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CHRIST ABSENT AND PRESENT:  
A STUDY IN PAULINE CHRISTOLOGY

BY

PETER ORR

SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

AT THE

UNIVERSITY OF DURHAM

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## ABSTRACT

The aim of this thesis is to contribute to the study of Pauline Christology by examining how Paul conceives of the exalted Christ. In particular it considers the exalted Christ through the lens of his absence and presence. The fact that the exalted Christ can be simultaneously present (e.g. Rom 8:10) and absent (e.g. Rom 8:34) points to the complexity in Paul's conceptuality. The main argument of this thesis is that if the *absence* of Christ is carefully delineated then the seeming paradox concerning the presence and absence of Christ actually disappears.

Given that New Testament studies have generally not considered the exalted Christ through this lens, in chapter one we do not present a history of research but provide an entry point to our thesis by examining how two of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century's most significant Pauline scholars, Albert Schweitzer and Ernst Käsemann, conceived of the exalted Christ. These two Pauline interpreters are particularly relevant given that they view the exalted Christ in such sharply distinct ways and so help orientate us to the theological issues that are crucial to understanding the nature of the exalted Christ.

In chapter two, we consider a number of texts where Paul expresses the reality of the absence of Christ from the world. We examine a number of passages which indicate that the absence of Christ is a bodily absence since, for Paul, the exalted Christ remains a human being with a discrete, located, human body. Because Christ retains a discrete and distinguishable human body, he is not universally located.

In chapters three and four we turn to investigate three of the most significant modes of the presence of Christ and, in particular, consider how these relate to his bodily absence. In chapter three we consider his epiphanic presence and his dynamic presence. The former is seen in an extended section in 2 Corinthians (2:14-4:12) where Paul repeatedly employs epiphanic language and imagery. The dynamic mode of Christ's presence is seen in texts where Paul portrays Christ as the *agent* of his own presence.

Finally, in chapter four we consider the bodily presence of Christ. Here Paul employs the concept of the body to suggest Christ's intense *presence* with his people whether individually, corporately or in the Lord's Supper. This use of body imagery to express the *presence* of Christ would seem to call into question our suggestion that the *absence* of Christ might be understood in bodily terms. However, throughout this chapter we see that the bodily presence of Christ is a mediated presence and not an absolute, unqualified presence.

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## 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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*Soli Deo Gloria.*



## ABBREVIATIONS

All abbreviations of ancient literature, academic journals and monograph series follow the forms indicated in the *SBL Handbook of Style: For Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christians Studies* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2006).

## CHAPTER 1: ENTRY POINT: SCHWEITZER AND KÄSEMANN ON THE EXALTED CHRIST

### 1. Overview

In your presence  
Time rode easy, anchored  
On a smile; but absence  
Rocked love's balance, unmoored  
The days.

Seamus Heaney<sup>1</sup>

Seamus Heaney's poem reflects the tension at the heart of every human relationship. Every union foreshadows a departure; every arrival a separation. This tension which drives so many poets and authors is also a significant, though often neglected, factor in Paul's own writing. In Paul, we encounter both the presence and the absence of Christ. However, Paul does not merely understand Christ's absence to follow his presence so that they are chronologically separated. Rather, for him, the presence and absence of Christ are simultaneously experienced. The absent Christ for whom Paul longs to depart and be with (Phil 1:23) is the present Christ in whom every Christian exists (Phil 1:1 etc.). The Christ who is in the believer (Rom 8:10) is the Christ who is seated at the right hand of God (Rom 8:34).

In this thesis we will use this seeming paradox as a lens to provide greater conceptual clarity of Paul's view of the exalted Christ.<sup>2</sup> We will see that this striking simultaneity of presence and absence is not a minor incoherence in an unimportant aspect of Paul's Christology but actually lies close to the heart of his understanding of the exalted Christ.

In considering the presence and absence of Christ we will particularly attend to his *absence*. This aspect of Paul's Christology is frequently neglected or even denied. The idea of absence is effectively ruled out when the risen Christ is identified with the Church or the Spirit and thus understood to exist solely as a *trans-corporeal*<sup>3</sup> or *trans-locational*<sup>4</sup> being. The

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<sup>1</sup> Seamus Heaney, 'Valediction' in *Death of a Naturalist* (London: Faber & Faber, 1966), 46.

<sup>2</sup> For the sake of this thesis, we will focus on the letters of Paul for which his authorship is largely undisputed, namely Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians and 1 Thessalonians.

<sup>3</sup> John Robinson in his 1952 monograph, *The Body*, suggests that the Church is the body of Christ in an absolute sense since it is 'in literal fact the risen organism of Christ's person in all its concrete reality'. The church 'is in fact no other than the glorified body of the risen and ascended Christ' [John A.T. Robinson, *The Body: A Study in Pauline Theology* (SBT 1, London: SCM, 1952), 51 (emphasis added)].

complexity of Paul's portrayal of Christ is indicated by the fact that that these identifications are not made in the abstract but are generated by readings of Pauline texts. The apostle *does* closely associate Christ and the Church and Christ and the Spirit. So, in 1 Corinthians 12:27, Paul identifies the Church as the *body* of Christ. And given that he has already identified Christ and his body (12:12), this suggests the closest possible connection between Christ and the Church. Similarly, others note the identification that Paul makes between the Lord and the Spirit in 2 Corinthians 3:17 and suggest that the risen Christ exists as the Spirit.

It would seem, then, that understanding Christ as a being who is trans-corporeal or trans-locational naturally arises from the Pauline text. Needless to say, other exegetes have contested the interpretations of the specific verses in question. However, what has largely been missing from these debates has been a consideration of how these understandings of Christ relate to his *absence*. How do texts where Christ is identified with the Church or with the Holy Spirit fit with those texts in which Christ is considered to be absent? How can Christ be absent if he is identified with the ubiquitous Holy Spirit? How can he be absent from believers if he exists as the Church?

The main argument of this thesis is that if the absence of Christ is more carefully delineated then the seeming paradox concerning the presence and absence of Christ actually disappears. We will argue that the absence of Christ is explained by his continuing humanity in which he possesses a distinct and distinguishable resurrection body. Christ's distinct bodily existence means that he can and must be distinguished from both the Church and the Holy Spirit. Because Christ's ongoing bodily existence has a particular and singular dimension which explains his absence, his presence is then understood to be a *mediated* presence. This, in turn, clarifies related questions concerning his presence - in particular the relationship between Christ and the various media of his presence (Paul; the Church; the gospel; the Spirit).

The result, as we have said, is hopefully greater conceptual clarity concerning the exalted Christ. But more positively it is hoped that this thesis will provide something of a contribution to wider questions in Pauline theology. For example, on the question of hope in Paul's eschatology and the relationship between the 'now' and the 'not yet', it has been

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<sup>4</sup> Adolf Deissmann argued that 'der lebendige Christus ist das Pneuma'. As Spirit, Christ is 'nicht fern über Wolken und Sternen, sondern er ist gegenwärtig auf der armen Erde' where he 'wohnt und waltet in den Seinen' [Adolf Deissmann, *Paulus: eine kultur- und religionsgeschichtliche Skizze* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1911), 85 (emphasis added)].

pointed out that in Paul eschatological ‘hope has an apocalyptic specificity’.<sup>5</sup> In this thesis we see that for Paul hope also has a *christological* specificity. For the Apostle, the Christian life is not simply one that is lived in the ‘overlap of the ages’, waiting for the consummation of history and the transformation of the cosmos. It is also one of waiting to be united with a person. The absence of Christ highlights the relational and christological dimension to Paul’s eschatology that can be drowned out by an exclusive emphasis on cosmology. Further, the absence of Christ emphasises the importance of the lordship of Christ to Paul’s theology. As Barth argues ‘eine persönliche Herrschaft’ needs to be ‘eine freie Herrschaft’ and so with personal presence there is always the possibility of personal absence.<sup>6</sup> Christ’s absence reminds the Church that she does not control her Lord and that his presence with her does not negate his Lordship over her. The same caution applies where Christ’s presence is thought primarily in terms of his *kerygmatic* presence. As we will see, the gospel does function as a medium of Christ’s presence. But even here the Lord retains his personal particularity *beyond* the gospel and so his resurrection existence cannot be reduced to a mere linguistic actuality.

## 2. Outline

In chapter 2, we consider a number of texts which imply the absence of Christ. Paul expresses his own experience of the Christian life in terms of Christ’s absence when he states his strong desire to depart this life so that he can be with Christ (Phil 1:23). He also considers the Parousia of Christ as the time when believers will be *with* Christ (1 Thess 4:15-17). Thus, the Christian life before death or the Parousia of Christ is a life experienced in absence from Christ. This chapter proceeds by examining the *body* of Christ to see whether the idea that Christ continues to possess a distinct and distinguishable body might explain his absence from believers.

In chapters 3 and 4 we turn to consider the presence of Christ and we see that his presence actually takes a number of different modes and we examine three of the most significant. In chapter 3 we examine his epiphanic presence and his dynamic presence. The former is seen clearly in an extended section in 2 Corinthians (2:14-4:12) where Paul repeatedly employs epiphanic language (e.g. φανέρωσις and cognates) and imagery (e.g. the apostles are the ‘aroma’ of Christ; believers behold the ‘face’ of Christ). The latter mode of Christ’s presence is seen in texts where Paul portrays Christ as the *agent* of his own

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<sup>5</sup> J. C. Beker, *Paul The Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), 149.

<sup>6</sup> KD 1/1, 100.

presence (e.g. Rom 15:18-19; 2 Cor 13:1-4; 1 Cor 11:27-34). In this chapter, we will see that the question of mediation is an important aspect in regard to Christ's presence. The mediation of the Spirit is particularly significant as it raises the issue of the exact nature of the relationship between Christ and the Spirit.

Finally, in chapter 4 we consider the bodily presence of Christ. Here Paul employs the concept of the body to suggest Christ's intense *presence* with his people – seemingly at both the individual (Rom 8:10) and corporate (1 Cor 12:27) levels. He also appears to equate Christ's body with the bread broken at the Lord's Supper (1 Cor 10:16). This use of body imagery to express the *presence* of Christ would seem to call into question our suggestion that the *absence* of Christ might be helpfully understood in bodily terms. We proceed in this chapter by considering how these images of Christ's bodily presence relate to the idea of his bodily absence, which we argue for in chapter 2.

Thus, we will see that the relationship of the absence and presence of Christ centres on the nature of the body of the exalted Christ. However, often treatments of the risen Christ's body focus on discussions of its materiality or otherwise. What is often neglected is any consideration of the locatedness of Christ's body. Our thesis, in contrast, attempts to highlight the significance of the bodily locatedness of the risen Christ as a lens to understand both his absence and presence.

### **3. Entry Point: Schweitzer and Käsemann**

Questions concerning the presence and absence of Christ have played an important role in theological debates throughout Christian history - most obviously concerning the relationship of Christ to the bread and the cup in the Lord's Supper. The historical significance and continuing impact of these debates on relationships between different Christian groups highlight the importance of considering the presence and absence of Christ. However, New Testament studies have generally not considered the exalted Christ through this lens. Accordingly, in the rest of this chapter we will not present a history of research or *status quaestionis*. Rather, we will provide an *entry point* to our thesis by examining how two of the 20<sup>th</sup> century's most significant Pauline scholars conceived of the exalted Christ.<sup>7</sup> We will see that while they did not directly address the relationship

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<sup>7</sup> Although more famed for his *Quest for the Historical Jesus*, Albert Schweitzer (1875-1965) has had a significant influence on the study of Paul. Despite his mixed reception, the questions that Schweitzer poses have arguably 'remapped the terrain and redrawn the contours' of the study of Paul [R. Barry Matlock, *Unveiling the Apocalyptic Paul: Paul's Interpreters and the Rhetoric of Criticism* (JSNTS 127, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 57]. For a survey of the (mixed) contemporary reception of both his major works on Paul see James

between the presence and absence of Christ, this question actually lies close to the heart of their interpretations of Paul's Theology.

In fact, the importance of Paul's concept of the exalted Christ is reflected by its centrality in both Schweitzer's and Käsemann's Pauline theologies. The mysticism that Schweitzer understands as central to Pauline soteriology is a mystical union of the believer with the exalted Christ. For Käsemann, the construct that holds together the theology of the apostle Paul is the Lordship of the exalted Christ.<sup>8</sup> However, these two interpreters also reveal the complexity of Paul's conceptualisation of the exalted Christ. In two important aspects they arrive at very different conclusions. Regarding Christ's location, Schweitzer insists that for Paul 'wie für alle Gläubigen seiner Generation, ist Christus im Himmel, bei Gott, und nirgends sonst',<sup>9</sup> while Käsemann maintains that Paul 'kennt keinen unsichtbaren Christus, den man *nur im Himmel* lokalisieren kann'.<sup>10</sup> Similarly, regarding the agency of the exalted Christ in Paul, we will see that while Käsemann views him exercising his lordship as a personal agent, Schweitzer regards him as an impersonal 'transmitter' of resurrection power. The stark differences between Schweitzer and Käsemann afford an excellent opportunity to lay out some of the major issues concerning the exalted Christ. However, we will not confine ourselves to their conclusions, but will especially attend to the exegesis that leads to those conclusions.<sup>11</sup> These two Pauline interpreters will lead us not only to the theological issues that are crucial to understanding the nature of the exalted Christ but to the texts that need to be interpreted to construct that understanding.

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Carleton Paget, 'Schweitzer and Paul,' *JSNT* 33 (2011): 232-233, 244-245. Similarly, Ernst Käsemann (1906-1988) has arguably dominated the study of the New Testament in the second half of the twentieth century. His consistent interpretation of Paul's theology across five decades has been simply described as 'remarkable' [David Way, *The Lordship of Christ: Ernst Käsemann's Interpretation of Paul's Theology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 277].

<sup>8</sup> As convincingly argued by Way, *The Lordship of Christ*, 279-280. Way notes that in different contexts Käsemann can assert that 'God's righteousness', justification, Paul's Christology, the dialectic of gift and power, and the lordship of Christ are the 'centre' of Paul's theology. However, as Way argues, the Lordship of Christ is 'the catch-phrase which sums up Käsemann's theological programme and enables him to relate the individual themes of his interpretation to its doctrinal centre'.

<sup>9</sup> Albert Schweitzer, *Die Mystik des Apostels Paulus* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1930), 34. Emphasis added.

<sup>10</sup> E. Käsemann, *An die Römer* (HUNT 8a., Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1973), 212. Emphasis added. Käsemann is here commenting on Romans 8-1-11 and we will return to the specifics of his discussion below.

<sup>11</sup> Matlock, *Unveiling the Apocalyptic Paul*, 17 states that, in his study of Schweitzer, Käsemann and others, his aim is not to offer his own exegesis of any Pauline texts. However, neither does he offer any real treatment of the exegesis of his subjects. The result is that their conclusions tend to be presented in a slightly disconnected, abstract manner. On the neglect of Käsemann as an exegete see Landau's editorial foreword to the collection of Käsemann's unpublished essays: Rudolf Landau, 'Vorwort' in *In der Nachfolge des gekreuzigten Nazareners: Aufsätze und Vorträge aus dem Nachlass* (ed. R. Landau and W. Kraus; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2005), viii.

## 4. Schweitzer on the Exalted Christ

### 4.1 Christ in Heaven

As noted, Schweitzer holds to an exclusively heavenly location for the exalted Christ. He is insistent that that for Paul 'wie für alle Gläubigen seiner Generation, ist Christus im Himmel, bei Gott, und nirgends sonst'.<sup>12</sup> In making this statement Schweitzer refers to two statements in Paul, namely Philippians 3:20 ('from [heaven] we await a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ') and 1 Thessalonians 4:16 ('the Lord himself will descend from heaven'). Later in discussing Philippians 1:21-24 where Paul expresses a desire to 'depart and be with Christ', Schweitzer notes Paul's expression of hope that he will be swept away, to 'wo Christus ist'.<sup>13</sup> Quite simply Christ is not *here*, he is somewhere *else*. This view of the exalted Christ's location is consistent with what Schweitzer sees as the controlling theme in Paul's theology, namely 'Christ-mysticism'. For Schweitzer, mysticism is found 'wo ein Menschenwesen die Trennung zwischen irdisch und überirdisch, zeitlich und ewig als überwunden ansieht und sich selber, noch in dem Irdischen und Zeitlichen stehend, als zum Überirdischen und Ewigen eingegangen erlebt'.<sup>14</sup>

Schweitzer regards Paul's mysticism as specifically 'Christ-mysticism' since it is belonging to or being united with the exalted Christ which enables believers to belong to the super-earthly realm. Christ-mysticism, then, is fellowship with the Messiah 'in der natürlichen Welt verwirklichten'.<sup>15</sup> Schweitzer sees this Christ-mysticism in text after text in Paul that speak of union with Christ; new creation and death to sin and flesh: Galatians 2:19-20; 3:26-28; 5:6; 5:24-25; 6:14; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Romans 6:10-11; 7:4; 8:1-2; 8:9-11; 12:4-5 and Philippians 3:1-11. Christ-mysticism is the key to Paul's soteriology. In fact all the soteriological blessings which the believer possesses flow *exclusively* from being-in-Christ.<sup>16</sup> For Schweitzer, 'being-in-Christ' is 'das große Rätsel', the key to unlocking Paul's entire theology.<sup>17</sup>

The concept of mystical union with the exalted Christ or 'being-in-Christ' means that believers are 'aus ihrer natürlichen Existenz herausgerissen und eine

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<sup>12</sup> Schweitzer, *Die Mystik des Apostels Paulus*, 34.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 138.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 106. Schweitzer notes an important difference between Paul's Christ-mysticism and primitive mysticism in that it is not a 'Gottesmystik' but purely a 'Christusmystik' (3). Christ-mysticism will, in time, give way to God-mysticism when Christ will give his authority back to God (1 Cor 15:26-28) but at this stage in history this is impossible while Christ's power is not absolute (12-13).

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 202.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

Menschheitsklasse für sich werden'.<sup>18</sup> Believers are already able to partake in the resurrection mode of existence, though they are not *fully* in this mode of existence. At least in 'äußerer Schein'<sup>19</sup> they remain in the natural world. Their supernatural character has not been made manifest. Paul's mystical schema thus has an 'overlapping' character. In it 'werden ja jetzt die natürliche und die messianische Welt miteinander in Verbindung gesetzt'.<sup>20</sup> It is precisely this overlapping character between the earthly and super-earthly worlds that gives Paul's teaching its mystical character.

Under this mystical scheme, Christ must be entirely located in the eternal, super-earthly sphere. It is believers' union with him that gives them their share in the super-earthly world. Thus, it is crucial that he is, in fact, *entirely* located there, acting almost as an anchor for believers' own participation in that world. Accordingly, for Schweitzer, Paul's Christ exists in an 'übernatürlichen Zustand'<sup>21</sup> and possesses a 'himmlische'<sup>22</sup> and 'verklärte'<sup>23</sup> 'Leiblichkeit'.<sup>24</sup>

So, for Schweitzer the exclusive heavenly location of Christ is exegetically present in Paul and consistent with his central theological concern. This, however, raises the question concerning the mode of Christ's union with believers. How can Christ be thought of as exclusively located in *heaven* and yet united with believers on *earth*? This question is especially acute for Schweitzer because he refuses to conceive of the union between Christ and the believer as 'metaphorical' or 'spiritual'. It is, as we will see, a form of *physical* union. In what sense is Christ *physically* united with believers on earth and yet not himself located on earth? In the next section we will consider that question, as well as examine one area of Pauline thought where these issues come to the surface, namely the Lord's Supper. In what sense, if any, does Paul consider the bread and the wine the body and blood of Christ?

*The Mystical Union of Christ with Believers.* Given that Christ is entirely located in heaven and that believers, in some sense, remain here on earth, the question of the *nature* of their mystical union must be addressed. That is, how is it possible 'daß die noch als natürliche Menschen auf Erden wandelnden Erwählten in Gemeinschaft mit dem bereits im

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 97. Because they are in this state, believers are capable of immediately receiving the (full) resurrection state of existence at the return of Christ as shown by 1 Thessalonians 5:10 where Paul states that Christ 'has died for us, in order that we, whether awake or asleep, may be alive with him' (111).

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 167 cf. 111.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 105.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 110.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 135.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> This important term will be discussed below.



übernatürlichen Zustand befindlichen Christus stehen’?<sup>25</sup> Schweitzer is clear that this union is not ‘etwas Symbolisches’ which could, if necessary, simply be expressed using a different metaphor but is an ‘einfache Wirklichkeit’<sup>26</sup> and a ‘naturhafte Größe’.<sup>27</sup> It is also not merely ‘spiritual’.<sup>28</sup> Rather, Pauline Christ-mysticism has an ‘außerordentlich realistischer Charakter’.<sup>29</sup> Schweitzer argues that Paul holds that Christ and the Elect are actually ‘in derselben Leiblichkeit naturhaft untereinander zusammenhängen und eine in die andere übergehen’.<sup>30</sup> How then can a physical union with the Elect who remain on earth be consistent with Christ’s exclusively heavenly location? To answer this question we first need to establish the exact nature of this physical union.

For Schweitzer, that there is ‘eine ganz naturhafte Gemeinschaft’ between Christ and the Elect is proved by the fact that ‘being in Christ’ replaces the ‘naturhaft’ existence ‘in the flesh’.<sup>31</sup> Paul can use the language of ‘cleaving’ (κολλάω) of both bodily union between a man and a woman and union between the believer and Christ (1 Cor 6:16-17). Further, only by regarding the union as physical can we make sense of verses like Philippians 1:20; 29; 2:17 etc. where the Elect can suffer for Christ and for each other.<sup>32</sup> Mutual suffering implies *physical* interdependence. In addition, a passage that Schweitzer argues has been neglected in this regard is 1 Corinthians 7:12-14 where a believer’s unbelieving partner and children are described as being sanctified ‘weil die Ehegatten

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<sup>25</sup> Schweitzer, *Die Mystik des Apostels Paulus*, 110.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 127.

<sup>28</sup> Schweitzer criticises the approach of those who explain conceptions regarding union with Christ in his death and suffering, and new life in him through the Spirit by ‘Umschreibungen und Erläuterungen’ until nothing of the realistic sense is left. These interpreters fail to answer the question of why Paul if he ‘etwas so “Geistiges” und Allgemeines sagen will, eine so übertriebene, paradoxe und materialistische Ausdrucksweise gewählt hat’ [Albert Schweitzer, *Die Geschichte der paulinischen Forschung von der Reformationszeit bis auf die Gegenwart* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1911), 31].

<sup>29</sup> Schweitzer, *Die Mystik des Apostels Paulus*, 13.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 127.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.* In his English translation of *Paul and his Interpreters* [Albert Schweitzer, *Paul and his Interpreters: A Critical History* (London: A&C Black, 1912), 162 n.3], William Montgomery notes that he entered into correspondence with Schweitzer regarding how to best translate the word *naturhaft*. They agreed to translate it using the word *physical* but to place it in quotation marks ‘to indicate the special use’. Schweitzer’s note to Montgomery reads as follows: ‘In the special sense in which it is here used *naturhaft* is intended to convey that it is not a question of a purely spiritual redemption, but that the whole physical and hyperphysical being of the man is thereby translated into a new condition. Body and soul are redeemed together; and in such a way that not only the elect portion of mankind, but the whole world is completely transformed in a great catastrophic event.’ In his translation of *The Mysticism of Paul* [Albert Schweitzer, *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle* (2nd ed., Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998)], Montgomery in places renders *naturhaft* as ‘quasi-physical’ (e.g. 110 [cf. 112], 223 [cf. 218] and in others as ‘actual’ (e.g. 127 [cf. 127]) or ‘physical’ (e.g. 127 [cf. 128])). We will explore further the nature of this physical union below. To avoid confusion we will proceed by quoting Schweitzer directly so that the reader can observe when he uses the word *naturhaft* (or related words such as *Leiblichkeit* and *Körperlichkeit*). When summarising Schweitzer’s thought we will use the word ‘physical’. We will explore further below more closely what Schweitzer understands by this concept.

<sup>32</sup> Schweitzer, *Die Mystik des Apostels Paulus*, 127.

einander körperlich angehören' and so 'ist der ungläubige Teil, ohne sein Zutun, Christo zugehörig und der Wirkung der von Christo ausgehenden Sterbens- und Auferstehungskräfte ausgesetzt'.<sup>33</sup> That is, *physical* union with the believer brings the unbelieving partner into *physical* union with Christ. Further, other texts indicate that the physical nature of the union means that it can be annulled by other physical connections.<sup>34</sup> Each of these sections of Paul indicate that the union between Christ and the believer is *physical*.

