δύναμις] and wisdom [σοφία] of God’ (1:24). When the Corinthians encountered this proclamatory gift,¹²⁸ as it were, they willingly ‘received’ (15:1) and ‘believed’ it (3:5; 15:11). So remarkable was their acceptance that Paul even asserts that they now (at the time of writing) ‘stand’ (15:1) in the gospel and are even being ‘saved’ by it (15:2). But in order to avoid being mistakenly identified as the origin of this gift, and thus exalted above the heavenly giver, Paul employs two different (yet related) slave metaphors, that of the servant (διάκονος) and the managerial slave (οἰκονόμος).¹²⁹

127. ‘Consequently,’ Fee concludes, ‘by means of thanksgiving Paul redirects their confidence from themselves and their own giftedness toward God, from whom and to whom are all things’ (Fee, *First Corinthians*, 44).

128. Thiselton, *Corinthians*, 223: ‘[T]he proclamation of the gospel. . . is itself a gift of God.’ Cf. 2 Cor. 11:7 (δωρεάν τὸ τοῦ θεοῦ εὐαγγέλιον εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν).

129. Of course, this is not the only reason why Paul uses these metaphors. Mitchell has drawn attention to the unifying purpose of these metaphors to unite the work of Paul and Apollos (*Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 98–99). Also, the term ὑπηρετής will not be discussed here, since it simply emphasises the servitude and subordination already present in οἰκονόμος (cf. John Goodrich, ‘Paul, the Oikonomos of God: Paul’s Apostolic Metaphor in 1 Corinthians and Its Graeco-Roman Context’ [PhD Thesis, University of Durham, 2010], 155–56).

The διάκονος metaphor explicitly describes the role of the apostles as intermediary agents. Paul asks, ‘What then is Apollos? What is Paul?’ He answers, ‘Servants [διάκονοι] through whom [δι’ ὧν] you believed,¹³⁰ and each as the Lord gave [ἔδωκεν]’ (3:5).¹³¹ The Lord sovereignly provided apostles to operate as mediators (indicated by διὰ) of his divine grace and salvific work in the community. Paul likens this work to agricultural development, but with a theological twist. Paul planted the seeds and Apollos watered, but neither role ultimately matters. The only one who is anything (τι) is God (3:6-7). Without him, the productivity of Paul and Apollos would be entirely unproductive. He alone causes growth in the lives of the Corinthians, which leaves the apostles operating as instruments,¹³² mere channels ‘through whom’ (δι’ ὧν) the gospel of grace would travel to reach the Corinthians.¹³³ They are workers who erect ‘God’s building,’ who till ‘God’s field,’ and who construct ‘God’s temple’ (3:9, 16-17). No longer should the Corinthians declare, ‘I am of Paul!’ or ‘I am of Apollos!’ Paul makes it crystal clear, ‘you are of God!’ (3:21-23).

130. Thiselton, *Corinthians*, 300: ‘The genitive pronoun with διὰ. . . indicates the *means* or *channel* of belief, not its source. In this sense ministers *serve God’s* good purposes’ (author’s italics).

131. Contextually, the giving of the Lord in 3:5 refers to the different tasks given to the servants rather than God granting the Corinthians’ faith. According to Fee, part of Paul’s concern here is ‘that they focus not on the servants, but on the Lord himself, whose servants they are all to be’ (*Corinthians*, 131).

132. In speaking of 1 Cor. 1:30, Chester explains, ‘Paul does not consider that his preaching ability played any part in the Corinthians’ conversion, instead conceiving of himself as simply a channel for the power of God reaching out to them. Again, the emphasis is firmly on divine initiative. The Corinthians are in Christ ἐξ αὐτοῦ (of him, 1:30), not because of Paul’ (*Conversion*, 83).

133. W.A. Beardslee, *Human Achievement and Divine Vocation in the Message of Paul* (SBT 31; London: SCM Press, 1961), 60: ‘God is at work, and has chosen to work through men.’

The other metaphor Paul employs, which also emphasises the apostolic, intermediary role, is that of a managerial slave (οἰκονόμος, 4:1).¹³⁴ In the ancient world, an οἰκονόμος administered the commodity of his master to his clientele, anything from provisions to payments.¹³⁵ But, in Paul's case, he functions as an οἰκονόμος who dispenses a unique commodity, 'the mysteries of God' (μυστήρια θεοῦ).¹³⁶ With this metaphor, the apostle accentuates the source of the gospel. It is a heavenly resource bestowed by God, his divine gift of χάρις,¹³⁷ delivered through the word of the cross which Paul proclaimed at Corinth. Both servant metaphors, therefore, take on different forms but share one purpose. They underscore Paul's mediatory, apostolic role in the economy of χάρις.

Before Paul can mediate the gift of χάρις, however, he must receive it himself. This two-stage process is especially noteworthy for the purposes of our study, for it unveils a characteristic relational dynamic in the divine economy.¹³⁸ Paul speaks of 'the grace of God

134. For works on the οἰκονόμος metaphor against its Greco-Roman background, consult Goodrich, 'Oikonomos of God'; Martin, *Slavery*, esp. 68–85; John Byron, *Slavery Metaphors in Early Judaism and Pauline Christianity: A Traditio-Historical and Exegetical Examination* (WUNT 2/162; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003); Benjamin L. Gladd, *Revealing the Mystery: The Use of Mystery in Daniel and Second Temple Judaism with Its Bearings on First Corinthians* (BZNTW 160; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008).

135. Goodrich, 'Oikonomos of God,' 79.

136. Taken as a genitive of source (BDF 162).

137. If 'the mysteries of God' allude to the 'wisdom' Paul imparts, which 'no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined' (2:9), then there is a direct link between 'wisdom,' 'the mysteries of God,' and 'grace.' Especially when one considers that the neuter plural article τὰ ('the [things]') in 2:12, which have been 'given [χρησθέντα] to us by God,' points back to the neuter plurals of 2:9, which clearly speak of God's 'wisdom.' Read in this way, the 'wisdom' of God is nothing other than salvation through the crucified one (1:23–24; 2:2) — God's gift of grace in the Christ-event.

138. See my article 'Mutual Brokers.'

given to [him]’ (τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ τὴν δοθεῖσάν μοι, 3:10; cf. 15:3, 10), which transformed him into an apostle and empowered him to ‘beget’ the Corinthians ‘through the gospel’ (διὰ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου, 4:15), that is, through mediating the creative grace of God to others. What is being depicted here is a cascade of grace. As grace streams from God, it flows through Paul and other apostles ‘in Christ,’ and ultimately saturates the community. This is the route of χάρις — God is the benevolent source, Paul and other apostles are intermediary servants, while the Corinthians, as we will see, are ‘unworthy’ recipients of grace in the gospel.

3.2.3. *The Corinthians are ‘Unworthy’ Recipients of Χάρις*

When the Corinthians initially received the gift of χάρις, they were foolish, weak, base, and contemptible, unworthy of the least of all gifts (cf. 1:26-28). Strangely, after their conversion experience, they appealed to worldly criteria in order to announce their worth in the community. But this lofty attitude, as we saw in the scathing appraisal of 3:1-4, actually opposes the gospel, for the essence of χάρις, at least from Paul’s perspective, is that it is given to those who do not deserve it, to those who are ‘unworthy.’ The criterion of χάρις, therefore, subverts the criteria of the κόσμος.

To bestow a gift on an unworthy person was a major *faux pas* in ancient society. Seneca, for instance, repeatedly exhorts his readership to discern the worth (*dignitas*) of prospective recipients before granting a gift to them (*Ben.* 1.14.1; 4.10.2-3). Not doing so will only produce

an ungrateful recipient, for ‘if [benefits] are ill placed, they are ill acknowledged’ (1.1.1; cf. 1.1.9-10). Indeed, from the several causes of ingratitude, Seneca insists that the chief and foremost is that givers ‘do not pick out [*non eligimus*] those who are worthy [*dignos*] of receiving [their] gifts’ (1.1.2; cf. 3.11.1). Contrary to Seneca, however, God willingly chooses (ἐκλέγω) recipients who are unworthy — in the world’s eyes — to receive the gift of χάρις.

In 1:26-29,¹³⁹ Paul reminds the Corinthians of the culturally-subversive nature of χάρις to eradicate boasting and to engender utter dependence on God alone.

Consider your calling, brothers, that not many of you were wise according to worldly standards [οὐ πολλοὶ σοφοὶ κατὰ σάρκα], not many were powerful [δυνατοί], not many were of noble birth [εὐγενεῖς]. But God chose [ἐξελέξατο] what is foolish in the world [τὰ μωρὰ τοῦ κόσμου] to shame the wise; God chose [ἐξελέξατο] what is weak in the world [τὰ ἀσθενῆ τοῦ κόσμου] to shame the strong; God chose [ἐξελέξατο] what is low and despised in the world [τὰ ἀγενῆ τοῦ κόσμου καὶ τὰ ἐξουθενημένα], even things that are not [τὰ μὴ ὄντα], to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.

From the divine perspective, the social badges of worth (i.e. σοφός, δυνατός, and εὐγενής) pale in comparison to that of the divine economy (i.e., μωρός, ἀσθενής, ἀγενής, ὁ ἐξουθενημένος, μὴ ὄν), albeit counterintuitively. The purpose of this ‘reversal of status’¹⁴⁰ is precisely ὅπως μὴ καυχῆσθαι πᾶσα σὰρξ ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ, that is, so that no one would seek worth ‘according to worldly standards’ (κατὰ σάρκα) but according to God’s standards ‘in Christ’ (1:29), the source of their worth.

139. On the exegetical history of this passage, consult K. Schreiner, ‘Zur biblischen Legitimation des Adels: Auslegungsgeschichtliche Studien zu 1. Kor 1,26–29,’ ZKG 85 (1974): 317–47.

140. Welborn, ‘Discord,’ 93.

This counter-cultural status reversal, however, not only governs life *before* Christ but also life *after*, as seen in 1 Cor. 12:12-31. Although certain members possessed a low status in the world,¹⁴¹ and so were deemed weaker and less honourable in the community (12:22-24), Paul strongly asserts that they actually receive ‘greater honour’ in the divine economy than the ‘esteemed,’ ‘necessary,’ and ‘honourable’ members possessing a high status in the world (12:22-23). As such, ‘The lower is made higher, and the higher lower,’ Martin explains, with the result that the ‘dominant Greco-Roman common sense — that honour must accord with status and that status positions are relatively fixed by nature — is completely, albeit confusingly, thrown into question by Paul.’¹⁴²

According to 12:24b-26, two divine purposes¹⁴³ lie behind this reversal of status: (i) to prevent σχίσμα in the body (12:25a) and (ii) to generate mutual concern for one another (τὸ αὐτὸ ὑπὲρ ἀλλήλων μεριμνῶσιν, 12:25b), exhibited through their fellow-suffering (συμπάσχω) and fellow-rejoicing (συγχαίρω) with one another. The two are entwined. If mutuality is attained, there will be no σχίσμα in the church, but the mutuality advocated here stands in

141. Martin shows that, by referring to them as ‘necessary members’ (ἀναγκαῖος; namely, the genitals), Paul simultaneously ‘admits and denies the low status of the weaker members of the body’ (12:22). For although the male organ may seem shameful, ‘our very attention to them — our constant care to cover them and shield them from trivializing and vulgarizing public exposure — demonstrates that they are actually the most necessary of the body’s members, those with the *highest* status’ (*Body*, 94–95).

142. Dale Martin, *Body*, 96. Horrell similarly argues that this divine redistribution of honour ‘represents a demand that an alternative pattern of values and relationships be embodied within the ἐκκλησία’ (*Social Ethos*, 181).

143. The first ἵνα-clause in 12:24b-26 governs the latter clause separated by ἀλλά (Thiselton, *Corinthians*, 1010–11).

direct contrast to the reality of factionalism at Corinth. They care more about their own reputation than those in need, they inflict suffering with their superior attitude and competitive behaviour instead of humbly entering into the suffering of another, and they strive to outdo one another by competitively hoarding honour for oneself rather than happily attributing honour to others (cf. Rom. 12:10), all social tendencies which pervaded the Greco-Roman world. Paul, however, turns these cultural principles on their heads by placing every member, regardless of their worldly status and rank, on an equal plane.¹⁴⁴ They must embrace the reality that they are one body, not two in competition with each other, but a single entity with a common bond, status, and purpose — unworthy recipients of God’s χάρις, deemed worthy ‘in Christ,’ through Paul’s proclamation of the gospel.

3.3. Conclusion

The three-way relational pattern of the economy of χάρις, in which God operates as the source, Paul as the mediator, and the Corinthians as ‘unworthy’ recipients, now comes into plain view. But what purpose does this theological reconfiguration serve in a study concerning Paul’s financial policy at Corinth?

It first serves the purpose of (re)positioning God as the *giver* of the gift of χάρις, and Paul as the *mediator* of that divine gift to the Corinthians. Of course, it is not that the

144. Even though Paul acknowledges diversity within the body (cf. Horrell, *Social Ethos*, 179–81).

Corinthians have reverted back entirely to their pagan ways, as those ‘who do not know God’ (cf. 1 Thess. 4:5). They know God, at least on the discursive level, and, in that sense, they have a *three-party* relationship. What they lack is a *three-way* relationship with others, not least with Paul. This expresses itself in the Corinthians’ status-enhancing dependence on him (‘I am of Paul!’ 1:12; 3:4), like a client beneath a patron, a political supporter behind a politician, or a pupil under a teacher, and it is this *two-way* relational pattern that his theological reconfiguration attempts to abolish.

To be sure, not all were of the same stamp at Corinth. Some indeed criticized Paul for his lack of rhetorical flair and spiritual gifting (2:1-5; 3:1-4; 4:3-5). But whether members were *for* or *against* Paul, neither party claimed a superordinate position over him.¹⁴⁵ Even those who criticised him most likely did so under the shadow of Apollos (cf. 1:12; 3:4). This point bears direct relevance to the issue of financial support, for it has become commonplace in Pauline scholarship to assume that the Corinthians, by offering Paul a gift, attempted to patronise him as a dependent client. The evidence, however, suggests otherwise. As we will demonstrate later, it seems likely that the Corinthians actually viewed Paul as the *source* of the gospel, the patron, as it were, and therefore the one to whom they ought to provide a return gift. This naturally flows from the two-way relational pattern embedded in their practical

145. In our opinion, 1 Cor. 4:8 (ἤδη κεκορεσμένοι ἐστέ, ἤδη ἐπλουτήσατε, χωρὶς ἡμῶν ἐβασιλεύσατε· καὶ ὄφελόν γε ἐβασιλεύσατε, ἵνα καὶ ἡμεῖς ὑμῖν συμβασιλεύσωμεν) is too rhetorical to support the conjecture that the Corinthians wanted to become Paul’s superior.

consciousness, a pattern which controverts the three-way framework of gift that governs Paul's financial dealings, as seen in his gift-exchange relationship with the Philippians.¹⁴⁶

The second purpose of the theological reconfiguration is that the three-way relational framework operates as the social *and* theological filter of Paul's financial policy. As we will see, this framework dictates his financial decisions, such as refusing aid when initially entering a city in 1 Cor. 9, accepting support from the Philippian church (cf. Phil. 2:25-30; 4:10-20), and ultimately refusing the Corinthians' gift in 2 Cor. 11-12. The three-way relational framework, however, not only determines all of Paul's decisions, he also expects his churches, who wish to support him financially, to recognise his role as a mediator of the gospel rather than its source, as a mutual mediator of grace rather than the fount of the divine commodity itself. The criterion by which he assesses this is whether 'a full, trusting *κοινωνία*' has been established, which, as brilliantly exemplified by the Philippian church, is primarily gauged on a mutuality of suffering with their apostle. But because a fellow-sharing of suffering for the gospel neither characterised the Corinthians' relationship with one another (cf. 12:25-26) nor with Paul (cf. 4:8, 10),¹⁴⁷ they exhibited a misapprehension of his 'counter-cultural vision of the gospel,'¹⁴⁸ preventing them from entering into a gift-exchange relationship with their apostle.

146. See Chapter 3.

147. Barclay notes that Paul, 'with some bitterness,' contrasts his dishonourable (*ἀτιμὸς*) suffering with the honourable (*ἐνδοξὸς*) dealings of the entire church in society. 'Clearly,' he concludes, 'whatever individual

While both purposes of the theological reconfiguration have been sketched briefly above, we will now lay out a fuller picture of how this relates to Paul's financial policy in 1 Corinthians 9.

4. The Socio-Theological Strategy behind Paul's Financial Policy

There are two perspectives from which his policy may be examined, the social or the theological. Hock noticed a general trend in favour of the latter, insisting that 'recent treatments of Paul's defence of his self-support tend to isolate Paul from his cultural context and to view the whole matter too abstractly, that is, exclusively in terms of theology with no consideration of the social realities involved.'¹⁴⁹ But although Hock admirably presents a sociological case, and even affirms a theological meaning in Paul's self-support,¹⁵⁰ he nevertheless only contributes to the sociological dimensions of the debate. In what follows, we will attempt to redress this scholarly imbalance, presenting a case for a *socio-theological* strategy behind Paul's decision to refuse financial support from the Corinthian church.

exceptions there may be, Paul does not regard social alienation as the characteristic state of the Corinthian church' ('Thessalonica and Corinth,' 57–58).

148. Barclay, 'Thessalonica and Corinth,' 73.

149. *Social Context*, 51, following the lead of E.A. Judge and Gerd Theissen.

150. 'Theological considerations are not to be denied, but, as we shall see, sociological dimensions must also be recognized' (*Social Context*, 94 n8). The same could be said of Theissen, who states, 'The theological question of an apostle's legitimacy is indissolubly linked with the material question of the apostle's subsistence' (*Social Setting*, 54).

4.1. 1 Corinthians 9 — A Response to the Offer of a Gift or a Pre-Established Policy?

Paul's discussion in 9:1-18 assumes the shape of a rhetorical *tour de force*, with no less than seventeen questions, four vocational images, and a weighty appeal to the Law (9:9-10) and even the Lord himself (9:14), in order to confirm his apostolic right (ἐξουσία) in the gospel to live *from* the gospel (9:11, 14).¹⁵¹ Unexpectedly, however, he builds this tower of legitimate rights only to tear it down, refusing any recompense for his labours at Corinth. But why?

Many scholars explain this wrecking of rights as a negative response to the offer of a gift. This has been advocated most influentially by Peter Marshall. Modifying the earlier

151. Because this section is part of a larger unit (8:1-11:1), many scholars disagree as to the rhetorical function of ch. 9. Some consider it a self-exemplary argument, with Paul presenting himself as an example to be imitated (e.g., Willis, 'Apologia'; Mitchell, *Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 243-50; Schrage, *Korinther*, 2:280-81; Joop Smit, 'The Rhetorical Disposition of First Corinthians 8:7-9:27,' *CBQ* 59 [1997]: 476-91 at 478; Joachim Jeremias, 'Chiasmus in den Paulusbriefen,' *ZNW* 49 [1958]: 145-56 at 156), while others, though not completely denying a paradigmatic purpose, primarily read 9:1-27 as a digressive self-defence (ἀπολογία, 9:3), with Paul abruptly defending his rights as an apostle (e.g., Hock, *Social Context*, 60-61; Marshall, *Enmity*, 282-317; Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 153; Fee, *First Corinthians*, 393, 395; Joseph Fitzmeyer, *First Corinthians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* [AB 32; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008], 353; Weiss, *Korintherbrief*, 231-34). Both rhetorical strategies contain substantial elements. The apologetic approach elucidates Paul's use of forensic terms, the vigorous rhetoric and length of interruption in verses 1-14, and the recurrence of certain themes from the defensive stance taken in chs. 1-4 (cf. E. Coxe Still III, 'Divisions Over Leaders and Food Offered to Idols: The Parallel Thematic Structures of 1 Corinthians 4:6-21 and 8:1-11:1,' *TynBul* 55 [2004]: 17-41; Richard Liong-Seng Phua, *Idolatry and Authority: A Study of 1 Corinthians 8.1-11.1 in the Light of the Jewish Diaspora* [LNTS 299; London: T&T Clark, 2005], 179-85). Conversely, the paradigmatic approach accounts for thematic and verbal parallels throughout chs. 8-10 and, more significantly, provides the only explanation for 11:1 ('Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ'). For unless 9:1-27 is identified as the personal example he has in mind in 11:1, one wonders where such an example to imitate would be found. For these reasons, I agree with David Horrell that these rhetorical approaches may be viewed as complementary rather than mutually exclusive (*Social Ethos*, 204-05).

proposals of E.A. Judge and Ronald Hock,¹⁵² Marshall surmises that the defensive tone of 1 Cor. 9 comes as a critical reaction to certain wealthy members (i.e., the ‘hybrists’), who offered a gift to Paul with the intention of obliging him. Paul nevertheless denies their gift, circumventing their attempts to patronise him as a dependent client, a decision which, Marshall reasons, would have been ‘a serious affront to the status of his would-be benefactors,’¹⁵³ equal to that of declaring war. To make matters worse, these wealthy Corinthians somehow became aware of the Philippians’ gift to Paul which he gladly accepted, giving rise to the accusation that their apostle deals inconsistently with his churches.

Marshall’s historical reconstruction, while helpful in emphasising gift-exchange conventions as a cause of the relational problems at Corinth, is nevertheless improbable. To begin with, Marshall’s methodology has been rightly criticised for importing 2 Cor. 11-12 into 1 Cor. 9,¹⁵⁴ since, without this methodological move, the conjecture that 1 Cor. 9 comes as a response to the offer of a previous gift would be unfounded, only proven by implication.¹⁵⁵

152. Hock argues that, of the four options for philosophers to make a living (i.e., charging fees, entering the households of the wealthy, begging, and working), ‘entering a household. . .was probably what the Corinthians expected Paul to do’ (*Social Context*, 65; cf. Judge, ‘Classical Society’, esp. 28, 32).

153. Marshall, *Enmity*, 284.

154. See Mitchell, *Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 246 n332; Dale Martin, ‘Review of Peter Marshall, *Enmity in Corinth: Social Conventions in Paul’s Relations with the Corinthians*,’ *JBL* 108 (1989): 542–44.

155. Proponents of this view usually posit that the offer of a gift was brought by Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus when they visited Paul in 1 Cor. 16:17–18. This is certainly possible, especially since ἀναπληρώω and ὑστέρημα in this passage, as in Phil. 2:30, could signify a ‘filling up’ of material as well as spiritual ‘needs’ (cf. Horrell, *Social Ethos*, 91; Welborn, ‘Discord,’ 98). But this is a slender thread on which to hang a weighty reconstruction. Phil. 2:30 is clearly part of the financial context of 4:10–20 (as the verbal parallels suggest), where Paul clearly responds to the Philippians’ gift. Yet the financial content of 1 Cor. 16 centres on the collection and

Even Marshall recognises this when he plainly admits, ‘It is true that Paul never says in 1 Cor 9, “I refused your offer.”’¹⁵⁶ Thus, the sheer silence and the necessity to import 2 Cor. 11-12 makes it highly unlikely that a gift was offered before 1 Cor. 9 was written.

Another major piece in Marshall’s historical portrait of which we are sceptical, as already mentioned, is that some wealthy Corinthians attempted to obligate Paul to themselves, just as a patron would a client. To be sure, every gift in ancient society entailed obligation and debt. But to assume that every gift-giving relationship in antiquity could be subsumed under the patron-client rubric is simply incorrect. As seen in chapter 2, gift-exchange took on a variety of forms (e.g., teacher-pupil, father-son, friend-friend, etc.), so this raises the question of whether it is right, with the majority of scholars, to interpret Paul’s refusal as an escape from the financial constraints of these ‘would-be benefactors.’ Nevertheless, since we remain unconvinced by Marshall and others that 1 Corinthians 9 is a response to an offer of a prior gift,¹⁵⁷ we need not, as of yet, provide an alternative to the patronal interpretation. That will wait until our section on 2 Cor. 11-12, where Paul undoubtedly responds to the offer of a gift.

What can be concluded at this point is that Marshall’s reconstruction of 1 Corinthians 9 as a refusal of a gift, offered by the so-called *hybrists* in the attempt to oblige Paul, lacks hard

future plans to be helped by them. There is no indication whatsoever that Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus presented Paul with a gift.

156. *Enmity*, 242; cf. 174.

157. Neither are we persuaded that Paul’s discussion of self-enslavement (ἐμαυτὸν δουλόω) and freedom (ἐλευθερία) in 9:19 entails a financial freedom from wealthy members (*contra* Hock, ‘Tentmaking’ at 559). A thorough critique of this position will be presented below.

evidence. Instead, we maintain that this passage discloses a pre-established financial policy, not a *general* policy that he enforces *at all times* (since he obviously accepted support from the Philippians; cf. 4:10-20), but a *specific* policy he employs *when initially entering into a city*.¹⁵⁸ This policy, however, is comprised of two strands, one social and the other theological. Examining them separately and then tying them together in the conclusion will permit a *socio-theological* rationale to emerge.