Further, the physical union between Christ and believer is not of a general kind. Rather, it involves a partaking in 'der himmlischen Leiblichkeit Christi' and so Paul uses the language of 'putting on Christ' (Gal 3:27; Rom 13:14).<sup>35</sup> In fact, for Schweitzer, Paul's basic point is that the Elect actually share a corporeity with Christ which 'in besonderer Weise der Wirkung von Auferstehungskräften ausgesetzt und für sie empfänglich ist'.<sup>36</sup> The physical nature of the union means that in the nature of their corporeity [the Elect] 'mit Jesus Christus zusammengehören'.<sup>37</sup> They have become beings who 'in Sterben und Auferstehen begriffen sind, wenn auch der Schein ihrer natürlichen Existenz noch erhalten bleibt'.<sup>38</sup>

The physical concept of being-in-Christ 'beherrscht Paulus in der Art, daß er nicht nur alles, was mit der Erlösung zusammenhängt, in ihr begründet sein läßt, sondern überhaupt jedes Erleben, Fühlen, Denken und Wollen des Getauften als in Christo geschehen bezeichnet'.<sup>39</sup> For Paul every 'Lebensäußerung' of the baptised person is determined by their being in Christ.<sup>40</sup> Being 'in die Leiblichkeit Christi eingepflanzt', [the baptised person] 'verliert sein kreatürliches Eigendasein und seine natürliche Persönlichkeit'.<sup>41</sup> From that point on they are only 'eine Erscheinungsform der in jener Leiblichkeit dominierenden Persönlichkeit Jesu Christi'.<sup>42</sup> Paul testifies this about himself in Galatians 2:19-20 - 'I am crucified with Christ, and I no longer live; rather, it is Christ who lives in me'.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 128.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 129-130. Thus, Paul's mysticism leads him to articulate three sins that can break union with Christ - sexual immorality (1 Cor 6:13-19), circumcision after baptism (Rom 7:4-6; Gal 5:4) and partaking in pagan sacrificial feasts (1 Cor 10:20-21).

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 135.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 110-111.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 111.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 125.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 126.

The fact that ‘die Erwählten miteinander und mit Jesu Christo an einer Leiblichkeit teilhaben’ is the ‘ursprüngliche und zentrale Gedanke der Mystik Pauli’.<sup>44</sup> And it is this physical nature of the union that opens up another important question regarding Schweitzer’s conception of the exalted Christ. In fact, Schweitzer himself identifies Paul’s concept of shared corporeity of the ‘mystical body of Christ’ as the most enigmatic part of his theology. He thinks that ‘in der gesamten Literatur der Mystik gibt es kein Rätsel, das dem des mystischen Leibes Christi vergleichbar wäre’.<sup>45</sup> How can Christ and the Elect share the same bodily space? How could Paul develop ‘die Vorstellung des erweiterten Leibes einer Persönlichkeit’ and regard it as so self-evident that he can use it without ever explaining it?<sup>46</sup>

Schweitzer sees the roots of the doctrine of the body of Christ lying in the Jewish concept of the ‘vorherbestimmten Zusammengehörigkeit’ of the Elect with one another and with the Messiah.<sup>47</sup> Within the framework of Paul’s resurrection mysticism, this root concept takes the form of a shared corporeity.<sup>48</sup> To understand this idea of common corporeity in the body of Christ we must probe further the *physical* nature of the union between Christ and the Elect. As Schweitzer himself notes, to argue that statements in Paul are meant in a ‘naturhaft’ sense does not take us very far. The foundation of their ‘reality’ must be shown. Simply in and of themselves they are not ‘erklärlich’.<sup>49</sup>

To proceed further we need to examine more closely what exactly Schweitzer means by the term ‘Leiblichkeit’. It is to be distinguished from *flesh*, which for Schweitzer is entirely negative. He maintains that in Paul there is no idea of the resurrection of the flesh<sup>50</sup> and that there is an absolute antithesis between flesh and Spirit.<sup>51</sup> The flesh has no future and through dying and rising again with Christ it is ‘vernichtet’.<sup>52</sup> Schweitzer, thus, seems to understand ‘flesh’ primarily as the *earthly, natural* matter of which the body consists.<sup>53</sup> Flesh is different from corporeity which in turn, according to Schweitzer, is to be distinguished from both the ‘Fleischesleib’ and the ‘Herrlichkeitsleib’.<sup>54</sup> He equates

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 116.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 117.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 118.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Schweitzer, *Die Geschichte der paulinischen Forschung*, 190.

<sup>50</sup> Schweitzer, *Die Mystik des Apostels Paulus*, 130-131.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 332.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> See Richard B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1--4:11* (2nd ed., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 44 n.43.

<sup>54</sup> Schweitzer, *Die Mystik des Apostels Paulus*, 131.

corporeity with the *soul* and maintains that this is to be understood as the ‘essence’ or ‘die unzerstörbare Persönlichkeit des Individuums’.<sup>55</sup> Due to its corporeal nature, Schweitzer can thus refer to the soul as a ‘Seelenleib’<sup>56</sup> and can speak of ‘Seelenleiblichkeit’<sup>57</sup> He can also speak of ‘geistigen Persönlichkeit’ in contrast to ‘fleischlichen Körperlichkeit’.<sup>58</sup> The soul of the Elect person is united first with the fleshly body and then with the glorified body. For Schweitzer, it is both union with the Spirit<sup>59</sup> and union with Christ<sup>60</sup> which gives the soul the capacity to unite with the glorified body.

It is the ‘soul’ then which is the essence of the ‘corporeal’ or ‘physical’ union between Christ and the Elect. It is not a union of *flesh* but rather a union of *personality*. Paul in Galatians 3:28 affirms that the Galatians are ‘one’ and the nature of this union entails the Elect form with one another and with Christ ‘eine Gesamtpersönlichkeit’ in which ‘die Besonderheiten der Einzelpersönlichkeiten, wie sie durch Abstammung, Geschlecht und soziale Stellung gegeben sind, nicht mehr gelten’.<sup>61</sup> This common corporeity is called the Body of Christ ‘nach der hervorragendsten Persönlichkeit, die an ihr Teil hat’.<sup>62</sup>

Christ’s dominance in the common corporeity does not exclude the fact that it has an influence on *him* as well. According to Schweitzer, this ‘soul’ union has meaning ‘nicht nur etwas im Hinblick auf die Erwählten, sondern auch im Hinblick auf Christum selber’.<sup>63</sup> That is, because of ‘naturhaft’ connection between Christ and the Elect, there is a ‘Vertauschbarkeit der Beziehungen’.<sup>64</sup> Further, this common corporeity means that one cannot distinguish between the personal (historical) and the mystical body of Christ given

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 332.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid. Note that Montgomery (Schweitzer, *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle*, 342) renders *Körperlichkeit* as ‘corporeity’ i.e. the same as *Leiblichkeit*. It is probably better to render it as something more like ‘physicality’ and thus to reflect the underlying difference between *Körper* and *Leib*. On the translation and philosophical differences involved see the discussion in Drew Leder, *The Absent Body* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 5–6 and also E. Käsemann, ‘Leiblichkeit bei Paulus’ in *In der Nachfolge des gekreuzigten Nazareners: Aufsätze und Vorträge aus dem Nachlass* (ed. R. Landau and W. Kraus; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2005), 39.

<sup>59</sup> Schweitzer, *Die Mystik des Apostels Paulus*, 332: Bei Paulus bereitet sich die Auferstehung in der Art vor, daß das Fleisch durch das Sterben und Auferstehen mit Christo vernichtet wird und der Geist sich mit der Seelenleiblichkeit verbindet und diese fähig macht, bei der Wiederkunft Christi alsbald mit dem Herrlichkeitsleibe überkleidet zu werden.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 133: sie sind durch das Teilhaben an dem verkörperten Leibe Christi bereits auf die Erlangung des ihnen bestimmten Herrlichkeitsleibes vorbereitet. As we will see, Schweitzer holds that being in the Spirit is only ‘eine Erscheinungsform’ of being-in-Christ. They are both a ‘Beschreibung ein und desselben Zustandes’ (166). He refers to a number of groups of texts to show that believers are ‘in the Spirit’ and thus *no longer* ‘in the flesh’ viz. Romans 8:1–2; Romans 2:28–29 and Philippians 3:3; 2 Corinthians 3:6; Galatians 5:18 and Romans 7:6; Galatians 4:6 and Romans 8:14–16; Galatians 5:5 and Romans 8:4, 10 and 1 Corinthians 6:11; Romans 5:5.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 119.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 118.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 126.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 127.

that the body of Christ can no longer be thought of as 'eine für sich bestehende Größe'. Rather, it can only be thought of as 'die Stelle in Betracht, von der aus das mit Jesus Christus anhebende Sterben und Auferstehen auf die Leiblichkeit der mit ihm zusammengehörigen Erwählten übergreift'.<sup>65</sup>

We can now return to the question of how Christ who is exclusively located in heaven, can be united with believers on earth. The answer turns on two facts. Firstly, for Schweitzer, the Elect 'in Wirklichkeit nicht mehr natürliche Menschen, sondern, wie Christus selber, bereits übernatürliche Wesen sind, nur daß es an ihnen noch nicht offenbar ist'.<sup>66</sup> For believers, then, being in the flesh is only a matter of outward appearance, not a 'wirkliche Daseinsbedingtheit'.<sup>67</sup> In other words, in reality believers *are* located with Christ in heaven. Their location on earth is only an outward appearance. Secondly, Schweitzer's understanding of 'corporeal' as centring on the soul, that is, the 'indestructible essence' of a person, allows him to posit a corporeal union that does not include the flesh. So, while believers are located on earth *in the flesh*, they remain corporeally located with Christ in a single corporeity that is located exclusively in heaven. An implication of Schweitzer's analysis, then, is that although Christ is located in heaven, he is not *absent* from believers. The fact that Christ and the Elect share the same corporeity means that they are connected and present to one another at the deepest level. The aspect of believers that remains *on earth* is merely a matter of 'äußerer Schein'.

*Christ and the Lord's Supper.* It is in his discussion of the Lord's Supper that Schweitzer's understanding of the location of the exalted Christ comes into sharpest focus. We will see that for Käsemann it is precisely the Lord's Supper that gives Paul one of his clearest expressions of the *non-heavenly* location of Christ. For Schweitzer, however, given Christ's exclusive heavenly location, it would be impossible for him to be present in the elements in any way. So, on his view of the exalted Christ, there is no question of eating and drinking elements 'die irgendwie Leib und Blut Christi sind'.<sup>68</sup> Much of Schweitzer's concern in considering the Lord's Supper (and Baptism) is to show that sacramental ideas fit naturally into Paul's physical and mystical structure and do not need to be seen to be imported from Hellenism. The physical character of Paul's soteriology explains why sacramental ideas,

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 119.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 111.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 167.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 262.

which at first blush appear out of character with the 'tiefen Geistigkeit' which is characteristic of his religion,<sup>69</sup> are consistent with the thoroughly realistic character of his thought.<sup>70</sup>

In his discussion of the Lord's Supper, Schweitzer understands Paul to be acting as an *interpreter* of Jesus. So, in 1 Corinthians 11:24, Paul changes Jesus' statement that his body is given 'for many' (cf. Matt 26:28; Mk 14:24) to 'for you'. In its original context 'for you' would have implied that Jesus' death was effective for the disciples alone. However, Paul considers the disciples as 'die Vertreter der Gläubigen bei den künftigen Mahlen'.<sup>71</sup> Similarly, in view of his mysticism, Paul interprets Jesus' original words to mean 'daß dieses Essen und Trinken Gemeinschaft mit Christo bedeutet'.<sup>72</sup> So, in 1 Corinthians 10:16, Paul can speak of the cup being a participation in the blood of Christ and the bread being a participation in the body of Christ. For Paul, 'blood and body of Christ' together here refer to the *mystical* body of Christ. In other words, eating and drinking effects union with the *mystical* body of Christ in the same way baptism does.<sup>73</sup> The reference to 'blood' which, at first glance, seems not to fit with respect to the *mystical* body of Christ can be simply explained by the fact that Paul was constrained by Jesus' words or may be a reference to the blood of *believers* in the body of Christ.<sup>74</sup>

For Schweitzer, then, there is absolutely no question of a change occurring in the elements: 'In keiner Weise sind oder bedeuten Brot und Wein beim Herrenmahl für Paulus Leib und Blut Christi'.<sup>75</sup> Moreover, this is not simply due to Christ's exclusively heavenly location but is also due to the nature of his body. The bread cannot be the body of Christ since 'keine Materie außer dem menschlichen Leibe kann für ihn jemals zum Leib Christi werden'.<sup>76</sup> The term 'body of Christ' refers to 'der Leib Christi mitsamt den Leibern der in ihm seienden Erählten'.<sup>77</sup> So, in the context of a discussion on the Lord's Supper, when Paul speaks of the possibility of sinning against the body of Christ (1 Cor 11:27), the debate over whether this refers to the body of the crucified historical Jesus or the body of the risen Lord misses this wider issue of how Christ now exists bodily. *Body* here actually refers to

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 22: Schweitzer notes that while this may be difficult for modern readers to accept, 'wir haben seine Worte reden zu lassen, wie sie lauten, nicht wie wir sie gerne hören möchten'.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 258.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 260.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 262.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

‘die erweiterte Leiblichkeit Christi, die die Existenzen der Gläubigen miteinschließt’.<sup>78</sup> Thus, this sin is committed against fellow believers. As Schweitzer notes in *Paul and his Interpreters*, ‘das Leib und Blut des historischen Jesus für Paulus nicht mehr existieren’ and while ‘der verhörte Christus wohl einen Leib besitzt’, it is not one ‘der von Blut durchspült wird und irdisch genossen werden kann’.<sup>79</sup> Rather, the body of the exalted Christ is his mystical body and this body includes within itself both the exalted Christ and ‘noch auf Erden wallenden Wesen’ and is thus simultaneously natural and supernatural.<sup>80</sup>

For Paul the Lord’s Supper does not involve a change in elements. Interpreting Jesus’ words at the Last Supper in the light of his mysticism, Paul sees the Lord’s Supper as a means to union with the body of Christ - that is with Christ and with other believers.<sup>81</sup> It was only as the intensity of eschatological expectation died down after Paul that the meal lost its character as a real meal and the bread and wine were understood as the flesh and blood of Christ.<sup>82</sup> Schweitzer’s view of the Lord’s Supper then is totally consistent with his view of Christ as being entirely located in heaven. In the Lord’s Supper the partaker is lifted up to Christ. Christ does not descend to the elements.

#### 4.2 Christ’s Agency from Heaven

Christ’s heavenly location does not restrict his agency. In fact, at one point Schweitzer states that ‘die erlösende Wirksamkeit des verklärten Christus ungleich größer ist als die des im Fleische seienden’.<sup>83</sup> However, not only is this ongoing activity immeasurably greater, it operates in a significantly different mode than when Christ was ‘in the flesh’. At the conclusion of his *Quest For the Historical Jesus*, Schweitzer argues that Jesus remains significant for the world because ‘eine gewaltige geistige Strömung von ihm ausgegangen ist und auch unsere Zeit durchflutet’ - a fact that can be ‘weder erschüttert noch gefestigt’ by history.<sup>84</sup> Accordingly, he argues, ‘wir erleben was Paulus erlebte’ and ‘müssen uns darein finden, daß die historische Erkenntnis des Wesens und des Lebens Jesu der Welt nicht eine Föderung, sondern vielleicht ein Aergernis zur Religion sein wird’.<sup>85</sup> It is not ‘der historische erkannte, sondern nur der in den Menschen geistig auferstandene Jesus’ who is

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 263. Emphasis added.

<sup>79</sup> Schweitzer, *Die Geschichte der paulinischen Forschung*, 156.

<sup>80</sup> Schweitzer, *Die Mystik des Apostels Paulus*, 263.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 262.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 265.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 357.

<sup>84</sup> Albert Schweitzer, *Von Reimarus zu Wrede: eine Geschichte der Leben-Jesu-Forschung* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1906), 397.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 399.

significant for our time, and it is not 'der historische, sondern der Geist, der von ihm ausgeht' who is 'der Weltenüberwinder'.<sup>86</sup> These concepts find a parallel in Schweitzer's later Pauline studies where we see that the exalted Christ operates more as a transmitter or even medium of resurrection power than a true personal agent.

*Paul and the Revelation of the Exalted Christ.* Despite his own views on the lack of soteriological relevance of 'der historische erkannte' Jesus, Schweitzer does affirm a basic continuity between Jesus and the exalted Christ in Paul. His understanding of the resurrection is that it is the resurrection of *Jesus*.<sup>87</sup> So, he notes that '[d]urch Tod und Auferstehung ist Jesus also über alle Engelwesen erhaben'.<sup>88</sup> Similarly, he speaks of the return of *Jesus*.<sup>89</sup> However, Schweitzer also twice quotes 2 Corinthians 5:16: 'If we have known Christ in the flesh, we no longer know him'.<sup>90</sup> In both cases, this is not used to affirm any kind of disjunction in *identity* between Jesus and the exalted Christ. Rather, it is specifically applied to Paul's own teaching. In his first use of the verse, Schweitzer argues in the light of it that we are not to *simply* appeal to the teaching of Jesus but to see Paul re-stating it in light of the time.<sup>91</sup> That is, he affirms that Paul does not abandon Jesus' teaching but *continues* it.<sup>92</sup> Both taught Christ-mysticism: Jesus 'wie sie für die Zeit gilt, in der der kommende Messias unerkant in irdischer Gestalt auf Erden wandelt' and Paul 'wie sie für die Zeit gilt, die auf Tod und Auferstehung Jesu folgt'.<sup>93</sup> Or, to use an illustration, both Jesus and Paul are looking toward the same mountain range: 'Jesus erschaute es als vor ihm liegend; Paulus aber steht darin und hat die ersten Anhöhen schon hinter sich'.<sup>94</sup> Crucially, however, in his second reference to 2 Corinthians 5:16, Schweitzer refers to the verse alongside a reference to Galatians 1:11-12 where he notes that Paul maintains that his gospel is grounded on

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid. On the similarities between Schweitzer and Bultmann at this point, see in particular Erich Grässer, *Albert Schweitzer als Theologe* (BHT 60, Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1979), 123.

<sup>87</sup> He will also obviously use the language of the risen *Christ* e.g. Schweitzer, *Die Mystik des Apostels Paulus*, 14, 97.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 65.

<sup>89</sup> For example Ibid., 66.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 115, 259.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 115.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 110.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 114. Schweitzer puts it a bit stronger in Schweitzer, *Die Geschichte der paulinischen Forschung*, 191: Es ist, als ob er annähme, daß von der jetzigen Weltperiode keine Verbindung zu derjenigen führt, in welcher Jesus lebte und lehrte, und die Überzeugung wäre, daß nach Tod und Auferstehung des Herrn Voraussetzungen vorliegen, die in ihrer gänzlichen Neuheit alles, was er lehrte, außer Kraft setzen und zu einer neuen Grundlegung der Ethik und weitergehenden Erkenntnissen über seinen Tod und seine Auferstehung drängen'.



revelation from Christ.<sup>95</sup> So, apart from the ‘unvermeidlichen Zugeständnissen an die Überlieferung’,<sup>96</sup> Paul operates on the principle that the truth about Christ and salvation ‘nicht aus überlieferten Nachrichten und Lehren, sondern aus Offenbarungen des Geistes Jesu Christi komme’.<sup>97</sup> Similarly, when he considers the phrase ‘by the word of the Lord’ in 1 Thessalonians 4:15, he suggests that this is not a saying of the historic Jesus, but a revelation of the exalted Christ made to him through the Spirit.<sup>98</sup> The exalted Christ, then, is active in his ongoing revelation to the apostle Paul. However, as our next section will show, this is not the dominant mode of his ongoing significance.

*The Soteriological Activity of the Exalted Christ.* Perhaps the most fruitful way of understanding Schweitzer’s view of the ongoing soteriological activity of Christ is through his view of baptism. Baptism in Paul, for Schweitzer, objectively effects union with the risen Christ. The one who is baptised into Christ ‘ist in einer Leiblichkeit mit ihm und den andern in Christo seienden Erwählten vereinigt (Gal 3:27-28) und erlebt mit ihm Sterben and Auferstehen (Rom 6:3-4)’.<sup>99</sup> Grafting into Christ takes place in this ceremonial act and *not* through ‘die gläubige Versenkung’.<sup>100</sup> Certainly the Corinthian Christians thought of it so objectively that they even underwent baptism for the dead. Schweitzer notes that far from rejecting their view as superstitious, Paul uses it as an argument against those who cast doubt on the resurrection (1 Cor 15:29).<sup>101</sup> That is, ‘being-in-Christ’ is not a subjective experience brought about ‘durch eine besondere Anstrengung des Glaubens’ but something which happens at baptism.<sup>102</sup> Baptism, then, is absolutely crucial to Paul’s soteriology. In fact, without baptism there simply is no ‘being-in-Christ’.<sup>103</sup>

While baptism unites the elect with Christ, this union with Christ is not to be thought of in *static* terms. Rather, the experience of dying and rising with Christ is not merely undergone in the act of initiation - as would be the case in the Greek Mystery-religions, but is something that ‘sich in dem [sic] Gläubigen vom Moment der Taufe an

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<sup>95</sup> Schweitzer, *Die Mystik des Apostels Paulus*, 259.

<sup>96</sup> Schweitzer is referring here to some of the language in the Lord’s Supper accounts that Paul is compelled to use since it is necessary for him to refer to the words spoken by Jesus at the Last Supper.

<sup>97</sup> Schweitzer, *Die Mystik des Apostels Paulus*, 172.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 118.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*

stetig wiederholt'.<sup>104</sup> Schweitzer notes 2 Corinthians 4:11 at this point, where Paul speaks of the Christian 'constantly being given over to death for Jesus' sake'. There is a continuous dying and rising again. This continual dying and rising again is possible because powers which were revealed in Jesus from the moment of his death and resurrection operate 'an der Leiblichkeit der zum messianischen Reiche Erwählten'. These powers enable the Elect to assume 'die Seinsweise der Auferstehung' before the general resurrection of the dead.<sup>105</sup> The flow of these powers to the elect is an ongoing process. That is, 'weltumgestaltende Kräfte' which are manifested for the first time in the death and resurrection of Jesus from that point onwards continue to show their efficacy in a 'bestimmten Menschheitsklasse'.<sup>106</sup> These powers flow from Christ to the believer. Baptism, then, is the means by which the believer is joined to Christ, and the efficacy of baptism is due to the 'von Christus ausgehende Kräfte' which cause 'das erlösende Geschehen in ihr zustande kommen'.<sup>107</sup> And it is the ongoing communication of this resurrection power from Christ which is the mode of his ongoing soteriological activity. The same powers that enabled Jesus to rise from the dead are continually at work on the Elect.

Crucially, these powers flow from the exalted Christ who is pictured as a transmitter or even medium of resurrection power. The form of these powers is the Spirit. So, Paul, in 1 Corinthians 12:13, describes baptism 'as being given to drink of the Spirit'.<sup>108</sup> It is the Spirit who is the 'Erscheinungsform von Auferstehungskräften',<sup>109</sup> and, as a consequence, is the 'Lebenskraft' of believers.<sup>110</sup> That is, the Spirit is the power 'der in Christo lebt und von ihm ausgeht (Rom 8:9)'.<sup>111</sup> The Spirit 'kommt den Gläubigen also von Christus aus als Geist Christi zu'.<sup>112</sup> Christ himself is the 'Träger' of 'Auferstehungsgeistes' which is bestowed

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 17. Accordingly, Schweitzer argues on pages 14-15 that there is no 'rebirth' motif in Paul's theology. This is only found in 'deutero-Pauline' literature. So, baptism in Romans 6:4 signifies being buried and raised with Christ while in Titus 3:5 it is described as the 'washing of rebirth'. Similarly the rebirth motif appears in 1 Peter 1:3, 23; 2:2; John 3:5; 1 John 3:9. The language of 'new creation' in Galatians 6:15 and 2 Corinthians 5:17 has 'nothing to do with the notion of rebirth'. Rather it indicates that the one who has died and risen again in Christ 'already belongs to the new world'.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 102. Although this is not to be thought of as a 'process' or any kind of ongoing ascent towards deity. Schweitzer, *Die Geschichte der paulinischen Forschung*, 175 compares the 'Mystery-religions' where 'steigen die Einzelnen auf einer Treppe stufenweise zur Vergottung hinauf' with Paul's theology where 'springen sie miteinander auf den in Bewegung befindlichen Aufzug, der sie in eine neue Welt bringt'.

<sup>106</sup> Schweitzer, *Die Mystik des Apostels Paulus*, 23.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 255.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid. We will see later that Käsemann sees this description as a reference to the Lord's Supper.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 165 cf. Rom 8:11; 2 Cor 1:22; 1 Cor 15:45-49.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 120.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 163.

upon the Elect.<sup>113</sup> However, Schweitzer simultaneously describes the way in which resurrection power flows to believers in *impersonal* terms. He argues that the powers of death and resurrection ‘in der ganzen Leiblichkeit der zum messianischen Reich Erwählten in Gang gebracht wird’ like ‘ein aufgespeicherter Brennstoff’.<sup>114</sup> This is certainly not something that the believer accomplishes in themselves. Instead, ‘der Prozeß des Sterbens und Auferstehens Christi ohne sein Zutun, ohne jedes Wollen, ohne jede Überlegung an ihm abläuft’. However, neither is any *personal* involvement of Christ emphasised. Rather, this ongoing soteriological activity is like ‘eine Maschinerie, die durch den Druck auf eine Feder in Gang gesetzt wird’ which serves to release a set of forces already in existence.<sup>115</sup>

### 4.3 Summary

For Schweitzer, Christ is located in heaven ‘*und nirgends sonst*’. Schweitzer can point to specific texts which speak of the future return of Christ from heaven (Phil 3:20; 1 Thess 4:16) and Paul’s expression of desire to ‘depart and be with Christ’ (Phil 1:21-24). Equally important is the fact that Paul’s soteriology is fundamentally mystical with its central concern being the transfer of the believer from the natural to the supernatural state of existence. Mystical union with Christ is union with the exalted Christ who is strictly located in heaven. Corporeally united with the exalted Christ, believers already share in his resurrection mode of existence. The fact that believers remain on earth is not a problem for Schweitzer. Their earthly location is only an ‘äußerer Schein’. In reality, in ‘essence’, they are already corporeally united with Christ in heaven. Similarly, Paul’s view of the Lord’s Supper does not contradict his concept of Christ’s heavenly location. Christ in no way dwells *in* the elements. Rather, Paul interprets the Last Supper of Jesus in light of his mysticism so that when the meal is taken, the believer is united with the body of Christ in all its extended corporeity, that is, with Christ and with believers.

One feature of Schweitzer’s analysis is that he only stresses the ‘extended’ nature of Christ’s corporeity. Central to Paul’s soteriology is the mystical union between Christ and believers and the resultant shared corporeity. Missing from Schweitzer’s treatment is any discussion on the ‘distinct’ nature of Christ’s corporeity, that is, the idea that there remains an aspect of Christ’s corporeity in which believers do not and will not *participate*. Schweitzer does not deny that the risen Christ has a discrete body. He suggests that the

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<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 165.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 111.

<sup>115</sup> Schweitzer, *Die Geschichte der paulinischen Forschung*, 176.

corporate body is made up of 'der Leib Christi' together with 'den Leibern der in ihm seienden Erwählten'.<sup>116</sup> However, this discrete body plays little part in Schweitzer's overall view of Paul's theology. The result is that any notion of the believer being *absent* from Christ in any meaningful sense is missing. The fact that the believer who is located on earth only in 'äußerer Schein' and exists as 'eine Erscheinungsform' of the 'dominierenden Persönlichkeit Jesu Christi'<sup>117</sup> means that any absence from the heavenly Christ is, in effect, insignificant.

For Schweitzer, the exalted Christ who is exclusively located in heaven is a spiritual being who transcends all human concepts. Towards the end of his *Mysticism* he suggests that:

Das Christentum ist also Christusmystik, das heißt gedanklich begriffene und im Erleben verwirklichte Zusammengehörigkeit mit Christo als unserem Herrn. Indem Paulus Jesum kurzweg als unseren Herrn bezeichnet, erhebt er ihn über alle zeitlich gegebenen Vorstellungen hinaus, in denen das Geheimnis seiner Persönlichkeit begriffen werden kann, und stellt ihn als das alles menschliche Definieren überragende geistige Wesen hin, an das wir uns hinzugeben haben, um in ihm die wahre Bestimmtheit unseres Daseins und unseres Wesens zu erleben.<sup>118</sup>

The fact that the exalted Christ transcends human concepts is further reflected in the fact that Schweitzer does not give any consideration to the humanity of the exalted Christ. It would seem that for Schweitzer any notion of the *humanity* of the exalted Christ is irrelevant while his *personality* remains inaccessibly hidden.

Further, Paul's mysticism is not static but dynamic and turns on the continual flow of resurrection power in the form of the Spirit to the believer. The exalted Christ acts as bearer of this Spirit-power which continually flows from him. However, the notion of any personal, direct conscious involvement of the exalted Christ in this ongoing activity is missing from Schweitzer's analysis.<sup>119</sup> Christ acts as a *medium* of the Spirit rather than as a personal agent. His own involvement in this flow of resurrection power is not stressed and, indeed, it seems to happen automatically. Although Schweitzer does not spell this out it seems fair to assume that the reason that Christ does not act as an agent is that he is so closely united with believers - they share the same corporeity - that he can affect them

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<sup>116</sup> Schweitzer, *Die Mystik des Apostels Paulus*, 262.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 125.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 367.

<sup>119</sup> We have noted that Christ continues to act as a personal agent in his ongoing revelation to Paul. However, the main tendency of Schweitzer's conception is of Christ as an impersonal medium of the Spirit.

*automatically*. The very fact of the mystical union between Christ and the elect brings benefits to the believer without Christ needing to undertake specific actions. Thus, while his soteriological activity in his exalted state is ‘ungleich größer’ than in the days of his flesh, it is an automatic activity in which he is not consciously engaged.

## 5. Käsemann on the Exalted Christ

### 5.1 Christ on Earth

In marked contrast to Schweitzer, Käsemann maintains that Paul ‘kennt keinen unsichtbaren Christus, den man nur im Himmel lokalisieren kann’.<sup>120</sup> This is because Paul ‘sieht ihn irdisch am Werk und konstatiert einen Machtbereich, in welchen, man ihn finden kann’.<sup>121</sup> Thus, Christ is ‘im Medium seines Geistes present, und zwar in der Gemeinde wie im Leben des einzelnen Glaubenden und durch beide im weltweiten Horizont’.<sup>122</sup> The location of the exalted Christ, then, is understood not spatially but in terms of the exertion of his power. Given his view of Christ’s location, it is not surprising that Käsemann emphasises the ongoing activity of Christ. So, we will see that in the Lord’s Supper, the exalted Christ is continually engaging in ‘konkret und real’ activity ‘indem [er] sakramental unsere Leiber zu seinem Dienst an seinen Leibe beschlagnahmt’.<sup>123</sup> The location and activity of the exalted Christ are both bound up with Christ continuing to exert his lordship. In contrast to Schweitzer, he is both *present* on earth and *personally* active.

Therefore Christ is located according to Käsemann, where he exerts his lordship and is present in different *Machtbereiche*: in the lives of believers; in the Church and through it in the world; and in the Spirit. We will examine each of these different - though related - ‘spheres of power’ in turn.

*Christ and the Believer*. It is important to note that for Käsemann the idea of the individual is actually an abstraction.<sup>124</sup> We can speak of the individual, but Käsemann maintains that Paul

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<sup>120</sup> Käsemann, *An die Römer*, 212.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>123</sup> E. Käsemann, ‘Anliegen und Eigenart der paulinischen Abendmahlslehre’ in *Exegetische Versuche und Besinnungen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960), 1:35. Originally published as E. Käsemann, ‘Anliegen und Eigenart der paulinischen Abendmahlslehre,’ *EvTh* 7 (1947/48): 263-283.

<sup>124</sup> One of the sharpest disagreements between Käsemann and his former teacher Bultmann was concerning the priority of the individual versus the community. Käsemann remembers that at one point in a lecture Bultmann had denied the existence of the concept of ‘humankind’ - that it was merely an abstraction. Käsemann reflects that later he ‘hatte zu lernen, daß das total falsch war und viel eher das Wort “Individuum” ein Abstraktum bezeichnet’ [E. Käsemann, ‘Was ich als deutscher Theologie in fünfzig Jahren verlernte’ in *Kirchliche Konflikte* (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht: Göttingen, 1982), 241].

only applies the category to the believer.<sup>125</sup> This is because for him ‘ist der “Einzelne” nicht Prämisse einer anthropologischen Theorie, sondern Ergebnis der in ihren Dienst nehmenden Gnade’.<sup>126</sup> Individuation does not follow from ‘vorhandenen Individualitäten’ but is a ‘Konkretion der Berufung’, in which the point at issue is the ‘Weltherrschaft Christi’.<sup>127</sup> For Paul ‘konnte der Mensch unter der Herrschaft der Sünde kein “Einzelner” sein’ but rather ‘war als Repräsentant seiner Welt ihren Gewalten verfallen’.<sup>128</sup> The question of individuality, then, turns on the power one is under, whether that of the world or Christ.<sup>129</sup>

Käsemann considers the idea of Christ’s presence in the individual believer in his discussion of Romans 8:1-11. He examines in particular the reciprocal language of ‘in Christ’ (v.2) and ‘Christ in you’ (v.10) and concludes that being ‘in Christ’ means, primarily, that each Christian is ‘ein irdischer Platzhalter’ of his exalted Lord.<sup>130</sup> So, in Galatians 2:20, Paul can confess: ‘I live, yet not I but Christ lives in me’. However, what is in view is more than simply a matter of the believer being Christ’s ‘Herrschaftsbereich’ in the world.<sup>131</sup> The connection between Christ and the believer is deeper still. So, the reciprocal formula of Galatians 2:20 indicates that Paul wants to say ‘in äußerster Konkretion’ that ‘Christus sich auch unseres eigenen Lebens total bemächtigt hat’.<sup>132</sup> The phrase ἐν Χριστῷ means standing in Christ’s ‘Kraftfeld’.<sup>133</sup>

Galatians 2:20 and Romans 8:10, then, are key texts for Käsemann to indicate the location of Christ *on earth* in believers. However, Schweitzer can refer to the very same texts together and use them to situate believers *in heaven* in Christ.<sup>134</sup> For Schweitzer, as we have seen Paul is a mystic. Salvation for him is transfer to the supernatural state. For Christ to dwell in a believer means that the believer is united with Christ in heaven - not that Christ is united with the believer on earth. Schweitzer and Käsemann understand the

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<sup>125</sup> E. Käsemann, ‘Zur paulinischen Anthropologie’ in *Paulinische Perspektiven* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1969), 58. In a letter to Paul Zahl, Käsemann summarises his position: ‘As I see it, no “individual” (Christian) who as a charismatic stands under the lordship of Christ can be exchanged for any other. But the *other*, the person who lives under the tyranny of sin, is, no matter how many hundreds of times differentiated, *representative* of their lords [Paul F. M. Zahl, ‘A Tribute to Ernst Käsemann and a Theological Treatment,’ *ATR* 80:3 (1998): 386].

<sup>126</sup> Käsemann, ‘Zur paulinischen Anthropologie’, 59.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.* We will return to the important issue of the universal Lordship of Christ below.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>129</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, 55-56: ‘Der Mensch hat sich nicht in eigener Regie. Sein Heil und Unheil liegt in seinem jeweiligen Herrn’. Käsemann thus views ‘Anthropologie als konkretisierte Kosmologie’ and ‘jeden Menschen als Projektion seiner jeweiligen Welt und ihres Herrschers’.

<sup>130</sup> Käsemann, *An die Römer*, 212.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 213.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>134</sup> Schweitzer, *Die Mystik des Apostels Paulus*, 120.

meaning of the texts in the same way but draw very different implications from them. Verses which speak of Christ dwelling ‘in’ the believer will be understood to locate Christ on earth or in heaven depending on where the believer is thought to be situated. A key text in this regard is Romans 6:4-5. Here Paul states that we were buried with Christ in baptism so that ‘just as Christ was raised from the dead [...] we too might walk (περιπατήσωμεν) in newness of life’ (v.4) and that just as we have been united with him in a death like his ‘we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his’ (v.5). For Schweitzer these verses are proof that believers now exist ‘im neuen Dasein’ since they have been included in Christ’s resurrection.<sup>135</sup> However, Käsemann argues that it is ‘erstaunlich’ that so many interpreters fail to notice Paul’s eschatological reserve.<sup>136</sup> Rather than mystical union with Christ which speaks ‘von seins- oder wesensmäßigem Wandel der menschlichen Physis’, Paul’s use of περιπατέω in verse 4 indicates that Paul is only anticipating a *future* resurrection.<sup>137</sup> Although Käsemann does not name Schweitzer at this point he notes the influence of the idea of mystical union with Christ on the interpretation of these verses and suggests that ‘mystical union’ may not be as crucial for Paul as it is for his interpreters.<sup>138</sup> Here we see how Käsemann and Schweitzer’s respective views of the exalted Christ relate to the extent to which they understand Paul’s eschatology to be realised. For Käsemann, the believer has not yet been extracted from the earth but remains as an earthly representative of her Lord through whom he continues to exercise his dominion.

*Christ and the Church.* As much as the individual believer is to manifest the presence of the Lord, he or she does so only in their ‘Ausrichtung’ to the assembly.<sup>139</sup> To understand Christ’s relationship to the church, it is necessary to examine Käsemann’s treatment of the church as the *body* of Christ. Käsemann’s understanding of the body of Christ, however, is a complex matter in itself, undergoing as it does, quite significant development.<sup>140</sup> His work on this topic stretches from his 1933 doctoral thesis *Leib und Leib Christi*<sup>141</sup> to a lecture ‘Leiblichkeit bei Paulus’ delivered in 1985 (and published in 2005)<sup>142</sup> with a very important

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<sup>135</sup> Ibid., 129.

<sup>136</sup> Käsemann, *An die Römer*, 157.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid., 159.

<sup>139</sup> E. Käsemann, ‘Amt und Gemeinde im Neuen Testament’ in *Exegetische Versuche und Besinnungen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960), 1:122.

<sup>140</sup> See Way, *The Lordship of Christ*, 237-238.

<sup>141</sup> E. Käsemann, *Leib und Leib Christi: Eine Untersuchung zur paulinischen Begrifflichkeit* (BHT 9, Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1933).

<sup>142</sup> Käsemann, ‘Leiblichkeit bei Paulus’, 36-49.

essay also published in 1969.<sup>143</sup> Across his writings, the body motif expresses, for Käsemann, the closest possible connection between Christ and the church. So, in his dissertation Käsemann argued that ‘in Christ’ should be interpreted as being ‘in the church’, and so the church is ‘für die paulinische Christologie wie für seine Anthropologie Sinn und Telos’,<sup>144</sup> while in his 1985 essay, the body of Christ is the ‘Raum seiner Ubiquität und Omnipotenz’.<sup>145</sup>

For him, an ‘unumgänglicher Ausgangspunkt’ in thinking how the church is the body of Christ is to reject the view that Paul was merely using a ‘schöne[s] Bild’.<sup>146</sup> At this point Käsemann is in agreement with Schweitzer. However, as Käsemann continues we immediately see a clear fissure open up between them. Käsemann affirms that ‘[d]er erhöhte Christus hat wirklich einen irdischen Leib, und die Glaubenden werden mit ihrem ganzen Sein realiter darin eingegliedert’.<sup>147</sup> For Schweitzer, the body of Christ is a heavenly corporeity. The body of Christ for Käsemann is an *earthly* body. To understand why, we need to examine three areas: the background to Paul’s concept of the body of Christ; Paul’s anthropology and Christ as *cosmocrator*.

Regarding the background to the concept of the body of Christ, it is worth noting the development that occurs in Käsemann’s understanding. In his doctoral thesis he argues strongly for a Gnostic ‘Aeon’ background to the idea of both ‘body’ and ‘body of Christ’ in Paul.<sup>148</sup> This leads him to understand the phrase *body of Christ* to be an explicative genitive, that is, ‘der Christus ist der Leib selbst’.<sup>149</sup> By the time of his *Motif of the Body of Christ* essay, however, Käsemann suggests that it is possible to shed light on Paul’s meaning without detailed investigation into the *Religionsgeschichte*.<sup>150</sup> However, Way maintains that despite his formal ambivalence to the presence of a Gnostic Aeon background ‘this conceptuality

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<sup>143</sup> E. Käsemann, ‘Das Theologische Problem des Motives vom Leibe Christi’ in *Paulinischen Perspektiven* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1969).

<sup>144</sup> Käsemann, *Leib und Leib Christi*, 183.

<sup>145</sup> Käsemann, ‘Leiblichkeit bei Paulus’, 48.

<sup>146</sup> Käsemann, ‘Das Theologische Problem’, 179.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, 182. Emphasis added.

<sup>148</sup> Käsemann, *Leib und Leib Christi*, 162 ‘wie aber das Sein “in Christo” das Sein “im Fleisch” ablöst [...] so wird man geneigt zu einem Verständnis auch des Christusleibes als eines Äons’. As David Way notes in *Way, The Lordship of Christ*, 163, Käsemann simply lists the key passages (Rom 5:12ff.; 1 Cor 15:21 f., 45ff.; Phil 2:6 ff.) as evidence for this hypothesis without offering any detailed argument.

<sup>149</sup> Käsemann, *Leib und Leib Christi*, 138. He makes this explicit in his discussion of ‘ob [...] der paulinische Gedanke vom Christusleib aus dem stoisch-griechischen Organismusbegriff oder aus dem gnostischen Aion-Verständnis abzuleiten sei’. He notes that ‘Beide verwenden ja das Bild vom Leibe. Im erstem Falle wäre der Genitiv τοῦ Χριστοῦ possessiv zu fassen: der Organismus “gehört” dem Christus zu; im zweiten Falle wäre er explikativ: Der Christus ist der Leib selbst’.

<sup>150</sup> Käsemann, ‘Das Theologische Problem’, 180.



continues to be determinative' throughout his career in shaping his understanding of the body of Christ.<sup>151</sup>

As well as having a Gnostic background, for Käsemann the meaning of the body of Christ is rooted in Paul's anthropological concept of the body. Given that Paul compares the body of Christ with the human body in both Romans 12:4-5 and 1 Corinthians 12:12-27, there would appear to be a clear correlation between the two.<sup>152</sup> This means that grasping how Paul understood human bodies and corporeality is important in understanding the body of Christ. In his dissertation Käsemann argues that Paul uses 'body' in two senses. Firstly, he understands it as an external 'Erscheinungsweise menschlichen Lebens'.<sup>153</sup> Thus, 'man "hat" [...] nicht eigentlich ein σῶμα, man "ist" es'.<sup>154</sup> Secondly, Käsemann argues that Paul understands the body as the 'Geschöpflichkeit des Menschen' i.e. humanity understood with respect to God.<sup>155</sup> In this second sense, Käsemann develops the idea that creatureliness comes to mean being confronted with 'die Entscheidung für oder wider Gott'.<sup>156</sup> In his later 'Motif' article, Käsemann builds on these ideas arguing that Paul does not hold to the commonly assumed idea of body as primarily a term describing the human 'self' as person, but rather it points to the human as a 'nicht isolierbare Existenz'.<sup>157</sup> The concept of body thus points to the human in his or her 'Notwendigkeit und Wirklichkeit der Kommunikation'.<sup>158</sup>

The body of Christ, like any other body, is Christ's means of communication, and as the equivalent of a Gnostic Aeon, operates as a sphere of his power. These two ideas give the sense of the body of Christ as the means by which he communicates his power. Finally, to complete the picture that it is the *world* to which Christ communicates his power, we need to explore how Käsemann employs the term *cosmocrator* to express Christ's universal lordship. This can be particularly seen in Käsemann's treatment of Philippians 2:5-11.

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<sup>151</sup> Way, *The Lordship of Christ*, 113. The aeon was regarded as a spatial, dynamic, sphere of power into which people were incorporated. These aspects are emphasised throughout his career.

<sup>152</sup> Käsemann, 'Das Theologische Problem', 198.

<sup>153</sup> Käsemann, *Leib und Leib Christi*, 118. Käsemann refers to e.g. Galatians 6:17 where Paul says that he bears on his body the marks of Jesus and the use of 'spirit, soul and body' in 1 Thessalonians 5:23 indicate that this use of 'body' refers to 'der äußere Mensch'. This is parallel to how Paul understands σάρξ. C.f. also Käsemann, *Leib und Leib Christi*, 120.

<sup>154</sup> Käsemann, *Leib und Leib Christi*, 119. This is Paul's view of the body despite a possible 'nod' in the direction of contemporary dualism in 2 Corinthians 5.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, 120.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, 122.

<sup>157</sup> Käsemann, 'Das Theologische Problem', 198.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*

Käsemann undertook a detailed study on this text in a 1950 article<sup>159</sup> which is perhaps one of his most influential essays.<sup>160</sup> In it Käsemann tackles the common approach that sees Paul setting out Christ's obedience as an ethical example of humility to be imitated. Käsemann disagrees, arguing instead that the passage is centrally concerned with eschatology and soteriology.<sup>161</sup> The hymn portrays the descent and exaltation of a heavenly Redeemer whose cosmically significant actions would be impossible to imitate.<sup>162</sup> Rather, the emphasis lies in the hymn's climax in verse 11 with its *universal* confession of Jesus Christ as Lord. As Käsemann (following Lohmeyer) notes, Jesus is here proclaimed 'als Herr der Welt und nicht der Gemeinde'.<sup>163</sup> The importance of the lordship of Christ over the world is seen across Käsemann's writings on the church and the believer. So, in his discussion of the individual believer he argues that Christ is present in the believer because he wants 'die Welt in ihrer Weite wie in der Tiefe ihrer Schlupfwinkel durchdringen'.<sup>164</sup> This presupposes 'die Aktivität jedes Gliedes der Gemeinde an seinem Platz' so that each believer participates 'mit seinen Fähigkeiten und Schwächen im Siegeszug des Erhöhten'.<sup>165</sup> As the believer is placed in the body in this way, the lordship of Christ is exercised in the world.

At this point it is worth pausing to note the criticism that has been leveled against Käsemann's work, namely that the importance he places on the 'body of Christ' in Paul is rarely based on exegesis of the specific passages where Paul refers to the motif.<sup>166</sup> In his 1969 essay he reasserts the importance of the body of Christ when he states that '[k]ein anderer Kirchenbegriff entspricht angemessener seinem Werk und seiner Botschaft, weil kein anderer in gleicher Weise die Welt als das von Christus beanspruchte Herrschaftsgebiet bezeichnet'.<sup>167</sup> This raises the question, 'if the concept of the church as the body of Christ was so important to Paul why did he use it so infrequently'? Käsemann's answer is that the body of Christ has a 'funktionale Bedeutung' for the apostle.<sup>168</sup> While

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<sup>159</sup> E. Käsemann, 'Kritische Analyse von Phil. 2:5-11' in *Exegetische Versuche und Besinnungen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960), 1:51-95. The article was originally published as E. Käsemann, 'Kritische Analyse von Phil. 2:5-11,' *ZThK* 47 (1950): 515-560.

<sup>160</sup> Way, *The Lordship of Christ*, 88.

<sup>161</sup> Käsemann, 'Kritische Analyse von Phil. 2:5-11', 84.

<sup>162</sup> R. P. Martin, *Carmen Christi: Philippians 2:5-11 in Recent Interpretation and in the Setting of Early Christian Worship* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967), 91.

<sup>163</sup> Käsemann, 'Kritische Analyse von Phil. 2:5-11', 85.

<sup>164</sup> Käsemann, *An die Römer*, 213.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>166</sup> Way, *The Lordship of Christ*, 70-72.

<sup>167</sup> Käsemann, 'Das Theologische Problem', 185.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, 205.

paranesis (e.g. Rom 12:5; 1 Cor 12) is the proper place for an ‘ausdrücklich’ discussion on the theme of the church, actually ‘[a]lles Wichtige in seiner Ekklesiologie äußert sich dann in den Relationen der Christologie zu Geist, Wort, Dienst, Glaube, Sakrament und den konkreten Verhältnissen in den Gemeinden’.<sup>169</sup> In fact, if the body of Christ is correctly understood as the expression of the Lordship over the world then Ecclesiology cannot be foregrounded. Once it is, then ‘wird die Christologie ihre ausschlaggebende Bedeutung verlieren’.<sup>170</sup> In effect Käsemann is arguing that the body of Christ idea of the church is central to understanding Paul’s Ecclesiology because it explicitly expresses the Lordship of Christ over the world, but it is not everywhere discussed because to do so would be to draw the focus away from Christ and put it on the church. So, Christology is more foundational than Ecclesiology. Hence, the fundamental understanding of the Church is the one that is the most christological, namely the Body of Christ. However, this term in itself is not foregrounded by Paul so that the focus is not taken away from Christology. Käsemann summarises his position as follows:

Reichlich pointiert läßt sich sagen, daß der Apostel an der Kirche, für sich selbst genommen und als religiöser Verband verstanden, nicht interessiert ist. Er ist das nur, sofern sie das Mittel dafür wird, daß Christus sich irdisch offenbart und durch seinen Geist in der Welt verleiblicht. Wie der menschliche Leib die Notwendigkeit und Wirklichkeit existentieller Kommunikation ist, so erscheint die Kirche als Möglichkeit und Wirklichkeit der Kommunikation zwischen dem Auferstandenen und unserer Welt und heißt insofern sein Leib. Sie ist der Bereich, in dem und durch den Christus sich nach seiner Erhöhung irdisch als Kyrios erweist. Leib Christi ist sie als sein gegenwärtiger Herrschaftsbereich, in welchem er durch Wort, Sakrament und Sendung der Christen mit der Welt handelt und in ihr schon vor seiner Parusie Gehorsam erfährt.<sup>171</sup>

Käsemann’s language here is pointed. The church is the means whereby Christ is ‘verleiblicht’. Not that the incarnation is somehow repeated or extended.<sup>172</sup> Christ is not

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<sup>169</sup> Ibid.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid., 209. Käsemann argues that this has happened in Ephesians where ‘[d]ie Funktion der Christologie [...] besteht darin, für das geordnete Wachstum der Kirche zu sorgen. Das Problem von Kirche und Welt löst die Frage des Verhältnisses von Christus und Welt nicht ab, umgreift sie aber. Es sollte uns beunruhigen, ob solche theologische Verschiebung notwendig und berechtigt war. Selbst wenn sie es historisch gewesen wäre, bliebe uns nicht die Entscheidung darüber erspart, ob wir sie nachvollziehen oder rückgängig machen müssen’.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid., 204.