4.2. Paul's Financial Policy in Social Perspective

In light of the social circumstances of the first century, Paul implemented a *specific* policy to refuse support when initially entering a city in order to disassociate himself and his message from the popular wisdom teaching of itinerant Sophists and philosophers, who lived on the fees and donations of their hearers.¹⁵⁹ Whereas they expected a return for their wisdom, Paul expected nothing. When he first arrived at Corinth, his *μισθός* was that he received no

158. Windisch, *Korintherbrief*, 336: 'Paulus hat also mehrfach Unterstützung von auswärts angenommen, nur nicht von der Gemeinde, der er gerade diente'; cf. Holmberg, *Paul and Power*, 91; Dungan, *Sayings*, 32; Pratscher, 'Verzicht,' 290–92. Also, see Chapter 3, section 4.1.1, where we argue that Paul did not accept the Philippians' gift until he *departed* from Philippi.

159. The ancient sophistic convention of entry (*εἴσοδος*), as explicated by Bruce Winter ('Orators' at 57-60; idem, *Sophists*, 163–66), provides an interesting parallel. By appealing to accounts of entering cities by famous orators, such as Dio Chrysostom, Aristides, Favorinus, and Philostratus, he explains how itinerant Sophists, who were thoroughly preoccupied with honour (*φιλοτιμία*) and glory (*δόξα*), received wealth and fame in public life (*πολιτεία*), education (*παιδεία*), and the courts on arriving at various cities. Eventually, though, these professional rhetors gained a poor reputation in the eyes of the public, as seen in Dio Chrysostom's disassociation from their unethical conduct: 'Gentlemen, I have come before you not to display my talents as a speaker nor because I want money from you, or expect your praise' (*Or.* 35.1; cf. also *Or.* 8.9; 32.10; Plato, *Protagoras* 313c-d; *Apol.* 19E-20A; Xenophon, *Mem.* I, vi; Aristotle, *Nic. Eth.* 9.1.5-7). Like Chrysostom, Paul also seeks to separate himself from these Sophists and philosophers (see also Betz, *Tradition*, 115–17; Holmberg, *Paul and Power*, 90, 93).

μισθός. The logic of this paradoxical ‘non-payment “payment”’¹⁶⁰ appears in three verses

which comprise the heart of his argument in 1 Corinthians 9:

ἀλλ’ οὐκ ἐχρησάμεθα τῇ ἐξουσίᾳ ταύτῃ, ἀλλὰ πάντα στέγομεν, ἵνα μή τινα ἐγκοπὴν
δῶμεν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ (9:12b).

Ἐγὼ δὲ οὐ κέχρημαι οὐδενὶ τούτων.¹⁶¹ Οὐκ ἔγραψα δὲ ταῦτα, ἵνα οὕτως γένηται ἐν ἐμοί·
καλὸν γάρ μοι μᾶλλον ἀποθανεῖν ἢ -- τὸ καύχημά μου οὐδεὶς κενώσει (9:15).

τίς οὖν μου ἐστὶν ὁ μισθός; ἵνα εὐαγγελιζόμενος ἀδάπανον θήσω τὸ εὐαγγέλιον εἰς τὸ
μὴ καταχρησασθαι τῇ ἐξουσίᾳ μου ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ (9:18).

Just as the strong should forgo their ἐξουσία to avoid placing a stumbling block
(πρόσκομμα) before the weak (ἀσθενής, 8:8-9),¹⁶² so also Paul gives up his ἐξουσία, enduring all
things (πάντα στέγομεν) — most certainly hardships in general and slender wages of manual
labour in particular — rather than accepting monetary support from the Corinthians,
foreseeing that it would place an obstacle (ἐγκοπὴ)¹⁶³ in the way of the gospel of Christ (τὸ

160. Fee, *First Corinthians*, 420.

161. Although the word ἐξουσία is lacking, this is nevertheless what Paul has in mind. The plural demonstrative corresponds to τῇ ἐξουσίᾳ ταύτῃ (9:12), and even though other ‘rights’ are obviously in the background (9:4-6), the primary ‘right’ in this chapter is the right to support (cf. Fee, *First Corinthians*, 416 n12).

162. We nevertheless resist the temptation to deem those who are susceptible to stumbling in 9:12b solely as the ‘weak’; that is, those who possess a low social status (cf. Martin, *Slavery*, 123–24). While the social self-lowering of the apostle, as seen in his decision to ply a trade, and the curious omission of ὥς in 9:22 suggests an accommodating stance toward the weak, it remains difficult to determine exactly who Paul has in view. ἀσθενής takes on a variety of meanings throughout the epistle (1:27; 4:10; 11:30; 12:22) and could just as easily refer to the entire church in 1 Cor. 9, especially if 9:20-22 parallels 10:32-33, where the ‘weak’ (9:22) could correspond to ‘the church of God’ (10:31) (Thomas C. Edwards, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* [2nd ed.; London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1885], 239; Gardner, *Gifts of God*, 99). But since the argument of this chapter does not rest on the precise definition of ἀσθενής, we remain agnostic on the matter.

163. On the synonymy of πρόσκομμα and ἐγκοπὴ, Dautzenberg explains, ‘Damit dürfte aber das von Paulus Gemeinde noch nicht voll erfasst sein, denn ἐγκοπὴ steht durch den Kontext in Analogie zu den Begriffen

εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ, 9:12).¹⁶⁴ Some interpret εὐαγγέλιον here as *the content of preaching*,¹⁶⁵ advocating the view that accepting funds in return for the gospel is somehow out-of-step with the message of grace.¹⁶⁶ But Horrell criticises this view, perceptively stating that ‘it is not clear why accepting support from churches, especially after they were well established, should be incompatible with the gospel of grace. Moreover, . . . being utterly dependent upon the grace of God, expressed through the generosity of others, could equally express gospel theology.’¹⁶⁷

Rather, εὐαγγέλιον more accurately refers to *the act of preaching* during Paul’s initial ministry at Corinth *before* they were, as Horrell puts it, ‘well established.’ That said, one can certainly discern how Paul, by accepting money in return for his message, could easily have been mistaken as an avaricious Sophist, teaching wisdom only to acquire wealth and thus placing an ἐγκοπὴ before the gospel (9:12). But by initially refusing support instead, he dispelled a variety of possible misconceptions. He was not a self-interested teacher of worldly

πρόσκομμα (8,9), σκανδαλίζω (8,13) und zur Forderung des ἀπρόσκοπον εἶναι (10,32)’ (‘Unterhaltsrecht,’ 212–32 at 219; cf. Stählin, *TDNT* ἐγκοπὴ).

164. The gospel is most certainly at the forefront of Paul’s mind in 9:1–23, since εὐαγγέλιον and εὐαγγελίζω only appear twice in chs. 1–4 (1:17; 4:15) and three times in ch. 15 (15:1 [2x], 2), but nine times in this chapter (9:12, 14 [2x], 16 [2x], 18 [3x], 23).

165. John Schütz discerns three categories of meaning for εὐαγγέλιον: (i) the content of preaching; (ii) the act of preaching; and (iii) the gospel as an on-going entity ‘in’ which one can ‘be’ or ‘stand,’ of which he adopts the third option (*Apostolic Authority*, 52).

166. Gardner, *Gifts of God*, 84: ‘[Paul] did not want anyone to think they had to pay to hear the “gospel.” This would have denied the fundamental gospel concept of *grace*’ (cf. also Bachmann, *Korinther*, 325; Dautzenberg, ‘Unterhaltsrecht,’ 218–32).

167. *Social Ethos*, 211. As a point in case, consider Paul’s gift-giving relationship with the Philippians, a spiritual-for-material exchange which embodies the gospel by vulnerably operating as mediators of divine grace to one another in times of need. See Chapter 3, section 3.2.1.

wisdom (cf. 1:18-2:16), but a slave of God who preached divine wisdom free of charge (ἀδάπανος, 9:18). He was not a Sophist who boasted in not knowing hard labour, but a labourer who boasted (καύχημα)¹⁶⁸ in the renouncement of his right not to work (9:15).¹⁶⁹ And, most importantly, he was not an itinerant teacher who loved being placed on a pedestal, praised by all as the source of what he provides, but repeatedly pointed to God as the divine source of his teaching. Thus, he preached the gospel free of charge. If he imparted his own wisdom, then he would deserve a μισθός. But because he imparted God's commodity of χάρις to them, then it is God who rightly deserves the return. Preaching 'free of charge,' then, was not to avoid distorting the *content of the gospel of grace* but to circumvent any affiliation with teachers of worldly wisdom in *the act of preaching the gospel*.

The same *specific* policy found in 1 Cor. 9 also emerges from 1 Thessalonians 2:1-13. In this passage, Paul urges the Thessalonian church to recall (μνημονεύω) how he refrained from accepting monetary aid during his initial stay, working night and day so that he might not be a burden (ἐπιβαρέω) to anyone while proclaiming the gospel (2:9; cf. 2 Thess. 3:8-9). Although he could have been a burden (βάρος, 2:6), he nevertheless refrained from becoming so at Thessalonica in order to disassociate himself from disreputable Sophists and philosophers, as

168. Given the juxtaposition of 9:12b and 15, Paul's καύχημα in the anacoluthon of the latter verse runs parallel with the ἵνα-clause of the former. Thus, by not invoking his ἐξουσία, he avoided placing an ἐγκοπὴ before the proclamation of the gospel and so declares that this 'boast will not be made void.'

169. Winter, *Sophists*, 166.

in 1 Cor. 9.¹⁷⁰ This becomes quite evident from the contrast between negative critiques and positive self-descriptors:

2:3-4a	οὐκ. . . οὐδέ. . . οὐδέ. . .	ἀλλά
2:4b	οὐχ ὡς	ἀλλά
2:5	οὔτε γάρ. . . ἐν. . . οὔτε ἐν. . .	
2:6-7	οὔτε ἐξ. . . οὔτε ἀφ' ὑμῶν. . . οὔτε ἀπ' ἄλλων. . .	ἀλλά

Whereas itinerant philosophers charged a large amount for their blandishing speeches and teachings,¹⁷¹ in their craving for money, glory, and honour, Paul reminds the Thessalonians that he proclaimed the gospel without flattering words (ἐν λόγῳ κολακείας) and greedy intentions (ἐν προφάσει πλεονεξίας, 2:5), neither did he seek glory (δόξα, 2:6) from anyone. His only aim was to please God (ἀρέσκω, 2:4), having been approved by him and entrusted with the gospel to proclaim and embody it, sacrificially giving his very life (τὰς ἑαυτῶν ψυχάς) for the Thessalonians (2:8). A deep love therefore resides at the core of his ministry (2:7, 11-12), yet it manifests itself in the most peculiar way. Paul lovingly refuses their material assistance, as he did at Corinth, so as not to cause people to stumble over the gospel (1 Cor. 9:12b). He does not want to make it seem as if he and his audiences, like that of teachers and pupils, enjoyed a two-

170. For sophistry as the background to 1 Thessalonians 2, see Winter, 'Orators'; Christoph vom Brocke, *Thessaloniki - Stadt des Kassander und Gemeinde des Paulus* (WUNT 2/125; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 143-51, for a Cynic background, see Abraham Malherbe, 'Gentle,' and for opposing perspectives on the cultural setting of 1 Thessalonians, see Holtz, 'Background' and Vos, 'On the Background of 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12: A Response to Traugott Holtz' in *The Thessalonian Debate: Methodological Discourse or Methodological Synthesis?* (ed. Karl P. Donfried and Johannes Beutler; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 69-88.

171. Although it is difficult to determine the exact rate that Sophists charged, G.B. Kerferd considers them 'relatively high' (*The Sophistic Movement* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981], 145; cf. 28).

way gift-exchange relationship: Paul as the source of his teaching, and they as students who pay for it. And this reluctance to operate within a two-way relational pattern with his churches is as much a sociological decision as it is theological, a complementing perspective we now turn to consider.

4.3. Paul's Financial Policy in Theological Perspective

Scholarly efforts to uncover a plausible reason behind Paul's refusal of Corinthian support, whether sociologically or theologically-driven, overlook the divine participant's role in the relationship. The starting point for these scholars, in every case, is the gift offered by *the Corinthians to Paul*, supposedly found in 1 Cor. 9 — which we have argued against — or in 2 Cor. 11-12. In either case, the first, more essential part of the apostle's gift-exchange relationship with the church is neglected: the initial gift of χάρις in the gospel *from God through Paul to the Corinthians*. This is a triangulated relational framework which constitutes Paul's vision for gift-giving relationships 'in Christ.' Having outlined this initial exchange above,¹⁷² and with the social aspect of his strategy explained, we can now unearth the theological aspect behind his *specific* policy to refuse support when initially entering a city.

172. See section 3.2.

4.3.1. *The Theological Strategy of 1 Cor. 9 and 1 Thess. 2*

With these texts identified, through a social perspective, as a disaffiliation from the cultural practices of itinerant Sophists and philosophers, who enjoy two-way relationships with their pupils and are highly esteemed as the *source* of their teaching, we will now disclose the theological strategy underlying Paul's fiscal policy.¹⁷³ Four theological moves, in particular, constitute this strategy.

4.3.1.1. *The Divine Inclusion*

In 1 Corinthians 9, Paul incorporates God in Christ as the crucial third participant of their relationship. He does so by envisaging the Corinthian ground which he ploughs divine property, which attests to his apostolic identity. 'Are you not my work in the Lord [ἐν κυρίῳ]?', he asks. Indeed, 'you are my seal of apostleship in the Lord [ἐν κυρίῳ]' (9:1-2).¹⁷⁴ The precise nuance of ἐν κυρίῳ is uncertain here. But whether it carries a locative meaning (i.e., their existence is in the Lord) or an instrumental sense (i.e., the Lord ultimately does the work),¹⁷⁵ it includes God in what could be misunderstood as a two-way relationship,¹⁷⁶ as in 1:31 ('Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord [ἐν κυρίῳ]'). As a labourer is bound up with the fruit of his

173. Of course, the social and theological aspects are not at odds with one another. In reality, one illumines the other.

174. Unlike Zeba Crook, who thinks that 'Paul's behaviour [in 1 Cor. 9:1] reflects that of proper and honouring client conduct' (*Conversion*, 158; cf. 168-69), we prefer to view him here as a broker or mediator (see below). To view him as a client is to insinuate that God's benefaction ends with him, which it obviously does not.

175. Fee, *First Corinthians*, 395 n19.

176. For this specific use of ἐν κυρίῳ in Phil. 4:10, see Chapter 3, section 4.2.2.

labour, so, too, Paul and the Corinthians are interdependently bound to a divine party. More than this, his apostolic role as an οἰκονόμος in 9:16-18 (which will be discussed more fully below) underscores Paul's accountability and submission to one far greater than himself.

Although Paul's tactic shifts slightly in 1 Thessalonians 2, it produces the same result of incorporating God as a third party. At pivotal points in the argument, he emphatically stresses God's position as the *source* of the gospel with the recurring phrases, τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ (2:2, 8, 9) and λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ (2:13c).¹⁷⁷ In addition to this, he further emphasises God as the heavenly giver, who approvingly entrusts the gospel to Paul (ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ, 2:4a), who inspects his motives and work (θεῶ τῷ δοκιμάζοντι τὰς καρδίας ἡμῶν, 2:4d; θεὸς μάρτυς, 2:5, 10), who has the right to place demands on beneficiaries of his commodity (τὸ περιπατεῖν ὑμᾶς ἀξίως τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ καλοῦντος ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν ἑαυτοῦ βασιλείαν καὶ δόξαν, 2:12), and who is ultimately thanked for the outcome at Thessalonica (ἡμεῖς εὐχαριστοῦμεν τῷ θεῷ, 2:13a). Truly, as Paul proclaims elsewhere, 'from him, through him, and to him are all things' (Rom. 11:36). Grace *begins* and *ends* with God.

4.3.1.2. Paul's Intermediary Role

The divine inclusion of God is amplified by Paul's middleman position. In 1 Thess. 2:4-5, Paul expresses his allegiance to God, the one who installed the apostle to act as a *mediator*

177. The phrase τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ appears in 1 Cor. 9:12.

between him and the Thessalonians. As a broker was entrusted with the *beneficia* of a patron, or an οἰκονόμος with the goods of his master, so Paul is also approved by God to be entrusted (πιστεύω) with God's gospel (τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ), God's word (λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ) in order to dispense it, as it were, to God's clientele. In all of this, his chief task is to proclaim this divine gift (οὕτως λαλοῦμεν, 2:4), inasmuch as it pleases the owner of this commodity, who stands as a witness (μάρτυς, 2:5, 10) of his ministry. In all of this, divine entrustment and direct accountability to the giver suggest that Paul endeavours to communicate more than a disassociation from worldly philosophers (i.e., social rationale). He also clearly delineates God as the sole *giver* of the gift and himself as a *mediator* of it (i.e., theological rationale).

Turning back to 1 Corinthians 9, however, we discover one of the strongest social *and* theological statements concerning Paul's intermediary role of God's gospel, found in the portrayal of himself as an οἰκονόμος of God who proclaims the gospel involuntarily. By doing so, he draws all attention to the true giver and possesses a special boast as an apostle who preaches 'free of charge' as his mediator. This can be best explained by comparing those who receive financial support in 9:12 with Paul's figuring of himself as a servant of God in 9:16-18.

Some apostles, perhaps those mentioned in 9:5 ('the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas'),¹⁷⁸ availed themselves of the legitimate right to support (cf. 9:14). This is assumed from the question of 9:12a, 'If others share this rightful claim over you [τῆς ὑμῶν ἐξουσίας μετέχουσιν],¹⁷⁹ do not we even more?' What is interesting, however, is how these apostles are portrayed. For Paul (at least in the rhetoric of this chapter), those who accept support reside within a *pay* economy, where work is rewarded with remuneration.¹⁸⁰ This is supported by the numerous vocations surrounding 9:12. Soldiers receive a wage or pay (ὀψώνιον) for services rendered,¹⁸¹ the vine dresser eats the fruit of his vineyard, the shepherd

178. The lack of excoriation and the slightest hint of disapproval makes it highly unlikely that Paul has rival apostles in view, such as those which emerge in 2 Corinthians (*pace* Hock, *Social Context*, 61–62; Chow, *Patronage and Power*, 107–08; Schrage, *Korinther*, 304).

179. Although it is feasible to interpret ὑμῶν as a subjective genitive ('a share of the right you bestow'), the objective rendering seems more likely ('share in a right over you'; cf. Fee, *First Corinthians*, 410; Schrage, *Korinther*, 2:304 n157), though Héring doubts this on the basis of word order and meaning (*The First Epistle of Saint Paul to the Corinthians* [trans. A.W. Heathcote and P.J. Allcock; London: Epworth Press, 1962], 78–79). Plummer, however, thinks that 'the sense is the same, however the genitive is interpreted. "We have a better claim than others to the right of maintenance"' (*I Corinthians*, 186).

180. To modern readers, this may sound antithetical to the economy of grace or gift, but, in the ancient world, the notions of pay and gift resided on a single continuum, sharing considerable linguistic and conceptual overlap. To be sure, pay was on the basis of 'work,' while gift was on the basis of 'worth.' But that is not to say that work and worth do not share commonalities, such as the measurements of 'quality, status, character or achievement' (John Barclay, 'Paul, the Gift and the Battle Over Gentile Circumcision: Revisiting the Logic of Galatians,' *ABR* 58 [2010]: 36–56 at 49 n44, esp. 47–56).

181. BDAG, 747. The military imagery necessitates the definition of 'pay', 'wages,' even 'salary,' since an enlisted Roman soldier would have been paid a monthly or weekly 'wage' (cf. Philip Sabin, Hans van Wees, and Michael Whitby, eds., *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Warfare: Rome from the Late Republic to the Late Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 158–59). However, Chrys Caragounis ('ΟΨΩΝΙΟΝ: A Reconsideration of Its Meaning,' *NovT* 16 [1974]: 35–57), while admitting that 'the sense of "wages" cannot be absolutely ruled out' (57), insists that 'shoppings' or 'provisions' is the most natural sense of the word. Nevertheless, he refuses to perceive the illustrations in 1 Cor. 9 as inviting the notion of salary. 'Neither the fruit of the vine nor the milk of flock of which the labourer may taste,' he writes, 'are regarded as his salary, any more than the few bundles of wheat stalks which the threshing ox devours are his wages (ver. 9). The context speaks of

drinks the milk of his flock, the ploughman and thresher share in the crops, and the temple worker shares in the sacrificial offerings on the altar (9:7, 9-10, 13). All are due a μισθός for their work.¹⁸² ‘In the same way’ (οὕτως καί, 9:14a), the Lord determined that preachers of the gospel ought to receive a μισθός for their labours.

Nevertheless, Paul declines this legitimate ἐξουσία (cf. 9:12, 15, 18),¹⁸³ being free (ἐλευθερία) to do so (cf. 9:1, 19), with the result that he locates himself outside the pay economy.¹⁸⁴ Unlike the apostles of 9:12a, Paul likens himself to a managerial steward, an οἰκονόμος,¹⁸⁵ who *involuntarily* distributes God’s commodity, thereby highlighting the three-way relational pattern in 9:16-18. Although numerous exegetical issues attend this text,

the barest means of life, not the luxury of salary’ (51-52). But what would comprise a salary for a farmer or vine dresser, if not for the milk of the flock or fruit of the vine? These elements of their work are crucial to the reception of pay and promise of sustenance. This is not ‘the luxury of salary’ but reward for their work.

182. μισθός and ὀψώνιον appear to be synonymous in Paul’s argument, even though Caragounis insists that ὀψώνιον ‘must never be understood as = μισθός absolutely, but only in certain contexts all of which bear, indelibly imprinted on them, the underlying significance of “provisions”’ (‘ΟΨΩΝΙΟΝ,’ 51–52). But having rejected his rendering of ὀψώνιον as ‘provisions,’ the context of 1 Cor. 9 makes it more palatable to interpret these words as synonyms.

183. Of course, Barnabas is included in this refusal of rights (cf. 9:6). But, for the sake of simplicity, I will focus on Paul’s portrayal of his own apostleship, especially in light of the first person singular verbs in 9:16-18. On whether Paul disobeys the Lord by refusing support, see David Horrell, “The Lord Commanded...but I Have not Used...” Exegetical and Hermeneutical Reflections on 1 Cor 9.14–15,’ *NTS* 43 (1997): 587–603; Dungan, *Sayings*, 20–40; Christopher L. Carter, *The Great Sermon Tradition as a Fiscal Framework in 1 Corinthians: Towards a Pauline Theology of Material Possessions* (LNTS; London: T&T Clark, 2010).

184. We are not building a law (pay)/grace (gift) dichotomy here. Once again, nothing in 1 Corinthians suggests that the apostles of 9:12 were Judaizers or opposing Paul.

185. This is not to say that, in the ancient world, an οἰκονόμος did not receive pay for his labours, which has been recently demonstrated by the comprehensive study of Goodrich, ‘Oikonomos of God,’ nor that Paul does not have this in mind, especially regarding his right to support. But since the pay that Paul receives is a paradoxical ‘non-payment “payment,”’ we can assume that he employs this metaphor in order to distance himself from the monetary practice of other apostles.

especially in relation to the surrounding context,¹⁸⁶ we will focus on the way in which Paul's servitude to God in 9:17 illumines the *καύχημα* of 9:16 and the preaching of the gospel *ἄδάπανος* in 9:18, and then briefly attempt to bridge the conceptual gap with 9:19-23.

4.3.1.3. *The Triangulated Relationship in 1 Cor. 9:16-18*

Having just declared that he renounces support in order to retain his *καύχημα* (9:15), Paul provides the reason (*γάρ*) behind this emotionally-charged decision.¹⁸⁷ 'For if I preach the gospel [*εὐαγγελίζωμαι*], it cannot be a boast [*καύχημα*], for compulsion [*ἀνάγκη*] is laid on me. For woe is me if I do not preach the gospel [*μὴ εὐαγγελίσωμαι*]' (9:16). He then moves into the heart of his argument in 9:17, which can be laid out as follows:

Protasis A:	<i>εἰ γὰρ ἐκὼν τοῦτο πράσσω,</i>	17a
Apodosis B:	<i>μισθὸν ἔχω</i>	17b
Protasis A':	<i>εἰ δὲ ἄκων</i>	17c
Apodosis B':	<i>οἰκονομίαν πεπίστευμαι</i>	17d

But this perplexing passage requires clarification. Did Paul preach the gospel willingly (*ἐκὼν*) or unwillingly (*ἄκων*)?

186. Käsemann famously described 1 Cor. 9:16-18 as a passage that 'cannot be fitted smoothly into the living whole,' since it 'contradicts it, and threatens to paralyse it' ('A Pauline Version of the "Amor Fati,"' in *Questions*, 226-27).