<sup>172</sup> An idea that Käsemann elsewhere rejects (Käsemann, *An die Römer*, 276).

spatially localised in the church. Rather the church, as his body, is the means of the communication of his lordship to the world.

So, for Käsemann the body of Christ is an earthly not a *heavenly* entity. That is, as Lord of the world, Christ comes to earth through the means of his body to exert his universal lordship. In fact, Christ can only ‘irdisch zu allen kommen’ if ‘unsere Leiber Glieder seiner Herrschaft werden’ since ‘unser Leib ist das von ihm beanspruchte und einzige Stück Welt, das wir ihm zu geben vermögen’.<sup>173</sup> The church is the earthly body of the risen Lord in the sense that it is the ‘Bereich’ of his communication with the world - that is the means by which he claims other bodies into his own body.<sup>174</sup> The body of Christ is the earthly sphere of power of the risen Lord. While Christ and the Church should not be collapsed into one another,<sup>175</sup> the latter is the means by which ‘Christus sich irdisch offenbart und durch seinen Geist in der Welt verleiblicht’.<sup>176</sup>

*Christ and the Spirit.* As we have seen, for Käsemann, the Spirit is the means by which the exalted Christ takes possession of us. Through the Spirit we are brought into his presence and ‘steht fortan “in seinem Angesicht”’. Im Pneuma kommt der Kyrios zu uns und ergreift von uns Besitz, beschlagnahmt uns für sich’.<sup>177</sup> The Spirit is to be thought of as the manifestation of Christ’s presence. This manifestation especially (but not exclusively) happens in the sacramental context such that where ‘das Pneuma als sakramentale Gabe beschrieben ist’, there Paul is speaking most radically of ‘der Offenbarung des Christus selber, von seiner Epiphanie und praesentia’.<sup>178</sup>

Käsemann argues that Spirit in Paul can be understood as ‘Kraft, Person und Substanz’.<sup>179</sup> In the latter ‘substantial mode’, the Spirit can be understood in a ‘stofflich und substanzhaft’ sense similar to the Gnostic ‘Mana’.<sup>180</sup> In relation to the exalted Christ, the Spirit is ‘die Substanz der Auferstehungsleiblichkeit’ and ‘die Seinsweise des

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<sup>173</sup> Käsemann, ‘Das Theologische Problem’, 199.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

<sup>175</sup> Though in his dissertation, Käsemann can state that ‘*Wie die Kirche die Konkretion des mit ihr identischen Christus ist, so kann sie gerade deshalb nicht von ihm gelöst werden*’ (Käsemann, *Leib und Leib Christi*, 185). Emphasis original. For Käsemann’s later reflections on the problems with his dissertation see E. Käsemann, ‘Aspekte der Kirche’ in *Kirchliche Konflikte* (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht: Göttingen, 1982), 1:8-12. Käsemann later makes a comment that the fact that he did not investigate the motif of the Body of Christ in an isolated fashion was the most important contribution he made in his otherwise ‘sonst recht fragwürdigen’ dissertation (Käsemann, ‘Leiblichkeit bei Paulus’, 39).

<sup>176</sup> Käsemann, ‘Das Theologische Problem’, 204.

<sup>177</sup> Käsemann, ‘Anliegen und Eigenart der paulinischen Abendmahlslehre’, 19-20.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>179</sup> Käsemann, *Leib und Leib Christi*, 126.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid., 125.

Auferstandenen'.<sup>181</sup> This conceptuality is most clearly developed in Käsemann's discussion on the sacraments (which will be discussed more extensively below). It is precisely the Spirit-given 'Leiblichkeit des Auferstandenen' which makes it possible for him to give himself in the sacrament and thus 'wird die Wirklichkeit solcher sakramentalen Selbsthingabe Christi von Paulus sonst durchweg als Mitteilung des πνεῦμα beschreiben'.<sup>182</sup> Christ is given as Penuma and this is a corporeal giving because the corporeality of Christ is a σῶμα πνευματικόν (1 Cor 15:44), just as Christ is the πνευματικὴ πέτρα (1 Cor 10:4) and even τὸ πνεῦμα (2 Cor 3:17). In 1 Corinthians 6:17 Paul explicitly states: 'Whoever joins with the Lord is one spirit with him' and so Käsemann concludes that σῶμα Χριστοῦ and πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ are 'in bestimmter Hinsicht für Paulus auswechselbar'.<sup>183</sup> So, we see in 1 Corinthians 12 the community can only become the Body of Christ because the Spirit of Christ working within makes it so.

Similarly, in Romans 8:9 those who have the Spirit of Christ do so because they are those who have been 'in den Christusleib sacramental Eingliederten'.<sup>184</sup> So, the Spirit is 'die irdische Präsenz des erhöhten Herrn'.<sup>185</sup> The Spirit is thus *very* closely identified with Christ. This linking of Pneumatology and Christology is 'ein entscheidendes Merkmal und vielleicht sogar eine ursprüngliche Einsicht paulinischer Theologie'.<sup>186</sup> The reciprocal nature of the 'in Christ' and 'in the Spirit' formulae 'ist nur verständlich, wenn man sie aus der Pneumatologie ableitet und begreift. Durch den Geist ergreift Christus Macht in uns, wie wir umgekehrt durch den Geist Christus eingegliedert werden'.<sup>187</sup> Romans 8:9 shows us that Christians 'werden als solche nicht anerkannt, wenn sie den Geist nicht haben'.<sup>188</sup> We can only say this in an unequivocal way if 'der Geist der Stand unter dem präsenten Herrn ist'.<sup>189</sup>

Käsemann thus tends to elide the distinction between Christ and the Spirit. Although for him σῶμα Χριστοῦ and πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ are 'auswechselbar' only in 'bestimmter Hinsicht',<sup>190</sup> there is a greater identity between Christ and the Spirit in Käsemann than we saw in Schweitzer. For Schweitzer, 'being in the Spirit' is only 'eine

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<sup>181</sup> Käsemann, 'Anliegen und Eigenart der paulinischen Abendmahlslehre', 19.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>185</sup> Käsemann, *An die Römer*, 209.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*, 211.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*, 212.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*, 213.

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>190</sup> Käsemann, 'Anliegen und Eigenart der paulinischen Abendmahlslehre', 33.

Erscheinungsform' of 'being in Christ'. They are both a 'Beschreibung ein und desselben Zustandes'.<sup>191</sup> However, Schweitzer maintains the distinction between Christ and Spirit in his emphasis on the Spirit as the power 'der in Christo lebt und von ihm ausgeht (Rom 8:9)'.<sup>192</sup> The Spirit 'kommt den Gläubigen also von Christus aus als Geist Christi zu'.<sup>193</sup> For Käsemann the Spirit does not flow *from* Christ who remains located in heaven, rather the Spirit is the very 'Substanz der Auferstehungsleiblichkeit' and 'die Seinsweise des Auferstandenen'.<sup>194</sup> In sharing the Spirit with Christ, believers are sharing in his very 'Auferstehungsleiblichkeit'. However, for all their distinctions, we actually arrive at a very similar position to Schweitzer in that believers share the same corporeity with Christ. For both interpreters there is little notion of Christ being, in any meaningful sense, *absent* from believers.

## 5.2 Christ's Agency on Earth

For Käsemann the 'Auferstandene setzt das fort, was der Menschgewordene und Gekreuzigte getan hat'.<sup>195</sup> So, in considering the exalted Christ as an agent it is worth probing his relationship to the historical Jesus. Käsemann notes that in his proclamation, Paul pointed to the Word of the Cross, and in so doing 'ruft er jedoch in den Schatten des irdischen Jesus'.<sup>196</sup> Now, it is true that for Paul the Cross is no mere historical event, it is rather a 'Heilsereignis und insofern mythologisch ausgestattet, verklärt, übermalt',<sup>197</sup> but the cross is no mere Gnostic 'Lichtkreuz'. Rather, it is the 'Torheit und Schande, in welcher der historische Jesus gelitten hat'.<sup>198</sup> In the same way, the great hymn in Philippians 2:5-11, despite its 'überquellenden Mythologie' could not stand as a cipher for the suffering and ascent of, say, Hercules. Rather, it refers to the Jesus 'für den es Stellvertreter nicht gibt'.<sup>199</sup> Crucially, for Käsemann the exalted Christ 'behält [...] die Nägelmale des Irdischen und wäre sonst nicht mit Jesus identisch'.<sup>200</sup> For Käsemann, like Schweitzer, there is an identification of Jesus and the exalted Christ.

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<sup>191</sup> Schweitzer, *Die Mystik des Apostels Paulus*, 166.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*, 120.

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*, 163.

<sup>194</sup> Käsemann, 'Anliegen und Eigenart der paulinischen Abendmahlslehre', 19.

<sup>195</sup> E. Käsemann, 'Sackgassen im Streit um den historischen Jesus' in *Exegetische Versuche und Besinnungen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960), 2:33.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>200</sup> E. Käsemann, *Der Ruf der Freiheit* (3rd ed., Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1968), 92.

As with Schweitzer, however, there is also distinction between the historical Jesus and the exalted Christ. So, in a very similar way to Schweitzer, Käsemann argues 2 Corinthians 5:6 shows that Paul rejects a theology which is oriented *primarily* to the historical Jesus.<sup>201</sup> Here we also see, as we did with Schweitzer, a subtle down-playing of the humanity of the exalted Christ. Käsemann does not explicitly deny his humanity but certain tendencies call it into question. For a start, the exalted Christ does not challenge people to discipleship in the same way as the historical Jesus since he operates ‘nicht mehr als Individuum unter anderen’.<sup>202</sup> Käsemann argues this by pointing to the christological language that the early Christians (both Jewish and Hellenistic) began to use after Easter. Their christological declarations were not merely adaptations to contemporary religious language but declarations that ‘die Gemeinde den erhöhten Herrn nicht mehr nur oder vorwiegend als historische Figur und damit als einen unter andern verstehen kann’.<sup>203</sup> Their language was used to distinguish Christ from other religious figures and the climax of this process was the conferral of deity on Christ and the ‘paradoxical’ description of Christ as ‘God and Man’.<sup>204</sup> Käsemann argues that this intensely *personal* language is too exclusive with respect to other christological concepts. Fundamentally, to apply this kind of personal language to the exalted Christ obscures the most significant aspect - his Lordship. Käsemann argues that Paul’s ‘Kyrios’ language certainly suggests personal traits but cannot be *reduced* to understanding this figure ‘als Person’.<sup>205</sup> To do so is to rationalize Christ and to downplay his supreme lordship. After all, ‘was kann das Geschöpf über den Schöpfer aussagen, das über die Anerkennung der Geschöpflichkeit hinausführte, und der Knecht über den Herrn, das mehr als Dankbarkeit und Verpflichtung ausdrückte’?<sup>206</sup> Käsemann has been criticised in this regard by Webster who argues that his Lordly ‘Saviour lacks historical density and extension, and so response to him is similarly not specified in terms of the fashioning of contingent historical experience’.<sup>207</sup> His Lordship has become an abstract concept of divine power (albeit christologically focussed) rather than an expression of his reign as the exalted person of Christ.

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<sup>201</sup> Käsemann, *An die Römer*, 276.

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.

<sup>203</sup> Käsemann, ‘Sackgassen im Streit um den historischen Jesus’, 64.

<sup>204</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

<sup>207</sup> John Webster, ‘Christology, Immutability and Ethics,’ *STJ* 39 (1986): 320.

*Christ and the Sacraments*. In turning to the activity of the exalted Christ, the most fruitful place to examine is Käsemann's treatment of the Lord's Supper. Käsemann concludes his article *The Pauline Doctrine of the Lord's Supper* by noting that the 'Auferstandene setzt das fort, was der Menschgewordene und Gekreuzigte getan hat'.<sup>208</sup> Because he exists for us 'leiblich', he gives us 'leiblich' participation in himself and thus 'kann im Abendmahl der nun Erhöhte immer wieder geben, was der Sterbende ein für alle Male gegeben hat: τὸ σῶμα μου τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν'.<sup>209</sup> In the Lord's Supper, the exalted Christ is engaging in the 'konkret und real' action in which he 'sakramental unsere Leiber zu seinem Dienst an seinem Leibe beschlagnahmt'.<sup>210</sup>

For Käsemann, then, Paul's treatment of the Lord's Supper can only be properly understood as part of his Christology.<sup>211</sup> As with his doctrine of baptism, the Lord's Supper must be interpreted in the light of his dominant theme—the Body of Christ.<sup>212</sup> Like Paul's Christology, Käsemann argues that history-of-religion influences are present as background to his doctrine of the Lord's Supper. He sees that practically all of Paul's interpretation of early Christian Eucharistic tradition indicates that he has adopted and adapted the Gnostic myth of an Archetypal Man, who is also the 'Urmensch-Erlöser'.<sup>213</sup> Only as we make this connection can we explain Paul's unique combination of sacrament and the ecclesial Body of Christ.<sup>214</sup>

The key text for Käsemann is 1 Corinthians 10:16-21. Here he argues that the expressions κοινωνία τοῦ αἵματος and τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ in v.16 undeniably refer to the elements of the Lord's Supper which provide a means of participation in the blood and body of Christ.<sup>215</sup> Käsemann notes the shift in Paul's emphasis at v.17 where the move is made from the Body of Christ as something in which we participate to something which we ourselves *are* (ἐν σώμα οἱ πολλοί ἐσμεν). This, argues Käsemann, marks the point at which the Apostle begins to give his *own* interpretation of the tradition he has received. This interpretation suggests 'Anteil am Leibe Jesu uns zum Christusleibe macht'.<sup>216</sup> The questions in v.16 (τὸ ποτήριον τῆς εὐλογίας ὃ εὐλογοῦμεν, οὐχὶ κοινωνία ἐστὶν τοῦ αἵματος

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<sup>208</sup> Käsemann, 'Sackgassen im Streit um den historischen Jesus', 33.

<sup>209</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

<sup>211</sup> *Ibid.*, 'Die Abendmahlslehre des Paulus ist also ein Stück seiner Christologie, und man wird ihr Anliegen und ihre Eigenart nur verstehen, wenn man sie das im strengen Sinn bleiben lässt'.

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>216</sup> Käsemann, 'Anliegen und Eigenart der paulinischen Abendmahlslehre', 12.



τοῦ Χριστοῦ; τὸν ἄρτον ὃν κλῶμεν, οὐχὶ κοινωνία τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐστίν;) expect positive answers, suggesting that they express a commonly held tradition. However, from v.17 Paul begins to make affirmations, suggesting that he is adding his own views to the exposition of the common kerygma.<sup>217</sup> It is this reinterpretation that explains Paul's reversal in v.16 of the normal order (cf. 1 Cor 11:23-26) of body then blood. He reverses the order, so that he can turn to discuss the more significant idea of participation in the body of Christ which can be derived from the bread alone. While Paul *refers* to the early Christian tradition in v.16, he *interprets* it in v.17.<sup>218</sup>

Käsemann continues by discussing the interconnectedness of baptism and the Lord's Supper and how they relate to Christ, his Body and the Spirit. He traces the link between baptism and the Lord's Supper by examining 1 Corinthians 12:13 ('For in one Spirit we were all baptised into one body [...] and were all given to drink of one Spirit') where the baptismal event - incorporation into the Body of Christ - is ascribed to the operation of the one Spirit.<sup>219</sup> The 'drinking the Spirit' language at the end of this verse (καὶ πάντες ἐν πνεῦμα ἐποτίσθημεν) - especially when compared to similar language in 10:3-4 - suggests that Paul is referring to the Lord's Supper and drawing a parallel between the two sacraments. Thus, 12:13 is not a reference to baptism alone but baptism and the Lord's Supper. Käsemann argues that the idea of being given to drink of the Spirit in 1 Corinthians 12:13 is an echo of the language of βρῶμα and πόμα πνευματικόν in 10:3 and 4 which, he argues, undoubtedly mean 'food and drink which convey πνεῦμα'.<sup>220</sup> This can be seen in how Paul continues verse 4: 'for they drank from the spiritual rock which followed, and that rock was Christ'. In other words, they were given food and drink that conveyed the Spirit because they drank from the rock which was Christ himself. Käsemann sees an identification here between Christ and the Spirit and makes reference to 2 Corinthians 3:17.<sup>221</sup> That is, the 'Gabe hat den Charakter des Gebers, und in der Gabe erhält man Anteil am Geber selbst'.<sup>222</sup> Thus, by giving himself to us as πνεῦμα (in the sacrament) Christ incorporates us into his own Body.<sup>223</sup> Because the Lord is the *Pneuma* and because in the

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<sup>217</sup> Ibid., 12-13.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid., 16.

Lord's Supper he conveys participation in himself as the Giver, the gift of the sacrament must be *Pneuma* as well.<sup>224</sup>

For Käsemann then, on the basis of 1 Corinthians 10:3-4 and 1 Corinthians 12:13, the Lord's Supper is a sacramental giving of Christ as the Spirit that incorporates people into his body. In comparison, Schweitzer, as we have seen, views the Lord's Supper in Paul as his interpretation of the words of Jesus in line with his mysticism so that eating and drinking signifies union with Christ.<sup>225</sup> That is, by eating the Supper, the believer enters into union with the body and blood of Christ.<sup>226</sup> Over the early Christian idea of 'Mahlgemeinschaft' with Christ, Paul lays his mysticism.<sup>227</sup> Unlike Käsemann, Schweitzer reads the reference to drinking the Spirit in 1 Corinthians 12:13 to be a simple change of metaphor from the beginning of the verse and still to refer to baptism.<sup>228</sup> The elements do not mediate the Spirit. Similarly, Schweitzer interacts with a form of Käsemann's interpretation of 1 Corinthians 10:3-4 which he finds present in Lietzmann who argues that the elements 'werden Träger des Pneuma'.<sup>229</sup> He criticises this view because it overlooks the fact that Paul always associates the *Pneuma* with the spirit of a human, *never* with 'nichtmenschlicher Materie'.<sup>230</sup> This latter association only begins with the Hellenistic theology of Ignatius and Justin. Paul's reference to spiritual food and drink in 1 Corinthians 10:3-4 refers not to food and drink 'mit denen sich der Geist verbunden hatte' but to food and drink which 'durch ein vom Geiste gewirktes Wunder beschafft worden waren'.<sup>231</sup> Käsemann<sup>232</sup> agrees with Schweitzer that this is a Hellenistic concept but argues that Paul is in fact consciously drawing on earlier ideas of *Pneuma* that are shared with Hellenistic Gnosticism. Here, as we have seen, *Pneuma* is conceived as heavenly matter or substance. That is, it is not simply a disembodied force but has a corporeal substratum. In Hellenistic philosophy we see the earthly and heavenly worlds filled with forces 'die sich verbinden oder feindlich scheiden'.<sup>233</sup> These forces are not 'unkörperlich' but carry within themselves 'den Willen zur Verleiblichung' and thus can only be fully realized in bodily form.<sup>234</sup> According to Käsemann, while Paul draws on these concepts, he opposes the soteriology

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<sup>224</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>225</sup> Schweitzer, *Die Mystik des Apostels Paulus*, 260.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid., 262.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid., 260.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid., 264.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid., 263.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid.

<sup>232</sup> Although he does not engage specifically with Schweitzer on this point.

<sup>233</sup> Käsemann, 'Anliegen und Eigenart der paulinischen Abendmahlslehre', 17.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid., 15-18.

that they presuppose. So, it would seem that the Corinthians had understood the sacraments to be a guarantee of salvation. For this reason, Paul portrays Israel in 1 Corinthians 10:1-13 as the first recipient of the Christian sacraments.<sup>235</sup> The sacrament, Paul makes clear in 10:5-10, is not a guarantee of salvation but a call to obedience. Thus, Paul does not share Hellenistic ideas of salvation.

Paul's doctrine of *Pneuma* itself cannot be understood without some grasp of its Hellenistic background.<sup>236</sup> He does not consider human existence as autonomous but understands it to be conditioned by the power to which it belongs. Thus, given that humanity can undergo change in lordship, existential transformation is possible and this is precisely what happens in the sacramental event, when we are granted the gift of the *Pneuma*.<sup>237</sup> So, according to Käsemann, Paul shares with his Hellenistic environment the idea that *Pneuma* is no mere disembodied force but has a corporeal substratum. Thus, the Spirit is 'die Substanz der Auferstehungsleiblichkeit und die Seinsweise des Auferstandenen'.<sup>238</sup> However, this is not the dominant thought for the Apostle. The sacramental gift of the *Pneuma* is not simply a heavenly power which enters man in an 'unbestimmt und unpersönlich' manner.<sup>239</sup> Rather, the main idea, again, is that this gift brings with it its Giver and as such is an 'Erscheinungsweise' of the exalted Lord, who becomes 'epiphany' in it.<sup>240</sup> So, 'im *Pneuma* kommt der Kyrios zu uns und ergreift von uns Besitz, beschlagnahmt uns für sich'.<sup>241</sup>

Käsemann's understanding of the presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper turns then on his view that Paul adopts some of the contemporary Hellenistic understanding of the Spirit.<sup>242</sup> With his view of a Hellenistic background, Käsemann can argue that the elements of the Lord's Supper take on spiritual character and thus become identical with the body and the blood of the Lord.<sup>243</sup> It is the presence of the Lord who is using this means 'zu seiner Epiphanie bedient'.<sup>244</sup> Whatever objections we may have in applying the idea of 'Real

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<sup>235</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>237</sup> Ibid.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid., 19-20.

<sup>242</sup> Schweitzer's whole thesis rules this out of court. He maintains that 'Paulinismus und Griechentum nichts, aber auch gar nichts miteinander gemeinsam haben. Sie verhalten sich nicht einmal indifferent, sondern stehen im Gegensatz zu einander' (Schweitzer, *Die Geschichte der paulinischen Forschung*, 77-78).

<sup>243</sup> Käsemann, 'Anliegen und Eigenart der paulinischen Abendmahlslehre', 23-24.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid., 24.

Presence' to the Sacrament, it is 'genau die von Paulus gemeinte Sache'.<sup>245</sup> It is precisely the 'Leiblichkeit des Auferstandenen' which makes it possible for him to give himself in the sacrament.<sup>246</sup>

The ongoing work of Christ is the exercise of his Lordship achieved by his sacramental presence in the Spirit. It is nothing less than the transference of human beings into a new dimension as he claims them for his own obedience. The Lord's Supper sets us in the Body of Christ in the presence of the Exalted One and 'unterstellt damit unter die Herrschaft dieses Kyrios'.<sup>247</sup>

*Christ and the Spirit Interceding.* Paul's description of the intercessions of Christ and of the Spirit in Romans 8, although not extensively treated by Käsemann, give a helpful insight into how he understands the relationship between the work of the Spirit and the exalted Christ. Käsemann sees the intercession of the Spirit in Romans 8:26-27 as the Spirit actually praying through the glossolalia of believers.<sup>248</sup> The Spirit intervenes in their own prayers to give them a content that is pleasing to God. Given that the Spirit is the earthly presence of the exalted Lord, he does his work, intercession included, 'im Raum und durch den Dienst der Gemeinde'.<sup>249</sup> In contrast, the intercession of Christ happens in heaven, and the intercession of the Spirit is the 'irdische Spiegelung' of what the heavenly High Priest does before the throne of God.<sup>250</sup> That is, the 'irdische Vorgang' is an 'Ausdruck und Spiegelung eines verborgenen himmlischen'.<sup>251</sup> When he turns to Romans 8:34, Käsemann sees the image of Christ at the right hand of God as an expression of the interpretation of messianic prophecy current in early Christianity.<sup>252</sup> Further, the following clauses, one of which contains reference to Christ's intercession, are 'typisch hymnisch' and 'nicht spezifisch paulinisch'.<sup>253</sup> It would seem fair to note that while the heavenly intercession of Christ is

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<sup>245</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>246</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>248</sup> Käsemann, *An die Römer*, 230 interpreting στεναγμοῖς ἀλαλήτοις as 'ekstatische Schreie' and drawing a parallel with 1 Corinthians 4:15 and its language of 'Beten im Geist'. That 'wordless' speech is *not* in view is proved by the parallel phrase ἄρρητα ῥήματα in 2 Corinthians 12:4 which in the context can only mean 'in irdischer Sprache nicht auszudrücken, unaussprechlich'.

<sup>249</sup> Ibid., 231.

<sup>250</sup> Ibid.

<sup>251</sup> E. Käsemann, 'Der gottesdienstliche Schrei nach der Freiheit' in *Paulinischen Perspektiven* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1969), 229.

<sup>252</sup> Ibid., 237.