187. Indicated by the anacoluthon of 9:15.

Two primary interpretations have been posited.¹⁸⁸ One understands 17a-b as a *real condition* but 17c-d as *hypothetical*.¹⁸⁹ This conclusion is reached by placing 1 Cor. 8-9 within the Stoic discussion on free will and determinism. The wise man, through reason and philosophy, can be free from all passions that conflict with the predetermination of Fate (ἀνάγκη).¹⁹⁰ He can willingly desire a divine compulsion and so overcome it and be free. Likewise, Paul ‘willingly does what necessity has laid upon him’ and so exhibits a life of freedom.¹⁹¹ More prosaically, his volition becomes compatible with divine necessity, insofar as his preaching, while ἀνάγκη, was conducted ἐκῶν rather than ἄκων. Nevertheless, this position erroneously assumes that Paul overcame compulsion (ἀνάγκη) by willingly accepting the divine injunction to preach. Nothing in the text discloses an absolute willingness on the apostle’s part. Compulsion was laid on him (note the present tense of ἐπίκειμαι, 9:16a) and he was fearful to do otherwise (οὐαὶ γάρ μοί ἐστιν ἐὰν μὴ εὐαγγελίσωμαι, 9:16b).

The other interpretation, which is supported by the majority of scholars, considers 17a-b as *hypothetical* but 17c-d as a *real condition*.¹⁹² Paul preaches *involuntarily* (ἄκων), and his

188. For a succinct outline of each position, see Goodrich, ‘Oikonomos of God,’ 193–202, who presents a slight variation of the second interpretation, demonstrating that preaching involuntarily does not mean that Paul was undeserving of a μισθός (cf. 202–06).

189. Mainly advocated by Malherbe, ‘Determinism and Free Will’; cf. also Hock, ‘Tentmaking,’ 559.

190. Cf. Diog. Laer. 7.121; Philo, *Prob.* 60; Seneca, *Ep.* 37.3; 54.7; 61.3; *De prov.* 5.6; Epictetus, *Diatr.* 2.16.42; 4.1.70–71, 74; 4.3.9.

191. Malherbe, ‘Determinism and Free Will,’ 250.

192. Cf. Käsemann, ‘Amor Fati,’ 149–53; Martin, *Slavery*, 71–85; Fee, *First Corinthians*, 420; Schrage, *Korinther*, 2:324–26; Dautzenberg, ‘Unterhaltsrecht,’ 227; Marshall, *Enmity*, 302–04; Scott Hafemann, *Suffering and*

confession to being divinely compelled (ἀνάγκη) confirms this reality (9:16). Thus, only *voluntary* preaching merits a μισθός. So, as an *involuntary* preacher, he asks, ‘what then is my μισθός?’ He responds, ‘To preach free of charge [ἀδάπανος] and not make use of my right in the gospel’ (9:18). It is, as it were, a paradoxical μισθός, a ‘non-payment “payment,”’¹⁹³ and in this he boasts.¹⁹⁴ Consequently, his καύχημα does not come from preaching the gospel *per se*, as 9:16 demonstrates, but from preaching it *involuntarily* and *free of charge*.

But why stress these particular aspects of his ministry strategy at Corinth? Because *compulsion* and *freely giving* jointly accentuate his intermediary role in distributing God’s gospel and thus placards the three-way relational pattern of the divine economy before the Corinthians. The εὐαγγέλιον of χάρις is God’s. It is his divine commodity. Paul is a mediator, a compelled οἰκονόμος who simply distributes it to others without cost. This is not because the message of χάρις is incompatible with the acceptance of pay. Far from it. The gift is freely bestowed because it is theologically imperative that recipients acknowledge from whom they have received, not Paul but God. He therefore refuses initially to avoid distorting the gospel of

Ministry in the Spirit: Paul’s Defence of His Ministry in II Corinthians 2:14-3:3 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990), 141–44; Horrell, *Social Ethos*, 207.

193. Opinions vary on the nature of Paul’s μισθός. Dungan interprets it as a facetious pun (*Sayings*, 23), others as a present, ‘inner satisfaction’ (Käsemann, ‘Amor Fati,’ 223; cf. also Weiss, *Korintherbrief*, 239, who regards it as ‘innere Gehobenheit und Freudigkeit, man könnte fast sagen “meine Freude an meinem Tun”’), and still others as an eschatological, external recompense. Traditionally, this latter view has been promoted primarily by Catholic exegetes (cf. G. Didier, ‘Le Salaire du Désintéressement [1 Cor ix: 14–27],’ *RSR* 43 [1955]: 228–51), though not exclusively (cf. Adolf Schlatter, *Paulus der Bote Jesu* [Stuttgart: Calwer, 1956], 278).

194. Fee maintains that μισθός and καύχημα ‘refer to the same reality’ (*First Corinthians*, 421).

grace. To be sure, the giving of χάρις demands a return, in society as well as in Paul's theology. But his major concern pertains to *who* gives the gift. If Paul gives it, then the χάρις belonged to him. Since it obviously does not, he categorises himself as an unwilling (ἄκων) and compelled (ἀνάγκη) slave. For, according to Paul's criteria of gift giving in 2 Cor. 8-9, which, in this respect, perfectly aligns with the social criteria of his day, a giver must not give from compulsion (μή. . . ἐξ ἀνάγκης, 2 Cor. 9:7) but willingly, that is, as that person has decided in his/her heart (2 Cor. 9:7). This could only mean that, in 1 Cor. 9, Paul intentionally removes himself from the realm of gift to stress God's role as the giver. For nothing that inhabitants (including the apostle) possess or give in the economy of χάρις *begins* or *ends* with them. All is of God. χάρις flows from him, is recycled among Christ-followers, and then returns back to God as εὐχαριστία. His special καύχημα in preaching free of charge, therefore, can be better understood as a boast in God as the primary giver and source of all goods in the divine economy, a theological point he accentuated in 1:31 (ὁ καυχώμενος ἐν κυρίῳ καυχάσθω).

This theo-centric boast is further enhanced by Paul's portrayal of himself as an unwilling slave, especially when viewed through the ancient lens of gift-exchange. Although Zeba Crook draws connections between 9:16-18 and the world of patronage and benefaction,¹⁹⁵ he wrongly identifies Paul as a client, obligated to reciprocate (indicated by the 'woe' of 9:16) for the divine benefaction he has received, without which God, his patron, would be greatly

195. Martin also mentions the close ties between slavery and the system of patronage (*Slavery*, 22-42).

dishonoured.¹⁹⁶ But if Paul were a client, divine benefaction would *end* with him, which, as we have seen, is certainly not the case. He is an οἰκονόμος who *mediates* his patron's goods to others, not a client who merely receives benefaction.¹⁹⁷ Indeed, when closely examining the ancient rules of gift exchange in relation to slavery and compulsion, 9:16-18 may be heard in a unique way.

In the ancient world, it was commonly assumed that a slave could not furnish a benefit. Seneca, for instance, mentions that various philosophers distinguish between benefits (*beneficia* = something given by a person who, without incurring criticism, might have done nothing), duties (*officia* = performed by a son, wife, or persons stirred by kinship), and services (*ministeria* = done by a slave).¹⁹⁸ His imaginary interlocutor provides the reason for this:

For a benefit [*beneficium*] is something that some person has given when it was also within his power not to give it [*cum illi liceret et non dare*]. But a slave does not have the rights to refuse [*non habet negandi potestatem*]; thus he does not confer [*non praestat*], but merely obeys [*paret*], and he takes no credit for what he has done because it was not possible for him to fail to do it [*quod non facere non potuit*].¹⁹⁹

196. *Conversion*, 155–64.

197. Interestingly, even after acknowledging the 'middle management' position of an οἰκονόμος, Crook still concludes that as 'a slave of God, Paul is compelled to follow orders, but as an οἰκονόμος he has the added distinction of being a client: either he honours his patron publicly, or he risks insulting that patron and incurring the coming wrath (οὐαὶ γάρ μοί ἐστιν)' ('The Divine Benefactions of Paul the Client,' *JGRChJ* 2 [2001–05]: 9–26 at 18–19).

198. *Ben.* 3.18.1.

199. *Ben.* 3.19.1.

In short, a slave is compelled and therefore cannot give a *beneficium*.²⁰⁰ Could this comprise an element of what Paul wishes to communicate through the οἰκονόμος metaphor? Though we cannot be absolutely certain, it would further bolster his over-arching desire to illumine the divine third party in his *specific* policy, and this in two ways. First, it almost entirely diminishes Paul's role in the exchange of χάρις. If he cannot furnish a gift as a compelled slave, then it can only be God who gives to the Corinthians. Second, if it is God who gives, then Paul cannot receive a return. Thus, his μισθός,²⁰¹ albeit paradoxically, is a theocentric boast in preaching free of charge, one which directs all eyes to the heavenly giver of χάρις.

But how does this self-portrayal as a slave, driven by compulsion, boasting in the divine initiative of God's gift, and mediating χάρις to the community, carry over into the argument of 9:19-23?²⁰²

200. Of course, Seneca proceeds to dismantle this argument in *Ben.* 3.18.1-3.28.6, but it nonetheless represents the ancient view of slaves.

201. In antiquity, μισθός could belong either to the discourse of pay- or gift-economies. This becomes evident from the bivalent use of the term in Philo and other parts of the Scriptures, either as earned pay (e.g., *Mos.* 1.141, 2; *Spec.* 1.156; cf. *Gen.* 29:15; *Sir.* 34:22; *Luke* 10:7) or a gift-reward (e.g., *Wis.* 5.15; 10.17; cf. *Spec.* 4.98; cf. *Gen.* 15:1), indicating that these economies are not antithetical to one another. I owe this insight to Jonathan Linebaugh.

202. The explanatory γάρ connects this section to the preceding, as Dautzenberg argues, 'Der Abschnitt 1 Kor 9,19-23 steht in einem inneren Zusammenhang mit dem Vorherigen. Das einleitende γάρ muss ernst genommen werden; 9,19 will 18 begründen und weiterführen' ('Unterhaltsrecht,' 228; cf. also Héring, *First Epistle*, 81). Moreover, the terminological and thematic parallels, sprinkled throughout 9:1-18 and 9:19-23, such as the free/slave motif (9:1, 17, 19), the commitment to the gospel (9:12, 16, 18, 23), and the financial metaphors and terminology (ὀψώνιον, μισθός, κερδαίνω), confirm this connection.

4.3.1.4. The Progression of Χάρις in 9:19-23

The main thrust of his argument comes at the beginning (9:19) and end (9:23) of this section and reveals two aspects of the apostle's lifestyle which become an example for the Corinthians to emulate (cf. 11:1).

Ἐλεύθερος γὰρ ὢν ἐκ πάντων πᾶσιν ἑμαυτὸν ἐδούλωσα, ἵνα τοὺς πλείονας κερδήσω

καὶ ἐγενόμην

τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις ὡς Ἰουδαῖος,

ἵνα Ἰουδαίους κερδήσω·

τοῖς ὑπὸ νόμον ὡς ὑπὸ νόμον, μὴ ὢν αὐτὸς ὑπὸ νόμον,

ἵνα τοὺς ὑπὸ νόμον κερδήσω·

τοῖς ἀνόμοις ὡς ἄνομος, μὴ ὢν ἄνομος θεοῦ ἀλλ' ἔννομος Χριστοῦ,

ἵνα κερδάνω τοὺς ἀνόμους·

ἐγενόμην τοῖς ἀσθενέσιν ἀσθενής,

ἵνα τοὺς ἀσθενεῖς κερδήσω·

τοῖς πᾶσιν γέγονα πάντα,

ἵνα πάντως τινὰς σώσω.

πάντα δὲ ποιῶ διὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, ἵνα συγκοινωνὸς αὐτοῦ γένωμαι (9:19-23)

In 9:19, Paul speaks of his freedom *from all people* (ἐκ πάντων; cf. 9:1) and his self-

enslavement *to all people* (πᾶσιν).²⁰³ He positions himself, once again, as the middleman, being

203. Hock contends that Paul's self-enslavement is his decision to work a trade that made him appear 'slavish' in society, since 'by entering the workshop he had brought about a considerable loss of status' ('Tentmaking,' 559; idem, *Social Context*, 59-62). Just as Socrates could boast, 'Who among men is more free (ἐλευθεριώτερος) than I, who accepts neither gifts nor fee from anyone? (Xenophon, *Apol.* 16),' so also Paul, by plying a 'slavish trade,' boasts of his economic freedom from the patronage of well-to-do Corinthians ('Tentmaking,' 61). But if the all [people] (ἐκ πάντων) represent the Corinthian patrons, then how can Paul say that he became a slave 'to all [people]' (πᾶσιν) immediately after (cf. Hafemann, *Suffering and Ministry*, 136-38)? This would mean that Paul enslaves himself to patrons as well. More importantly, if Paul means what Hock wants him to mean, namely, that he shared the 'snobbish' attitude of the higher echelon of society toward work as 'slavish,' then Todd Still is right, 'Paul would have been shaking the very hands he was seeking to slap in Corinth!' ('Did Paul Loathe Manual Labor?')

simultaneously enslaved to God, as 9:17 demonstrates, and to the Corinthians by relinquishing his right to support and plying a trade. As such, he presents himself as a model of giving up legitimate rights for the sake of others, most likely to inform the strong at Corinth (cf. 8:9),²⁰⁴ which is evidenced by the goal (ἵνα) of his particular missionary strategy in every city. He financially supports himself during his initial visit in order to gain (κερδαίνω) and save (σώζω) those of various social and ethnic boundaries (9:20-23a).²⁰⁵ This strategy is self-effacing and other-oriented, the sort of lifestyle lacking in the Corinthians.²⁰⁶

But if 9:19 portrays Paul as an example for those who wished to maintain their freedom, even if it caused others to stumble, then 9:23, as in 9:12, presents the apostle as a model of a life conformed to the gospel, committed to its advancement. Scholars investigating 9:23 generally wrestle with one important exegetical question. By employing the word συγκαινωνός, does Paul have in view ‘his participation in the *work* of the gospel’ or ‘his fellow-sharing *with* the Corinthians in its *benefits*?’ While the latter interpretation is plausible, the singular verb

Revisiting the Work of Ronald F. Hock on the Apostle’s Tentmaking and Social Class,’ *JBL* 125 [2006]: 781–95 at 788). Savage rejects Hock’s proposal on the Corinthians’ view of work (*Power Through Weakness*, 102–03), but has been criticised by Gardner, *Gifts of God*, 82–84 and Margaret Thrall, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 2:703–04.

204. According to Martin, ‘Paul’s main goal in 1 Corinthians 9 is to persuade the strong to modify their behaviour to avoid offending the weak’ (*Slavery*, 209).

205. The absence of ὧς in 9:22 is indeed telling. If ἀσθενής indicates social status, as many have argued (Martin, *Slavery*, 118–24; Theissen, *Social Setting*, 121–43), it is noteworthy that Paul identifies the beneficiaries of divine benefaction in the gospel as those who, in the eyes of the more élite Corinthians, would not have been socially suitable to receive such a gift.

206. See section 2.2 above.

γένωμαι makes it more likely that he has himself in view. The συν- in συγκοινωνός, then, corresponds to Paul's partnership with the gospel as a *force* during the act of proclamation rather than speaking of the Corinthians as co-partners.²⁰⁷ But this begs the question, how does Paul facilitate the advance of the gospel in his own life?

As we have attempted to show, Paul is a *mediator* of the gospel, divinely compelled to distribute the gift of χάρις as he enslaves himself to the Corinthians, so that they may be claimed by God's gospel. We have also tried to show that the Corinthians assumed that divine gifts *ended* with them, as evidence by their inappropriate use of provisions (11:17-34) and spiritual gifts (12:12-31). They did not pass on their possessions to others but solely took pride in and through them (cf. 4:7). As Morna Hooker incisively explains,

[The Corinthians] see themselves only as recipients of grace — not as those who are commissioned to *pass it on* — for they have not grasped that the pattern of the gospel must now be stamped on their own lives. They think of the interchange between Christ and themselves in terms of simple exchange — he gives, we take — instead of in terms of mutual give and take. But how can one give to Christ? It is not so much a case of giving to Christ but giving *in* Christ — that is, sharing in *his* giving.²⁰⁸

Perhaps, then, Paul, by exemplifying a life committed to passing on the gospel and recognising the divine giver in his dealings with others, expects the Corinthians to make a

207. Pace Morna Hooker, 'A Partner in the Gospel: Paul's Understanding of His Ministry,' in *Theology and Ethics in Paul and His Interpreters: Essays in Honor of Victor Paul Furnish* (ed. Eugene Lovering and Jerry Sumney; Nashville: Abingdon, 1996), 83–100.

208. Morna Hooker, *From Adam to Christ: Essays on Paul* (Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 1990), 64–65; my italics.

connection between his self-portrayal as a broker of χάρις and his call to 'become imitators of me, as I am of Christ' (11:1).

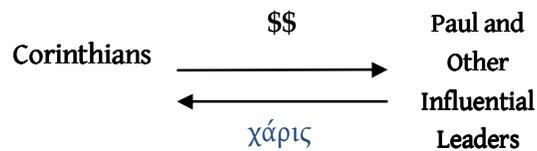
5. Conclusion

We have attempted to present a *socio-theological* rationale behind Paul's refusal of support, tying together the social and theological strands that comprise his fiscal policy. The social strand, on the one hand, can be identified as *pragmatic*. Paul refused monetary support, not because he detected the Corinthians' motive to patronise him, as many assume, but because he evaded any associations with the monetary practices of itinerant Sophists and philosophers, who avariciously capitalised on their initial visits into cities. Solidifying this conclusion is the fact that this *specific* policy was enforced at Corinth and Thessalonica, two very different cities. For, as John Barclay has shown, these 'sibling communities,' though founded closely together, diverged greatly in their individual perception and appropriation of the Christian faith. The Corinthians exhibited culturally-conditioned lifestyles, while the Thessalonians embraced the apocalyptic symbols of the gospel and experienced social dislocation.²⁰⁹ And yet, Paul enforces the same financial policy in both communities. His refusal, therefore, could not have been predicated on the ulterior motives of certain wealthy members. If that were the case, he would not have employed this policy at Thessalonica. Rather, his refusal was based, at least in part,

209. 'Thessalonica and Corinth,' 66–72.

on the sociological factors of the cities that he evangelised. For accepting gifts initially could potentially distort the gospel of grace, not its content but its source.

The theological strand, on the other hand, can be considered *perspectival*. What I mean is that, when initially proclaiming the gospel, Paul deems it theologically necessary that the Corinthians *perceive* God as the source of the gift of χάρις and himself as the mediator of it. This is precisely where the *social* and *theological* threads overlap. As our analysis of 1 Cor. 1-4, 11:17-34, and 12:12-31 demonstrate, the Corinthians operated primarily within a two-way relational structure with Paul and other influential leaders, excluding the divine third party from their social interactions, which may be diagrammed as follows:

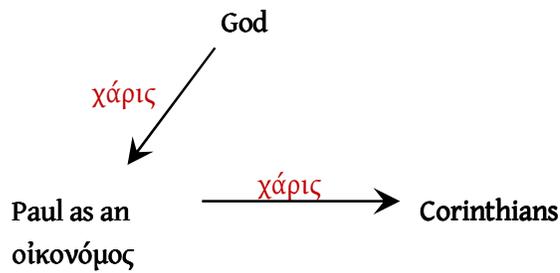


In their relationship with God and Paul, the Corinthians acted in a manner consistent with two-way relationships in ancient society. Of course, as mentioned earlier,²¹⁰ they believed in the gospel on the discursive level, and so would happily affirm a three-party relationship with Paul and others, with God at the head of each. What they lacked, however, was a three-way relational pattern in their practical consciousness. In other words, unlike the Philippians' relationship with Paul, where the divine inclusion drastically modified their mutual bond, the

210. See section 3.3.

inclusion of a vertical party did not modify the Corinthians' horizontal behaviour, neither with Paul nor with other members. Again, the comparison between Thessalonica and Corinth is theologically telling. When the Thessalonians heard the gospel preached παρ' ἡμῶν, they accepted it as a λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ (1 Thess. 2:13). They accurately acknowledged the divine source and consequently endured *social dislocation*. But when the Corinthians heard the gospel, they viewed Paul and others as its source, as indicated by the party slogans (1:12), boasting in men (3:21), and plainly rejecting (or possibly forgetting, 2:12) God as the fount of their material and spiritual blessings (4:7), which resulted in *social integration*.

In their relationship with one another, the Corinthians erroneously assumed that divine gifts ended with them instead of being conduits of grace. God's intention for gifts was 'for the common good' (πρὸς τὸ συμφέρον, 12:7), to be shared and enjoyed by all. But they used them for their own good, to accrue spiritual honour and status. That is why Paul, in addition to exemplifying selflessness for the sake of others, might also be presenting himself as a mediator-model, a slave of God who receives in order to give as a συγκοινωνός of the gospel's advancement (9:23). Through his example, he communicates a fundamental truth in the economy of χάρις. All possessions, whether spiritual or material, find their *beginning* and *end* with God. Divine commodity is simply mediated among his people, as captured by the following diagram:



This is the stamp of the gospel, whose imprint is missing from the practical lives of the Corinthians.²¹¹

With the strands of the *socio-theological* rationale behind Paul's monetary policy exposed and explained, along with the social and theological deficiency of the Corinthians, that is, their desire to work within two-way relational structures due to their culturally-conditioned mindset, we now turn to 2 Corinthians 11-12 in order to determine whether the issues detected in 1 Corinthians illumine the rationale behind Paul's offensive refusal of their gift.

211. Obviously, Paul would not have been aware of this until after departing Corinth, so this was not a factor in his specific monetary policy of refusing during initial visits. However, we will see in the following chapter that their worldly perspective on relational roles and status did play a role in the ultimate refusal of their gift in 2 Cor. 11-12.

CHAPTER 5: Paul's Negative Relationship with the Corinthians (2 Corinthians 11-12)

Introduction

In Chapter 4, we encountered a *socio-theological* strategy within the financial text of 1 Corinthians 9. When initially entering into a city, Paul always refuses support. This *specific* policy serves the *pragmatic* purpose of distancing himself from avaricious Sophists and itinerant teachers (i.e., social aspect) and the *perspectival* purpose of accentuating the heavenly giver of the gospel (i.e., theological aspect). This financial stance was not in response to a previous offer of a gift, nor was it enacted because of the state of the church. As we already mentioned, the same policy was enforced when he ministered at Thessalonica and Philippi. And yet, when we arrive at 2 Cor. 11-12, we discover that something in the Corinthians specifically compelled Paul to *extend* his initial policy into the distant future, even after the founding of the church: 'I refrained [from accepting support] and will refrain from burdening you in any way' (11:9); 'What I do I will continue to do' (11:12); 'I myself did not burden you . . . Here for the third time I am ready to come to you. And I will not be a burden' (12:13-14).

But why does Paul choose to minister among them as if he were initially evangelising them? The most common explanation in Pauline studies is the patronal interpretation. Paul

refused Corinthian gifts, which carried the unwanted ties of obligation, because some wealthy patrons in the church sought to make him their dependent client. The extension of his initial policy therefore teaches the church that he is the patron in the relationship. But this position is seriously flawed. It not only misunderstands patronage in antiquity and ignores other ancient gift-exchange relationships as suitable frameworks,¹ but it also wrongly assumes that Paul is the source of the gospel instead of its mediator and inaccurately portrays him as a modern who despises obligation and debt. More than this, however, it overlooks the Corinthians' propensity to be *under* influential figures, as our analysis of 1 Corinthians has shown. This, in our opinion, is the Achilles heel of the patronal approach, and it will be the objective of this chapter to prove it.

To that end, our examination of 2 Cor. 11-12 will begin by reconstructing the events between 1 and 2 Corinthians, before comparing Paul and the super apostles. This comparison will help us understand why the Corinthians shifted their allegiance to these rivals and what exactly *their* gift-exchange relationship consisted of. From the relational pattern of this exchange, we will be able to deduce the sort of financial relationship that the Corinthians sought with Paul, whether they wanted to be the superior or inferior party. Thereafter, we will provide an exegesis of Paul's reasons for refusing in 11:7-12 and 12:13-16a, particularly demonstrating the inadequacy of the patronal approach. And lastly, a *socio-theological* approach

1. See Chapter 2, section 1.

will be offered, one which takes the pragmatic and perspectival purposes of Paul's policy into consideration and provides a counter-example to his well-functioning, gift-exchange relationship with the Philippians. From this, a plausible reason for Paul's refusal will be propounded.

1. Reconstruction of Events between 1 and 2 Corinthians

Because our position on this matter has been comprehensively argued by others,² we will offer only a brief sketch of events here.³ The discussion will be selective, focusing on the state of Paul's relationship with the community in light of the ἀδικήσας-incident in 2 Cor. 1:23-2:11 and 7:5-16, and its relation to the issues in 2 Cor. 10-13.

After the writing of 1 Corinthians, the relationship between Paul and the community rapidly declined. This relational descent was first set in motion by his insistence on working a trade to support himself,⁴ but it eventually broke out into open conflict during, what Paul calls,

2. See Francis Watson, '2 Cor. x-xiii and Paul's Painful Visit to the Corinthians,' *JTS* 35 (1984): 324-46; L.L. Welborn, 'The Identification of 2 Corinthians 10-13 with the "Letter of Tears,"' *NovT* 37 (1995): 138-53; Horrell, *Social Ethos*, 217-20; 296-312; Lars Aejmelaeus, *Streit und Versöhnung: Das Problem der Zusammensetzung des 2. Korintherbriefes* (PFES 46; Helsinki: Finnish Exegetical Society, 1987).

3. For a close examination of the differing views on the events between 1 and 2 Corinthians, see Ivar Vegge, *2 Corinthians - a Letter About Reconciliation* (WUNT 2/239; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 9-12, and for a historical overview on the discontinuity and continuity of these letters, consult Reimund Bieringer, 'Zwischen Kontinuität und Diskontinuität: Die beiden Korintherbriefe in ihrer Beziehung zueinander nach der neueren Forschung,' in *The Corinthian Correspondence* (ed. Reimund Bieringer; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1996), 3-38; esp. 6-7.

4. As Horrell explains, '1 Corinthians may only have exacerbated their discontent. Dissatisfaction over the particular issue of manual work and material support, moreover, is especially likely since the Corinthians are clearly aware of another "model" of apostolic lifestyle practised by others, quite apart from Paul's informing them of the rights of an apostle' (*Social Ethos*, 217).

‘a painful visit’ (2:1), occurring at the second of three visits (cf. 2:1; 12:14; 13:1-2), where a member of the church⁵ acted defiantly against the apostle’s authority (2:3, 5). In response, Paul wrote a ‘tearful letter’ (2:4; 7:8),⁶ which not only caused pain (λύπη) to the wrongdoer, insofar as it later produced repentance (2:6-8; 7:9-11), but it also served to castigate the *entire* community (7:8-11).⁷ For, prior to this ‘tearful letter,’ the Corinthians had taken no action against the offender and were thus implicated in the offence against Paul, that is, deliberate recalcitrance against his apostolic authority at Corinth. With traces of this offence in 2 Cor. 10-13,⁸ especially in connection with the rival apostles, it seems likely that this section ought to be identified as the ‘tearful letter,’ chronologically preceding the writing of 2 Cor. 1-9.⁹ If this is

5. Identified by the singular phrases: τις (2:5); ὁ τοιοῦτος (2:6-7); ὁ ἀδικήσας (7:12).

6. For the multiple theories on the ‘tearful letter,’ see Hurd, *Origin*, 55–56; Murray Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), 5–8.

7. Because Paul obviously desired to evoke loyalty to his apostleship in the church, as gathered from one of his chief reasons for the ‘tearful letter’ (‘that [the Corinthians’] zeal on [Paul’s] behalf might be manifested to [them] before God,’ 7:12), many scholars accurately reason that the offence was a collective defiance of his apostolic authority (cf. Watson, ‘Painful Visit’ at 340-45; J.H. Kennedy, *The Second and Third Epistles of St. Paul to the Corinthians* [London: Methuen and Co., 1900], 84–85).

8. As most notably shown by Kennedy, *Epistles*, 63–68, 79–94; Watson, ‘Painful Visit,’ 339–46; Ernst Käsemann, ‘Die Legitimität des Apostels. Eine Untersuchung zu II Korinther 10–13,’ *ZNW* 41 (1942): 33–71.

9. While the argument of this chapter does not entirely depend on this partition theory, it does, however, support the close connection that we will draw in the following section, namely, that the Corinthians’ deficient practical consciousness, described in 1 Corinthians, carries over directly into 2 Cor. 10-13. Of course, the hypothesis adopted here has been challenged, primarily on the basis of two problems: (i) the lack of reference in 10-13 to the ‘brother’ who had wronged Paul, and (ii) Titus’ visit in 12:18, which, many argue, is described in 2 Cor. 8:16-9:5 and requires that the ‘tearful letter’ was delivered at that time (cf. Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 33–36; Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians* [WBC; Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1986], xlix; Frank Matera, *II Corinthians: A Commentary* [NTL; Kentucky: Westminster John Knox, 2003], 297). In response to (i), multiple verbal and conceptual parallels exist between 10-13 and the ἀδικήσας-incident (see n8 above), yet argument (ii) concerning Titus’ visit in 12:18 may, at first glance, seem more persuasive. Nevertheless, Watson (‘Painful Visit,’ 31–32) has shown that, if Titus’ visit in 8:16-9:5 precedes 10-13, then he was altogether incompetent, reporting news to Paul about the Corinthians’

accurate, then 2 Cor. 10-13 contains a vitriolic defence against the criticisms of the Corinthians, who, due to the influence and acceptance of the so-called super apostles, considered Paul's *vita apostolica* to be inferior to his opponents' (cf. 11:5; 12:11). This apostolic subordination was a catastrophic blow to Paul, and it was the rival apostles who helped the Corinthians deliver it. Just how they did so, and how the Corinthians were so easily misguided by these rebels, emerges from the community's love for honour, status, and worth in connection with the social stature of Paul in comparison to the super apostles. This is especially the case since, according to Wayne Meeks, 1 Corinthians failed to amend two issues. It 'had not. . . put to rest the discontent with Paul's authority, nor the longing of some Corinthian Christians to attach themselves to leaders more self-evidently grand.'¹⁰

repentance and loyalty when, in fact, they were committed to the super apostles and practised all sorts of immorality (12:20-21). Being unconvinced by argument (ii), then, which F.F. Bruce understands as the linchpin against the view propounded here (*1 and 2 Corinthians*, 168), we therefore maintain that 10-13 is the tearful letter, written *before* 1-9, though we refrain from being overly confident in this theory by not building major arguments on this plausible reconstruction.

10. *First Urban Christians*, 118.

2. The Corinthians' Culturally-Conditioned Lifestyle Maintained

With the practical consciousness of the Corinthians, driven by the cultural norms of gift and worth in society, outlined in some detail in the previous chapter,¹¹ we now seek to consider how their culturally-conditioned lifestyle carried over into 2 Cor. 10-13. We will do so by first discovering the motivation behind the Corinthians' rejection of Paul's apostleship and subsequent allegiance to the super apostles, a transfer of loyalty that revolved around the giving of money. We will then reconstruct the specific gift-giving relational pattern that the Corinthians shared with these rival missionaries in order to extrapolate the sort of gift-exchange relationship that they sought to have with Paul. This comparison will give us a glimpse into the precise role that the church desired to play in this gift-exchange relationship, whether they sought to be superior *over* or inferior *under* the super apostles. But first, it is necessary to ask why the Corinthians cut ties with Paul and affiliated themselves with his opponents.

2.1. A Corinthian Assessment of Apostolic Status

In a culture mesmerised by honour and status, difficult decisions had to be made. One pressing question was, With whom should I affiliate myself? Since one's decision on the matter determined the social fate of the inquirer, it was imperative to assess the social standing of

11. See Chapter 4, section 2.

influential candidates. And this was no less the case with the culturally-conditioned Corinthians, as can be validated by comparing the status symbols exhibited by Paul with those of the super (or false) apostles.¹²

2.1.1. Paul's Apostolic Status

Humility and weakness. These were the status symbols embodied by Paul that were deemed inferior in ancient society. 'Humility,' writes Savage, 'was scorned. The lowly had no self-respect, no public standing — they were "slaves on a low scale."¹³ Interestingly enough, Paul presents himself as writing to Corinth in the meekness (πραΰτης) and gentleness

12. Many draw a distinction between the ὑπερλίαν ἀπόστολοι (11:5b; 12:11) and ψευδαπόστολοι (11:13; cf. Käsemann, 'Legitimität,' 38–43, 45–49; C.K. Barrett, 'Paul's Opponents in 2 Corinthians,' *NTS* 17 [1970/71]: 233–54; Hafemann, *Suffering and Ministry*, 147–48). Yet it seems best to consider them one and the same group, primarily because the title ὑπερλίαν ἀπόστολοι is most likely an ironic designation for the ψευδαπόστολοι. This is confirmed by ψευδαπόστολοι in 11:13 being sandwiched by the twofold reference to the ὑπερλίαν ἀπόστολοι in 11:5 and 12:11, by the comparison between Paul and the super apostles in 11:5, which directly follows his description of the false apostles who preach another Jesus and give a different gospel and spirit (11:4), and by the multiple appearances of ὑπέρ, as a preposition or a prefix (10:14, 16), which Paul employs in his rebuttal against the false apostles and ultimately culminates in the title ὑπερλίαν ἀπόστολοι (cf. Christopher Forbes, 'Paul's Boasting,' 17; Alfred Plummer, *The Second Epistle of St Paul to the Corinthians* [ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1915], 298–99; Josef Zmijewski, *Der Stil der paulinischen 'Narrenrede': Analyse der Sprachgestaltung in 2 Kor 11, 1–12, 10 als Beitrag zur Methodik von Stiluntersuchungen neutestamentlicher Texte* [BBB 52; Bonn: Hanstein, 1978], 116–17; Windisch, *Korintherbrief*, 330; Philip Hughes, *Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians* [NICNT; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1962], 378–80). For a concise summary of the debate and support for the argument advocated here, see Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 502–05.

13. Savage, *Power Through Weakness*, 24 and n39. Two passages from Epictetus are illuminating in this regard, both of which highly discourage presenting oneself as ταπεινός — "Ἐτι οὖν ἀπόκριναί μοι κάκεῖνο: δοκεῖ σοι μέγα τι εἶναι καὶ γενναῖον ἢ ἐλευθερία καὶ ἀξιόλογον; – Πῶς γὰρ οὐ; – Ἔστιν οὖν τυγχάνοντά τινος οὕτως μεγάλου καὶ ἀξιολόγου καὶ γενναίου ταπεινὸν εἶναι; Οὐκ ἔστιν (*Diatr.* 3.24.54); Καὶ ἐνθάδε τοῦτον θέλε ὄρᾶν καὶ ὄν βούλει ὄψει: μόνον μὴ ταπεινῶς, μὴ μετ' ὀρέξεως ἢ ἐκκλίσεως καὶ ἔσται τὰ σὰ καλῶς (*Diatr.* 4.1.53–54). Similarly, Lucian speaks of the wealthy who expect the lower classes to express the self-abasement of their soul (τὴν ψυχὴν ταπεινώσαντα) with a lowly bow (*Nigr.* 21). In another work, he asserts that one disadvantage of being a sculptor is possessing a lowly opinion (ταπεινὸς τὴν γνώμην), more than likely, in view of what follows (εὐτελὴς δὲ τὴν πρόοδον), from others in society (*Somm.* 9). See also Dio Cassius 52.8.5 and Origen *Cels.* 6.15 on the disgrace of a lowly lifestyle.

(ἐπιείκεια) of Christ, living among them in a humble manner (ταπεινός).¹⁴ These lowly characteristics were equally despised and avoided in society as in the Corinthian church.¹⁵

Because of these, they accused him of living κατὰ σάρκα, that is, as a frail, weak, and powerless apostle (10:1-3).¹⁶ For from the Corinthians' perspective, to be as spiritually humble as Christ was to be as socially despicable as a slave.

Of course, the letters of this weak slave were surprisingly considered weighty (βαρύς) and strong (ισχυρός). But their assessment was quickly disproven by his weak, physical presence (παρουσία τοῦ σώματος ἀσθενής) and contemptible speech (ὁ λόγος ἐξουθενημένος, 10:11; cf. 10:1; ἰδιώτης, 11:6). The city of Corinth highly praised rhetorical acumen¹⁷ and a powerful self-display,¹⁸ both of which exponentially increased one's status and worth in society. So it should be the cause of little wonder that the absence of these status markers in

14. 'The linkage of the term ταπεινός to the virtues of Christ (πραΰτης, ἐπιείκεια),' Arthur Dewey asserts, 'should not prevent one from noting that this term carries with it the pejorative social sense of low estate or status' ('A Matter of Honor: A Social-Historical Analysis of 2 Corinthians 10,' *HTR* 78 [1985]: 209–17 at 210; cf. Marshall, *Enmity*, 323).

15. Since, as Murray Harris (*Corinthians*, 68) states, 'It is impossible to distinguish clearly between the views of native Corinthians and the teaching of the rival apostles, for many of the Corinthians seem to have adopted some of the ideas or attitudes of these intruders (11:4),' we will treat them as a single entity, unless clearly distinguished, since they influenced one another in their attack against Paul.

16. Scholars have variously taken κατὰ σάρκα to refer to Paul's trade (Hock, *Social Context*, 64; Theissen, *Social Setting*, 45), illnesses (Betz, *Tradition*, 96), worldly inconsistency (Windisch, *Korintherbrief*, 295), or lack of oratorical skill (Winter, *Sophists*, 212). Nevertheless, Thrall rightly concludes that the 'primary issue is that of power' (*Second Epistle*, 607), a general category that may include some of these specific factors. Of course, mirror-reading is unavoidable when discerning the meaning of κατὰ σάρκα, so an awareness of its propriety as well as its dangers are necessary (cf. Jerry Sumney, *Identifying Paul's Opponents: The Question of Method in 2 Corinthians* [JSNTSS 40; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1990], 95–119; Samuel Sandmel, 'Parallelomania,' *JBL* 81 [1962]: 1–13; Barclay, 'Mirror-Reading').

17. See Judge, 'Cultural Conformity,' 165–66; Litfin, *Proclamation*, 151–55, 159–72.

18. MacMullen, *Social Relations*, 109; Winter, *Sophists*, 116–17.

their apostle produced intense criticism, especially when he failed to deliver punitive action during the sorrowful visit, causing the Corinthians to wonder if, in fact, he possessed the authoritative power that he claimed to have in 1 Cor. 4:18-21.¹⁹ From this point on, they became immensely suspicious of his asserted status and thus apostolic legitimacy.

From Paul's perspective, however, their categories of worth were completely upside-down.²⁰ Weakness and hardship characterised the entirety of his life as an apostle, and they were, albeit counter-culturally, the worthy objects of his boasting (11:16-12:10; esp. 11:30; 12:5, 9). Their scepticism therefore evoked the defensive rejoinder, 'For I consider myself not in the least inferior [ὕστερηκέναι] to these super apostles [τῶν ὑπερλίαν ἀποστόλων]' (11:5).²¹ But it was too late. The Corinthians had assessed Paul on the basis of social criteria (i.e., rhetorical skill and an authoritative self-display),²² concluded that he lacked the status symbols that they expected in an apostle (cf. 12:20),²³ and turned their allegiance to more 'superior' figures. But

19. Savage surmises that the Corinthians must have assumed that Paul had something to hide. 'Perhaps he is afraid that if he visits Corinth he will be exposed as the weak and cowardly person he really is! Maybe he is intentionally concealing his humility! He is duplicitous!' (*Power Through Weakness*, 67; cf. also Watson, 'Painful Visit,' 342-43).

20. 11:16-21 is also an attempt to show the Corinthians their impaired judgment.

21. See also 12:11 where he includes, 'even though I am nothing' (εἰ καὶ οὐδέν εἰμι), and thereby paradoxically claims a high status for himself through low status indicators.

22. Dewey's analysis of the social functions and symbols in 2 Cor. 10 'shows that Paul directly engages the social reality as perceived and accepted by the community and the opposition' ('Honor,' 216).

23. It is probably not accurate to state that the Corinthians did not consider Paul to be an apostle at all (*pace* Rudolf Bultmann, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* [trans. Roy Harrisville; Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 1985], 234), but that they considered him to be an apostle of a lesser kind (cf. Paul Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* [NICNT; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997], 512).

who are these so-called ὑπερλίαν ἀποστόλοι, and what sort of status symbols did they embody?

2.1.2. *The Super Apostles' Status*

While the identity of these rival apostles remains shrouded in uncertainty and methodological debates,²⁴ a few remarks may be made concerning their apostolic status at Corinth by investigating specific passages. First, irrespective of whether the assessment of his oratorical performance in 10:10 and 11:6 comes from the opponents or the community itself,²⁵ Paul's rhetorical deficiency places him in a lower social position — particularly since education is indissolubly linked with social class — and therefore raises the status of the opponents higher than the apostle's.²⁶ This is further supported by the response related to status in 11:5 (Λογίζομαι γὰρ μηδὲν ὑστερηκέναι τῶν ὑπερλίαν ἀποστόλων) that precedes his concession (εἰ δὲ καὶ) to being an ἰδιώτης τῶ λόγῳ in 11:6.²⁷ Second, unlike Paul, the rivals' powerful self-display was anything but 'weak.' If the pejorative description of 11:20 reflects a historical

24. See, for instance, the discussions in Sumney, *Opponents*; Gerd Lüdemann, *Opposition to Paul in Jewish Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989); J.J. Gunther, *St. Paul's Opponents and Their Background: A Study of Apocalyptic and Jewish Sectarian Teachings* (NovTSup 35; Leiden: Brill, 1973).

25. It is difficult to determine who Paul refers to when he employs the singular φησὶν (10:10), τις (10:7; 11:20[5x], 21b), or ὁ τοιοῦτος (10:11), since they can be generic singulars. Similarly, the plurals τινες (10:2, 12) and οἱ τοιοῦτοι (11:13) can also be generic plurals.

26. Furnish accurately maintains that 'the intruders were skilled in the art of Hellenistic rhetoric' (*II Corinthians*, 50; cf. Marshall, *Enmity*, 339–40).

27. Paul, according to Winter, 'suffered from a presentation which fell short of the quality expected of a public orator or Sophist who aimed to persuade a first-century Corinthian audience. This attracted his opponents' attention because it was an irreparable deficiency' (*Sophists*, 217–18).

reality, in which these competitors enslave (καταδουλώω), devour (κατεσθίω), and strike the Corinthians in the face (εἰς πρόσωπον. . . δέρει), then they most likely exerted the authoritative power that Paul only spoke of but never administered (cf. 1 Cor. 4:18-20). Finally, they promoted their social worth through boasting. As Paul describes it, they showed off their apostolic credentials as Ἑβραῖοι, Ἰσραηλῖται, σπέρμα Ἀβραάμ,²⁸ and διάκονοι Χριστοῦ (11:22-23),²⁹ engaged in σύγκρισις with one another (10:12, 18), and audaciously boasted in his labours at Corinth (10:13-18; 11:12),³⁰ all of which served to bolster their own apostolic status over Paul's in the eyes of the Corinthians — an intrusive endeavour which proved successful.

2.1.3. Status Differential between Paul and the Super Apostles

Contrary to Paul's life and ministry, the super apostles possessed a mighty self-display, expressed through rhetorical grandiloquence, punitive action, and presumptuous boasting in their social worth, with the shameful attributes of humility and weakness far removed from their apostolic repertoire. Both in appearance and eloquence, they fit the social ideal for

28. By employing the terms Ἑβραῖοι, Ἰσραηλῖται, and σπέρμα Ἀβραάμ, the rivals may have appealed to their genuine Jewishness as an attack against Paul's less than pure lineage as a Diaspora "Hellenist," since he was not born in Israel and probably had no personal knowledge of the earthly Jesus (Harris, *Corinthians*, 794-96).

29. The terms διακονία in 11:8, which describes Paul's ministry, and διάκονος in 11:15 (2x) and 23, which depicts the super apostles' ministry, deserve further explanation. J.N. Collins convincingly demonstrates that the διακον- word group, far from merely being defined as 'messenger,' 'envoy,' or 'servant,' actually means 'mediator,' 'middleman,' or 'in-between person' ('The Mediatorial Aspect of Paul's Role as *Diakonos*,' *ABR* 40 [1992]: 34-44 at 42). These definitions accord well with our construal of Paul's intermediary role of God's gift of χάρις to the Corinthians. By calling the rival missionaries διάκονοι Χριστοῦ, then, he presents them as a competing model of intermediary ministry. They claim to be mediators of God's gospel, but they nevertheless mediate, in Paul's mind, the gifts of Satan, consisting of neither righteousness nor Christ.

30. This will be further explained in section 3.2.

Sophists, itinerant philosophers, and teachers. The Corinthians were therefore more than willing to support them. After all, the status of these influential teachers naturally elevated their own,³¹ but Paul's low status symbols only brought shame and embarrassment to the community. Consequently, as those conformed to the dominant culture around them, the Corinthians' decision to support the rival apostles as opposed to Paul can be understood as a quest for social status, honour, and worth, being acutely attuned to social rather than gospel norms. In a word, their affiliation with Paul's competitors unveils their culturally-conditioned lifestyle. They asked themselves, With whom should we affiliate ourselves? And they chose the socially-esteemed super apostles.

Having noted *why* the Corinthians would attach themselves to these high-status leaders, the following section will now inquire as to *how* they attached themselves to them.

2.2. The Exploitative Gift-Giving Relationship of the Corinthians and the Super Apostles

Gifts, like marriage, bind people together — 'for better or for worse.' But in the case of the Corinthians' bond with the super apostles, it was, in Paul's view, definitely 'for worse.' He portrays their rocky relationship in 11:20, 'For you tolerate it if someone [τις]³² enslaves [καταδουλώ] you, or exploits [κατεσθίω] you, or takes advantage [λαμβάνω] of you, or puts

31. 'It is apparent,' writes Furnish, 'that the point at issue [in 11:5-15] is not only Paul's status as an apostle compared with the status of the so-called "super-apostles." The status of the congregation is also involved' (*II Corinthians*, 508; cf. also Windisch, *Korintherbrief*, 397).

32. The singular τις takes on a collective sense and refers to the super apostles (Thrall, *Second Epistle*, 2:716; Zmijewski, 'Narrenrede,' 208).

on airs [ἐπαίρω], or strikes you in the face [δέρω].³³ The highly figurative language in this parody against the intruders should not be pressed too literally, but it nevertheless communicates a general point, ‘that Paul believes his rivals have tyrannized and exploited the congregation.’³⁴ More specifically, though, this exploitation clearly involves finances, insofar as κατεσθίω and λαμβάνω carry a pecuniary sense.³⁵ But the telling question is: who is financially exploiting whom?

The logic of the patronal interpretation leads to the conclusion that the Corinthians, with their desire to become patrons over their leaders, exploited the super apostles through

33. The graphic metaphor, εἴ τις εἰς πρόσωπον ὑμᾶς δέρει, whether placed in a Jewish or Greco-Roman social domain, communicates the act of humiliating a person. In a Jewish framework, to slap someone’s cheek, especially on the right side, with the back of the hand dishonoured them (cf. Job 16:10; Lam. 3:30; Mt. 5:39; *Baba m. Qamma* 8:6). From a Greco-Roman viewpoint, the πρόσωπον (or the Latin, *facies*), which manifested one’s *persona* or social reputation, was the battleground for honour (cf. Carlin A. Barton, *Roman Honor*, 56–57). Being struck in the face, therefore, brought intense shame to the object of abuse; in modern words, it was to ‘lose face.’ One point of interest is that, after describing the super apostles’ heavy handedness, Paul ironically claims that he lost face by not striking their faces: κατὰ ἀτιμίαν λέγω, ὡς ὅτι ἡμεῖς ἠσθενήκαμεν (11:21a).

34. Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 512.

35. Many scholars interpret κατεσθίω as a reference to financial exploitation (cf. C.K. Barrett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* [BNTC; London: A&C Black, 1973], 288, 291; Bultmann, *Second Corinthians*, 213; Gerhard Friedrich, ‘Die Gegner des Paulus im 2. Korintherbrief,’ in *Abraham unser Vater: Juden und Christen im Gespräch über die Bibel* [ed. O. Betz, M. Hengel, and P. Schmidt; AGJU 5; Leiden: Brill, 1963], 181–215). The term λαμβάνω, however, is much more debatable, since it can have a variety of meanings (cf. BDAG, 583–85). Some consider it a repetition of κατεσθίω (E.B. Allo, *Saint Paul: seconde épître aux Corinthiens* [ÉBib; Paris: Galbalda, 1937], 290), others an amplification of κατεσθίω (‘lay violent hands upon’; C. Lattey, ‘Λαμβάνειν in 2 Cor. xi.20,’ *JTS* 44 [1943]: 148), and still others define λαμβάνω in view of 12:16 (‘if anyone gets you in his power’; Barrett, *2 Corinthians*, 288) or Lk. 5:5 (‘catch,’ Thrall, *Second Epistle*, 2:717). Nevertheless, Barrett’s translation, ‘if anyone gets you in his power,’ highlights the connection between the power or authority of the super apostles and finances, an issue that comes to the fore in 11:7–12 and 12:13–16a. For ancient parallels that attach an exploitative connotation to λαμβάνω, see Philo *Cher.* 122 and Lucian *Somm.* 9.

their self-interested and obliging gifts. But, from Paul's perspective, this is not the case.³⁶

Rather, the Corinthians are being exploited by these perpetrators (as the grammar and language of 11:20 confirm), who behave malevolently *over* the church, like a patron over a client.³⁷ If this is accurate, then the Corinthians, as in 1 Cor. 1-4, long to be *under* well-known leaders. To be sure, a client, in ancient society, would never give money to an opulent patron.³⁸ They usually reciprocated honour, loyalty, political allegiance, and public gratitude. But before we assume that the Corinthians must therefore be patrons solely because they gave money to the super apostles, perhaps it is better to perceive the church as pupils of influential teachers, paying for their services. In any case, whether a patron-client or teacher-pupil relationship is in view, we can safely conclude that they did not function as the patron or the superior party. They clearly occupied the inferior position, as they tolerated an abusive (in Paul's eyes), though status-enhancing, gift-exchange relationship.³⁹ More than this, even if patrons in

36. It could be argued that they attempted to patronise these apostles but their plans were subverted, ultimately becoming the objects of exploitation. This is possible, but not likely, since the unstated premise in this assertion is that Paul misunderstands the situation. After all, he claims that the Corinthians tolerate (ἀνέχεσθε) the exploitative abuse of these rivals.