<sup>253</sup> Ibid., 238.

not denied, it is not developed and perhaps even downplayed. In other words, it is the work of Christ *on earth* through the Spirit working in the Church that is emphasised.<sup>254</sup>

### 5.3 Summary

For Käsemann, then, the exalted Christ is in no way confinable to heaven.<sup>255</sup> His views of the body of Christ and of the Spirit give him cause to locate Christ on earth. He reads Paul's concept of the body of Christ against a Gnostic Aeon background and in light of his anthropology such that the body of Christ is understood to be both the sphere of Christ's power and the means by which he communicates that power. Furthermore, Christ's role as *universal* Lord means that his power is communicated to *all* of humanity and not just the church. Thus, his body is located on earth so that through it by his Spirit he can exert his authority over the whole world.

Further, Käsemann understands the Spirit in Paul to be apiece with what he perceived as the general Hellenistic concept that the Spirit is a corporeal entity. In the Spirit, Christ is able to manifest *himself* and not simply his power. Christ actually *exists* in the corporeal dimension provided by the Spirit. So, the presence of the Spirit on earth is the very presence of Christ. This view of the Spirit is especially relevant for the Lord's Supper. In the Lord's Supper, βρῶμα and πόμα πνευματικόν (1 Cor 10:3, 4) are understood as food and drink that convey the Spirit. In conveying the Spirit, the elements of the Lord's Supper convey Christ himself. In this way, Christ's ongoing soteriological activity is direct.<sup>256</sup> Christ, in the Lord's Supper, gives *himself* to us. He takes possession of us and brings us under his lordship. The universal Lord, the *cosmocrator*, continues his work of bringing people under his lordship. As we have seen, however, the *personality* of the exalted Christ becomes blurred in Käsemann's portrayal. Though he acts directly, his identity as a person is not given a sharp focus. His Lordship tends to be conceived as an abstract concept of divine power rather than an expression of his reign as the exalted person of Christ.

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<sup>254</sup> Schweitzer does not discuss the intercession of Christ in Romans 8:34 but he does quote the verse in *Mystik*, 65 where he renders ἐντυγχάνω 'eintreten'.

<sup>255</sup> Obviously where Paul specifically locates Christ in heaven, Käsemann acknowledges this. So, in commenting on Romans 10:6 (Käsemann, *An die Römer*, 276) he notes that 'Himmel ist für den Apostel der Ort des erhöhten Herrn'. However, as Käsemann notes, 'unerschütterliche Prinzipien gibt es stets nur in der Theorie. In der Praxis muss man sich mit Schwergewicht und Tendenzen begnügen' (Käsemann, 'Leiblichkeit bei Paulus', 41).

<sup>256</sup> Käsemann, 'Anliegen und Eigenart der paulinischen Abendmahlslehre', 33.

## 6. Summary and Conclusion

Albert Schweitzer and Ernst Käsemann give us two radically different conceptions of the exalted Christ in Paul. For Schweitzer, Christ is exclusively located in heaven. There is no sense that he is on earth, whether in believers, or in the elements of the Lord's Supper.<sup>257</sup> For Käsemann, Christ is unquestionably not restricted to heaven. He is present in the believer, in the church and in the world - through the medium of the Spirit.<sup>258</sup> For Schweitzer, the exalted Christ does not act as a personal agent with respect to believers. Rather, he is the 'bearer' of resurrection power which he transmits to believers through his extended corporeity. In contrast, Käsemann sees Christ continuing to exert his lordship directly through the Spirit particularly in the Lord's Supper.

We have seen that the reasons for their differences are varied but they can be summarised in terms of exegesis; Pauline theological themes; and Paul's social and religious context. So, firstly and most obviously, their view of the exalted Christ is affected by their exegesis of Pauline texts, particularly the weight which they give to certain texts. So, Schweitzer orientates himself to texts which speak of Christ's location in heaven (e.g. Phil 1:21-24; 3:20; 1 Thess 4:16), while Käsemann generally does not seem to refer to these texts but orientates himself to texts which more concretely centre on Christ's Lordship. We have also seen that their view of the exalted Christ, in turn, actually impacts their exegesis. So, we observed that their handling of texts which speak of Christ 'in' the believer (e.g. Rom 8:10; Gal 2:20) is affected by their prior conclusion on the location of Christ. So, Schweitzer reads these texts in light of his understanding of Paul's mysticism. Christ and the believer are in heaven and so Christ is 'in' the believer *there*. For Käsemann, Christ is exerting his lordship *on earth*, so he is 'in' the believer there.

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<sup>257</sup> It is worth pointing out that although Schweitzer was from a Lutheran background, there are similarities here with his view and Calvin's doctrine of the Lord's Supper where the believer is lifted up to heaven. So, Calvin in John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, 2 vols; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960 [1559]), IV:17:xxxi argues that 'we do not think it lawful for us to drag him from heaven' but that 'if he should lift us to himself, we should [...] just as much enjoy his presence'. See also Thomas J. Davis, *This is My Body: The Presence of Christ in Reformation Thought* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008):132 who summarises that 'Calvin thought it absolutely essential that believers have access to the body of Christ in heaven so that it is present corporeally to them'.

<sup>258</sup> Having noticed a parallel between Schweitzer and Calvin, it is interesting to note that Luther addressed the problem of the location of Christ in a similar way to Käsemann. Noting that Paul locates Christ at God's right hand, he argued that 'since [my opponents] do not prove that the right hand of God is a particular place in heaven, the mode of existence of which I have spoken also stands firm, that Christ's body is everywhere because it is at the right hand of God which is everywhere' (Martin Luther, 'Confession concerning Christ's Supper', *Luther's Works Volume 37: Word and Sacrament vol 3*. (trans. Robert H Fischer; ed. Robert Fisher; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1961[1528]), 213-214.

Secondly, Schweitzer and Käsemann tend to understand different unifying themes to be at the heart of Paul's theology. For Schweitzer the idea that Paul was a mystic is of supreme importance and deeply affects his view of the location of Christ. For Käsemann, the idea that Christ is the *universal* Lord and continues to exert this Lordship over *all* people impacts his view of Christ's location and his ongoing agency. These different themes flow out of their exegesis and affect it in turn. Schweitzer lists text after text that he argues shows Paul's Christ-mysticism and hence the location of Christ and believers entirely in heaven. Käsemann, in detailed exegesis of texts like Philippians 2:5-11, shows that Christ is the *universal* Lord and exerts his Lordship over the world - not just over believers in heaven. Schweitzer will interpret texts like Romans 6:4-5 as clearly teaching that believers are already resurrected and thus dwelling with Christ in heaven. Käsemann, on the other hand, sees greater eschatological reservation here and sees Christ united with believers still dwelling on earth.

Thirdly, their understanding of Paul's religious context shapes their view of the exalted Christ. Schweitzer sees a purely Jewish background to all of Paul's theology, whereas Käsemann is much more open to Hellenistic influence.<sup>259</sup> This is particularly relevant in their treatments of the Spirit and the Lord's Supper. Käsemann argues that Paul adopts a Hellenistic view of the Spirit and so can argue that the elements of the Lord's Supper are means by which the exalted Christ conveys *himself*. This is because the elements convey the Spirit which is the corporeal substratum in which Christ exists. Schweitzer rejects this view out of hand because he understands it as Hellenistic.

Finally, in relation to our own thesis we can make a number of concluding observations. Most obviously, the stark difference between Schweitzer and Käsemann's understanding of the location of the exalted Christ alerts us to the fact that there are passages in Paul that speak of both aspects of his location – in heaven and on earth. However, we also noticed a tendency that both Käsemann and Schweitzer share, namely that they do not extensively consider the *absence* of Christ. In one sense this is understandable. As central as the exalted Christ is to both of their readings of Paul, neither is offering anything like a full articulation of the Pauline view of Christ's location. It is significant, however, that both seem to operate with a realised eschatology as far as the *relationship* between Christ and the believer is concerned. Neither stresses the *absence* that Paul experiences with respect to Christ's location (cf. Phil 1:23). For Schweitzer, believers

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<sup>259</sup> Obviously this sort of sharp delineation is no longer maintained by NT interpreters.

are already with Christ in heaven sharing the same corporeity. Any 'absence' is simply a matter of 'äußerer Schein'. For Käsemann, Christ is with believers on earth who act as his earthly 'Platzhalter'. In neither case is the idea of an experiential absence between Christ and believers explored for its christological significance. We will see, however, that it is precisely when the significance of this absence is grasped that the seeming complexity regarding the location of Christ (on earth and in heaven) begins to unravel.

We also have seen a corresponding tension between Schweitzer's portrayal of Christ as an essentially passive transmitter of resurrection power and Käsemann's depiction of him as *personally* and *actively* expressing his lordship on earth. Again, neither interpreter has simply developed an abstract idea of Christ's activity but both have grounded their conceptuality in the Pauline text. This again points to the complexity in Paul's thought regarding the exalted Christ. So, for our purposes we will need to ensure that we attend to the variety in the Pauline portrayal of Christ and we will do so by trying to offer a more sustained exegetical study of the texts where Paul discusses the activity of Christ. We will see that the picture is more complicated than simply a passive Christ from whom resurrection power streams or an actively engaging exalted Christ who is the subject of his own soteriological activity. By considering his *presence* in a fuller sense we will see that Paul's portrayal of Christ resists simple reductions – that at times he is presented passively and at other times as actively engaging as the subject. The question remains as to whether this is simple inconsistency on Paul's part or whether these different modes of Christ's presence can be integrated.



## CHAPTER 2: THE BODILY ABSENCE OF CHRIST

### 1. Introduction

In his short story *A Painful Case*, James Joyce narrates the tale of a Mr James Duffy who ‘lived at a little distance from his body...’.<sup>1</sup> In his *Confessions*, Augustine describes Alypius’ defence of his attendance at the Circensian Games: ‘Though you take my body to that place [...] I will be absent even while I am present [*adereo itaque absens*].’<sup>2</sup> In this chapter I will argue that these conceptions are precisely the opposite of how Paul views the absence of the exalted Christ. For Paul, the exalted Christ is absent because he possesses a discrete, localisable body which means that he is not omnipresent but *located*. He is not currently *with* believers but there is a *spatial* separation between their bodies.

But can we really speak of the absence of Christ? The frequently occurring and widely discussed Pauline motif of the believer’s *union* with Christ surely calls the very idea of the *absence* of Christ into question. How can Christ be absent from believers for Paul when he so frequently speaks of believers being ‘in Christ’? We will see in this chapter that Paul does indeed assume and articulate the absence of Christ and that it is explained by the exalted Christ possessing his own discrete body. In Philippians 1 Paul does express his desire to ‘depart’ and be ‘with Christ’ suggesting, as we will see, that he recognizes an absence between the believer and Christ. Further, when we look at the idea of Christ’s coming from heaven in 1 Thessalonians, we see that, for Paul, Christ is currently located in heaven. Only when he comes from there will believers be ‘with’ him ‘forever’ (1 Thess 4:15-17). In the second part of the chapter we will examine what Paul says about the body of Christ. This section will not consider the church as the body of Christ (see chapter 4), but the ‘discrete’ body of the exalted Christ. We will see that for Paul the exalted Christ continues to possess a human body (1 Cor 15); that this body is discrete in that it can be *distinguished* from the bodies of other believers (Rom 8:29) and that this body is *located* at God’s right-hand (Rom 8:34). In the final section we will see how these two motifs come together by examining two passages (2 Cor 5:6-8 and Phil 3:20-21) where Paul specifically views Christ’s current absence as a *bodily* absence. It is the fact that Christ remains a human being with a discrete and localisable body that explains his current absence from believers.

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<sup>1</sup> James Joyce, *Dubliners* (Ware: Wordsworth, 1993 [1914]), 104.

<sup>2</sup> Augustine, *Confessions* 6.8.13 (PL 32).

## 2. The Absence of Christ

### 2.1 Christian Experience and the Absence of Christ (Phil 1:21-26)

In Philippians 1:23 the apostle expresses his desire (τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν) to depart and be with Christ (εἰς τὸ ἀναλῦσαι καὶ σὺν Χριστῷ εἶναι) which is ‘far better’ (πολλῶ μᾶλλον κρεῖσσον) than remaining ‘in the flesh’. The fact that Paul feels he needs to ‘depart’ (i.e. die)<sup>3</sup> to be ‘with Christ’ suggests that he considers himself, in some sense, to be currently separated or ‘absent’ from Christ. How seriously can we take this statement as an expression of genuine absence between Paul and Christ? For a start, the desire to be with Christ *at death* seems to contradict other statements in Paul that tie this hope to the resurrection or parousia (e.g. 1 Thess 4:17 καὶ οὕτως πάντοτε σὺν κυρίῳ ἐσόμεθα cf. 1 Thess 5:10). Secondly, can we speak of a real ‘absence’ between Christ and the believer when for Paul the believer is so patently ‘in Christ’ now (cf. Phil 1:1; 2:5; 4:7; 4:21)?

It is generally agreed that these verses are part of a unit that stretches from 1:18 to 1:26.<sup>4</sup> In this section, Paul opens with a question (τί γάρ;) in response to the previous section (1:12-17) where he has recounted how his (negative) experiences (imprisonment 1:13-14; rivalry from other preachers 1:15-17) have served the advancement of the gospel (προκοπὴν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου 1:12). The affirmation in 1:18 that Paul rejoices because the gospel is being preached matches (thematically at least) the earlier affirmation that what has happened to him has increased the advancement of the gospel (1:12). Paul affirms that he will continue to rejoice (ἀλλὰ καὶ χαρήσομαι 1:18) because what has happened<sup>5</sup> will turn out for his vindication (1:19 σωτηρία)<sup>6</sup> through the prayers of the Philippians and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.<sup>7</sup> His expectation is that he will not be put to shame but will always have the boldness so that Christ will be glorified in his body (1:20) – whether through life or death.

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<sup>3</sup> This particular verb occurs only here in Paul (cf. ἀνάλυσις in 2 Tim 4:6). The word can be used of an army breaking camp (2 Macc 9:1) or of a ship sailing off (Polybius 3.69.14). Paul probably employs it because it enables him to avoid making the bald statement that that he actually desires *to die*.

<sup>4</sup> ‘The two phases in 1:12-26 are 1:12-17 and 1:18-26’. So A. H. Snyman, ‘A Rhetorical Analysis of Philippians 1:12-26,’ *AcT* 25.1 (2005): 93.

<sup>5</sup> τοῦτο (1:19) probably refers to the whole of 1:12-18 cf. τὰ κατ’ ἐμέ in 1:12. So P. T. O’Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians: a Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 109.

<sup>6</sup> This phrase in 1:19 ὅτι τοῦτό μοι ἀποβήσεται εἰς σωτηρίαν corresponds exactly to Job 13:16 (LXX) and suggests that σωτηρία should be understood as ‘vindication’ from God so that Paul will not be ashamed (αἰσχυνθήσομαι [1:20]) cf. J. Gnllka, *Der Philipperbrief* (2nd ed., HTKNT 10.3, Friburg: Herder, 1976 [1968]), 65-66; O’Brien, *Philippians*, 110. It seems clear that given he allows for the possibility of his death (1:20) that something other than mere release from prison is in view when he speaks of σωτηρία (so N. C. Croy, “‘To Die Is Gain’ (Philippians 1:19-26): Does Paul Contemplate Suicide?,” *JBL* 122.3 (2003): 519).

<sup>7</sup> As O’Brien, *Philippians*, 110 notes, in 1:19 both δεήσεως and ἐπιχορηγίας are governed by διά and connected by a single article (τῆς) thus suggesting that ‘the supply of the Spirit is the answer to his friends’ prayers’.

Mention of life and death leads Paul to reflect on his respective attitudes to each. In 1:21-24 Paul ties his argument around alternating expressions of life and death (1:21 a τὸ ζῆν; 1:21 b τὸ ἀποθανεῖν; 1:22 τὸ ζῆν ἐν σαρκί; 1:23 τὸ ἀναλῦσαι; 1:24 τὸ ἐπιμένειν ἐν τῇ σαρκί).<sup>8</sup> Verse 1:21a, however, stands as an ‘übergreifende Feststellung’ which gives Paul’s discussion its orientation: for Paul, to live is Christ (τὸ ζῆν Χριστός).<sup>9</sup> Paul balances this with the statement that ‘to die is gain’ (τὸ ἀποθανεῖν κέρδος). While to continue living in the flesh (ἐν σαρκί)<sup>10</sup> will actually mean fruitful labour, he is genuinely torn<sup>11</sup> between life and death. The latter will mean departing<sup>12</sup> and being with Christ (εἰς τὸ ἀναλῦσαι καὶ<sup>13</sup> σὺν Χριστῷ εἶναι [1:23]) which is better by far (πολλῶ γὰρ μᾶλλον κρεῖσσον) but the former is actually more necessary for the Philippians (ἀναγκαιότερον δι’ ὑμᾶς). Thus, in as much as the choice depends on him,<sup>14</sup> he will remain ‘in the flesh’ for the sake of the Philippians (1:25).

How then does this idea of being with Christ *at death* match other statements in Paul that tie this hope to the resurrection or parousia? Many scholars are pessimistic that these ideas can actually be reconciled.<sup>15</sup> Lohmeyer attempted to resolve the issue by proposing a martyrological understanding of these verses. In this interpretation, Paul’s reflections on

<sup>8</sup> Gnllka, *Der Philipperbrief*, 70.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. Paul’s central statement in 1:21 that τὸ ζῆν Χριστός (‘to live is Christ’) may be a corrective allusion to the Greek motto ζῆν χρηστός (‘life is good’), so A. J. Droge and J. D. Tabor, *A Noble Death: Suicide and Martyrdom Among Christians and Jews in Antiquity* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1992), 121.

<sup>10</sup> τὸ ζῆν ἐν σαρκί ‘does not signify an antithesis to the absolute τὸ ζῆν in the preceding verse. Rather it is a more precise definition of it’ (O’Brien, *Philippians*, 125). As such although living ‘in the flesh’ (e.g. Rom 8:9) can be extremely negative, it can also be neutral as here (cf. Gal 2:20; 2 Cor 10:3). Cf. Gordon D. Fee, *Paul’s Letter to the Philippians* (NICNT, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 142 who argues that ‘in the flesh’ refers here to “bodily, physical” existence with no pejorative overtones.

<sup>11</sup> Whether or not Silva is right to argue that ‘Paul is laying bare his soul and frankly admitting a certain embarrassment’ [Moisés Silva, *Philippians* (BECNT, Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 73], he is surely correct to argue that Paul is not just giving ‘a sustained contrast between life and death for its mere stylistic impact’ *pace* Croy, ‘Does Paul Contemplate Suicide?’, 6 who argues that Paul is using a rhetorical device of ‘figured perplexity’.

<sup>12</sup> τὸ ἀναλῦσαι. Used intransitively this verb means ‘to depart, to return’ (cf. BDAG 67; Tob 2:9; 2 Macc 8:25) and can be used euphemistically for ‘die’ (see the refs in BDAG 67 e.g. Lucian, *Philops.* 14). Some argue that given the word’s use elsewhere in contexts of the soul being freed from the body, Paul has that in view here. [See e.g. Jacques Dupont, *Syn Christōi: l’union avec le Christ suivant Saint Paul* (Bruges: Éditions de l’Abbaye de Saint-André, 1952), 177 cited in A. T. Lincoln, *Paradise Now and Not Yet: Studies in the Role of the Heavenly Dimension in Paul’s Thought with Special Reference to His Eschatology* (SNTSMS 43, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 144 n.79]. However, to anticipate our discussion below, Paul’s concern is christocentric. It is a desire to be ‘with Christ’ that Paul expresses, not a desire to be away from the body. Cf. S. Schreiber, ‘Paulus im “Zwischenzustand”’: Phil 1.23 und die Ambivalenz des Sterbens als Provokation,’ *NTS* 49.3 (2003): 340.

<sup>13</sup> This καὶ is explicative i.e. ‘to have departed from this life is to have taken up residence in the presence of the Lord’, so Schreiber, ‘Paulus im ‘Zwischenzustand’,’ 340.

<sup>14</sup> On this question, see the summary in C. S. Wansink, *Chained in Christ: The Experience and Rhetoric of Paul’s Imprisonments* (JSNTSup 130, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 97-100.

<sup>15</sup> Gerald F. Hawthorne, *Philippians* (WBC, Texas: Word, 1983), 59: ‘No completely satisfactory resolution to the problem posed by these seemingly contradictory views has as yet been given, and perhaps none can be given’.

death are understood to only apply to *himself* as a potential martyr. While other Christians will have to wait for the parousia 'to be with Christ', for Paul, as a martyr, this would happen at death.<sup>16</sup> This view has recently been taken up by Sumney.<sup>17</sup>

Sumney suggests that the assumption that most commentators make, namely that what Paul says of himself applies to all believers, is invalid.<sup>18</sup> He notes the tension this assumption makes 'with Paul's expectation of receiving a future bodily resurrection'.<sup>19</sup> The best way to resolve the tension is to understand that Paul distinguishes what he expects for himself and what he expects for believers in general. He makes this distinction on the basis of 'Jewish martyrdom traditions that distinguish between those who sleep and those who are already in heaven with God'.<sup>20</sup> Sumney cites Jewish texts and other texts that, he argues, operate on the same understanding.<sup>21</sup> Further, he argues that the emphasis in the passage is on *Paul* and what he can experience.<sup>22</sup> The life 'with Christ' which is 'better for Paul is what martyrs receive, not what all can expect'.<sup>23</sup>

Sumney, however, misses the fact that the texts that he cites, although they speak of the martyrs being with God, do not, in fact, distinguish between martyrs and other believers. So 4 Maccabees does indeed picture martyrs being present with God following their death, but these are held out as examples for readers to imitate so that they too will suffer like these martyrs. The state of those who die without suffering is not raised. The implicit understanding of the book is that those τῆς εὐσεβείας προνοοῦσιν ἐξ ὅλης καρδίας (7:18) *will suffer death* and so will go to be with God. Similarly, Revelation appears to apply the description (if not the term) of martyr to *all* believers (7:9, 14). Sumney argues that Polycarp *distinguishes* between martyrs and other believers in Poly. *Phil* 9:2<sup>24</sup> when, in fact, he is using their example and reward to call his readers to imitate them (9:1). The same note of imitation is found in 1 Clement 5 (cf. 5:1). Further, it seems that Paul himself fails to make any distinction between martyrs and other Christians.<sup>25</sup> In any case, this distinction

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<sup>16</sup> Ernst Lohmeyer, *Der Brief an die Philipper* (11th ed., KEK, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1956 [1928]), 247-248.

<sup>17</sup> Jerry L. Sumney, 'Post-mortem Existence and Resurrection of the Body in Paul,' *HBT* 31.1 (2009).

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*: 24 cf. as an example Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, 149.

<sup>19</sup> Sumney, 'Post-mortem Existence and Resurrection of the Body in Paul,' 24.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> Sumney refers to 4 Macc 17:17-18; Rev 6:9-11; Poly Phil 9:2; 1 Clem 5:4.

<sup>22</sup> He notes the ἐμοὶ γάρ in an emphatic position in v.21, and the first person singular dominates throughout vv. 19-25

<sup>23</sup> Sumney, 'Post-mortem Existence and Resurrection of the Body in Paul,' 25.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Markus N. A. Bockmuehl, *A Commentary on Epistle to the Philippians* (BNTC, London: Continuum, 1997), 88 who notes that Paul 'never employs a separate category of martyrs.'

would be very odd in a letter where he so definitely sees himself as a model for other Christians.<sup>26</sup>

Others have proposed different solutions for the tension between the hope here orientated to death which is elsewhere focussed on the parousia or resurrection. Some argue that any apparent differences are simply caused by the different situations that Paul addresses. So Lincoln suggests that the apparent differences between Philippians 1 and 1 Thessalonians 4 are explained by the fact that in the latter case the issue is the relationship between those who are dead and those who are alive at the parousia. Paul, in 1 Thessalonians 4, does not discuss the state of those who are dead but this is precisely his concern in Philippians 1.<sup>27</sup>

Still others attempt to resolve the tension by appealing to an altered *perspective* of time. So Fee argues that for Paul

death means 'heaven now'. At the same time, a person's death did not usher him or her into 'timeless' existence. Hence the bodily resurrection still awaits one 'at the end'. Ultimately this matter lies in the area of mystery. At issue is the interplay between 'time' and 'eternity' involved in the implied period of 'time' between death and resurrection. From our human perspective, earthbound and therefore time bound as it is, we cannot imagine 'timeless' existence; whereas from the perspective of eternity/infinity these may well be collapsed into a single 'moment', as it were.<sup>28</sup>

Similarly, Bockmuehl argues that perhaps the best solution is to view the dead as passing 'into a kind of time beyond time, where judgement and resurrection and full knowledge of the risen Christ are seen to be a present reality, even while they are still anticipated on earth'.<sup>29</sup> According to these interpretations Paul is not expressing any current absence from Christ. Rather, he is effectively collapsing the *experience* of time passing between his death and the final resurrection. Others, however, reject the 'systematische

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<sup>26</sup> D.W. Palmer, 'To Die is Gain (Philippians i 21),' *NovTest* 17 (1975): 204.