37. We are not assuming that every patron-client relationship was exploitative, but if 11:20 is viewed through the lens of patronage, then these 'patrons' would certainly be exploiting those beneath them.

38. Although Dionysius of Halicarnassus portrays clients providing financial aid to patrons (*Ant. Rom.* 2.10-11), his ideals cannot be understood as normative in antiquity.

39. Ancient parallels for this sort of exploitative, teacher-pupil relationship may be garnered from Dio Chrysostom, who distinguishes himself from teachers merely seeking after money (*Or.* 35.1), Philo (*Vit. Mos.* II.212) and Plato (*Protagoras* 313c-d; *Men.* 92A; *Euthyd.* 277B) who rail against Sophists hawking their teaching around like sellers in the market square (cf. Dio, *Or.* 8.9; cf. Xenophon, *Mem.* 1.2.7), and Plutarch (*Mor.* 131a) who notes that greed drives sophistic practices (cf. also Kerferd, *The Sophistic Movement*, 25-26). Of course, not every teacher-pupil relationship was exploitative in antiquity.

antiquity provided money, this still does not require us to view the Corinthians as attempting to be patrons over Paul. Different spheres in society carry varying symbolic capital. In the marketplace (ἀγορά), for instance, the person with money is superior and exhibits more power than shopkeepers. In the gymnasium (γυμνάσιον), however, the teacher possessing advanced educational qualifications clearly occupies the superior position over their pupils. In this sphere, pupils give money to pay their teachers, but no one would affirm that, just because they offer money, they therefore occupy the superior position. Obviously, the higher-value symbolic capital varies from one social sphere to another. The relationship between the Corinthians and the super apostles clearly involved education (cf. 11:4), and this would render the former group inferior, paying pupils.

The community, therefore, knew their place in this relationship of gift and worth with the super apostles, and it certainly was not *over* them. Instead, they acknowledged their inferiority by willingly enduring an exploitative relationship and accrued status as a result. In this sense, they operated more like dependent clients than despotic patrons,⁴⁰ or more like a paying pupil than a knowledgeable teacher. And this was the sort of relationship that they desired with Paul. In the following section, it will be argued that this was partly why he refused Corinthian aid. He did not want dependent clients or paying pupils. He wanted partners in the

40. Once again, we are not asserting that every patron-client bond was exploitative. We are only applying the model to the exploitative relationship – from Paul’s perspective – of 11:20.

gospel who recognised God as the supreme giver. Of course, we will have to support this argument with a close exegesis of 2 Cor. 11:7-12 and 12:13-16a, wherein we will challenge the patronal interpretation which attributes Paul's refusal to the Corinthians' desire to become his patron.

3. The Gift-Giving Relationship (or lack thereof) between Paul and the Corinthians

Why did Paul refuse the Corinthians' gift? Although this question has been the topic of perennial debate,⁴¹ we will attempt to contribute to the discussion by advancing two specific reasons. The first is that Paul refused because the Corinthians suffered from a skewed practical consciousness, being preoccupied with worldly status, which inculcated a misunderstanding about the relational pattern of the divine economy. They therefore strove to become Paul's *inferior* dependents, like a client to a patron or a pupil to a teacher. The second reason for refusal, logically following the first, is that this pattern of thinking reveals a spiritual immaturity on the Corinthians' part (cf. 1 Cor. 3:1-4), provoking Paul to insist on his refusal until they exhibit an appropriate degree of maturity in the faith. What exactly that maturity consists of will be discussed below. For now, we solely attend to 2 Cor. 11:7-12 and 12:13-16a to provide a close reading of these texts and to offer an alternative to the long-standing patronal interpretation in Pauline scholarship.

41. See Chapter 1.

3.1. Paul's Refusal of Corinthian Gifts

3.1.1. 2 Corinthians 11:7-12

A quick word on the flow of the argument of this text. Although some scholars affirm a logical connection between 11:6b and 11:7, supposing the latter to be the grounds of the former,⁴² we prefer to view the argument of the larger section as follows:

Chief Accusation — Paul is inferior to the super apostles (11:5)

Paul's Concession to being Inferior in *Speech* (11:6)

Paul's Concession to being Inferior in *Gift* (11:7-12)

Paul's Response to Chief Accusation — So-called Super Apostles are False Apostles (11:13-15)

11:6b, then, ends the first concession and 11:7 picks up the second, which underlies much of the discussion in 2 Cor. 11-12, namely, that Paul's refusal betrays his inferiority to the false apostles, who evidently accepted financial support from Corinth (cf. 11:20). That said, we now offer an exegesis of 11:7-12.

With ἤ introducing a rhetorical question in 11:7,⁴³ Paul asks, ἀμαρτίαν ἐποίησα ἑμαυτὸν ταπεινῶν ἵνα ὑμεῖς ὑψωθῆτε, ὅτι δωρεὰν τὸ τοῦ θεοῦ εὐαγγέλιον εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν? Rather than interpreting ἀμαρτία⁴⁴ literally as a breach of the apostolic norm of charismatic poverty,⁴⁵

42. In this way, 11:7 supports the claim of the previous verse in that it demonstrates the genuine nature of the gospel (i.e., γνῶσις) through his humble refusal and their subsequent exaltation (Zmijewski, 'Narrenrede,' 124–25; Hafemann, *Suffering and Ministry*, 149–50).

43. BDAG, 432 (1d).

44. It only appears here and in 5:21.

or as an insult to the Corinthians' 'status as a patron congregation,'⁴⁶ this strong term probably reflects their animosity towards Paul's refusal of their gift. In Greco-Roman society, this was an extremely offensive act that degraded one's status.⁴⁷ But their status was not one of 'a patron congregation,' as Furnish affirms, but a client or dependent congregation. This is especially the case since their gift of money does not, in and of itself, make them superior patrons over Paul, and since their gift is a *return* for the *initial* gift of the gospel. If seen through the patron-client rubric, this would position them as clients in the relationship.⁴⁸ In this sense, just as a teacher's knowledge is worth more than a pupil's finances, so, too, Paul's spiritual goods are of higher value than their money, a symbolic capital differential that characterises the divine economy (cf. Rom. 15:27; 1 Cor. 9:11). Nevertheless, instead of accepting their offer and thereby operating as a status-enhancing leader/patron/teacher to whom the Corinthians may attach themselves as clients/pupils, Paul humbled himself (ἐμαυτὸν ταπεινῶν) by working a trade, a low social position with little accompanying worth.⁴⁹ And yet, his subjective purpose (ἵνα) of self-abasement was, albeit counter-culturally, to exalt (ὑψώω) the community.

45. *Contra* Theissen, *Social Setting*, 42–46. Judging from 11:11, the offence seems much more personal (Thrall, *Second Epistle*, 2:683).

46. *Contra* Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 508.

47. See Judge, 'Cultural Conformity,' 166–67; Marshall, *Enmity*, 245–46.

48. To operate as a "patron," one must be the *initial* giver, and must possess a higher status than the other party, two requirements that the Corinthians obviously did not meet.

49. Hock, *Social Context*, 64.

Unlike the magniloquent apostles, whose social standing brought *social* exaltation, Paul's social lowering brought *spiritual* exaltation,⁵⁰ an act which resounds with Christological overtones, as Barrett notes. 'Paul lives in physical poverty, that his hearers may become spiritually rich (cf. vi. 10; ix. 11; 1 Cor. i.5); there is no respect in which Paul could be more like the Lord himself (viii. 9).'⁵¹ This humiliation/exaltation pattern of ministry echoes his previous claim in 1 Cor. 9:12. He would rather endure all things than place an ἔγκοπή before the gospel of Christ, which, in order to materialise, must be preached free of charge (δωρεάν, 2 Cor. 11:7; cf. ἀδάπανος, 1 Cor. 9:18). Contrary to the practices of itinerant philosophers and Sophists, who *charge* for their teaching, Paul, the teacher, *paid* a sacrificial price to preach the gospel freely at Corinth. Implicitly, then, he asks, 'How can this be ἀμαρτία?'⁵² The anticipated reply is, 'It cannot be!'

What emerges from this passage (and consistently reemerges throughout the rest of 11:7-12 and 12:13-16a) is a battle of rhetoric between Paul and the super apostles, fought on the grounds of redefinition. On the one side of the battlefield are the Corinthians, who assume that the super apostles exalt them, whereas Paul, on the other side, redefines their exaltation as a degradation of worth. Conversely, Paul views his refusal as their exaltation, but the

50. Harris, *Corinthians*, 755; Windisch, *Korintherbrief*, 334; Plummer, *Second Epistle*, 303; *pace* Bultmann who interprets ὑψόω as a material exaltation; that is, since Paul refuses their offer, they possess more money (*Corinthians*, 207).

51. *2 Corinthians*, 282.

52. The ὅτι-clause of 11:7 provides the content of the alleged offence (Hans Lietzmann and W.G. Kümmel, *An die Korinther I/II* [HNT 9; Mohr Siebeck: Tübingen, 1969], 146).

community, being influenced by the super apostles, interpret this supposed exaltation as a denigration of worth and even an act of sin (ἁμαρτία). Since Paul most likely anticipated this sort of reaction on account of his refusal, being attuned to the cultural norms of gift-giving in society,⁵³ the question becomes: why did he deem it necessary to preach the gospel δωρεάν?

A clue is provided in the emphatic juxtaposition of the words δωρεάν τὸ τοῦ θεοῦ εὐαγγέλιον, which Plummer’s translation sharply captures, “*God’s Gospel, that most precious thing,—for nothing!*”⁵⁴ As we argued in the previous chapter,⁵⁵ Paul longs for the Corinthians to acknowledge the divine third party — ὁ θεός — in the mediation of χάρις in the gospel. Their gift-giving relationship is therefore triangulated, not merely a bilateral exchange, as the Corinthians would have it. And, as will be argued in the course of this chapter, until they recognise God as the giver of χάρις, and thus the one who deserves the return, Paul will continue to refuse support from the community. What this tells us about their spiritual state, particularly in light of the apostle’s insistence to abstain from accepting aid in the future and distorting the gospel (cf. 11:9, 12; 12:14), will be explored later. For the moment, we simply

53. This may be supported by the common terminology that he employs in Phil. 4: ἐκοινωνήσεν εἰς λόγον δόσεως καὶ λήψεως (4:15); λόγον (4:17); ἀπέχω (4:18).

54. *Second Epistle*, 303; author’s italics.

55. See sections 3.2.1 and 4.3.1.

note the important stress that he places on the divine origin of his gift to the Corinthians. It is, he writes, ‘God’s gospel’ (τὸ τοῦ θεοῦ εὐαγγέλιον)!⁵⁶

Having underscored the divine origin of the gift, we can now comprehend the meaning of δωρεάν. When interpreting this term, scholars generally reason that since God’s ‘pure’ gift of χάρις to humanity is unilateral, given without any thought of or need for a return,⁵⁷ then Paul, as a mediator of God’s gift, must replicate this divine pattern of giving.⁵⁸ He therefore proclaims the gospel ‘free of charge,’ with ‘no strings attached’ and without a trace of self-interest. Thus, the gift from God through Paul to Corinthians is one-way, largely because God is self-sufficient and does not need a return from humanity. In 11:7, then, Paul is basically saying that he himself gives without requiring a return. But is this true? Does Paul give without seeking anything in return, and does this reveal the unilateral flow of divine gifts?

56. For the emphasis on divine ownership of the gospel, see 1 Thess. 2:2, 4, 8, 9, 13.

57. But this idea is not a modern novelty. Many ancient philosophers explain the unilateral nature of divine giving by insisting that humanity does not possess anything that God needs. So, for instance, Philo states that ‘God distributes his good things, not like a seller vending his wares at a high price, but he is inclined to make presents of everything, pouring forth the inexhaustible fountains of his graces, and never desiring any return [ἀμοιβῆς οὐκ ἐφιέμενος]; for he has no need of anything [οὔτε γὰρ ἐπιδεῆς αὐτὸς], nor is there any created being competent to give him a suitable gift in return’ (*Cher.* 123). In the same vein, Seneca insists that ‘God bestows upon us very many and very great benefits, with no thought of any return [*sine spe recipiendi*], since he has no need of having anything bestowed, nor are we capable of bestowing anything on him’ (*Ben.* 4.9.1; cf. 3.15.4; 4.3.2-3; 4.25.3). And yet, even though these philosophers are adamant about God not requiring a *material* return, they nevertheless equally affirm that God seeks a return of *spiritual* or *immaterial* value. For Philo, it is bringing forth virtue (ἀρετή) and offering faith (πίστις) through intellectual contemplation of God (θεῶ) (*Cher.* 84-85), while, for Seneca, it is gratitude (5.17.7; cf. 2.29.1-3) and indebtedness to God(s) (4.6.1-6), which assumes the shape of a devoted life (4.4.1-3). Consequently, far from Philo and Seneca affirming ‘the modern myth of the pure gift,’ they equally maintain that God requires an immaterial rather than material return.

58. See, for example, Gardner, *Gifts of God*, 84.

Evidence from the text suggests that the answer must be a resounding ‘no.’ In 12:14, a text that we will closely examine later, Paul explicitly asserts that he *seeks* a return: οὐ γὰρ ζητῶ τὰ ὑμῶν ἀλλὰ ὑμᾶς. He also implicitly longs for the return of their love: εἰ περισσοτέρως ὑμᾶς ἀγαπῶ, ἧσσον ἀγαπῶμαι (12:15)? He does not seek a material return but an immaterial (or spiritual) return. It is, as we will show, a return of commitment to the gospel, loyalty to Paul, and obedience to God in Christ. In a word, it is the spiritual return of their lives (i.e., τῶν ψυχῶν ὑμῶν, 12:15). Paul therefore mediated the gospel with this expectation of a return in view, which, if interpreted through the framework of gift-exchange, amounts to a *self-interested* gift. Of course, self-interest, for Paul, is always *self- and other-interest*.⁵⁹ Nevertheless, to assume that he anticipates no return whatsoever is to be utterly mistaken. He seeks a *spiritual*, not *material*, return, at least when initially entering into a city, and this is what Paul means by preaching the gospel δωρεάν. From this, we may also reason that God does not require a *material* return, but he certainly expects *spiritual* commitment, loyalty, thanksgiving, praise, honour, and glory (e.g., 2 Cor. 1:11; 4:15; 9:12-13, 15).⁶⁰ But since this claim requires more support than can be allotted in this thesis, we simply conclude that Paul, in 11:7, emphasises

59. See Chapter 3, section 4.3.2.2.2.

60. Investigating divine-human patterns of giving merits an entire monograph, so we will not prepare a defence for this position. We are mainly concerned here with God’s role in Paul’s financial policy among his churches, though we recognise that human interactions carry massive implications for divine-human relationships of gift, an interesting exploration that we hope to undertake in the future.

the divine origin of the gospel, and that δωρεάν does not necessarily imply a gift without a return of any sort.

That said, we move to 11:8, where Paul turns to dispel Corinthian suspicions regarding his missionary activity of God's gospel and money: ἄλλας ἐκκλησίας ἐσύλησα λαβὼν ὀψώνιον πρὸς τὴν ὑμῶν διακονίαν. According to Furnish, the manner of expression here portrays Paul, the one who rejected the gift of would-be patrons, as responding to the accusation that he became the client of other churches.⁶¹ So, somewhat pejoratively, he writes that he did not receive benefaction but plundered (συλάω) others, receiving a wage (λαβὼν ὀψώνιον)⁶² from them.⁶³ This is nevertheless an *argumentum ex silentio*. The context favours a reading that interprets this verse as an accusation levelled against his inconsistent, perhaps even deceitful (cf. 12:16), behaviour.⁶⁴ He refused Corinthian support but accepted gifts from other churches

61. *II Corinthians*, 484, 492, 508, followed by Thrall, *Second Epistle*, 2:684.

62. Dungan argues that the Philippians' support occurred frequently enough to be considered a 'salary' (*Sayings*, 29), whereas Hock, relying on Caragounis ('ΟΨΩΝΙΟΝ'), asserts that neither the word ὀψώνιον nor δόμα (Phil. 4:17) imply, what we would term, a 'salary.' Instead, it should be considered occasional aid in addition to his work (*Social Context*, 50, 92 n1 and 2, emphasising the προσαναπληρώω of 11:9). However, having shown Caragounis' argument, and thus Hock's, to be lacking (see Chapter 4, section 4.3.1 n182), and sensing an anachronistic imposition of modern categories by Dungan, it seems best to affirm an ongoing exchange — as indicated by the phrase κοινωνία εἰς λόγον δόσεως καὶ λήμψεως in Phil. 4:15 — that is not enforced by necessity but upheld by volition.

63. συλάω is clearly hyperbolic, but ὀψώνιον is less likely to be so, given that Paul uncritically mentions other apostles in 1 Cor. 9, who, like a soldier, receive an ὀψώνιον in return for their labours (9:7), and that he himself shares this right (9:12, 15, 18). The ironical emphasis seems to fall mainly on συλάω.

64. Plummer is incorrect to think that accusing Paul of duplicity would have 'marred their [i.e., the opponents'] argument,' largely because his 'crime was that he declined to be treated as other Apostles were treated, and to have mentioned the subsidies sent by the Philippians would have lessened the crime (Phil. iv. 15)' (*Second Epistle*, 303). But neither the Corinthians nor the opponents had to be reminded that he was an apostle.

and the brothers from Macedonia (οἱ ἀδελφοὶ ἐλθόντες ἀπὸ Μακεδονίας, 11:9b), which raises a critical question regarding his financial policy at Philippi and Corinth that requires further discussion.

If Paul accepted support from other *churches* (ἄλλας ἐκκλησίας), how could he tell the Philippians that, after he departed from Macedonia, they were the *only church* with whom he entered into a partnership of giving and receiving (cf. εἰ μὴ ὑμεῖς μόνοι, Phil. 4:15)? Many scholars accuse Paul of being inconsistent here,⁶⁵ but investigating two issues will show that the discussion is much more complex than many assume. The first is the identity of these ἄλλας ἐκκλησίας. Three primary options exist. Plummer thinks that the phrase might be a generalisation or a rhetorical ploy.⁶⁶ Alternatively, Furnish and Peterman suggest that there were house congregations in Philippi,⁶⁷ even though no supporting evidence has emerged.⁶⁸ Lastly, Thrall posits that these ‘other churches’ are Thessalonica and Beroea (cf. Acts 16:11-17:15), who, in addition to Philippi, assisted Paul with travels funds that also provided for the first few days of residence at Corinth. This, she argues, mitigates the tension by explaining it as

After all, he founded the church in Corinth. Recalling a well-known, seemingly inconsistent practice, therefore, would have greatly benefitted their argument against Paul’s apostleship.

65. E.g., Marshall, *Enmity*, 255–77; John H. Schütz, *Paul and the Anatomy of Apostolic Authority* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 235 n1; Jouette Bassler, *God & Mammon: Asking for Money in the New Testament* (Nashville, KY: Abingdon Press, 1991), 64, 75.

66. *The Second Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians* (CGT; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1903), 167.

67. *II Corinthians*, 492; *Gift Exchange*, 146 n134, respectively.

68. Thrall, *Second Epistle*, 2:685.

follows. When writing to Corinth, Paul has in mind leftover travel funds, which served the same function as receiving a wage. When writing to Philippi, however, he has a formal, gift-giving relationship in view, not one that only covers travel expenses.⁶⁹ This intriguing theory may quite possibly explain the inconsistency of Paul's statements to both communities, but it draws too strong a distinction between, what we call, προπέμω-support (i.e., monetary aid for journeys; cf. 1 Cor. 16:6; 2 Cor. 1:16) and a distinct, gift-giving relationship.

While none of these theories are entirely satisfying, it would be unfair to accuse Paul of acting inconsistently merely on the basis of the plural phrases ἄλλας ἐκκλησίας and λοιπὰς ἐκκλησίας in 12:13, especially when there could well have been multiple house churches in Philippi. Though this argument is unverifiable, it seems to us most probable.

The second issue is the nature of προπέμω-support. If Paul preaches the gospel freely at Corinth, both during his initial and future visits (11:9, 12; 12:13-14), then how do we account for passages which suggest that he accepted provisions or money from the Corinthians for missionary journeys?

πρὸς ὑμᾶς δὲ τυχὸν παραμενῶ ἢ καὶ παραχειμάσω, ἵνα ὑμεῖς με προπέμψητε οὗ ἕαν πορεύωμαι (1 Cor. 16:6; cf. also 16:11).

καὶ δι' ὑμῶν διελθεῖν εἰς Μακεδονίαν καὶ πάλιν ἀπὸ Μακεδονίας ἐλθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς καὶ ὑφ' ὑμῶν προπεμφθῆναι εἰς τὴν Ἰουδαίαν (2 Cor. 1:16).

69. *Second Epistle*, 2:685–86; cf. also Harris, *Corinthians*, 757–58; Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 346–47.

The verb προπέμπω is generally acknowledged to be a technical missionary term⁷⁰ and carries two possible meanings, either (i) ‘to conduct someone who has a destination in mind, accompany, escort,’ or (ii) ‘to assist someone in making a journey, send on one’s way with food, money, by arranging for companions, means of travel, etc.’⁷¹ Yet the difficulty lies in which definition applies to 1 Cor. 16:6 and 2 Cor. 1:16 specifically.

Those who adopt definition (i) argue that no funds or provisions were involved. Paul simply wants the Corinthians to accompany him when he departs,⁷² perhaps to bestow nothing ‘more than good wishes and prayers.’⁷³ In light of the fact that the definition ‘to escort’ fits the contexts of 1 Cor. 16:6 and 2 Cor. 1:16, this is a plausible option. However, the majority of scholars opt for definition (ii), insisting that he expected the community to pay for travel expenses necessary to mount an expedition.⁷⁴ Despite the unconvincing attempts to furnish

70. See Dieter Zeller, *Juden und Heiden in der Mission des Paulus. Studien zum Römerbrief* (Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1973), 70f; Abraham Malherbe, ‘The Inhospitability of Diotrephes,’ in *God’s Christ and His People: Studies in Honour of Nils Alstrup Dahl* (ed. Jacob and Meeks Jervell Wayne A; Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1977), 222–32 at 223; cf. also C.E.B. Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans* (2 Vols., ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1975–79), 2:769; Peter Müller, ‘Grundlinien paulinischer Theologie (Röm 15, 14–33),’ *KD* 35 (1989): 212–35 at 222.

71. BDAG, 873–74. In addition to 1 Cor. 16:6, 11 and 2 Cor. 1:16, προπέμπω also occurs in Acts 15:3; 20:38; 21:5; Rom. 15:24; Tit 3:13; and 3 Jn. 6. For the variant meanings of προπέμπω outside of Paul, see John P. Dickson, *Mission-Commitment in Ancient Judaism and in the Pauline Communities* (WUNT 2/159; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 194–96.

72. Wolf-Henning Ollrog, *Paulus und seine Mitarbeiter. Untersuchungen zu Theorie und Praxis der paulinischen Mission* (WMANT 58; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1979), 124.

73. Robertson and Plummer, *I Corinthians*, 388; cf. also Barnett, *The Second Epistle*, 101 n10; W. Sanday and A.C. Headlam, *The Epistle to the Romans* (2nd Edition, ICC; New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1896), 411.

74. See Holmberg, *Paul and Power*, 86; Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 133–34; Dickson, *Mission-Commitment*, 197–201.

textual arguments for this position,⁷⁵ the Christian development of προπέμπω, as explicitly entailing the provision of material possessions,⁷⁶ adds weight to this construal. But the tension still remains. Paul simultaneously refuses and accepts finances from Corinth, so how can that be consistent?

There are a couple of ways to respond to this query. One is to assert that προπέμπω-support only consists of company, not material resources — option (i) above. While this is possible, it is almost certainly not correct. The other is to affirm a categorical distinction between financial support and an undefined, one-off, variable expense for travel necessities.⁷⁷ Yet the evidence does not necessarily lend itself to this sort of dichotomy. The grammatical tone of 1 Cor. 16:6 and 2 Cor. 1:16 implies an expectation that Corinth will pay for his travel expenditures, which would be strange if it were a one-off gift. The most convincing response, then, is to assume a qualitative difference between monetary aid and προπέμπω-support.⁷⁸ For

75. Peterman, for instance, avers that, if Paul meant to be escorted, then why would he, in 1 Cor. 16:6, be unclear about his final destination by employing the indefinite final clause οὗ ἔάν πορεύωμαι (*Gift Exchange*, 165)? But this can easily be explained by the fact that escorts would not have accompanied Paul throughout the *entire* journey, so there would be no need to inform them. Or, this clause may just be an admission to the variable nature of travelling.

76. Cf. 1 Macc. 12:4; 1 Esdr. 4:47; Acts 15:3; Tit. 3:13; 3 Jn. 6.

77. Nevertheless, Seneca explains the complexity of estimating the value of one gift, such as προπέμπω-support, over another. ‘Who will decree that benefits of one sort counterbalance benefits of another? “I gave you a house,” you say. Yes, but I warned you that yours was tumbling down upon your head! “I gave you a fortune,” you say. Yes, but I gave you a plank when you were shipwrecked! . . . Since benefits may be given in one form and repayed in another, it is difficult to establish their equality’ (*Ben.* 3.9.3).

78. Peterman also promotes this view but on different grounds. He emphasises a qualitative difference on the basis of Paul’s claim never to have burdened the community (2 Cor. 11:9; 12:1), and then logically (and rightly)

it would have been bizarre, especially from the Corinthians' perspective, if Paul had not drawn a sharp distinction between the two in practice, particularly since accepting a *service* would have looked identical to accepting a *gift*, at least on a superficial level. Furthermore, it is telling that the mention of paying for a one-off expense never enters the discussion of 11:7-12 and 12:13-16a. Surely, if any accusation of inconsistency regarding money were to be raised by the community or the super apostles, it would have been this one. The fact that Paul does not attempt to absolve himself from this accusation actually speaks in favour of a qualitative difference between the two, a monetary demarcation which must have been clear to Paul and the Corinthians but is now lost to us.

Although this conclusion is built primarily on the silence of the text, the arguments above lead us to adopt this approach to the quandary of Pauline inconsistency. Admittedly, we cannot be absolutely certain on this matter, but even if this argument does not completely liberate Paul from the indictment of inconsistency, then at least the complexity of this dilemma may be appreciated and may prohibit hasty conclusions.

Moving ahead to 11:9, Paul mentions the result⁷⁹ of being funded by other churches while ministering at Corinth:

deduces that the veracity of this assertion can only be maintained if travel expenses did not cause him to become a burden (*Gift Exchange*, 165).

79. The initial *καί* of 11:9a can be translated *either* 'in addition to,' 'moreover' or 'so that,' 'that is.' If one adopts the former, a *separate* gift is being referred to when he recalls how the Macedonians supplied (προσαναπληρώω)

καὶ παρῶν πρὸς ὑμᾶς καὶ ὑστερηθεῖς⁸⁰ οὐ κατενάρκησα οὐθενός· τὸ γὰρ ὑστέρημά μου προσανεπλήρωσαν οἱ ἀδελφοὶ ἐλθόντες ἀπὸ Μακεδονίας, καὶ ἐν παντὶ ἀβαρῆ ἑμαυτὸν ὑμῖν ἐτήρησα καὶ τηρήσω.

The apostle's manner of living among them is completely in step with his *specific* policy never to accept support during the initial preaching of the gospel (cf. 1 Cor. 9; 1 Thess. 2), since the Macedonians supplied (προσαναπληρώω) for Paul's material lack (ὑστέρημα),⁸¹ preventing him from becoming a burden (ἀβαρής)⁸² to anyone at Corinth. But what does it mean to become a burden?

To the majority, becoming a burden is equivalent to becoming a client or social dependent. Hock, for instance, maintains that if Paul had accepted the patronage of a householder as a resident teacher or intellectual, which included 'room and board and other gifts amounting to a salary,' he would have imposed a burden on the Corinthians.⁸³ Furnish similarly insists that Paul, by employing ἀβαρής, asserts 'his desire to be independent of

for his material need (ὑστέρημα) during his initial stay at Corinth (11:9b; cf. Thrall, *Second Epistle*, 2:685); if the latter, the *same* gift is in view in both 11:8 and 9a-b (cf. Pratscher, 'Verzicht,' 289). But since 11:7 and 11:9 refer to Paul's initial ministry in Corinth, it seems unlikely that 11:8 would refer to a time *before* arriving there (*pace* Harris, *Corinthians*, 759). It should therefore be considered the *same* gift.

80. Zmijewski is probably right to interpret this participle as an ingressive aorist ('Narrenrede,' 133).

81. The verb προσαναπληρώω, Hock suggests, 'means that the Macedonian aid was only something that filled Paul's needs in addition to his work. . . . Paul continued to work, even when he received occasional support' (*Social Context*, 93 n2; cf. Plummer, *Second Epistle*, 305). But this should not completely rule out the rendering, 'fully supply,' nor should we think that Paul never received enough pay to stop working for a time.

82. καταναρκάω, as a parallel of ἀβαρής, occurs twice in 12:13-14 and carries the meaning 'of numbing by applying pressure' (Gen. 32:25-33 [LXX]) and thus 'to impose a burden' (Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 347).

83. *Social Context*, 30.

anyone's patronage.'⁸⁴ Peterman further fleshes this out, stating that ἀβαρής reflects 'a resolution on [Paul's] part not to contract social obligations with the Corinthians through money,'⁸⁵ and that he 'is making a veiled reference to his desire to avoid social dependence.'⁸⁶ However prevalent this interpretation of ἀβαρής may be, the reasoning behind it is questionable in view of the following counterpoints. First, if we are correct in arguing that Paul's *specific* policy of initially refusing support stems, at least in part, from the practices of itinerant philosophers and Sophists,⁸⁷ primarily because he is providing communities with the *initial* gift of God's gospel, then the apostle here probably attaches an active rather than passive sense to βαρέω and its cognates. That is, he refrains from imposing a financial burden by not *charging* fees for his teaching rather than by not *depending* on their finances.⁸⁸ In support of this claim is the statement made about preaching the gospel free of charge (δωρεάν, 11:7). He gives them God's gift without requiring a material return.⁸⁹ This sounds more like a person

84. *II Corinthians*, 508.

85. *Gift Exchange*, 168.

86. *Gift Exchange*, 169.

87. Verbal and conceptual parallels between 2 Cor. 11-12 and 1 Cor. 9 & 1 Thess. 2 validate this connection: (i) ἀδάπανος (1 Cor. 9:18) and δωρεάν (11:7); (ii) ἐπιβαρέω (1 Thess. 2:9) and ἀβαρής/καταναρκάω (2 Cor. 11:9; 12:13-14); and (iii) alternative models of teaching ministry, with exploitative and greedy intentions (1 Thess. 2:1-6 and 2 Cor. 11:20).

88. The context demonstrates that ἀβαρής, as with καταβαρέω (12:16) and ἐπιβαρέω (1 Thess. 2:9), refers to imposing a financial charge (cf. John Strelan, 'Burden-Bearing and the Law of Christ: A Re-Examination of Galatians 6:2,' *JBL* 94 [1975]: 266-76 at 268-70), though it does not always carry this meaning (cf. 2 Cor. 1:8; 2:5; 4:17; 5:4). We nevertheless reject Dungan's assumption that Paul refuses to receive support because the Corinthians belonged to the urban poor (*Sayings*, 30-31; cf. also Chapter 1, section 1.2).

89. For primary sources on the sophistic practice of charging fees, see Winter, *Sophists*, 95-97, 164; idem, 'Orators,' 60-61.

rejecting the clientage (or something analogous to it) rather than the patronage of others.

Second, since their money is a *return* for the *initial* gift of the gospel — a material-for-spiritual exchange⁹⁰ — Paul would not be a ‘social dependent,’ as Peterman affirms. He would indeed be in *debt* to them, like anyone else in antiquity who accepted a gift, but he would not necessarily be a *social dependent*.⁹¹ We need to recall that he supplied them with the first gift, and that giving a return would not have made the Corinthians a patron, nor would it have made Paul a social dependent. To be sure, accepting their gift would have placed him in debt, just as accepting his gift would have placed them in debt. But Paul condones mutual dependency, a fluctuating disequilibrium of gift and debt, which we have already seen in his gift-giving relationship with the Philippians. It is therefore wrong to assume, as Peterman does, that Paul eradicates social dependency and mutual obligation from the economy of χάρις. He does nothing of the sort. Instead, he longs to be bound with his churches in the mutual ties of giving and receiving (cf. Phil. 4:15). Finally, if ἀβαρής means refusing to become the Corinthians’ social dependent, how would that be a burden to the Corinthians, since they are the ones offering? All of these reasons lead us to conclude that if Paul avoids anything at Corinth, it is

90. Paul blurs the lines between material and spiritual possessions and assumes that a spiritual gift deserves a material counter-gift. 1 Cor. 9:11 supports this point: ‘If we have sown spiritual things [τὰ πνευματικά ἐσπείραμεν] among you, is it too much if we reap material things [τὰ σαρκικά θερίσομεν] from you?’ Three verses later, he even appeals to a saying of Jesus for further support: ὁ κύριος διέταξεν τοῖς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον καταγγέλλουσιν ἐκ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου ζῆν (9:14).

91. Peterman does not make this distinction because, for him, Paul eradicates obligation from characterising gift-exchange relationships ‘in Christ,’ a conclusion that we strongly disagreed with in Chapter 3, section 4.3.2.

burdening them by charging fees for the gospel and thereby permitting them to become *his* social dependents. Instead, he longs for them to be dependent entirely on God, the giver of the gift of χάρις, not on him as the broker of divine commodity.

The shock of 11:9 nevertheless comes from what follows. Not only does Paul keep himself (ἐτήρησα) from accepting support during an initial visit, but here he lengthens the terms of his *temporary* fiscal policy into a *continual* practice in the future, ‘and I will keep myself [from accepting aid]’ (τηρήσω). To get the point across, he emphatically restates this policy in 11:12 (ὁ δὲ ποιῶ, καὶ ποιήσω) and 12:13-14 (οὐ κατενάρκησα . . . οὐ καταναρκήσω), going so far as to say that this decision has become a cause of boasting (καύχησις) throughout the regions of Achaia (11:10). From the Corinthians’ viewpoint, this may appear to be a deliberate affront to their relationship, even a lack of love. But sensing this likely response, Paul asks, ‘For what reason [will I continue to refuse support]? Because I do not love you? (διὰ τί; ὅτι οὐκ ἀγαπῶ ὑμᾶς;). To which he replies by appealing to divine omniscience, ‘God knows that I do’ (ὁ θεὸς οἶδεν, 11:12). Although the apostle’s policy to refuse now *and* in the future, and its interconnection with his καύχησις, will be dealt with more comprehensively in a later section,⁹² the implicit accusation that he does not love the Corinthians — whether from some Corinthians, the super apostles, or both — requires that we examine the parallel text of 12:13-16a, where the major theme is that of love.

92. See section 3.2 below.

3.1.2. 2 Corinthians 12:13-16a

This section concludes the fool's speech of 11:18-12:10 and provides a further reason⁹³ for why Paul should have been commended by the Corinthians rather than being deemed inferior to the super apostles (12:11):⁹⁴ he refused their monetary aid out of an earnest love for them. And yet, the super apostles probably construed his refusal as evidence of his apostolic illegitimacy,⁹⁵ to which the Corinthians, being corrupted in their practical consciousness by the dominant culture, agreed with their erroneous assessment based on worldly criteria. As already noted, refusing a gift was a sign of social enmity in ancient society,⁹⁶ largely because it was a direct attack on a person's honour, status, and worth.⁹⁷ Yet a different set of criteria governs the apostle's lifestyle and decisions, and it is his prerogative to reform the community's interpretation of his decision to refuse Corinthian gifts.

He begins this endeavour with a question, τί γάρ ἐστιν ὃ ἠσώθητε ὑπὲρ τὰς λοιπὰς ἐκκλησίας, εἰ μὴ ὅτι αὐτὸς ἐγὼ οὐ κατενάρκησα ὑμῶν (12:13a)? Like the rhetorical tactic of

93. On the first reason, that of the σημείους τε καὶ τέρασιν καὶ δυνάμεσιν (12:12), see C.K. Barrett, *The Signs of an Apostle: The Cato Lecture, 1969* (London: Epworth, 1970).

94. Though some perceive a continuation of his discussion in 12:12, given that 12:13 begins with a γάρ (cf. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 438; Harris, *Corinthians*, 878), it seems to make little difference. Either way, Paul defends his apostolic legitimacy.

95. Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 564.

96. Marshall, *Enmity*, 245–46.

97. 'What this is all about,' writes Witherington concerning the power struggles between Paul, the Corinthians, and the rival apostles, 'is a struggle for status, power, and control' (*Conflict & Community*, 457). Only instead of viewing the Corinthians as striving to become the superior party, as Witherington does, it makes more sense to view them as inferior dependents straining for honour and status by attaching themselves to influential leaders.

11:7, this question operates as a *reductio ad absurdum* argument.⁹⁸ How can they feel socially inferior (ἑσσοόμαι) to other churches,⁹⁹ perhaps even doubt their own status as a genuine apostolic church,¹⁰⁰ solely because Paul did not squeeze money out of them like the rivals apostles? ‘Forgive me this wrong!’ (χαρίσασθέ μοι τὴν ἀδικίαν ταύτην), he ironically exclaims.¹⁰¹ The ‘biting sarcasm’¹⁰² of this statement is meant to unveil the ludicrous nature of their accusation. Contrary to what the Corinthians think, this policy represents a selfless, other-oriented decision to endure hardship for the sake of their spiritual exaltation (cf. ὑψόω, 11:7). This ought to have validated rather than cast doubt on his apostolic legitimacy. Out of sheer love, he does what is best *for them*, even though they did not acknowledge it as such.

98. Windisch, *Korintherbrief*, 398.

99. These other churches are not, as Thrall suggests, under the jurisdiction of the Jerusalem apostles and rival missionaries in Corinth (*Second Epistle*, 2:841–42). Contrary to what she assumes, the phrase αὐτὸς ἐγὼ does not require this already dubious reconstruction. The emphasis simply serves to distinguish himself from the super apostles.

100. Windisch, *Korintherbrief*, 397. Less likely is Martin’s proposal that the Corinthians felt inferior ‘because they believed Paul had cheated them out of their full charismatic inheritance’ (*2 Corinthians*, 438, following Georgi, *Die Gegner*, 237).

101. As with the use of ἀμαρτία in 11:7, his refusal was considered offensive (ἀδικία). But we should not think, like Lars Aejmelaeus does, that the rhetorical context in which these terms are couched imply the opposite of what is said. Aejmelaeus argues that if the irony of 2 Cor. 10–13 is taken into consideration, one can clearly see that Paul was not accused of refusing support from Corinth (‘The Question of Salary in the Conflict Between Paul and the “Super Apostles” in Corinth,’ in *Fair Play: Diversity and Conflicts in Early Christianity. Essays in Honour of Heikki Räsänen* [ed. Ismo Dunderberg, Christopher Tuckett, and Kari Syreeni; Leiden: Brill, 2002], 343–76). Yet this argument rests wholly on a pessimistic view of Paul’s rhetoric, as if no truth can be communicated through hyperbolic statements. More importantly, however, the onus rests on Aejmelaeus to explain why Paul would create an offence that did not exist, a ludicrous act that would only have further enhanced the Corinthians’ loyalty to the super apostles.

102. Barrett, *2 Corinthians*, 323.

The earnest love that drives this inflexible policy at Corinth appears lucidly in 12:14.¹⁰³

After explaining that he will continue to refuse their money during his forthcoming visit (οὐ καταναρκήσω, 12:14a), he provides the reason: οὐ γὰρ ζητῶ τὰ ὑμῶν ἀλλὰ ὑμᾶς. οὐ γὰρ ὀφείλει τὰ τέκνα τοῖς γονεῦσιν θησαυρίζειν ἀλλὰ οἱ γονεῖς τοῖς τέκνοις. Unlike the super apostles, and rapacious Sophists for that matter, Paul desires the Corinthians themselves, not their money.¹⁰⁴

To prove this, he employs a gnomic statement about family life (12:14c).¹⁰⁵ He is the parent

(γονεύς), presumably alluding to his role as their father,¹⁰⁶ while they are his children

(τέκνον).¹⁰⁷ He is therefore obligated (ὀφείλω) to store up (θησαυρίζω) for them.¹⁰⁸ But what

precisely does Paul wish to convey through the parent-child metaphor?

103. As Martin notes, ‘Sometimes the severity that is found in chaps. 10-13 keeps us from seeing the tender heart Paul has for the Corinthians, so noteworthy in 6:11-13; 7:2-4’ (2 *Corinthians*, 441).

104. Windisch cites a striking parallel in Cicero’s *Fin.* 2.26.85, ‘Me igitur ipsum ames oportet non mea, si veri amici futuri sumus’ (*Korintherbrief*, 399), which parallels Paul’s relationship with his churches. What is true of his gift-giving relationship with the Philippians is true here. He can do without the Corinthians’ material gifts, but he cannot do without them.

105. If the *lex naturae* of this verse is taken literally, then Paul would have to refuse money from all of his churches. Since this is obviously not the case (cf. 11:8-9), it seems better to interpret it as a general truth, a proverb which is applicable in certain cases (as here) but not as a universal truth, binding at all times (Bultmann, *Second Corinthians*, 233).

106. Especially since his apostolic legitimacy is under suspicion (cf. 1 Cor. 4:14-15; 2 Cor. 11:2; 6:13).

107. Although we will argue later that the Corinthians were indeed spiritually immature in their faith, and this, in some respects, governed Paul’s decision to refuse support, the term τέκνον here ought not to be understood as synonymous with νήπιοι ἐν Χριστῷ in 1 Cor. 3:1-2 (pace James Scott, 2 *Corinthians* [NIBC; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1998], 243-44).

108. Cf. Philo, *Vit. Mos.* 2.245. It could be that Paul has, in some sense, provided them money by not taking any from them. But, as will become apparent in 12:15, he lifts the discussion to a more spiritual level (Martin, 2 *Corinthians*, 441). Also, it should be noted that the negation (οὐ . . . ὀφείλει) is not universally binding. By considering 12:14c a proverbial saying, it may be concluded that Paul does not ‘mean that children are under no obligation to support their parents’ (Plummer, *Second Epistle*, 362). This sort of relational dynamic appears in the mutual dependence of Paul and the Philippians (cf. Chapter 3, section 4).

Advocates of the patronal interpretation claim that Paul uses parental imagery to assert his superiority as their father (i.e., patron) over and against their intentions to become his patron. Marshall, for instance, appeals to Aristotle¹⁰⁹ and Seneca¹¹⁰ in order to demonstrate that parents were always depicted as ‘generous benefactors and the children as loving recipients.’¹¹¹ Peterman also maintains that ‘Paul took very seriously his role as a spiritual parent to his converts. As such he was their benefactor and could require a return on his affection for them.’¹¹² ‘Paul,’ according to Craig Keener, ‘argues that he is no mere household sage, but instead the congregation’s spiritual patron and father.’¹¹³ And Barnett avers that ‘Paul was their father-provider (v. 14; cf. 11:2; 6:13), who will spend himself for them (v. 15), not their “client,” to “be patronized” in the conventions of that culture; it was important to follow the appropriate pattern.’¹¹⁴ With these scholars, we agree that the father-child relationship certainly entailed inequality, the child being perpetually in the father’s debt for the gift of life.¹¹⁵ Even so, we strongly disagree with the underlying assumption of their argument, that Paul’s fatherly role was analogous to the role of a patron. This interpretive move defies logic. As a syllogism, the patronal argument runs as follows:

109. *Nic. Eth.* 8.14.4.

110. *Ben.* 2.11.5; 3.1.5; 3.11.2; 3.29.1-38.3; 5.5.2; 6.24.1-2.

111. *Enmity*, 248.

112. *Gift Exchange*, 174.

113. *1-2 Corinthians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 242.

114. *The Second Epistle*, 583; cf. also Witherington, *Conflict & Community*, 418.

115. See Chapter 2, section 1.2.3.

P1 — Ancient examples present the father as the source of the child's life and thus the one to whom the child is indebted as his/her patron or benefactor.

P2 — Paul presents himself as a parent (i.e., father) who stores up treasure for his children, the Corinthians.

Proposition — Paul is therefore the Corinthians' patron and not *vice versa*.

But a glaring problem stands out. When comparing ancient sources to the context of the metaphor in 12:14, one quickly realises that although a father in antiquity functioned as a patron over his children, Paul's use of this paternal metaphor suggests nothing of the sort. If a metaphor is primarily determined by the context in which it is employed,¹¹⁶ then what is relevant in 12:14 is not patronage — even if some ancient texts use it that way — but his parental and obligatory (ὀφείλω) responsibilities *for them* and not *vice versa*. The patronal interpretation, therefore, overextends the metaphor, stretching it far beyond Paul's purposes in 12:13-16, which centres on his sacrificial lifestyle on behalf of his children. This interpretation of the paternal imagery, as we will see, is confirmed by the rest of the section.

With an incessant, self-emptying love for the spiritual well-being of his children, Paul declares in 12:15a, ἐγὼ δὲ ἥδιστα δαπανήσω καὶ ἐκδαπανηθήσομαι ὑπὲρ τῶν ψυχῶν ὑμῶν. The postpositive δέ denotes a consequence ('so') or an explanation ('for') rather than an negative contrast ('but'),¹¹⁷ and the emphatic ἐγὼ may denote a deliberate contrast with the status and

116. 'Contextual coherence,' according to Nijay Gupta, is one of three important principles for determining the source domain of a metaphor, the others being 'analogy' and 'exposure' ('Towards a Set of Principles for Identifying and Interpreting Metaphors in Paul: Romans 5:2 [Προσαγωγή] as a Test Case,' *ResQ* 51 [2009]: 169–81 at 174).

117. Cf. Harris, *Corinthians*, 885; *pace* Plummer, *Second Epistle*, 363.

practice of the super apostles,¹¹⁸ though we cannot be certain that they are in view.¹¹⁹ In any case, Paul advances his self-sacrificial ministry, lived out before them since the founding visit (irrespective of the future tense),¹²⁰ which promotes the general truth of the father-child relationship in 12:14. His point is not, 'I am the patron in this relationship!' But, 'Just as a father willingly commits his life to raising his child, so, too, I will gladly spend (δαπανάω) and expend (ἐκδαπανάω) myself for your growth in the faith.'¹²¹ The use of δαπανάω and ἐκδαπανάω,¹²² intentionally corresponding to the adjective ἀδάπανος in 1 Cor. 9:18 and (less explicitly) to δωρεάν in 11:7, heightens his mode of ministry among them. He preached and will continue to preach 'free of charge,' insofar as he willingly spends all that he has — his strength, his health, his status, his reputation, and his emotions. He does not charge fees like the Sophists, an accusation which probably underlies 12:16b.¹²³ Rather, just as Christ died on behalf of

118. Thrall, *Second Epistle*, 2:846 n579.

119. The same can be said of the phrase περισσοτέρως in 12:15b, understood as the apostle loving the community 'more' than the opponents. For more on this issue, see n127 below.

120. As Harris confirms, 'He is not instituting a new policy that would take effect when he arrived on his third visit. Rather, he is reaffirming, with regard to that visit, what had always been true of his service to the Corinthians' (*Corinthians*, 886).

121. This is suggested by his statement in 12:19 that he does all things 'on behalf of their edification' (ὕπερ τῆς ὑμῶν οἰκοδομῆς; note also the parallel phrase, ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν, in 12:15). This 'edifying' ministry is also described in 13:10 and, as we will argue later, conceptually appears in 10:15-16.

122. Windisch differentiates between the two terms, insisting that the former refers to Paul taking financial responsibility for himself and the latter to a complete self-sacrifice (*Korintherbrief*, 400). However, it is preferable, with Barrett, to interpret both terms as synonymous, involving monetary sacrifice and the cost of 'time, energy, and love' (*Second Epistle*, 324), with ἐκ adding a perfective force to the grammatical construction (Thrall, *Second Epistle*, 2:847).

123. Winter, *Sophists*, 218–21. The phrase δόλος in 12:16 also appears in 1 Thess. 2:3, where many scholars argue that Paul battles the antithetical model of Sophists, who overprice their teaching out of love for money.

humanity, so, too, Paul voluntarily pays the price with his life on behalf of the Corinthians' souls (ὕπερ τῶν ψυχῶν ὑμῶν; cf. Phil. 2:17). This Christ-shaped love is not only an answer to the question of 11:11 but also tangibly embodies the gospel of χάρις. In this sense, he carries around the 'dying of Jesus,' so that 'the life of Jesus' may appear in them (4:10). Thus, he later reminds the community that 'death is at work in us, but life in you' (4:12). And all of his suffering is on behalf of (ὕπερ ὑμῶν) their ultimate salvation, the building up of their obedience of faith until that final day (cf. 10:6, 8; 12:19; 13:5).

After communicating the extent of his self-sacrificial, other-oriented love, he asks, εἰ περισσοτέρως ὑμᾶς ἀγαπῶ, ἥσσον ἀγαπῶμαι (12:15b)?¹²⁴ Once again, he repeats a claim that pervades 11:7-12 and 12:13-16a. His refusal of support was an act of love because it was more advantageous for them.¹²⁵ Unconvinced, the Corinthians persist in viewing his refusal as a depreciation of their status, being treated as inferior (ἐξσώομαι) to other churches (12:13).¹²⁶ So, in retaliation, they love him less (ἥσσω). They refuse to reciprocate this so-called 'love,'

124. On the complex textual issues of this verse, see Thrall, *Second Epistle*, 2:848–49.

125. Marshall approvingly cites Seneca (*Ben.* 2.21.3) and Cicero (*Fam.* 5.9.1; 13.76; *Att.* 3.21), who allow for refusal where accepting a benefit may result in some harm to the giver. He concludes, 'Paul should have been able to expect the Corinthians to accept his refusal in terms of his not being a burden to them, as a sign of his love and concern for them' (*Enmity*, 244–45).