<sup>27</sup> Lincoln suggests that there are parallels in Jewish apocalyptic writings where there is a combination of the idea of an intermediate state followed by the final resurrection of the dead. Lincoln, *Paradise Now and Not Yet*, 105 cf. Schreiber, 'Paulus im 'Zwischenzustand', 359 who emphasises the situation-specific application of Paul's view of the relationship of the believer with Christ.

<sup>28</sup> Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, 149.

<sup>29</sup> As Bockmuehl, *A Commentary on Epistle to the Philippians*, 93 has noted, the same co-existence of belief in future blessedness at death leading eventually to eschatological resurrection is also found in Jewish apocalyptic sources, e.g. 1 Enoch 70.1ff. and 102.4-105.2 However he also asks whether 'these two thoughts [immediate presence and future resurrection] can really be logically reconciled' and suggests that ultimately they cannot 'perhaps because they demand the impossible: a description of transcendence and eternity in immanent temporal terms'.

Unausgeglichenheit' of this sort of 'timeless eternity' idea<sup>30</sup> and argue, rather, that Paul holds to a form of conscious existence in an 'intermediate state'.<sup>31</sup> Lincoln suggests that the apparent tension in Paul reflects the inherent relationship between 'the "spatial and temporal elements" in Paul's eschatology'. That is the

spatial concept of heaven features in the proleptic enjoyment of eschatological salvation in the period between the individual's death and the parousia. At the same time individual death will not be followed by some immediate escape from time, so that in this respect it can be seen that heaven participates in the "already – not yet" tension of existence during the overlap of the ages.<sup>32</sup>

Whether or not we use the *term* 'intermediate state'<sup>33</sup> the *idea* it represents is no 'Fremdkörper' here and surely is the simplest way to understand Paul's words in this passage.<sup>34</sup> Further, there is no *necessary* tension between the idea that this 'intermediate state' is more *preferable* than remaining 'in the flesh' and the idea that it will not be until Christ's parousia that the *fullness* of eschatological blessing will occur. Paul expresses the supremacy of the latter idea in this very letter (3:20-21).<sup>35</sup>

The idea of Paul – or indeed any believer – wanting to die and be 'with' Christ even as he anticipates the eschatological consummation does not stand in contradiction with the latter expectation. Yet, how do we understand Paul's expression of the necessity of *dying* in order to be 'with' Christ? Surely Paul's 'present existence "in Christ" makes it *unthinkable* that he would ever – even at death – be in a "place" where he was not "with Christ"?'<sup>36</sup> In what sense is it πολλῶ μᾶλλον κρείσσον to die and be 'with' Christ? In what sense is to die κέρδος (1:21a)?

Some commentators answer this question by understanding Paul's key statement in 1:21a in a particular way. When Paul says that to live is Christ (τὸ ζῆν Χριστός), it is argued

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<sup>30</sup> Schreiber, 'Paulus im 'Zwischenzustand'', 343: 'Die systematische Unausgeglichenheit der Modelle beruht dort nirgends auf einer Reflexion des Verhältnisses Zeit – Ewigkeit'.

<sup>31</sup> So *Ibid.*: 340.

<sup>32</sup> Lincoln, *Paradise Now and Not Yet*, 106. Cf. Paul Hoffmann, *Die Toten in Christus: eine religionsgeschichtliche und exegetische Untersuchung zur paulinischen Eschatologie* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1978), 273: 'die Auferstehung ist dabei nicht bewusst ausgelassen, sondern nur nicht beachtet'.

<sup>33</sup> Those who reject it include Hoffmann, *Die Toten in Christus*, 341-344. As John H.P. Reumann, *Philippians: a New Translation* (AB 33B, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 252 points out the term is not Paul's and may open him up to more misunderstandings. However, as Schreiber, 'Paulus im 'Zwischenzustand'', 359 notes Paul 'hat kein Interesse an Terminfragen, aber eine berechtigte Hoffnung: "mit Christus zu sein"'.  
<sup>34</sup> Herman N. Ridderbos, *Paul: an Outline of His Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 506. Cf. Lincoln, *Paradise Now and Not Yet*, 106.

<sup>34</sup> Herman N. Ridderbos, *Paul: an Outline of His Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 506. Cf. Lincoln, *Paradise Now and Not Yet*, 106.

<sup>35</sup> Both Ridderbos and Lincoln point out that the idea of the intermediate state is not to be thought of as an eschatological climax – so Lincoln, *Paradise Now and Not Yet*, 106; cf. Ridderbos, *Paul: an Outline of His Theology*, 506.

<sup>36</sup> Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, 149.

that by 'life' here Paul means 'eschatological life' rather than simple 'bodily existence'.<sup>37</sup> It is noted that though τὸ ζῆν is the subject, and Χριστός is the predicate nominative, 'in terms of content, Χριστός is the subject of the sentence: *Christ is my life*'.<sup>38</sup> In this way it is precisely *because* Christ is Paul's life that to die is gain.<sup>39</sup> However, to render 'life' as eschatological life does not fit the context. So, in 1:20 life and death are seen as spheres of obedience to Christ – rather than Christ himself and in 1:21 life is further defined as 'life in the flesh'.<sup>40</sup> Life means 'bodily' existence. So the relationship between 'to live is Christ' and 'to die is gain' is not one of simple causation. Rather, death is gain because (1:23) it involves departing and being with Christ.

Other commentators seek to understand how Paul could understand death as gain by considering similar sayings in antiquity. After a survey of such literature, Palmer concludes that for Paul death is gain '*not because of any closer union with Christ, since τὸ ζῆν is already Χριστός*', rather it is gain 'as in the commonplace of Greek literature, because it brings release from earthly troubles'.<sup>41</sup> In that sense, what Paul says is of a piece with his non-Christian contemporaries. What is more, Paul is in a *better* situation because death does not cut him off from Christ but involves going to him (1:23). However, according to Palmer, going to Christ is not the *essence* of his desire to die. Rather, the heart of his desire is freedom from earthly troubles.<sup>42</sup> However, as Croy has pointed out, Palmer's thesis falls on two fronts. First, it misses the fact that nowhere does Paul in Philippians actually *bemoan* his existing condition. Far from it, as we have seen, he rejoices in his troubles because through them the gospel is being preached (1:18).<sup>43</sup> Second, Palmer's thesis 'deprives the expression "depart and be *with* Christ" of any meaning beyond being "*in* Christ"'.<sup>44</sup>

Palmer's work on backgrounds does raise the question of the relationship of Paul's thought to other similar expressions in antiquity. This question of backgrounds is complex and disputed. The problem is that the concept of dying and going to one's god is such a widespread religious hope that it seems impossible to trace any kind of relationship between other ancient texts and Paul. So, for example, Hofmann notes a Greek burial

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<sup>37</sup> Hoffmann, *Die Toten in Christus*, 288-296; Gnilka, *Der Philipperbrief*, 69-76; Peter Siber, *Mit Christus Leben: eine Studie zur paulinischen Auferstehungshoffnung* (ATANT 61, Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1971), 88-94.

<sup>38</sup> Hoffmann, *Die Toten in Christus*, 294.

<sup>39</sup> Siber, *Mit Christus Leben*, 89: 'Der Wunsch abzuschneiden ist vielmehr Ausdruck einer positiven Gewißheit und Hoffnung. Weil Christus selbst das eschatologische Leben ist, muß der Wunsch des Paulus auf die Erlangung dieses Lebens und auf das Sein mit Christus gehen'.

<sup>40</sup> O'Brien, *Philippians*, 120.

<sup>41</sup> Palmer, 'To Die is Gain (Philippians i 21),' 218. Emphasis added.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> Croy, 'Does Paul Contemplate Suicide?,' 522.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*: 523.

epigram ‘I have departed (ἀνέλθω), however to the gods and I come to the immortal ones. For whom the gods love, die [prematurely]’.<sup>45</sup> It is not altogether clear, however, that Paul simply ‘takes over a familiar Greek terminology’.<sup>46</sup> After all, the Psalms (for example) speak of the dead being in the presence of God. For example, Psalm 73 [72LXX]: 23-24 is thematically very similar to Paul here. The Psalmist is presently always with the Lord (καὶ ἐγὼ διὰ παντὸς μετὰ σοῦ) and afterwards will be received with him (καὶ μετὰ δόξης προσελάβου με).<sup>47</sup> What is often missing in discussions on these backgrounds (as illustrated by Palmer’s paper) is any christological focus.<sup>48</sup> It is ‘being with *Christ*’ that Paul found most appealing about death. So, death for him was not *simply* a gain ‘of relief, of honour, of vindication’.<sup>49</sup> It meant much more than that – it meant being with *Christ*. Similarly in rightly stressing the priority of the ‘corporate’ eschatological fulfilment at the *parousia* (3:20), some scholars downplay the fact that Paul genuinely does long to depart to be with Christ. It is not simply ‘different’<sup>50</sup> but ‘much better’ (πολλῶ μᾶλλον κρεῖσσον).

But, we return to our fundamental question – how is this being with Christ better than his current existence ‘in Christ’ (cf. 1:1; 4:21). Some commentators are content to speak in quite general terms. So, O’Brien argues that what is in view is the idea that ‘death ushers [Paul] into *an even deeper* fellowship with Christ, so that he can say that this union beyond death is “far, far better” and is a consummation earnestly to be desired’.<sup>51</sup> Similarly, Lincoln argues that Paul’s ‘relationship of union with Christ cannot be broken by death but will continue in *an even more intimate* way where Christ now is, that is in heaven’.<sup>52</sup>

At this stage, we can simply conclude that for Paul there is a sense that as well as being ‘in Christ’, he is also absent from Christ. We will have to wait until section 4 below before we can more fully explore the nature of the absence between Christ and Paul, but two aspects of this text anticipate our conclusion that Christ’s absence is a bodily absence.

<sup>45</sup> Hoffmann, *Die Toten in Christus*, 49.

<sup>46</sup> Heinz Giesen, ‘Eschatology in Philippians’ in *Paul and his Theology* (ed. Stanley Porter; *Pauline Studies* 3; Leiden: Brill, 2006), 249.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. Pss 16[15 LXX]:8-11. These psalms are both mentioned by Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 59. The idea of a post-mortem dwelling with God is also found in 1 Enoch 39:4-8. However Schreiber, ‘Paulus im “Zwischenzustand”’, 351 rejects texts like this as relevant to the current discussion given that they concern the ‘final’-state rather than an ‘intermediate’-state.

<sup>48</sup> So, for example, Sumney, ‘Post-mortem Existence and Resurrection of the Body in Paul,’ 23 overlooks any Christological significance by stating that ‘Paul expects to be with God in some experience that involves deeper fellowship with God than present life affords’.

<sup>49</sup> Nijay Gupta, “‘I Will Not Be Put To Shame’: Paul, the Philippians, and the Honourable Wish for Death,’ *Neot* 42.2 (2008): 265. Though all of these elements may certainly have been present.

<sup>50</sup> Reumann, *Philippians*, 253.

<sup>51</sup> O’Brien, *Philippians*, 130. Emphasis added.

<sup>52</sup> Lincoln, *Paradise Now and Not Yet*, 104. Emphasis added. Cf. Chrysostom in *Homily 3 on Philippians* describes the Christian’s state with the Lord as ‘μᾶλλον καὶ ἐγγύτερον’ [PG 62.203].



First, as we have seen, departing to be with Christ is contrasted with Paul's current bodily existence (vv. 22, 24). Paul's absence from Christ arises from his ongoing bodily existence. Secondly, we can note Paul's use of the word ἐπιθυμία. Commentators note that this is usually a negative word for Paul (Rom 1:24; 6:12; 7:7f; 13:14; Gal 5:16,24; 1 Thess 4:5; cf. Eph 2:3; 4:22; Col 3:5; 1 Tim 6:9; 2 Tim 2:22; 3:6; 4:3; Tit 2:12; 3:3). In fact there is only one other use in Paul which is not negative and that is in 1 Thessalonians 2:17.<sup>53</sup> In this verse Paul is expressing his desire to come to the Thessalonians (περισσοτέρως ἐσπουδάσαμεν τὸ πρόσωπον ὑμῶν ἰδεῖν ἐν πολλῇ ἐπιθυμίᾳ). Collange describes this verse as an *exception* in Pauline usage, whereas it is possibly the most important parallel use to Philippians 1. It would seem that Paul can use this more frequently negative word to express the noble desire to be in bodily presence with someone. In 1 Thessalonians 2:17, Paul is expressing the desire for *bodily* presence with the Thessalonians which would suggest that in Philippians 1:23 his desire is for the *bodily* presence of Christ.

## 2.2 The Parousia and the Absence of Christ (1 Thess 4:15-17)

In this section we will examine the motif of the *coming* of Christ and how it contributes to the idea of the current *absence* of Christ. Rather than survey all the texts in Paul which speak of Christ's coming, we will focus on 1 Thessalonians with its high concentration of the word 'parousia'.<sup>54</sup> In this letter the themes of Christ's coming and his current absence are most closely related.

Paul speaks explicitly of Christ coming *from heaven* twice in 1 Thessalonians. In the first instance, he speaks of how the Thessalonians have turned from idols to the 'true God'

<sup>53</sup> e.g. J-F Collange, *The Epistle of Saint Paul to the Philippians* (London: Epworth Press, 1979 [1973]), 64.

<sup>54</sup> This is obviously not the only word associated with Christ's coming [see esp. Walter Riggans, 'The Parousia: Getting Our Terms Right,' *Them* 21 (1995): 14-16] and we will examine other related motifs in 1 Thessalonians. The frequency of parousia language, however, does indicate the appropriateness of considering this letter. The literature concerning Paul's eschatological thought and in particular his specific understanding of the coming of Christ – even in 1 Thessalonians – is vast and a number of important scholarly debates centre on this topic. We will not deal with these in any detail except where relevant. One question which is frequently considered is whether and to what extent Paul's eschatology developed across his letters. This is a difficult issue concerning both the chronology of Paul's letters and his eschatological thought. Ultimately, however, it is not specifically relevant to our thesis. We are primarily concerned to examine the *Christology* that Paul (implicitly or explicitly) assumes when he discusses the parousia of Christ. The place of the parousia in Paul's overall thought is of less concern. On this specific question see Joseph Plevnik, *Paul and the Parousia: An Exegetical and Theological Investigation* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1997), 272-276 and David Luckensmeyer, *The Eschatology of First Thessalonians* (NTOA: SUNT 71, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009), 234-235. For a comprehensive survey of the issues surrounding 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 (sc. the Thessalonians' problem(s); Paul's answer(s); the meaning of λογός κυρίου; the question of Jewish/Hellenistic influence) see Luckensmeyer, *Eschatology of First Thessalonians*, 192-210.

and are now waiting his Son<sup>55</sup> ‘from heaven’ (ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν 1:10). In the second (4:14-17), Paul describes Christ’s coming from heaven in more detail. Here we are told that Lord will ‘descend’ from heaven (ἄπ’ οὐρανοῦ) and be united with believers both dead and alive so that they will be with him forever (4:16-17).<sup>56</sup> The Lord himself will descend; those who have died in him will rise first, followed by those who have remained alive and both will meet him ‘in the air’(4:16). The result is that they will all be with the Lord ‘forever’ (4:17).

While these references to heaven evoke a number of questions amongst commentators,<sup>57</sup> many simply comment that in referring to Christ in heaven, Paul is here assuming Christ’s exalted status rather than assuming anything about his *location*.<sup>58</sup> Paul, however, does not actually use any of the language associated with exaltation.<sup>59</sup> In fact, because Christ is only described as ‘coming’ from heaven, Traub argues that there is no emphasis on Christ being ‘in’ heaven.<sup>60</sup> That kind of ‘positional’ language, it is argued, only comes later (e.g. Col 3:1; Eph 6:9) and is simply an accommodation to ‘Hellenism or Judaism’ i.e. it is not specifically Christian.<sup>61</sup> On the contrary, by conceiving of Christ as *coming* from heaven, he is ‘nicht als “Seiender”, sondern grundsätzlich als Kommender verstanden’.<sup>62</sup> Similarly, Luckensmeyer has more recently argued that the fact that the expected deliverance comes ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν ‘confirms the saving action of God’ and means that

<sup>55</sup> As frequently noted, this is the only time that Paul uses ‘son’ language in reference to the parousia. For a survey of how ‘son’ has been understood here, see Luckensmeyer, *Eschatology of First Thessalonians*, 95-96.

<sup>56</sup> Note the continuity of identity: the Jesus who died and rose again is the one with whom and through whom, God will bring those who have died (4:14).

<sup>57</sup> So, for example, is there any significance in the difference between the singular (4:16) and plural (1:10) forms of οὐρανός and do these references reflect pre-existing traditions or Paul’s own formulations? On the former question, it is generally now agreed that there is no difference in meaning between the two forms. So, Lincoln, *Paradise Now and Not Yet*, 184, having surveyed all the Pauline uses of οὐρανός and cognates, concludes that (with the exception of Eph 4:10 where the use of πάντων indicates that the plural is significant) this ‘is simply a stylistic matter’. Cf. for example Ernest Best, *A Commentary on the First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians* (BNTC, London: A&C Black, 1972), 83; A. J. Malherbe, *The Letters to the Thessalonians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 32B, New York: Doubleday, 2000), 273. On the latter question, Best, *The Epistles to the Thessalonians*, 85-86 argues that in 1:10, Paul is using pre-existing tradition on the basis of unusual word usage (e.g. ἀναμένω instead of the more usual δέχεσθαι compounds) and the fact that in this statement concerning the content of the Christian faith, there is no reference here to the death of Jesus. T. Holtz, *Der erste Brief an die Thessalonicher* (EKKNT13, Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1986), 57, however, is probably correct to conclude that *at most* Paul is providing a *summary* of an earlier tradition and certainly *not* any kind of direct citation.

<sup>58</sup> Best, *The Epistles to the Thessalonians*, 196; Gordon D. Fee, *The First and Second Letter to the Thessalonians* (NICNT, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 49; Seyoon Kim, *Paul and the New Perspective: Second Thoughts on the Origin of Paul’s Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 93.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. Phil 2:19; Rom 8:34.

<sup>60</sup> Helmut Traub, ‘οὐρανός κτλ.’ in *TWNT* 5 (1954), 524.

<sup>61</sup> But even in these later examples Traub argues that ‘ἐν οὐρανῶν wird wahrscheinlich in abgeschliffenen Sprachgebrauch lediglich als “über euch” zu verstehen sein’. Traub does not deny that coming from heaven implies that Christ is ‘in’ heaven. He simply argues that there is no emphasis on this idea.

<sup>62</sup> Traub, ‘οὐρανός κτλ.’, 524.

'heaven' here should be understood as a 'circumlocution for God'. It 'does not refer to a physical locality but a dynamic point of departure'.<sup>63</sup>

However, it seems fair to note that the fact that Christ will come ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν at the very least 'presupposes that in the interim he is *in* heaven'.<sup>64</sup> Moreover, to conceive of Christ in his relation to believers and to heaven itself purely in dynamic terms underplays an important motif in 1 Thessalonians - Christ's current absence from believers. Paul does not *simply* describe Christ as 'the One who comes'. Rather, he is the one for whom believers are 'waiting' (1:10) to come from heaven.<sup>65</sup> His identity here is defined not only by his future 'coming' but also by his current absence that requires believers to wait for him. To speak of heaven, as Luckensmeyer does, purely as a 'dynamic point of departure' collapses the future into the present and minimises the present *static* period of waiting. The one for whom believers wait is currently located in heaven.

Locating Christ in heaven fits with the fact that in 1 Thessalonians, being 'with the Lord' (σὺν κυρίῳ) is a purely *eschatological* hope lying *only* in the future.<sup>66</sup> Following the coming of the Lord (εἰς τὴν παρουσίαν τοῦ κυρίου 4:15) and the subsequent events (4:16-17), believers will meet the Lord in the air and 'only then' (καὶ οὕτως)<sup>67</sup> be with the Lord forever (πάντοτε σὺν κυρίῳ ἐσόμεθα). While the motif of being 'with' Christ or 'with' the Lord, like the related 'in Christ' language, resists simple categorisation,<sup>68</sup> it seems fairly clear that, in this instance, Paul means something like being 'in the company of' the Lord. Thus, in 1 Thessalonians, Paul's locating Christ in heaven involves his conceiving of Christ *in some sense* as absent from believers. Only when he comes will he be 'with' them.

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<sup>63</sup> Luckensmeyer, *Eschatology of First Thessalonians*, 97.

<sup>64</sup> Lincoln, *Paradise Now and Not Yet*, 186.

<sup>65</sup> Paul uses the NT *hapax* ἀναμένειν. He may be drawing on a number of LXX texts that use the verb (cf. Jer 13:16; Jud 8:17; Sir 2:6-8) perhaps Isaiah 59:11 in particular with its related theme of waiting for salvation.

<sup>66</sup> Gerhard Friedrich, 'Der erste Brief an die Thessalonicher' in *Die Briefe an die Galater, Epheser, Philipper, Kolosser, Thessalonicher und Philemon* (ed. Jürgen Becker, Hans Conzelmann, and Gerhard Friedrich; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1976), 244: 'Mit-Christus-Sein ist die volle Erfüllung der christlichen Zukunftshoffung'. Luckensmeyer, *Eschatology of First Thessalonians*, 33 is right to point out that the 'crude distinction between "in Christ" as referring to the present life and "with Christ" as referring to the future life is not borne out in Paul's usage; he includes a complex mix of past, present and future references'. He cites J. D. Harvey, 'The "With Christ" Motif in Paul's Thought,' *JETS* 35.3 (1992). However, Harvey (332) notes that in each of the three cases where Paul uses the motif in 1 Thessalonians [σὺν αὐτῷ (4:14; 5:10) and σὺν κυρίῳ (4:17)] 'the temporal referent is future'.

<sup>67</sup> This phrase is normally taken in a modal sense ('and so' or 'thus'). However, P. W. van der Horst, "'Only Then Will All Israel Be Saved: A Short Note on the Meaning of καὶ οὕτως in Romans 11:26,' *JBL* 119.3 (2000): 524 shows that not only is the temporal sense ('only then') possible for the current passage, but it fits the fact that 'the text so unambiguously indicates that the apostle is speaking about a temporal order: first A, thereafter B, and finally (but only then) C'. Even on the traditional reading, the text presumes an aspect of being 'with' Christ that was not a reality before Christ's coming.

<sup>68</sup> See the brief survey in Harvey, 'The "With Christ" Motif,' 329-340.

One text in 1 Thessalonians, however, does seem to speak of believers currently *dwelling* with Christ and thus call into question the idea that Paul views him in any significant sense as absent in this letter. In 5:10 Jesus is described as the one who ‘died for us’ so that εἴτε γρηγορῶμεν εἴτε καθεύδωμεν ἅμα σὺν αὐτῷ ζήσωμεν. It is conventional to render this ‘whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him’. That is, whether we are alive (‘awake’) or dead (‘asleep’), we live *with* Christ. If this were the case, we may have an instance where Paul is describing the believer as currently ‘in the company’ of the Lord thus minimising the sense of his absence. However, this ‘alive/dead’ understanding is problematic, given that the very same words are used in 5:6 where they are used not of death and life but with reference to moral watchfulness or carelessness (ἄρα οὖν μὴ καθεύδωμεν ὡς οἱ λοιποὶ ἀλλὰ γρηγορῶμεν καὶ νήφωμεν). Some commentators argue that Paul has simply changed the referents of his terms between verse 6 (watchful or slothful) and verse 10 (alive or dead).<sup>69</sup> Moreover, they argue, Paul would substantially weaken the ethical force of 5:6 (ἄρα οὖν μὴ καθεύδωμεν ὡς οἱ λοιποὶ ἀλλὰ γρηγορῶμεν καὶ νήφωμεν) if he were reassuring those who were also spiritually slothful ‘like the rest’ (ὡς οἱ λοιποὶ) of humanity that they too were ‘with Christ’. However, it seems that while καθεύδω *can* refer to death (though only rarely),<sup>70</sup> γρηγορέω *never* means ‘to be alive’ in extant ancient literature.<sup>71</sup>

Various solutions are proposed for the seeming contradiction this linguistic observation creates between 5:10 and 5:6.<sup>72</sup> However, for our purposes the more pertinent

<sup>69</sup> So, for example Best, *The Epistles to the Thessalonians*, 218; C. A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles to the Thessalonians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 189.

<sup>70</sup> M. Lautenschlager, ‘εἴτε γρηγορῶμεν εἴτε καθεύδωμεν: Zum Verhältnis von Heiligung und Heil in 1 Thess 5,10,’ *ZNW* 81.1 (1990): 49 argues that καθεύδω never *by itself* refers to death (i.e. where it does e.g. Ps. 87:6 and Daniel 12:2, the meaning is shaped by the context (46). However, Luckensmeyer, *Eschatology of First Thessalonians*, 306-307 has recently shown that while καθεύδειν ‘is not well attested for the figurative meaning of death [...] there are a number of references [...] which cannot be dismissed altogether’ (including Matt 9:18, 23-24 and parallels).