126. Windisch surmises that Paul has other churches in mind when employing περισσοτέρως ('more'), translated 'more than other churches' (*Korintherbrief*, 401), though this rendering, according to Plummer, requires ὑμᾶς to be emphatic (*Second Epistle*, 363). Others envisage the super apostles here, translated 'more than others do' (Lietzmann and Kümmel, *Korinther I/II*, 158). But this necessitates the addition of ἐγώ (Bultmann, *Corinthians*, 236–37). The preferable option is to avoid a comparison and interpret περισσοτέρως with ἥσσω ('more. . .less'), since it is difficult to discern whether the super apostles are in view (Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 444).

and instead bind themselves to the super apostles, who happily receive their monetary gifts and so enhance the status and worth that Paul depreciated. Like a defiant child disciplined by a loving parent, the Corinthians' immaturity prevents them from seeing beyond the initial sting of Paul's refusal.

3.1.3. Summary

We can now come back to the question that we began with, Why did Paul refuse the Corinthians' gifts? The conventional answer in Pauline studies has been to say that the Corinthians attempted to become Paul's patron. But after analysing the sort of gift-giving relationship that the community had with the super apostles, in which they clearly operated as *inferior* dependents within this exploitative, yet status-enhancing, bond,¹²⁷ we doubt the veracity of this prevalent claim. Since the community functioned like clients or paying pupils with the opponents, it is highly likely — given that they transferred their allegiance and their finances from him to the rival missionaries — that they tried to enact this sort of two-way relationship with Paul. They therefore desired to become *inferior* dependents of Paul as their *superior* leader, and not the other way around. They attempted to give *him* a return, to be dependent on *him* as the *source* of his gift of the gospel, and, in so doing, neglected God as the essential third party. Their fascination with social worth, accrued through two-way, gift-giving relationships, blinded them from seeing the three-way relational pattern of the divine

127. See section 2.2 above.

economy. Thus, Paul's specific policy never to accept during initial visits, a policy meant to highlight God as the *source* of the gospel in 1 Cor. 9 and 1 Thess. 2, was lengthened into the unforeseeable future. And his refusal was meant to rebuff their clientage and to demean himself still further by working a low-grade trade (ταπεινώω, 11:7; cf. 1 Cor. 4:12), as he continued receiving support from others (11:8-9). But there is another side to this refusal, one which only arises from an investigation of the nature and significance of Paul's boast regarding his abstention from Corinthian aid.

3.2. Paul's Καύχησις Never to accept Corinthian Gifts

What became a matter of sin (11:9) and injustice (12:13) for the Corinthians became a matter of boasting for Paul. He adamantly declares that he rejected their gifts in the past and will continue to do so in the future (cf. ἐτήρησα. . .τηρήσω, 11:9; ποιῶ. . .ποιήσω, 11:12; οὐ κατενάρκησα. . .οὐ καταναρκήσω, 12:13-14), and that this will be his cause of boasting (καύχησις) throughout the regions of Achaia (11:10). In these verses, his indefinite refusal, on the one hand, and his geographic boast, on the other, are interconnected. In order to make sense of them, we need to examine each separately before ascertaining how they conjointly illumine Paul's decision to deny the Corinthians' offer.

3.2.1. The Indefinite Refusal of Support — Permanent or Contingent?

Scholars are divided over the nature of Paul's negative statements concerning the acceptance of future gifts in 11:9, 12 and 12:13-14. Two primary positions have been propounded. The first is that the strong expressions communicate a *permanent* decision. Put simply, Paul means what he says. He will 'never' accept Corinthian gifts. Support for this position is garnered from the future tenses of τηρέω, ποιέω, and καταναρκάω (11:9, 12; 12:14),¹²⁸ as well as the negation οὐ before the future verb φραγήσεται (11:10),¹²⁹ both of which are interpreted as *absolute*. No matter what takes place in the future, he will never change his mind, nor will his boast ever cease.

The other position views the apostle's concrete language as hyperbolic and thus *contingent*. In other words, he exaggerates in order to elicit a change of behaviour at Corinth. Until that happens, he will 'never' (in an exaggerated sense) accept their gifts. Consequently, rather than seeing 11:10 as a distinct oath-formula, it is interpreted as an emphatic declaration

128. Windisch is representative of this view. He argues, 'Noch einmal betont er 9c, dass er von Kor. niemals eine Steuer verlangt hat. Schon ἀβαρή. . ἐτήρησα sagt mehr als κατενάρκησα οὐθενός, es bezieht sich auf den ganzen Aufenthalt, nicht bloss auf den Moment, wo zum ersten Mal der Mangel eintrat. Mit καὶ τηρήσω gibt er seiner Haltung Kor. gegenüber eine Ausdehnung bis in alle Zukunft; niemals, meint er, werde ich euch mit Unterstützungsgesuchen zur Last fallen. Er will wohl auch den Verdacht abschneiden, als schreibe er dies, um künftig Unterhalt von Kor. zu beziehen' (*Korintherbrief*, 337).

129. This interpretive move stems from detecting an oath-formula in 11:10. As Betz asserts, 'Um nicht mißverstanden zu werden, schließt Paulus den Gedanken 11,9 mit der feierlichen Erklärung ab, daß er von den Korinthern, so wie er in der Vergangenheit niemals Unterstützung angenommen habe, auch in Zukunft nichts annehmen werde. Das wird bekräftigt durch die Eidesformel' (*Tradition*, 102; cf. also Jan Lambrecht, *Second Corinthians* [SP 8; Colledgeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1999], 172, 177; Barrett, *2 Corinthians*, 283; Plummer, *Second Epistle*, 306).

which is liable to change,¹³⁰ with the future tenses of 11:9, 12 and 12:14 denoting a *contingent* response, not an *absolute* decision. As Furnish concludes: ‘at least in the foreseeable future Paul intends that the congregation shall not be burdened with responsibility for his maintenance.’¹³¹

Of the two options, we adopt the second, considering Paul’s rigid statements to be purposely exaggerated in order to communicate the detriment of their situation and to evoke a behavioural response.¹³² But if this is true, then what is his refusal *contingent* on? What are the circumstances which he hopes will subside in the future before accepting Corinthian support? According to Wilhelm Pratscher, the apostle has in view the opponents and their missionary infringement on his Corinthian territory. He writes,

Paulus verweigert solange die Annahme von Unterstützung seitens einer Gemeinde, solange wegen der Annahme derselben durch gegnerische Agitationen seine Missionsarbeit in der betreffenden Gemeinde bzw. das von ihm gebrachte Evangelium gestört oder gar vernichtet werden könnte. Daß das gegenwärtige und zukünftige Verhalten in der Angelegenheit der Unterstützung durch die korinthische Gemeinde

130. So Hughes, *Commentary*, 389; Thrall, *Second Epistle*, 2:687 n220. In support of this view, Cranfield has shown that Rom. 9:1, an oft-cited parallel of an oath-formula, does not precisely fit this categorisation (*Romans*, 2:452 n1).

131. *II Corinthians*, 509.

132. The grounds on which we base this conclusion is fourfold: (i) the hyperbolic context of 10-13; (ii) the imprecise parallel between 11:10 and distinct oath-formulas; (iii) the interpretive connection between 11:10, 12 and 10:15-16 which will be made below; and (iv) the fact that Paul’s missionary activity requires financial partnerships with his churches, and that we have no text which suggests otherwise. Admittedly, there are no textual parallels where Paul makes an adamant claim, such as ‘I will never do X,’ which is actually contingent on the hearers’ behaviour. The only analogous parallel is found in 1 Cor. 16:5-6 and 2 Cor. 1:15-16, 23. In the former passage, Paul promises the Corinthians that he will visit them after passing through Macedonia, but, in 2 Cor. 1:15-16, 23, he explains that he changed his plans in order to spare them. His travel plans were predicated on and determined by their behaviour.

durch das Vorhandensein von Gegnern bestimmt ist, zeigen I Cor. 9.12 und II Cor. 11.12 direkt.¹³³

What dictates Paul's refusal from Corinth, for Pratscher, is not his attitude towards individual congregations but the different situations of those communities.¹³⁴ Thus, as long as the opponents feel welcomed at Corinth, he will continue to repudiate their gifts.¹³⁵

A similar argument is proposed by Thrall. In dealing with the accusation that Paul is inconsistent, she makes an insightful observation concerning the significance of the phrase ἐν τοῖς κλίμασιν τῆς Ἀχαΐας in 11:10:

Perhaps we should take more notice of the limiting phrase (v. 10) 'in the regions of Achaia'. What does it limit? Does it limit the congregations *from whom* Paul is willing to receive financial assistance? Or does it limit the area *within which* money provided by the Corinthians for further evangelism might be used? If the first, then Corinth is totally excluded from giving him financial support, and the disparity of treatment between Corinth and Philippi remains absolute. If the second, however, Paul does not in principle rule out assistance from the Corinthians for evangelism outside this region. Within it there would be the danger of further trouble from the rival missionaries, and so further reason for his determination to maintain his distinction from them.¹³⁶

The *from whom/within which* distinction is very helpful indeed. Thrall, however, champions the latter, which then leads her to affirm the same view as Pratscher. Accepting support *within* the regions of Achaia, where the super apostles openly accepted money, will only result in 'the danger of further trouble from the rival missionaries.'

133. 'Verzicht,' 294; cf. also 292-93.

134. In his own words, 'Liegt der Grund für die tatsächlich verschiedene Behandlung der Korinther und Philipper aber nicht in seiner prinzipiell unterschiedlichen Haltung diesen Gemeinden gegenüber, so kann er nur in der jeweils unterschiedlichen Gemeindesituation liegen' ('Verzicht,' 294).

135. See also Horrell, *Social Ethos*, 213-14.

136. *Second Epistle*, 2:707; author's italics.

Nevertheless, contrary to Pratscher and Thrall, instead of identifying the opponents as the direct problem, we perceive the super apostles as a by-product of the core issue: the culturally-conditioned practical consciousness of the Corinthians. For the continuing presence of the rival apostles is a direct corollary of the community's worldly preoccupation with honour, status, and worth, expressed through the cultural mores of rhetorical eloquence, presumptuous boasting, and a powerful self-display, all of which the opponents extravagantly flaunted. The core of the problem, then, was not the infiltration of the false apostles into Corinth *per se*,¹³⁷ but the acceptance of these false apostles by the Corinthians, who developed status-enhancing, gift-giving relationships with them.

We therefore affirm that ἐν τοῖς κλίμασιν τῆς Ἀχαΐας (11:10) indicates *from whom* Paul vows 'never' (in an hyperbolised sense) to receive again. And yet, if we were to stop there, Thrall would be correct. Paul would clearly be inconsistent, and a 'disparity of treatment between Corinth and Philippi' would be unavoidable. But if the *contingent* refusal is primarily based on the Corinthians' spiritual maturity rather than the opponents' presence at Corinth, as we will argue in the next section, then this would absolve Paul from the accusation of inconsistency and further our understanding about the apostle's rejection of Corinthian gifts. But to arrive at this conclusion, a thorough examination of 11:10, 12 in conjunction with 10:12-18 is necessary.

137. This was indeed *part* of the issue but not *the* issue.

3.2.2. The Significance of Paul's Geographic Καύχησις in 11:10, 12 and 10:12-18

Many scholars note that the boasting of 11:10, 12 points back to the territorial boasting of 10:12-18,¹³⁸ but no one has analysed these passages in connection with the reason for Paul's *contingent* refusal at Corinth. This calls for a close examination of this neglected parallel, which we will do by first uncovering the twofold purpose behind his καύχησις and then drawing some conclusions regarding his financial dealings with the Corinthians, both at the time of writing and in the foreseeable future.

3.2.2.1. The Twofold Purpose of Paul's Καύχησις

'As the truth of Christ is in me,' Paul forcefully exclaims, 'this boasting of mine will not be blocked in the regions of Achaia' (ἔστιν ἀλήθεια Χριστοῦ ἐν ἐμοὶ ὅτι ἡ καύχησις αὕτη οὐ φραγήσεται¹³⁹ εἰς ἐμὲ ἐν τοῖς κλίμασιν τῆς Ἀχαΐας). With αὕτη referring back to ἐν παντὶ ἀβαρῆ ἐμαυτὸν ὑμῖν ἐτήρησα καὶ τηρήσω (11:9), the content of this καύχησις becomes his past (11:9), present (11:12), and future refusal of support (11:9, 12), his preaching 'free of charge' at Corinth.¹⁴⁰ In short, his καύχησις is his *contingent* refusal,¹⁴¹ and this boast contains two purposes.

138. E.g., Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 347; Lambrecht, *Second Corinthians*, 177.

139. φράσσω could mean *either* 'stop,' 'seal' or 'block,' 'barricade.' But, as Harris explains, 'Whichever sense of φράσσω is preferred, the general import of οὐ φραγήσεται is the same. If an agent in the closure or blockage is implied, it may be indefinite ("by anything/anyone") or more specific ("by my opponents")' (*Corinthians*, 764).

140. Although some scholars envisage the Achaians boasting in Paul in 11:10, interpreting εἰς ἐμέ as the object of *their* boast (cf. Zmijewski, 'Narrenrede,' 139), we prefer, with the majority of scholars, to consider the boasting

The first is that Paul distinguishes his ministry from that of the super apostles in order to advance the gospel. This becomes evident when we keep in mind the primary principle that dictates his every decision — the unhindered progress of God’s gospel. As in 1 Cor. 9:12, he endures all things to avoid placing an ἔγκοπή before the gospel, becoming a co-sharer of it by facilitating its advancement as a mediator of God (1 Cor. 9:23). Yet the rival apostles pose a great threat to its divine momentum at Corinth. Paul therefore boasts about his refusal in 11:12 — something they cannot do since they accepted support — to put a stop to their obstructive ministry: “Ὁ δὲ ποιῶ, καὶ ποιήσω, ἵνα ἐκκόψω τὴν ἀφορμὴν τῶν θελώντων ἀφορμὴν, ἵνα ἐν ᾧ καυχῶνται εὐρεθῶσιν καθὼς καὶ ἡμεῖς.

While interpretations on the opponents’ intention (ἀφορμὴ)¹⁴² and the content of their boast (καύχησις) abound,¹⁴³ we adopt the view proposed by Ralph Martin. These rival missionaries, claiming to be sent by Christ (11:13) but actually propagating a spurious gospel (11:4), sought to elevate their apostolic status over and against Paul.¹⁴⁴ They had already proven themselves superior in many ways (cf. 10:7, 10; 11:6, 22-23). Ultimately, though, they

done by Paul himself throughout the regions of Achaia. To think otherwise is contextually implausible (cf. Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 493; Barrett, *Second Epistle*, 283; Harris, *Corinthians*, 764 n64; Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 347).

141. That is, of course, if the above discussion on Paul’s *contingent* refusal is found convincing.

142. For a concise summary of the various positions, see Thrall, *Second Epistle*, 2:690–93.

143. Harris gives a list of seven options (*Corinthians*, 769).

144. It is not, as Hock suggests, that Paul wants his opponents to conform to his practice of self-support (*Social Context*, 63 n118). This interpretation takes the second ἵνα-clause of 11:12 to be dependent on ὁ δὲ ποιῶ καὶ ποιήσω; however, the majority of scholars maintain that this ἵνα-clause modifies τῶν θελώντων (cf., Windisch, *Korintherbrief*, 339–40; Barrett, *2 Corinthians*, 284–85; Plummer, *Second Epistle*, 307–08).

wanted to take over Corinth as their own missionary territory, usurp the apostle's role as their founding father, boast in the apostolic groundwork that they did not lay, and insist on monetary aid. Then, they would fit the apostolic mould (εὐρεθῶσιν καθὼς καὶ ἡμεῖς, 11:12). Paul nevertheless exposes the intentions of these poachers and prevents them from completely overtaking his field of operation. He does so by affirming his apostolic credentials: he is their father in the faith (12:14; 1 Cor. 4:14-15);¹⁴⁵ he lovingly preaches without remuneration for their benefit (11:9, 11-12; 12:13-15; esp. 12:19); and his low status symbols, though culturally despicable, are actually an embodiment of the humiliation/exaltation pattern of the Christ-event on their behalf (cf. 6:10; 8:9; 11:7; 12:15).¹⁴⁶ These credentials serve to distinguish his gospel ministry from that of the rival apostles, who hinder the progression of the gospel at Corinth. But Paul does all things, including repudiate gifts, to benefit his children and to further the march of the gospel. In this way, his refusal of support, as Peterman concludes, 'has a missionary motivation.'¹⁴⁷ It helps advance the gospel, despite the obstruction of false apostles.

The second purpose of Paul's καύχησις comes from the parallel passage of 10:12-18, for not only does his boast deprive the opponents of the opportunity to be found as legitimate

145. Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 475: '...there is no surer evidence for the validity of his claim to be an apostle of Christ than their own faith in Christ and the very existence of their congregation.'

146. Barrett notes that Paul's abstention of support 'is a manifestation of the Gospel itself, because it reflects the voluntary poverty of Christ which makes others rich' (*Second Epistle*, 284).

147. *Gift Exchange*, 168.

apostles, but it also calls the Corinthians to the obedience of faith (cf. 10:5-6, 8).¹⁴⁸ He will continue to boast in his refusal, until they undergo a change of behaviour. The super apostles, as we noted earlier, are merely a consequence of the culturally-attuned lifestyle of the Corinthians, manifested through their affiliation with these rivals. To use the language of 1 Cor. 3:1, they are νήπιοι ἐν Χριστῷ. His *contingent* refusal therefore depends on the spiritual maturity of the Corinthians, *from whom*¹⁴⁹ he longs to receive money, so that the gospel may reach unreached lands. This becomes clear from analysing the territorial boast of 10:12-18.

After mentioning the rhetorical practices of the super apostles, whereby they measure (μετρέω) and compare (συγκρίνω) themselves with themselves,¹⁵⁰ and so prove, from the apostle's perspective, to have no understanding at all (συνήμι, 10:12),¹⁵¹ he sharply demarcates his conduct with the emphatic ἡμεῖς, followed by the adversative δέ in 10:13.¹⁵² Unlike the opponents, he does not encroach upon the territory of others but only boasts (καυχάομαι) in the area of influence (τὸ μέτρον τοῦ κανόνος) that God has allotted (μερίζω) to him (cf.

148. In speaking of 10:6, Furnish asserts, 'Here, as in v. 5, *obedience* must refer above all to the obedience of faith, *obedience to Christ*, and the "completion" of this obedience may perhaps be interpreted in accord with the remark in v. 15 about the "increase" of faith in Corinth (cf. Bultmann, 188)' (*II Corinthians*, 464; author's italics). It is the latter connection with verse 15 that we will attempt to draw out in what follows.

149. To employ Thrall's *from whom/within which* dichotomy regarding 11:10 (see section 3.2.1 above).

150. The concepts of comparison and self-praise belonged to the encomium, which promoted the conventions of 'physical appearance, education and achievements' (Marshall, *Enmity*, 327). For a fuller discussion of σύγκρισις among philosophers and teachers of rhetoric in relation to 2 Cor. 10:12f., see Christopher Forbes, 'Paul's Boasting,' 1-30; Betz, *Tradition*, 119-21; Winter, *Sophists*, 222-23.

151. In what respect, Paul does not say. But it could be, as Barrett surmises, that '[w]hat they failed to understand was that measurement by their own standards meant in effect the use of no standards at all' (2 *Corinthians*, 263).

152. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 319; Thrall, *Second Epistle*, 2:644.

10:15a).¹⁵³ This includes the Corinthians themselves (ἐφικέσθαι ἄχρι καὶ ὑμῶν), since he certainly did not overextend himself in reaching the Corinthians with the gospel (10:14). They are his work (ἔργον) in the Lord (1 Cor. 9:1), and, as a general principle, he only ever tills uncracked soil (cf. Rom. 15:18-21).

But it is not until we reach 10:15b-16 that we discover that Paul's *contingent* refusal, and thus the progression of the gospel, depends on the spiritual maturity of the Corinthians:

ἐλπίδα δὲ ἔχοντες ἀύξανομένης τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν ἐν ὑμῖν μεγαλυνθῆναι κατὰ τὸν κανόνα ἡμῶν εἰς περισσεῖαν εἰς τὰ ὑπερέκεινα ὑμῶν εὐαγγελίσασθαι, οὐκ ἐν ἄλλοτρίῳ κανόνι εἰς τὰ ἔτοιμα καυχῆσασθαι.

Murray Harris perceptively notes that gospel ministry in these verses can be summed up in one word, expansion (μεγαλυνθῆναι), which unfolds in four successive stages: two before μεγαλυνθῆναι, and two after.¹⁵⁴

The first stage is the spiritual growth of the Corinthians (ἀύξανομένης τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν). As a genitive absolute, connoting a temporal sense ('as your faith increases'),¹⁵⁵ this phrase indicates a deficiency in their faith. There is a lack that needs to 'increase.' But what

153. There is much debate as to how the terms μέτρον and κανών in the phrase τὸ μέτρον τοῦ κανόνα are related, when each carry the same meaning of 'rule' or 'limit.' To avoid tautology, many commentators choose to translate the former as a standard of measurement (e.g., 'limit' or 'area') and the latter in a geographic sense (e.g., 'jurisdiction' or 'sphere'). For a detailed discussion of this grammatical issue, see Harris, *Corinthians*, 710-16; Thrall, *Second Epistle*, 2:644-47.

154. *Corinthians*, 720-21. We slightly amend Harris' four-stage construal by conflating stages 3 and 4 and by including 10:16a as the climactic final stage of this Pauline drama.

155. Rather than 'after your faith increases,' which would require ἀύξανομένης to be an aorist participle (Harris, *Corinthians*, 720).

does this lack of faith consist of? It is unlikely to be an ironical statement,¹⁵⁶ alluding to their confidence that, through the teaching of the super apostles, their 'faith had moved on to a higher level.'¹⁵⁷ Rather, it most likely refers to a stunt in their spiritual growth, expressed through a lack of commitment¹⁵⁸ to God in Christ through Paul's apostolic mission,¹⁵⁹ the cause of which is their compromised consciousness. What could be in sight here is their spiritual immaturity so clearly articulated in 1 Cor. 3:1-4¹⁶⁰ and tangibly displayed in 1 Cor. 1-4, 11:17-34, and 12:12-31, which, as we argued in Chapter 4,¹⁶¹ consists of a miscomprehension of the gospel due to their conformity to worldly criteria and affiliations with influential leaders. This does not seem too distant from the context of 2 Cor. 10-13, though we cannot be absolutely certain. But what can be said with a reasonable degree of certainty is that a spiritual growth in the Corinthians must appear before Paul can move beyond them with the gospel.

156. The tone of this verse is too serious to be ironical (Thrall, *Second Epistle*, 2:651).

157. Barrett, *2 Corinthians*, 268.

158. 'It is less the content of their belief than their commitment to what they believe that seems to be in view here' (Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 481-82).

159. Martin asserts that πίστις could refer to the Corinthians 'faithfulness to [Paul's] mission' (*2 Corinthians*, 323), while Harris prefers to consider it 'a confident trust in Christ or God' (*Corinthians*, 720). But these are not mutually exclusive. In devoting themselves to Paul's mission, they devote themselves to God in Christ (cf. 11:2).

160. A textual parallel noted by Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 473.

161. See section 3.1.

The second stage involves the material assistance of the Corinthians, ‘by your aid/with your help’ (ἐν ὑμῖν). Taken with μεγαλυνθῆναι¹⁶² rather than what precedes,¹⁶³ this phrase could carry a local meaning (‘among you’),¹⁶⁴ or it could possess an instrumental sense (‘by your aid’).¹⁶⁵ Both are equally plausible, yet the financial context of 2 Cor. 11-12 and the missionary endeavours of 10:15-16, which require money to take place, may favour the instrumental meaning. If so, then Paul will not receive money from the Corinthians, who reside in ‘the regions of Achaia’ (11:10), until a satisfactory degree of maturity may be detected. Even if ἐν ὑμῖν does not refer to the help of aid, this is implicit in the mention of the Pauline mission, since financial support from his churches is necessary for mission.

The third stage is the expansion of his God-given sphere of ministry (κατὰ τὸν κανόνα ἡμῶν εἰς περισσεΐαν). As their faith increases, Paul will allow the Corinthians to partner with him by providing monetary aid in support of gospel advancement.¹⁶⁶ This will not only enlarge

162. Some attach a transitive sense to this passive infinitive, translated ‘we may be praised among you’ (e.g., Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 473), but we prefer an intransitive sense, such as ‘grow’ or ‘increase’ (BDAG, 623), because missionary expansion is at the forefront of the apostle’s mind (10:16).