<sup>71</sup> So Lautenschlager, ‘1 Thess 5,10,’ 49 and Luckensmeyer, *Eschatology of First Thessalonians*, 312.

<sup>72</sup> Lautenschlager himself sees 5:10 expressing the triumph of God’s grace. It ‘defines more precisely’ the πάντες of v.5 (‘you are all children of light’). That is, the difference between them and the ‘children of the night’ is not their quality of life since ‘even in the Christian community some are sleeping’. Rather the difference is simply their faith in the death and resurrection of Christ’. He specifically states (53) that ‘the moral behaviour of Christians for the attainment of salvation is irrelevant’. Heil [J. P. Heil, ‘Those Now ‘Asleep’ (not Dead) Must be ‘Awakened’ for the Day of the Lord in 1 Thess 5.9-10,’ *NTS* 46.3 (2000): 469] accepts Lautenschlager’s linguistic observations but argues that the context of the verse suggests that it has a hortatory function. That is, ‘if some Thessalonians might now be “asleep” like the rest and thus not living in holiness, they must be “awakened” to a life of holiness now, in order appropriately to share in life with the Lord at his parousia (5:10)’. Paddison, however, simply asserts that ‘no matter how these two verbs are used in the rest of the New Testament, *here* they are being used to return to Paul’s message of consolation - your loved ones who have died are not out of the sphere of Christ’s power’ [A. Paddison, *Theological Hermeneutics and 1 Thessalonians* (SNTSMS 133, Cambridge: CUP, 2005), 186]. Luckensmeyer offers a more complex reading which seems to be a combination of Heil’s and Lautenschlager’s interpretations and which seems to reflect

question is how to understand the end of the verse and particularly the significance of the form of ζάω (ζήσωμεν).<sup>73</sup> Is Paul picturing a present living ‘with’ Christ? Although some are happy to simply read the aorist as future-referring,<sup>74</sup> Koester argues that if ‘Paul wanted to refer unambiguously to the future, he could have used the future indicative’.<sup>75</sup> However, ἵνα followed by the future indicative is rare in the New Testament,<sup>76</sup> and Paul *can* use ἵνα followed by the aorist in an unambiguously future context (e.g. 1 Cor 5:5).<sup>77</sup> In other words, the use of the aorist here cannot be pressed for temporal information one way or the other. We are dependent on the context, with both the immediate context (cf. the eschatological language of wrath and salvation of 5:9) and the wider context (namely the future orientation of being ‘with the Lord’ in 4:17) indicating that ‘living with the Lord’ in 1 Thessalonians 5:10 lies only in the future and so does not contradict the notion of the absence of Christ.<sup>78</sup>

Paul’s first letter to the Thessalonians with its emphasis on the coming of Christ indicates that heaven is a ‘place of absence’ for Christ and not simply a state of exaltation. Though believers are ‘in Christ’ (2:14; 5:18 cf. 4:16), he is also conceived as *absent* from them in heaven so much so that Paul can say that they will only be with each other at his *parousia*. Christ’s future coming then implies his current absence from believers

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the hard ‘staying in’ / ‘getting in’ distinction of E.P. Sanders. That is, he argues that Paul’s ‘pattern of exhortation is designed to keep the community intact and is not a threat to its integrity’ (313). At the same time he argues that notions of vigilance and indolence are ‘ἀδιάφορα’ and so ‘whether a member is vigilant or not, every member will always be with the Lord (4:17) and live together with him (5:10)’ (313). While ‘there is no thought whatsoever whether the Thessalonians are insiders or not’ (312) and there is ‘no incompatibility between these exhortations and the obliteration of vigilance / indolence’ (313), at the same time the motivation in 5:6 ‘comes about through the necessity of remaining an insider’ (312). Perhaps the most appealing solution is that of E. J. Richard, *First and Second Thessalonians* (SP 11, Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2007), 257 who interprets Paul to mean that ‘whether we are alert (and waiting for the Lord’s day) or whether we are asleep (in the dust of the earth) we will live together with him’.

<sup>73</sup> Though there are small number of variants, this reading has by far the strongest external support. (For example the future indicative ζήσομεν is read by A and a few other manuscripts. This is probably explained by a desire to make the idea more explicitly future referring.)

<sup>74</sup> E.g. Holtz, *Der erste Brief an die Thessalonicher*, 230; Lautenschlager, ‘1 Thess 5,10,’ 57.

<sup>75</sup> H. Koester, ‘From Paul’s Eschatology to the Apocalyptic Schema in 2 Thessalonians’ in *The Thessalonian Correspondence* (ed. Raymond F. Collins; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1990), 164. Koester cites 1 Cor 9:15; 1 Cor 13:3.

<sup>76</sup> It seems to be used only twice in Paul (Gal 2:4; Eph 6:3 where the future of εἰμί is used). The two instances given by Koester above (1 Cor 9:15; 1 Cor 13:3) are complicated because in both cases there is an aorist subjunctive between the ἵνα and the future indicative. The most frequent NT occurrence of ἵνα and the future indicative is in Revelation (2:10; 3:9; 6:4; 6:11; 8:3; 9:4; 9:5; 9:20; 13:12; 14:13; 22:14). However, even here it is often ‘corrected’ by scribes to the aorist subjunctive (3:9; 6:4; 6:11; 9:4; 9:5; 9:20; 13:12; 14:13; 22:14). This suggests that the difference between the two is more stylistic than grammatical.

<sup>77</sup> ἵνα τὸ πνεῦμα σωθῆ ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τοῦ κυρίου.

<sup>78</sup> So J.G. Van der Watt, ‘The Use of ζάω in 1 Thessalonians: A Comparison with ζάω/ζωή in the Gospel of John’ in *The Thessalonian Correspondence* (ed. Raymond F. Collins; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1990), 363-364.

### 2.3 Summary

Paul, like every believer, currently experiences the absence of Christ. He longs for the ‘far better’ experience of departing and being with Christ (Phil 1:23-24). When he dies he will be with Christ in a way that he is not while alive. We have seen that this wish cannot simply be reduced to a hope that in dying a martyr’s death he will be granted some kind of ‘extra’ blessing on death. Nor can it be explained by collapsing the experience of time between Paul’s death and the Parousia so that he simply wakes up at the resurrection. Rather, Paul’s desire needs to be allowed to stand with its full christological significance. Paul envisions himself at death going to be with Christ whom he is not with now. His current experience is of being absent from Christ. Thus, though believers are ‘in Christ’, they are also absent from him. This absence is further presupposed in Paul’s teaching on the Parousia. He sees believers currently waiting for Christ from heaven (1 Thess 1:10). Only when he comes from there will they be fully united with him forever (1 Thess 4:17). Christ, then, in heaven is currently absent from believers.

### 3. The Body of Christ

In this section we will examine what Paul says about the body of Christ. If our thesis that Paul conceives of Christ’s absence as a bodily absence is to be formally possible, then Paul must view the exalted Christ as possessing a body that is distinguishable from the bodies of believers. This idea has been challenged by the view that the church is the *exclusive* body of the exalted Christ. This view was made popular in the English-speaking world by J.A.T. Robinson in his 1952 monograph *The Body*. Here he suggests that the Church is the body of Christ in an absolute sense since it is ‘in literal fact the risen organism of Christ’s person *in all its concrete reality*’.<sup>79</sup> The church ‘is in fact no other than the glorified body of the risen and ascended Christ’.<sup>80</sup> Robinson’s idea has found expression in contemporary systematic theology. So, Robert Jenson in his *Systematic Theology* notes that ‘in a Copernican universe [there] is no plausible accommodation for the risen Christ’s body’.<sup>81</sup> However, if ‘there is no *place* for Jesus’ risen body, how is it a body at all?’<sup>82</sup> Jenson concludes that although Paul clearly thinks of the Lord as in some sense visibly located in a heaven spatially related to the rest of creation, the only body of Christ to which Paul ever actually

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<sup>79</sup> Robinson, *The Body*, 51. Emphasis added.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Robert W. Jenson, *Systematic Theology Volume 1: The Triune God* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 202.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

refers is not an entity in this heaven but the Eucharist's loaf and cup and the church assembled around them.<sup>83</sup>

Similarly, Graham Ward in an essay on the Body of Christ in *Radical Orthodoxy* contends that The body of Jesus Christ is not lost, nor does it reside now in heaven as a discrete object [...] We have no access to the body of the gendered Jew [...] because the Church is now the body of Christ, so to understand the body of Jesus we can only examine what the Church is and what it has to say concerning the nature of that body. [...] God in Christ dies and the Church is born. One gives way to the other, without remainder.<sup>84</sup>

For Ward then the Body of Christ is entirely collapsed into the Church. It has no existence apart from the Church.

This idea has also appeared in German scholarship. So, in his 1966 volume *Die leidende Apostel und sein Herr*, Erhardt Güttgemanns argues that Paul never speaks of an individual body of Christ:

Wohl hat der auferstandene Jesus ein σῶμα, das σῶμα Χριστοῦ. Aber dieses ist kein individuelles σῶμα des Auferstandenen, sondern das Object des Kyrios, so daß Christus nicht in gnostischer Weise in die Kirche aufgelöst werden darf. Paulus kennt darum auch keine 'somatische' Auferweckung Jesu. Darin unterscheidet er sich grundsätzlich von den Evangelien. Die paulinische σῶμα-Begrifflichkeit ist in keiner Weise mit der Betonung der 'Leiblichkeit' der Auferstehung Jesu durch die Evangelien vergleichbar, da der σῶμα-Begriff keine empirische Gegebenheit meint.<sup>85</sup>

Again, the rejection of any kind of individual body possessed by the risen Christ is clear and absolute.

If any of these readings of Paul were correct then it would be difficult, if not impossible, to argue that Paul was conceiving of the absence of Christ in 'bodily' terms. If the church as the body of Christ (cf. 1 Cor 12:27) was the *only* body that the exalted Christ possessed then the idea of a *bodily* absence would be impossible. In this scenario his body would be the very mode of his *presence* with believers. However, we will see that in the following texts Paul affirms that the exalted Christ does, in fact, possess a body that is

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 204.

<sup>84</sup> Graham Ward, 'Bodies: The Displaced Body of Jesus Christ' in *Radical Orthodoxy: A New Theology* (ed. John Milbank, Catherine Pickstock, and Graham Ward; London: Routledge, 1999), 176-177.

<sup>85</sup> Erhardt Güttgemanns, *Der leidende Apostel und sein Herr: Studien zur paulinischen Christologie* (FRLANT 90, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1966), 280-281. Güttgemanns actually considers that Paul does formally speak of Christ having an individual body in Phil 3:21, but as we will see below, he rejects this as a pre-Pauline hymn that does not reflect the apostle's theology at this point.

human, discrete and located and cannot simply be collapsed with the bodies of believers but remains distinguishable from them.

### 3.1 Christ's Human Body (1 Cor 15)

We start with perhaps the most controversial text relating to the body of the risen Christ. In fact, 1 Corinthians 15 actually calls our whole thesis into question. In this chapter, Paul discusses the nature of the resurrection body as he answers the question: what kind of body will those who have been raised possess (15:35)?<sup>86</sup> The question seems to presuppose the impossibility of human bodies in their current form being able to inhabit a resurrected existence. To demonstrate that it is, in fact, possible to have a body that is fit for celestial existence, Paul answers the question by firstly arguing that just as a seed is different from the resulting plant, the resurrection body is different from the earthly body (15:37). It is the *power of God* that determines the form of the body that comes from the seed (15:38). From this, Paul notes that in the universe there are different forms of flesh and different forms of body,<sup>87</sup> and this applies to the resurrection body. That is, the body that is sown is different to the body that is raised. The idea of a 'heavenly body' is just as possible as an 'earthly body' (15:40). Paul continues to use a number of contrasts (perishable / imperishable; dishonour / glory; weakness / power) climaxing in verse 44 with the most controversial contrast (ψυχικός / πνευματικός). If there is a *natural*<sup>88</sup> body there is also a *spiritual* one. Paul maintains his argument by quoting Genesis 2:7: 'Moreover the first man Adam became a living being',<sup>89</sup> and then stating in contrast that the 'last Adam [became] a life-giving Spirit' (15:45).<sup>90</sup>

Two particular expressions in this passage call into question the possibility of Christ being genuinely absent from believers. First, Christ's body is described as a σῶμα πνευματικόν (15:44 cf. σῶμα ἐπουράνιον [15:40]). From this description, Dale Martin is

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<sup>86</sup> For a recent categorisation and survey of the different views on the Corinthian misunderstandings of the resurrection that this question presupposes, see S. Schneider, *Auferstehen: Eine neue Deutung von 1 Kor 15* (FB 105, Würzburg: Echter, 2005), 11-22.

<sup>87</sup> As Thiselton notes for Paul σάρξ is a 'a polymorphous concept' [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 1267] and hence 'heavily context dependent and variable' and probably here has a reference to the 'substance' of the body.

<sup>88</sup> Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 785. Cf. Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 1258: 'an ordinary human body'; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians: a New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 32, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 595-596: 'an animated' body.

<sup>89</sup> ἐγένετο ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος Ἄδὰμ εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν cf. Genesis 2:7 καὶ ἐγένετο ὁ ἄνθρωπος εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν.

<sup>90</sup> The literature concerning the background to the motifs in this section (specifically the expression πνεῦμα ζωοποιῶν, the contrast between the first and last Adam and the πνευματικός - ψυχικός antithesis) is vast. For a survey see Gerhard Sellin, *Der Streit um die Auferstehung der Toten: eine religionsgeschichtliche und exegetische Untersuchung von 1 Korinther 15* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986), 79-189.



happy to argue that the resurrected body of Christ is, for Paul, *material* and even *physical*.<sup>91</sup> However, crucially, the *matter* of which it consists is ‘the celestial substance of *pneuma*’.<sup>92</sup> Similarly, Christians when they are raised will have ‘bodies without flesh, blood, or soul – composed solely of pneumatic substance – light, airy, luminous bodies’.<sup>93</sup> Coupled with this is Martin’s contention that the ‘presupposition underwriting Paul’s argument [in this chapter] is that the nature of any body is due to its participation in some particular sphere of existence’ and that ‘individual bodies have reality only insofar as they are identified with some greater cosmic reality’.<sup>94</sup> Accordingly, it is ‘difficult to imagine how any kind of individuality as we conceive it today could exist in such a world view’.<sup>95</sup> Under this schema with believers and Christ sharing the same *pneuma*, the idea that Christ is ‘absent’ in any meaningful sense disappears.

Second, Paul does not simply describe the resurrected Christ as possessing a *σῶμα πνευματικόν* but as actually becoming a *πνεῦμα ζωοποιού* (15:45). Here the resurrected Christ seems to be equated with the Spirit. Again, if this is correct it is very difficult to speak of the absence of Christ. Accordingly Deissmann argued that ‘der lebendige Christus ist das Pneuma’.<sup>96</sup> As Spirit, Christ is ‘nicht fern über Wolken und Sternen, sondern er ist gegenwärtig auf der armen Erde’ where he ‘wohnt und waltet in den Seinen’.<sup>97</sup>

*Christ’s Spiritual Body (Martin and Engberg-Pedersen)*. Martin’s view that Paul envisaged the resurrection body to be made-up of the light and airy ‘pneumatic substance’ has been strongly questioned by Volker Rabens.<sup>98</sup> He shows that both Martin’s contextual presuppositions<sup>99</sup> and his interpretation of Pauline and Corinthian metaphysics are

<sup>91</sup> Dale B. Martin, *The Corinthian Body* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 126. Although according to Martin the distinction between materiality – immateriality was not one that was recognized in antiquity.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 129. The view that Paul understood the Spirit in substantial terms goes back at least as far as Hermann Lüdemann, *Die Anthropologie des Apostels Paulus und ihre Stellung innerhalb seiner Heilslehre* (Kiel: Universitäts-Buchhandlung, 1872), 149 who described the *σῶμα πνευματικόν* as consisting of ‘Lichtsubstanz’. For an extensive bibliography see Volker Rabens, *The Holy Spirit and Ethics in Paul: Transformation and Empowering for Religious-Ethical Life* (WUNT 2.283, Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2010), 87.

<sup>93</sup> Martin, *The Corinthian Body*, 132.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 131.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 132. Ward argues along similar lines when he asserts that the ‘body of Jesus Christ, the body of God, is permeable, transcorporeal, transpositional’ (Ward, ‘The Displaced Body’, 177).

<sup>96</sup> Deissmann, *Paulus: eine kultur- und religionsgeschichtliche Skizze*, 85 (emphasis added).

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>98</sup> Rabens, *The Holy Spirit and Ethics in Paul*, 86-96.

<sup>99</sup> For example his assertion that antiquity knew no distinction between matter and non-matter does not stand up against a close reading of Plato (Rabens goes into detail concerning this on pages 28-29) Also, his contention that Plato (e.g. in *Timaeus* 32C) held that after death human souls become (physical) heavenly bodies is ‘questionable’. Further ‘there is no clear evidence in Stoicism that the heavenly bodies, including the stars, were made up of *πνεῦμα*’ (89).

unconvincing. Concerning the latter, in particular it is unlikely that in describing the resurrection body as a *σῶμα πνευματικόν* Paul is deliberately building on a Stoic Pneumatology with an explicitly material conception of the Spirit. Rabens shows that neither the questions raised by the Corinthians (15:35) nor the logic of Paul's answer focus on the issue of the *materiality* or otherwise of the resurrection body. Further, the idea that the resurrection body will have its own glory and substance analogous to the heavenly bodies,

ignores the fact that Paul says of the resurrection only that 'it' is raised (*ἐγείρεται*) *in glory* (*ἐν δόξῃ*) (v.43). He neither speaks about substance nor does he name 'glory' as an attribute of the resurrection body. Moreover, when Paul uses 'glory' as an attribute in verses 40–41, it is in reference to *both earthly and heavenly bodies*.<sup>100</sup>

Martin describes 'the pneuma as the entity held in common by human beings and stars'.<sup>101</sup> However, Paul does not mention *πνεῦμα* when he discusses stars (v.41) or the *σῶμα ψυχικόν* (v.44).<sup>102</sup> Paul only employs the term in relation to the resurrection body. It functions *theologically* rather than *anthropologically*.<sup>103</sup> It is not *πνεῦμα* that 'stands for the continuity of the believer before and after the resurrection' but *σῶμα*.<sup>104</sup> The qualification of the latter as *σῶμα πνευματικόν* in distinction from the *σῶμα ψυχικόν* is an ethical or functional qualification rather than a 'substantial' one.<sup>105</sup> Rabens helpfully concludes

By calling the resurrection body *πνευματικός*, Paul conveys that the natural body will be transformed, animated and enlivened by God's Spirit (cf. Rom 8:11 and parallels). It is the most elegant way Paul can find of saying both that the new body is the *result* of the Spirit's work (answering 'how does it come to be?') and that it is the appropriate *vessel* for the Spirit's life (answering 'what sort of a thing is it?').<sup>106</sup>

There is no need, then, to adopt Martin's view of the pneumatic body with its attendant truncation of both individuality and the idea of absence between Christ and believer.

More recently Troels Engberg-Pedersen has argued along slightly different lines for a material understanding of *σῶμα πνευματικόν* with implications for understanding the

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<sup>100</sup> Rabens, *The Holy Spirit and Ethics in Paul*, 92-93.

<sup>101</sup> Martin, *The Corinthian Body*, 126.

<sup>102</sup> Rabens, *The Holy Spirit and Ethics in Paul*, 93.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.* where he cites Martin (128): 'for Paul, the current human body is made up of sarx, psyche, and pneuma. The resurrected body will shed the first two of these entities – like so much detritus – and retain the third, a stuff of a thinner, higher nature.' Rabens rightly points out that Paul does not engage in this kind of anthropological speculation.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 94.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 96.

relationship between Christ and the believer.<sup>107</sup> Engberg-Pedersen has suggested that Paul's letters need to be read from a Wittgenstein-like 'double-perspective'. That is, we need to be open to the idea that a particular image should be read from both a metaphorical and a 'non-metaphorical, concrete and physical' perspective.<sup>108</sup> This double-perspective is particularly relevant when we consider the Pauline theme of the body and turns on the relationship that Engberg-Pedersen understands between body and *pneuma*. He suggests that while Paul was certainly not a Stoic himself, he 'presupposed a number of broadly [Stoic] ways of thinking'.<sup>109</sup> For Engberg-Pedersen the most important point of shared presupposition is that Paul like the Stoics (and unlike the Middle-Platonists) regarded the *pneuma* as a 'through and through material, bodily phenomenon'.<sup>110</sup> Without denying a cognitive aspect,<sup>111</sup> Engberg-Pedersen argues that Paul operates with a basic material understanding of *pneuma*.<sup>112</sup> Thus, he argues that in the first instance we should be prepared to read Paul in *physical* terms.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Broadly speaking, Martin sees the resurrection body coming about by a shedding of everything *except* the *pneuma* whereas for Engberg-Pedersen it is a *taking on* of the *pneuma*. This difference comes out in the discussion of 15:50-55. Here Engberg-Pedersen notes his disagreement with Martin [Troels Engberg-Pedersen, *Cosmology and Self in the Apostle Paul: The Material Spirit* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 221 n. 85] in arguing that although Paul's notion of transformation appears to be different from Stoic cosmology in that the body is not *shed* but transformed, in actual fact this is an example of Stoic *anastoicheiōsis*: 'the transformation of the whole world into (pneuma and) God at the conflagration' (34). Paul has already associated the final events with fire (cf. 3:12-15) suggesting that chapter 15 should be read in that light too.

<sup>108</sup> Engberg-Pedersen, *Cosmology and Self*, 1.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 3. Engberg-Pedersen draws this conclusion from 1 Corinthians 15:44 where Paul describes the body of the risen Christ as a σῶμα πνευματικόν. He argues that the contrast in 15:44 between the σῶμα ψυχικόν and the σῶμα πνευματικόν is parallel to the contrast in 15:41 between the σώματα ἐπίγεια and the σώματα ἐπουράνια. That is, a pneumatic body 'is a heavenly body like the sun, moon and stars'. There can be 'only one' reason that Paul would view the 'heavenly bodies' as 'pneumatic' and that is that Paul is 'presupposing the specifically Stoic idea that heavenly bodies that are situated at the top of the hierarchical *scala naturae* are distinctly made up of *pneuma*' (28). Engberg-Pedersen argues that this understanding that the *pneuma* is a bodily, material substance has 'huge consequences for everything else we should say about Paul' (14).

<sup>111</sup> With his 'double-perspective' understanding, Engberg-Pedersen argues that we must hold the physical and the cognitive together. That is, as well as emphasising the physical, our view of the *pneuma* also needs to be informed by texts like 1 Corinthians 2:13 where Paul describes the *pneuma* as engaged in *teaching*. So, as well as being a physical entity the *pneuma* is also a cognitive one that generates understanding (63-65). This fits the Stoic view of *pneuma* as a cognitive entity as well as physical cf. Troels Engberg-Pedersen, 'The Material Spirit: Cosmology and Ethics in Paul,' *NTS* 55.2 (2009): 186.

<sup>112</sup> Again Engberg-Pedersen is not arguing that Paul was a Stoic. So, for example, while he may have accepted the Stoic argument for God's existence (in Rom. 1:19-21), he did not accept 'the specifically Stoic *ontology* of God, which connects God directly with the *pneuma*' (61).

<sup>113</sup> See Engberg-Pedersen, *Cosmology and Self*, 11 where he states that his 'basic methodological approach' is to, at least initially, 'attempt to take everything wholly literally'. Even, for example, the seeming 'mythic metaphor' of the trumpet in 1 Thessalonians 5:16. Or, for example, on Romans 8:19-22 and creation groaning Engberg-Pedersen asks: 'Is this a mere metaphor? Who knows? But we have decided not to consider it immediately like that' and goes on to suggest that we may have a parallel with Stoic 'panpsychism' and the idea of the 'world soul' (84). Engberg-Pedersen is, of course, not eschewing any distinction between metaphorical and literal readings, as he makes clear in Engberg-Pedersen, 'The Material Spirit: Cosmology and Ethics in Paul,' 180 n.1.