163. Pace Bultmann, *Second Corinthians*, 198. In order for ἐν ὑμῖν to modify μεγαλυνθῆναι, Bultmann argues that the prepositional phrase must follow the infinitive. But Thrall convincingly argues that the construction actually creates ‘a chiasmic arrangement (verb of increasing—ὑμῶν—ἐν ὑμῖν—verb of increasing) which serves to emphasise the responsibility of the Corinthians’ (*Second Corinthians*, 2:651 n397).

164. This rendering circumvents a tautologous translation with the preceding ὑμῶν.

165. Suggested by F.F. Bruce, *An Expanded Paraphrase of the Epistles of Paul* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1965), 151.

166. As Thrall maintains, ‘Once he is convinced that their faith is secure, and that they have progressed to a satisfactory degree of maturity, he will be at liberty to extend his sphere of work, since they will make fewer demands on his pastoral attention’ (*Second Epistle*, 2:651).

his divinely-ordained area of ministry (κανών) but will also overflow (περισσεία)¹⁶⁷ beyond it.

This is the language of abounding grace (cf. Rom. 5:15, 17; 1 Cor. 1:5; 2 Cor. 4:15; 8:1-2, 7; 9:8, 12).¹⁶⁸ The gospel will claim more and more territory. Accordingly, περισσεία ‘must thus be understood in a geographical sense; it refers to evangelization in other regions.’¹⁶⁹

The final stage is the progression of the gospel to unreached areas (εἰς τὰ ὑπερέκεινα ὑμῶν εὐαγγελίσασθαι). Windisch, after calling 10:16 intolerable (unerträglich), attempts to substitute εἰς τό for εἰς τὰ,¹⁷⁰ forming an infinitive of purpose or result with ὑπερέκεινα. Although this grammatical move is contextually attractive, it nevertheless lacks textual support.¹⁷¹ Even so, Thrall asserts that εὐαγγελίσασθαι can still convey an expression of result ‘in a somewhat free way by itself,’¹⁷² and that εἰς, which usually follows verbs of saying or proclaiming,¹⁷³ confirms this by producing the meaning, ‘preaching the gospel to regions beyond the Corinthians.’¹⁷⁴

From these four stages of gospel expansion, a fundamental standard for partnering with Paul in a gift-giving relationship can be gleaned — they must exhibit a higher degree of

167. This noun is an intensification of μεγαλυθῆναι.

168. See the section entitled ‘The Economics of Abundance’ in Frances Young and David Ford, *Meaning and Truth in 2 Corinthians* (BFT; London: SPCK, 1987), 172–75.

169. Lambrecht, *Second Corinthians*, 167.

170. *Korintherbrief*, 313.

171. Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 473.

172. *Second Epistle*, 2:651 n399, who cites BDR 391(4).

173. BDAG, 1.d.β. εἰς could equally take on the meaning of ἐν (‘preach in areas’; e.g., Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 315).

174. For various views on the syntactical function of εὐαγγελίσασθαι, see Harris, *Corinthians*, 722.

spiritual maturity before he can accept their monetary aid. This will play out in a behavioural shift in their obedience of faith and commitment to the gospel of God, a shift in allegiance, from the world to the cross, that will naturally bring about social dislocation. As they embrace and apply the apocalyptic symbols of the Christ-event, they will inevitably embody the sufferings of Christ. No longer will their only experience of suffering be Paul's 'painful letter.'¹⁷⁵ A time will come when the gospel of grace will fully envelop Corinth — practical consciousness and all — then powerfully progress through them to others. But before this progression of χάρις can take place, they must truly appropriate God's gift for themselves.

Thus, with the use of a reconstructive imagination, we can picture the sort of gift-giving relationship that Paul hopes to enjoy with the Corinthians in the future. It is at this point that the key features of his positive relationship with the Philippians may be recalled. They exhibited 'a full, trusting *κοινωνία*' with their apostle, which we defined as a mutuality in *gift* and *suffering*. They suffered on behalf of Christ, willingly shared in Paul's suffering through their gift, and thereby participated in the advance (*προκοπή*) of χάρις to others. In short, *suffering* led to *gift*. Suffering becomes the benchmark of a life fully devoted to the gospel of Christ, a life of spiritual maturity, which then permits them entrance into a *κοινωνία* of gift with Paul.

175. Barclay, 'Thessalonica and Corinth,' 72–73.

This seems to be the same pattern faintly alluded to in 10:15-16. Paul requires the Corinthians' full commitment to the gospel, loyalty to him as their apostle, and obedience to God in Christ, before he moves beyond them. Why? Because moving beyond them requires their partnership. It necessitates 'a full, trusting *κοινωνία*,' which, in turn, demands a growth in spiritual maturity. If this growth does not take place at Corinth, then the power of the gospel must first be experienced in their lives before 'paying it forward.' The gospel must claim Corinth before claiming other territories beyond them. And behind this joint effort in advancing the gospel, even undergirding the entire process, is God, the essential third party. He operates as the primary giver, mover, and sustainer of *χάρις*, who will propel it through the *κοινωνία* of Paul and the Corinthians for the sake of others. This is the three-way relational pattern of the divine economy, and it is this sort of relationship that Paul hopes to share with the Corinthians. They only need to grow in the gospel.

4. Conclusion

Our analysis here has confirmed the findings of the previous chapter. The Corinthians, although converted, retained a substantial degree of social integration, such that their lifestyle was informed more by the *cultural* values of the world rather than the *counter-cultural* values of the gospel. This cultural conformity generated strife in the church but social harmony in the world, preparing the ground perfectly for the socially-acceptable rivals. When they entered

Corinth, the church became enamoured by their rhetorical eloquence, forceful self-display, and ostentatious boasting. Captivated by their social glamour, the community transferred their allegiance from Paul to these false apostles, sitting under them as pupils and dependent on them like clients, all for the increase of their honour, status, and worth. These status-enhancing affiliations were analogous to teacher-pupil and patron-client relations, the very relational pattern that Paul avoided with the Corinthians. This was not because they sought to be his patrons, but because they envisioned Paul as the *source* of the gospel, the *source* of their worth, and so longed to supply *him* with a return gift of money. Paul, however, firmly refuses their gift to direct their eyes to the heavenly giver, the one from whom all gifts flow and in whom their worth is found, and to position himself as a mutual broker of divine commodity. Hence, the emphatic declaration to continue preaching *God's* gospel freely at Corinth (δωρεὰν τὸ τοῦ θεοῦ εὐαγγέλιον, 11:7). This combines the social and the theological, the evasion of sophistic practices, on the one side, and the divine exclusion from gift-giving relationships, on the other. Like two sides of the same coin, they represent a single reality — Paul's *socio-theological* reason for refusing financial support.¹⁷⁶

176. Admittedly, throughout this chapter and the previous one, we have been interpreting — and can only interpret — the Corinthian church through Paul's eyes. But this should not weaken the argument proposed here, since Paul's perceptions are necessary to uncover Paul's policy.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS

Having examined Paul's positive gift-giving *κοινωνία* with the Philippians in comparison to his negative relationship with the Corinthians, we can now offer a more nuanced answer to the perplexing question: why does Paul refuse support from some but accept it from others?

1. Paul's Financial Policy in Socio-Theological Perspective

Paul's financial policy can be divided into two stages. The first stage is his initial entry into a particular city. No matter the location, no matter the situation, Paul consistently refused monetary support from the people to whom he was ministering. Whether at Philippi (Phil. 4:15), Thessalonica (1 Thess. 2:9), or Corinth (1 Cor. 9:12, 15, 18), this *specific* policy remained the same – he worked a trade and denied fiscal aid. Underlying and even driving this policy of initial refusal is a social and theological purpose. Socially, it serves to distinguish Paul's gospel ministry from Sophists or itinerant philosophers and teachers who strive for personal, financial gain. Theologically, it highlights the true giver of the gospel. The gospel is τοῦ θεοῦ, not τοῦ Παύλου (cf. 1 Thess. 2:2, 4, 8, 9, 13; 2 Cor. 11:7). Paul mediates God's gospel as a broker, a middleman, to whom there can be no return. If a return does make its way to Paul, then recipients are liable to confuse him as the source of his teaching. The issue here is the *source*

not the gracious/free *content* of the gospel. Paul does not believe the gospel expects no return — only that the return must be to God, not him. To circumvent this theological mistake, he therefore invariably refuses when initially entering into a city.

The second stage is Paul's initial departure from one city and initial entrance into another. After establishing a church on the gospel and emphasising the divine origin of his message (cf. 1 Thess. 2:13), with no return being rendered to Paul, the apostle then departs that newly founded church and continues his Gentile mission into other cities. While stage 1 is repeated in the new city, stage 2 takes place with the recently established city. So, for instance, we learn that Paul accepted gifts from Philippi during his initial ministry at Thessalonica (Phil. 4:16) and Corinth (2 Cor. 11:9), while simultaneously working a trade in order not to burden the Corinthians or the Thessalonians (1 Thess. 2:9). This may seem like a double standard — as if he accepts money surreptitiously under the table, while supposedly bestowing the gospel freely — but it is simply an overlapping of the stages. Thus, only when Paul leaves a newly founded congregation does he allow them to help financially in the advance of the gospel towards others.

Within this two-stage process, the Philippians progressed from stage 1 to stage 2. They assisted Paul monetarily after he departed from Philippi and during his initial ministry at Thessalonica, Corinth, and even in prison. The Corinthians, however, never progressed past

stage 1. Paul's initial financial stance, recorded in 1 Cor. 9, was repeated during his second visit, and he also anticipated repeating this policy during his third visit (2 Cor. 11:9, 12; 12:13-14). To understand why the Corinthians did not advance to stage 2, and to discern what Paul intended to teach them by repeating stage 1 of his policy, the distinctive relational features of Paul's operative gift-giving relationship with the Philippians were set in contrast with his non-gift relationship with the Corinthians.

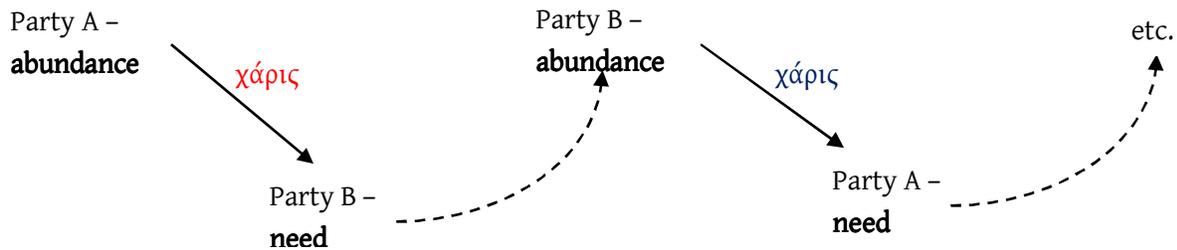
Three primary features were found in Philippians:

(i) *God as a third party.* By tracing the trajectory of χάρις in the gospel throughout Philippians, we discovered that Paul incorporates God as an essential third party, one who initiates, sustains, and completes the exchange of gifts on the horizontal level. In other words, gifts find their beginning and end with God. He revives the Philippians' concern for Paul, materialised in their gift (Phil. 4:10); he brings to completion the Philippians' good work (ἔργον ἀγαθόν) that he began, which includes their financial support (1:6); he somehow receives gifts that are given to Paul (4:18); he will distribute gifts for the needs of the Philippians' through Paul or another church (4:19); and he ultimately receives all thanks (εὐχαριστία, 1:3) and glory (δόξα, 4:20) for the work he accomplishes through human agency. From Paul's perspective, God is an active agent *in* and *through* his gift-giving relationship with the Philippians.

(ii) *Mutuality in gift and suffering.* After the Philippians accepted the χάρις in the gospel, the gift of God, they immediately encountered social dislocation and suffering (1:27-30). They suffered ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ at the hands of persons unknown (τῶν ἀντικειμένων), and, in so doing, embodied and even reenacted the sufferings of Christ (1:28-29). Since suffering *for Christ* is part and parcel of life *in Christ*, it naturally follows that Paul and the Philippians share the same ἀγών (1:30; cf. 1:7), a similar, though not identical, form of suffering ἐν Χριστῷ. We pictured this joint suffering as two circles partially overlapping one another, generating a sacred space where the individual sufferings of one co-mingle with the other and create a channel through which one party can meet the needs of the other. At the very core of each circle is τὰ παθήματα τοῦ Χριστοῦ (cf. 3:10), the deepest level of a person ἐν Χριστῷ, which is precisely the location where the community enjoys κοινωνία with Paul. In this sense, their intimate bond of co-suffering laid the groundwork for their κοινωνία in giving and receiving.

Their κοινωνία of *gift*, as already mentioned, includes a divine third party, such that the horizontal contours of their gift-giving relationship are necessarily recalibrated. No party can be the source of their possessions but only mediators, since all things belong to God. And with God as the source, Paul and the Philippians share a mutual obligation to him. But since God's gifts aim to meet needs, they also share a mutual obligation to one another (2:25-30; 4:15). Moreover, if divine gifts are mediated through Paul and the Philippians, then neither

party can accrue social power for themselves. Gifts are only received to be passed on. Being caught up into this cyclical exchange of gifts (ἐκοινωνήσεν εἰς λόγον δόσεως καὶ λήμψεως, 4:15), Paul and the Philippians participate in an oscillating asymmetry that is constantly in flux. When party A is in need, then party B will be enabled to meet that need, and when party B experiences need, then party A will be enabled to return the favour, ‘so that,’ in Paul’s words, ‘there may be equality [ἰσότης]’ (2 Cor. 8:14):



Thus, Paul and the Philippians’ participation in and embodiment of the Christ-gift produced a mutuality in *gift* and *suffering*.

(iii) *Participation in the divine momentum of χάρις.* The Philippians’ establishment in the *gospel* cultivated ‘a full, trusting κοινωνία’ with Paul in the advancement of the *gospel*, allowing God to distribute his divine commodity of χάρις through them to others. Grace abounded to those both inside and outside prison walls (1:12-18c), with Christ being proclaimed and exalted at every point of contact. No matter the actual situation — whether imprisonment or the ulterior motives of preachers — nothing could frustrate the divine progression (προκοπή) of

the gospel. Divine grace also abounded towards Thessalonica and Corinth through Paul's partnership with the Philippians, demonstrating that the Philippian community had passed from stage 1 to stage 2.

When these relational features were outlined, we then recognised the absence of them in the Corinthian church and the presence of three corresponding corrections that Paul sought to communicate through his refusal of their support:

(i) *Emphasis on God as the third party.* Whereas Paul highlights a divine *inclusion* in Philippians, he underscores a divine *exclusion* in 1 and 2 Corinthians. He emphatically reminds them that God is the *source* and *owner* of all that they possess (cf. 1 Cor. 1:4-9; 2:12; 3:16, 21-23; 4:7; 8:6; 11:12), and that Paul and other leaders merely operate as *mediators* or *brokers* of his divine commodity (cf. 3:5; 4:1; 9:17). The need for this reconfiguration of roles arose from their faulty perspective on Christian leaders. The acclamations, 'I am of Paul!' and 'I am of Apollos!' (3:4; cf. 1:12), and other exploitative interactions in the church (11:17-34; 12:12-31; cf. 5:1-13; 6:1-11; chs. 8-10), disclose a close conformity to two-way, status-enhancing relationships in antiquity, whether patron-client, teacher-pupil, or politician-supporter, in which the inferior party resides *under* influential figures to gain honour, status, and worth in society. They neglect God as the primary giver of χάρις and instead place human leaders (1:12; 3:21; 4:6), and even themselves (4:7), in God's exclusive position as the only worthy object of boasting (1:31).

By excluding God from their social interactions, the supposed spiritually élite assumed the divine role at the Lord's supper (11:17-34) and even judged some parts of the body as unworthy to receive their *χαρίσματα* (12:12-31). They lived as if divine gifts ended with them rather than handing them on to others. Thus, in a manner unlike the Philippians, the Corinthians repressed the divine momentum of *χάρις*, and so Paul sternly reminds them that they own absolutely nothing that was not first given to them by God (4:7), 'from whom are all things and for whom we exist' (8:6).

(ii) *Exposing the Corinthians' spiritual immaturity in Christ.* The Corinthians exhibited an indigenised faith in the church, being captivated by the status-enhancing way of the world. This revealed a skewed practical consciousness that exhibited little transformation but much reproduction of previous social structures after their conversion.¹ This social assimilation eventually led to the scathing verdict of 3:1. Although they appraise themselves as σοφοί, τέλειοι, and πνευματικοί (2:6; 3:18-23; 4:10; 14:36-38), Paul considers them νήπιοι ἐν Χριστῷ (3:1). They are spiritually immature. Thus, the culturally-acceptable practices of Corinth had an opposite effect in the Corinthian church. Instead of accruing honour, it only brought about shame. Small wonder. The church is, after all, built on the counter-cultural gospel of Christ.

1. For a distinction between the discursive and practical consciousness of the Corinthians, see Chapter 4, section 2.1.

In 2 Cor. 10-12, we demonstrated that their spiritual immaturity, caused by a faulty practical consciousness, was further fanned into flame by the super apostles. These socially-esteemed figures offered what society held as honourable — a mighty self-display, expressed through rhetorical grandiloquence, punitive action, and ostentatious boasting. The Corinthians therefore quickly turned away from their humiliating apostle and fiscally supported these influential leaders (11:20). By this point, Paul had already refused their gifts (11:7-12; 12:13-16), preventing them moving from stage 1 to stage 2 because of their spiritual immaturity, generated by the social conventions of Corinth and encouraged by the super apostles. Paul's refusal can therefore be traced back to the Corinthians' spiritual immaturity.

(iii) *Paul's future expectation of a three-way exchange of χάρις to others.* Even though Paul repeats stage 1 during his later visits at Corinth, he nevertheless envisages a time in the future when their faith will increase and they will be permitted to contribute to the progression of the gospel. This emerged from our comparison of the geographic boast of 11:10, where Paul declares that his boast never to accept Corinthian support will not be stopped 'in the regions of Achaia,' and 10:15b-16, in which a glimmer of relational hope is found. There, Paul expresses his desire to reach beyond the Corinthians to others with the gospel, insinuating that he will call on their financial help to evangelise others. But before that can happen, their faith must grow, they must exhibit a higher degree of maturity, which must correlate to the relational

features found in Philippians, since Paul did accept their gifts. What this demonstrates is that stage 2 is available to the Corinthians (as it was to other churches [ἄλλας ἐκκλησίας, 2 Cor. 11:8]), and that Paul's seemingly irrevocable boast is actually contingent on their response to the gospel.

In the end, the primary difference between the Philippians and the Corinthians concerns their social experience (or practical lifestyle) after accepting the gospel. The Philippians encountered social dislocation, while the Corinthians social integration, both of which had ensuing effects on their lives as Christians. The Philippians suffered in society, but the Corinthians were at social ease. More than this, their social awareness also dictated their view of relationships. In the Corinthians' desire for honour, they neglected God as a third party, whereas the Philippians, at least from Paul's ideal perspective, co-worked with God to benefit their apostle and others. Stemming from this comparison, therefore, is a sort of criterion that a church must meet before engaging Paul in a gift-giving relationship — *the social embodiment of the counter-cultural gospel of Jesus Christ that acknowledges God, the supreme giver, as the essential third party of every gift-giving relationship in the divine economy*. From this, one can see why Paul would strongly refuse gifts from Corinth but happily accept those from Philippi.

2. The Achieved Goals of the Socio-Theological Approach to Paul's Financial Policy

Through the socio-theological approach, we aimed to reach the following goals:

First, this approach adds a consistent structure to Paul's seemingly *ad hoc* and inconsistent financial policy. Rather than assuming the apostle had favourites among his churches, or perhaps that he delighted in having the power to refuse or accept at will, we have provided a criterion that Paul expected his churches to meet before financially assisting his missionary endeavours in other locations. We have also dealt with various issues that may call his consistency into question, such as his acceptance of προπέμπω-support (1 Cor. 16:6; 2 Cor. 1:16) but rejection of financial support and his resolution never to accept from Corinth (2 Cor. 11:9, 11; 12: 13-14).²

Second, we have shown that Paul's gift-exchange relationship with the Philippians is the norm rather than the exception. Paul does not grudgingly accept their gifts, as if he despised payment for his labours or reciprocity for that matter. To the contrary, by being bound in a nexus of gift and suffering, their exchange of divine goods becomes necessary for their livelihood. In fact, reciprocal exchange is the ordained means through which God himself, as the source and giver of all things, meets the needs of his people.

Third, the socio-theological approach offers an alternative to the widespread patron-client interpretation. Far from Paul refusing Corinthian support because they sought to make him their client, the Corinthians actually tried to make Paul their superior, their source of worth, a role that only God in Christ can occupy. They wanted to reside *under*, not *over*, their

2. See Chapter 5, section 3.1.

apostle, as evidenced by the relational pattern they had with the super apostles and other textual indicators. The illegitimacy of the patron-client model was also demonstrated by exposing its several exegetical,³ social-historical,⁴ and even philosophical weaknesses.⁵ Furthermore, our analysis has shown that a two-way exchange model like patronage (or even friendship for that matter) cannot adequately capture gift-giving relationships in the divine economy. Instead, the most suitable and illuminating relational pattern is the brokerage model, though, admittedly, this heuristic lens also fails to capture fully Paul's vision of triangulated bonds of gift.

Lastly, we attempted to expose the modern ideals of gift imposed on Paul's gift-exchange relationships with his churches. Contrary to some scholars, we contended that the presence of obligation and self-interest appear in Philippians, two relational elements that preserve rather than eradicate the reciprocity of gifts. Like Seneca's *De Beneficiis* (and unlike modern scholars), Paul distinguishes between an exploitative self-interest and an other-oriented self-interest,⁶ the latter of which he joyfully affirms.⁷ Unlike Seneca, however, Paul incorporates God into this exchange, so that mutual obligation is retied into a three-way knot,

3. See Chapter 4, section 4, and Chapter 5, section 3.1.

4. See Chapter 2, section 1.

5. These are sprinkled throughout the exegetical and social-historical critiques.

6. For Seneca's perspective, see Chapter 2, section 2.1.2.

7. See Chapter 3, section 4.3.2.2.2.

with God at the head of their relationship.⁸ We also challenged those scholars who reason that, because God gives grace unilaterally, without any thought of a return, so, too, Paul preaches the gospel at Corinth ‘free of charge’ (2 Cor. 11:7). While Paul does not actively seek a material return *per se*, he definitely expects a spiritual return (2 Cor. 12:14-15; cf. Phil. 4:17) and so does God (cf. 2 Cor. 1:11; 4:15; 9:12-13, 15; Rom. 12:1-2).

At the root of all these modern ideals is ‘the modern myth of the pure gift,’ that is, the insistence on the complete gratuitousness of a gift, without any self-regard or duty in the act itself — a post-enlightenment hermeneutic which Engberg-Pedersen laconically yet profoundly calls ‘false.’⁹ What then arises from the ash of modern sensibilities is a Paul who operates within an ancient framework of gift, and yet, in his own way, modifies that social framework with his embedded theology. Ultimately, his perspective on gift is neither modern nor ancient *per se*, but radically Pauline.

3. Implications for Further Study

This study has intentionally focused on Paul’s financial policy, but many of its findings bear direct relevance to other discussions in Pauline studies. For instance, although many scholars employ the patron-client model to illumine the collection for the Jerusalem saints in 2 Cor. 8-9, it seems more suitable to apply the brokerage model or — for those who have a methodological

8. See Chapter 3, section 4.3.2.2.1.

9. ‘Gift-Giving,’ 16.

aversion to social-historical paradigms — the triangulated relational pattern between God, Paul, and a particular church. Indeed, as of yet, no scholar has applied this triangulated framework to 2 Corinthians in order to uncover the deeper fabric of his theology of giving and receiving. Also, we noted the presence of an oscillating asymmetry of power in Philippians, which is most lucidly portrayed in 2 Cor. 8:14. While this relationship partly correlates with what Kathy Ehrensperger calls ‘transformative power,’ where Paul’s hierarchical authority empowers his churches to maturation, we question Ehrensperger’s claim that his apostolic authority renders itself obsolete once his churches achieve maturity.¹⁰ Consequently, the oscillating asymmetrical model not only offers an alternative to Ehrensperger’s paradigm but also to the previous works of John Schütz,¹¹ Bengt Holmberg,¹² Cynthia Briggs Kittredge,¹³ and Sandra Polaski.¹⁴ Lastly, Seneca’s *De Beneficiis* has more to offer the Pauline world of gift than could be explored in this study. We have mainly emphasised a few similarities between Paul and Seneca, but the most illuminating points of comparison are their differences. This, it seems to me, will certainly open up interdisciplinary avenues through which to irradiate Pauline theology.

10. *Paul and the Dynamics of Power: Communication and Interaction in the Early Christ-Movement* (LNTS; London: T&T Clark, 2007), 135–36.

11. *Apostolic Authority*.

12. *Paul and Power*.

13. *Community and Authority: The Rhetoric of Obedience in the Pauline Tradition* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press, 1998).

14. *Paul and the Discourse of Power* (GCT 8; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999).

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