In a similar fashion to Martin, Engberg-Pederson draws this conclusion from 1 Corinthians 15:44 and Paul's description of the body of the risen Christ as a *σῶμα πνευματικόν*.<sup>114</sup> In 15:43b-44a Engberg-Pedersen argues that Paul 'brings in two further [cf. vv 36-43a] contrasts that have not been *explicitly* prepared for in what immediately precedes': namely that the body is sown in 'weakness', it is raised 'in power'; it is sown a 'psychic' body, it is raised a 'pneumatic' body.<sup>115</sup> Although there may be *implicit* precedents for these two contrasts,<sup>116</sup> the key question for Engberg-Pedersen is how Paul can 'bring in these two contrasts without any more immediate preparation'.<sup>117</sup> He suggests that 'considering the careful way in which he lays out his argument, it seems that [Paul] must have had a [...] precise idea in mind when he contrasts a 'psychic' body with a 'pneumatic' one'.<sup>118</sup> For Engberg-Pedersen, this suggests that

this contrast was *already* contained in the basic contrast he drew in the second set of premises between 'earthly bodies' and 'heavenly bodies'. A 'psychic' body belongs on *earth* as exemplified by the 'earthly bodies' mentioned in 15:39; and a 'pneumatic' one belongs *in heaven* as exemplified by the 'heavenly bodies' mentioned in 15:41. Or to be even more precise: a 'pneumatic body' is a heavenly body like the sun, moon, and stars.<sup>119</sup>

This raises the key question for Engberg-Pedersen: why are Paul's 'heavenly bodies' specifically 'pneumatic'? Engberg-Pedersen suggests that *only one answer is possible*: because Paul is also presupposing the specifically *Stoic* idea that the heavenly bodies that are situated at the top of the hierarchical *scala naturae* are distinctly *made up of pneuma*.<sup>120</sup> On the basis of this exegetical argument, Engberg-Pedersen builds the entire argument of his book. He maintains that that how to understand the *σῶμα πνευματικόν* is 'the guiding question' for his book and the answer has 'huge consequences for everything else we should say about Paul'.<sup>121</sup>

We will return to Engberg-Pedersen in chapter 4 when we see how he develops his understanding with respect to the church as the body of Christ. To anticipate that

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<sup>114</sup> Engberg-Pedersen, *Cosmology and Self*, 3.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>116</sup> So, the 'naked' of v.37 seed implies weakness, while God giving it a body in v.38 implies power. Similarly, the psychic /pneumatic contrast occurs in 2:14-15.

<sup>117</sup> Engberg-Pedersen, *Cosmology and Self*, 28.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.* Emphasis added.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.* On Page 217 n. 76 gives reasons to explain the fact that the term 'pneumatic' is never employed in Stoic sources in direct connection with the heavenly bodies.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

discussion, at this stage we can note that Engberg-Pedersen's foundational view of *pneuma* leads him to suggest that 'being in Christ' may be understood in 'purely physical terms' so that a person's body is actually 'a material part of Christ'.<sup>122</sup> Full possession of the *pneuma*, however, lies in the future. Regarding the implication of this for believers in their relationship with *Christ*, Engberg-Pedersen comments on Philippians 3:8. Here Paul says that he has suffered loss ἵνα Χριστὸν κερδήσω. What aspect of Christ has Paul not grasped *already*? Engberg-Pedersen suggests that it is

neither the resurrection as such nor Christ without any qualification. Rather, it is the *complete* possession of the *pneuma* that will eventually transform Paul's body at the resurrection, and this complete possession of the *pneuma* is also the *complete* possession – both in a cognitive and a physical sense – of Christ.<sup>123</sup>

Thus for Engberg-Pedersen there is a current limited *physical* (i.e. pneumatic) union between believers and Christ which will become *fully realised* at the eschaton. Then there will be a full physical union between Christ and believer. There will, therefore, be an effective eschatological collapse of any *bodily* distinction between Christ and the Church. Not that Christ and believer will be identified without remainder,<sup>124</sup> but that their shared pneumatic corporeity will mean that any *bodily* distinction will be lost. Regarding the present, this implies that any current absence between Christ and believer is simply an expression of the fact that the believer has not yet undergone a full pneumatic transformation. Christ's absence from believers is a bodily absence but this is understood *quantitatively* rather than in a distinct, qualitative sense in which Christ and the believer possessing two distinct bodies are *spatially* separated.<sup>125</sup>

We will return, at different stages, to Engberg-Pedersen's thesis as it is particularly important for how we understand Christ's relationship to his corporate body, the church. At this stage, however, we are concerned to evaluate his *foundational* understanding of σῶμα πνευματικόν as a body 'made up' of *pneuma*? Key, as we have seen, to Engberg-Pedersen's argument is his contention that *only* explanation possible for Paul's equating

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid., 1.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 153.

<sup>124</sup> Engberg-Pedersen does not suggest an *absolute* identification between either Christ and the believer or Christ and the *pneuma*. He maintains that Christ remains a person who while he can be identified with the *pneuma* ('Christ is *pneuma*') is something more than just *pneuma*. Similarly with respect to believers he is 'someone "before" whose judgement seat believers will appear and on whose "face" the pneumatic shine can be seen' (Ibid., 56).

<sup>125</sup> Cf. Murray J. Harris, *Raised Immortal: Resurrection and Immortality in the New Testament* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1983), 57 who interprets the σῶμα πνευματικόν as 'a form of corporeality in which the spirit is supreme, unfettered by time and space.'

‘heavenly bodies’ and ‘pneumatic’ bodies is that he is operating with the Stoic idea of the *scala naturae* such that heavenly bodies are made up of pneuma.

There are a number of problems with Engberg-Pedersen’s proposal. First, Engberg-Pedersen is resting his entire reading on the assumption that Paul would have expected his readers to be familiar with Stoic hylozoistic metaphysics. There certainly seem to be no Jewish precedents for a materialistic understanding of the Spirit,<sup>126</sup> and whether anyone other than the elite among his readership would have operated with this understanding seems, at best, highly questionable.<sup>127</sup> Second, Engberg-Pedersen downplays the πνευματικός - ψυχικός contrast in 2:14-15 for the interpretation of the same contrast in 15:44. There the *contrast* itself is *cognitive* not *substantial*.<sup>128</sup> The ‘spiritual’ person has been taught by the Spirit whereas the ‘natural’ man is unable to accept the things of the Spirit,<sup>129</sup> suggesting that the ψυχικός ἄνθρωπος is a person ‘who lives on an entirely human level’.<sup>130</sup> Engberg-Pedersen suggests that this discussion in chapter 2 is too distant to be relevant to his employment of the same contrast in chapter 15. However, surely it is eminently possible that he is continuing that same contrast than bringing and positing a difference between *bodies* that are suitable for the different realms – just as there are *people* who operate in the different realms (2:14-15).<sup>131</sup> Not only does this have the advantage of reading the two instances of the πνευματικός - ψυχικός in essentially the same way, it also fits better with Paul’s argument in 15:42-29. In particular, as Paul continues to develop his thesis, it is not the question of *substance* that Paul is interested in but the question of *location*. Certainly Paul shows no interest in a *scala naturae* or hierarchy of substances.<sup>132</sup> So, Spirit and heaven are not associated because of the similarity of their substances but

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<sup>126</sup> Rabens, *The Holy Spirit and Ethics in Paul*, 79; J. M. G. Barclay, ‘πνευματικός in the Social Dialect of Pauline Christianity.’ in *The Holy Spirit and Christian Origins: Essays in Honor of James D. G. Dunn*. (ed. G. N. Stanton, B. W. Longenecker, and S. C. Barton; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 165.

<sup>127</sup> Rabens, *The Holy Spirit and Ethics in Paul*, 120. John Barclay suggests that the Pauline sense of the term πνευματικός ‘seems worlds apart from the Stoic notion’. He cites the example of Origen rejecting Celsus’ attempt to make sense of early Christian terminology by reference to Stoic notions of πνεῦμα (*Cels* 6.69-75) [Barclay, ‘πνευματικός in the Social Dialect of Pauline Christianity’, 163].

<sup>128</sup> Recognising that the *individual* terms can be employed in both cognitive and substantial contexts (Engberg-Pedersen, *Cosmology and Self*, 65).

<sup>129</sup> Birger A. Pearson, *The Pneumatikos-Psychikos Terminology in 1 Corinthians: a Study in the Theology of the Corinthian Opponents of Paul and its Relation to Gnosticism* (Missoula, Mont: Scholars Press, 1973), 39 suggests that Paul may here be correcting terminology that was employed by the Corinthians who believed that it was within human capacity to rise above the psychic level of existence.

<sup>130</sup> Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 269.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 279.

<sup>132</sup> As John Barclay notes in his review of Engberg-Pedersen’s *Cosmology & Self*, ‘the adjective πνευματικός like the noun from which it derives, appears to designate not a “higher” quality of material, but a *new entity*’ which is associated with ‘an eschatological reality newly operative on the cosmic stage’. What is in view is ‘not the relocation of creational elements, but the establishment of a wholly new ontological condition’ [J. M. G. Barclay, ‘Stoic-Physics and the Christ-Event,’ *JSNT* 33:4 (2011), 411].

because the origin of the ‘last Adam’, the spiritual man is in heaven, since he comes from heaven (15:49). There is no need to understand the body as somehow composed of ‘spirit’.<sup>133</sup> Rather we can see it as ‘a body adapted to the eschatological existence [i.e. heaven] under the ultimate domination of the Spirit’.<sup>134</sup>

Secondly, given that Christ, like the transformed Christian, is that ‘one and the same’ Pneuma,<sup>135</sup> any distinction between Christ and Spirit is basically eradicated. Certainly any kind of *relational* or *personal* distinction between Christ and the Spirit is difficult, if not impossible, to fit into Engberg-Pedersen’s schema.<sup>136</sup> As we turn to consider each of the ways that Paul speaks of the presence of Christ, we will see that Paul maintains both his bodily absence and a clear relational distinction between Christ and Spirit.

Fundamentally, though, as we have noted, Engberg-Pedersen’s view leads to a truncated view of Christ’s *absence*. The relationship between Christ and believer is a physically realised reality and so Christ and the believer are not separated in any real sense. It is not simply that they share the same corporeity (in this instance the *pneuma*) but that this corporeity is configured in a supra-individual way so that any distinction between Christ and believer is elided to such an extent that the believer’s body becomes ‘a *material* part of Christ’.<sup>137</sup> Christ, like the transformed Christian, is that ‘one and the same’ Pneuma,<sup>138</sup> and so any distinctions between Christ, Spirit and Christian are basically eradicated. Engberg-Pedersen’s construction is similar to that of Käsemann who saw the Spirit as providing the ‘die Substanz der Auferstehungsleiblichkeit’ in which the exalted Christ exists.<sup>139</sup> To a greater extent even than Käsemann, though, the notion of a distinct individuality of the exalted Christ and hence the possibility of his absence from believers is neglected. So not only is Engberg-Pedersen’s understanding of σῶμα πνευματικόν unlikely, it does not fit with the idea that we have seen of Christ’s absence from believers. We will, however, return to it as we consider the bodily presence of Christ in chapter 4.

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<sup>133</sup> As frequently pointed out Kurt Deissner, *Auferstehungshoffnung und Pneumagedanke bei Paulus* (Naumburg a.d. Salle: Lippert, 1912), 34 argued that given a σῶμα ψυχικόν does not consist of ‘soul’, we would not expect that a σῶμα πνευματικόν consist of ‘spirit’.

<sup>134</sup> Fee, *First Corinthians*, 786. Cf. Hans Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians: a Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Hermeneia, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 283.

<sup>135</sup> Engberg-Pedersen, *Cosmology and Self*, 171.

<sup>136</sup> The issue here is not solely the substantiality or otherwise of the Spirit since the personality and substantiality of the Spirit are not necessarily mutually exclusive. So, for example Käsemann, *Leib und Leib Christi*, 126 understood the Spirit to be an aeon and as such a ‘Kraft, Person und Substanz’.

<sup>137</sup> Engberg-Pedersen, *Cosmology and Self*, 1. Emphasis added.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, 171.

<sup>139</sup> Käsemann, ‘Anliegen und Eigenart der paulinischen Abendmahlslehre’, 19.

*Christ as Life-Giving Spirit (Dunn)*. In 1 Corinthians 15:45 Paul identifies the exalted Christ as πνεῦμα ζωοποιῶν. On the basis of this description, James Dunn argues that for Paul ‘Jesus can be fully and adequately understood in terms of this Spirit’ because ‘the exalted Lord seems to be *wholly identified* with the Spirit, the source of the new life experienced by believers’.<sup>140</sup>

Dunn’s arguments are subtle and he pulls back from making a full *ontological* identity between Christ and the Spirit.<sup>141</sup> Even if Christ is not ontologically equated with the Spirit, if *he* is experienced as the Spirit, then the sharpness of his absence is blunted. We will more fully explore the relationship between Christ and the Spirit in chapter 4, but we can make some preliminary remarks at this stage. First, it is important to note that the Holy Spirit is not actually mentioned in this chapter. As Wright notes, Paul’s bold statements regarding Christ are not made on the basis of an *experience* of the Spirit. Rather, they are made on the basis of the appearance of Christ to Paul (15:9). It is this vision of Christ that convinced him that Christ had become σῶμα πνευματικόν and ‘is the foundation of the whole chapter’.<sup>142</sup> In fact the description of Christ as ‘life-giving spirit’ may not actually be a reference to the Holy Spirit at all. Rather, as is frequently pointed out, Paul’s terminology is significantly conditioned by his citation of Genesis 2:7. That is he primarily uses the description as an antithesis to the statement that the first Adam was a ψυχὴν ζῶσαν.<sup>143</sup>

*The Humanity of the Exalted Christ*. Fundamentally, to posit too close an identification between Christ and the Spirit is to downplay the significance of the ongoing humanity of the exalted Christ. Affirming the humanity of the exalted Christ is a crucial aspect of Paul’s aim in this chapter. In his summary of the gospel at the start of the chapter, Paul narrates Christ’s history from his death to his resurrection to his appearances to the Twelve, five hundred other brothers and last of all to Paul. At each point in the narrative, there is a continuity in the identity of Christ. The one who died is the one who rose and is the one who appeared to the early church. Further, this ability to appear presupposes that in his

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<sup>140</sup> James D. G. Dunn, ‘1 Corinthians 15:45 - Last Adam, Life-Giving Spirit’ in *Christ and Spirit in the New Testament: Studies in Honour of Charles Francis Digby Moule* (ed. Barnabas Lindars and Stephen S. Smalley; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 127.

<sup>141</sup> There does seem to be some development in Dunn’s thought cf. James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids Eerdmans, 1998), 264 where he speaks of their relationship being ‘closely identified, but not completely’.

<sup>142</sup> N. T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1991), 34.

<sup>143</sup> So Fee, *First Corinthians*, 790.



resurrected state Christ maintains an identifiable body that can appear and be observed.<sup>144</sup> Christ cannot simply be reduced to a corporate entity—he also remains a discrete individual.

Of course, these appearances could merely be an adaption to human senses in a similar way to OT theophanies.<sup>145</sup> However, in this chapter Paul wants to establish the truth of the resurrection of Christ (15:12-34) and his ongoing bodily nature (15:35-57). These descriptions of Christ's appearances need to serve his argument.<sup>146</sup> Therefore, they establish that Christ possesses an *identifiable* body which, in turn, proves the resurrection of *the body*. This chain of argument would not hold if these appearances were simply equivalent to OT theophanies. Thus, Christ is distinguishable from the Holy Spirit, who, for Paul, could never be thought of as 'appearing'.

Earlier in the chapter there is further evidence of the ongoing humanity of Christ. In 15:18, we have the familiar 'in Christ' language applied to those who have died.<sup>147</sup> Paul maintains that those who have died 'in Christ' *will* be raised. To say otherwise is to deny the fact of Christ's resurrection. Christ has been raised as the 'firstfruits' of those who have died (15:20) and there is an organic connection between Christ and those who are his (15:23), so that what happens to the former happens to the latter. Crucially, in this passage, Christ is compared to Adam. Just as all who are in Adam die, so all who are in Christ are made alive (15:22).<sup>148</sup> Importantly, this comparison turns on the fact that both Adam and Christ are human beings: 'For just as death comes through a human (δι' ἀνθρώπου) so the

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<sup>144</sup> The fact that Christ appeared to five hundred, some of whom are still alive, presumably meant that these early eye-witnesses could be consulted regarding what they saw. See also 9:1 where Paul defends his rights as apostle, one of the planks of this defence being the fact that he has 'seen Jesus our Lord'.

<sup>145</sup> Especially given Paul's choice of ὤφθη to describe Christ's appearing. This aorist passive form of the verb is typically (though not exclusively - 1 Macc 4:6 cf. Acts 7:26) used in LXX of supernatural appearances of God and angels (e.g. Gen 12:7; Ex 3:2). On the debate concerning this word see Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 1198-1202 who concludes that a linguistic account of the word must be set against 'contextual considerations' so that we do not 'force apart the coherent logic of 15:1-58' (1202). Note how Luke uses it of the risen Jesus in Luke 24:34 and then immediately has an account of Jesus being handled and eating fish. Whatever we make of Luke's account, it would seem that the word ὤφθη itself does not rule out a very physical, material body being observed in a 'normal' sense.

<sup>146</sup> Pace A. F. Segal, 'Paul's Thinking about Resurrection in its Jewish Context,' *NTS* 44.3 (1998): 418 who argues that 'Paul's notion contrasts heavily with the gospel writers who claim that Jesus was literally resurrected as a physical body which can be seen in ordinary bodily sight'. Similarly Brian Schmisek, 'Paul's Vision of the Risen Lord,' *BTB* 41 (2011): 82 interprets the 'seeing language' in both 9:1 and 15:8 as referring to an interior experience. However, he then asserts that the visions therefore do not necessitate 'a physical object of the vision'. If this were Paul's meaning, his appeal to a vision would contribute nothing to his overall argument in chapter 15 where it is precisely the claim of a bodily, tangible resurrection that Paul is seeking to maintain.

<sup>147</sup> In passing we note that Paul has no problem discussing the corporate aspect of the risen Christ in the same context as the more discrete, individual aspect (cf. 15:44-45).

<sup>148</sup> Regarding the origin of Paul's comparison of two Adams, S. Hultgren, 'The Origin of Paul's Doctrine of the Two Adams in 1 Corinthians 15.45-49,' *JSNT* 25.3 (2003) suggests that it finds a parallel in Palestinian exegesis.

resurrection of the dead will come through a human (δι' ἀνθρώπου 15:21).<sup>149</sup> The future resurrection will come through a human being. Even in his transformed bodily state, the risen Christ retains his humanity and can be distinguished from other human beings. To reduce Christ to a trans-corporeal, supra-individual entity would be to deny the fact of his ongoing humanity. Even as Paul assumes the first *Adam* to have had a representative and corporate function, he was still an individual human being (15:21).

Further evidence concerning the ongoing humanity of Christ is seen in 15:23-28. Here Paul describes what will happen at Christ's coming (15:23). Paul outlines the eschatological dénouement to the Son's reign when he will hand his kingdom over to God the Father. This will only happen when he has destroyed every 'rule, authority and power' (15:24). Paul explains this in the next verse with an allusion to Psalm 110:1 [LXX 109:1] where he states that Christ must reign until 'he has put every enemy under his feet' (15:25). He then states that the last enemy to be defeated is death (15:26) and continues with an allusion to Psalm 8:7 stating that God has placed everything under Christ's feet (15:27).<sup>150</sup> In appealing to this Scripture, Paul is showing that Christ fulfils the commission that was given to *human beings* (Ps 8:5). Christ then in his eschatological victory over death is fulfilling God's charge to *humanity* and is showing himself to be the true Adam. The risen Christ, then, *must* remain a human being. Paul continues in 15:47-48 to describe Christ in contrast to Adam (ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος ἐκ γῆς χοϊκός) as ὁ δεύτερος ἄνθρωπος ἐξ οὐρανοῦ. In this description of Christ only ἐξ οὐρανοῦ should be taken predicatively i.e. 'the second man is from heaven' not 'the second is the man from heaven'.<sup>151</sup> It is a description of Christ in his exalted and not pre-incarnate state.<sup>152</sup> The risen Christ in heaven remains a human being. Finally, Christ's humanity has an important eschatological transformative function in that believers will be transformed to bear<sup>153</sup> his image (εἰκόν), just as they have borne

<sup>149</sup> Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 268 argues that Paul understood ἀνθρώπος as 'primal man'. However as Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 570 points out, there is no evidence that Paul ever thinks in terms of a 'primal man'. The phrase δι' ἀνθρώπου creates a connection with Romans 5 (esp. 5:16, 18, 19) where the individual acts of these individual human beings are stressed. Hence the corporate aspect of being 'in Adam' and 'in Christ' 15:22 is significant precisely because by being in Adam or Christ, one is affected by their specific, personal history.

<sup>150</sup> 15:27 reads: πάντα γὰρ ὑπέταξεν ὑπὸ τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ and Psalm 8:7 reads: πάντα ὑπέταξας ὑποκάτω τῶν ποδῶν αὐτοῦ. On the differences see Christopher D. Stanley, *Paul and the Language of Scripture: Citation Technique in the Pauline Epistles and Contemporary Literature* (SNTSMS 74, Cambridge: CUP, 1992), 206-207.

<sup>151</sup> Ridderbos, *Paul: an Outline of His Theology*, 544.

<sup>152</sup> Further in 15:48-49 ἐπουράνιος is used as an equivalent to ἐξ οὐρανοῦ and is applied to believers as well as Christ (Lincoln, *Paradise Now and Not Yet*, 46). It would seem then, that *here* Paul is thinking of 'heaven' in a qualitative sense rather than as a location – so Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 1287.

<sup>153</sup> The question of whether Paul used the subjunctive (i.e. φορέσωμεν 'let us bear') or the future (i.e. φορέσομεν 'we will bear') is a notorious crux. The external evidence overwhelmingly supports the

the image (εἰκῶν) of Adam (15:49). This Adam - Christ parallel would break down if Christ were to lose his distinct, human bodily form. That Christ remains a human being, then, is of fundamental importance to this chapter and must take hermeneutical priority over Paul's antithetical use of Genesis 2:7 – which can, *in any case*, be read in a way that does not equate Christ and the Holy Spirit.

The exalted Christ retains both his humanity and his individual bodily nature.<sup>154</sup> Christians are 'in Christ' (15:22) but Christ and Christians can be distinguished – so that he can appear to them (15:5-8) and they can be transformed into his likeness. The resurrection of Christ and of Christians is organically connected so that to deny one is to deny the other (15:12-17) but his resurrection can be *distinguished* from their resurrections – 'each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ' (15:23). As such, *his* resurrection body is not *their* resurrection bodies. In conclusion, while Christ's exalted body is transformed and is different to earthly bodies, *however* we understand the exact nature of this difference, Christ and Christians can continue to be distinguished at a bodily level. The risen corporeity of Christ must not be configured in a supra-individual way so that any distinction between Christ and believer is elided to such an extent that the believer's body becomes 'a material part of Christ'.<sup>155</sup> Rather, the risen Christ retains his own distinct human body, the nature of which allows him to be absent from the bodies of believers on earth. In short, to anticipate our conclusion, the body of Christ allows the absence of Christ is a *bodily* absence.

### 3.2 Christ's Discrete Body (Rom 8:29)

There is a strong eschatological theme throughout Romans 8 which sounds in two different keys – that of the body and that of glory. So, in 8:10-11, the body, which is currently marked by death and mortality (νεκρόν [8:10]; θνητόν [8:11]), will be made alive. Believers,

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subjunctive. The issue has theological importance since if the future is understood, then εἰκῶν presumably refers to the resurrection body. However, if this is a hortatory subjunctive then the idea of εἰκῶν is widened to include the idea of character and behaviour (so Fee, *First Corinthians*, 795). However, given the similarity in pronunciation between ω and ο, Barrett has argued that 'only exegesis can determine the original sense and reading' (C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (2nd ed., BNTC, London: A. & C. Black, 1971 [1968]), 369 n.2). An early change is eminently possible and would explain the widespread replication. Given the didactic context, most modern commentators argue for the future [so e.g. Jeffrey R. Asher, *Polarity and Change in 1 Corinthians 15: a Study of Metaphysics, Rhetoric, and Resurrection* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2000), 116 n. 51].

<sup>154</sup> Paul is not simply repeating the OT idea of a spirit appearing in human form cf. Job 4:15-16; Num 12:8; Psalm 17:15 as argued by S. H. Hooke, *The Resurrection of Christ as History and Experience* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1967), 55.

<sup>155</sup> Engberg-Pedersen, *Cosmology and Self*, 1.

though<sup>156</sup> they have the first-fruits of the Spirit, groan as they await their adoption, that is the redemption of their bodies (8:23). Similarly, in terms of glory, the believer who is an heir with Christ and suffers with Christ will be glorified with Christ (συνδοξασθῶμεν [8:17]). Present suffering is not worthy to be compared with the glory that is ‘in store for us’.<sup>157</sup> The whole of creation waits to be liberated and to enter into the glory of the children of God (8:21). Finally, in 8:30 Paul puts the believers’ glorification at the end of the ‘chain of salvation’ in 8:30. It would be a mistake to see these two aspects of the believers’ eschatological salvation as unrelated. We have already seen in 1 Corinthians 15:43 that the body will be ‘raised in glory’. This connection between body and glory is important as we consider Romans 8:29.

In the immediate context of 8:28, the apostle assures his readers that everything works for the good for those who love God and are called according to his purpose (κατὰ πρόθεσιν). In 8:29 Paul unpacks<sup>158</sup> this purpose on two levels: soteriological and christological. In the first clause, Paul describes how those whom God foreknew he predestined to be conformed (συμμόρφους)<sup>159</sup> to the image (εἰκόνας) of his son. He then explains that the purpose (εἰς τό) of this eschatological<sup>160</sup> conforming is that God’s Son might be the firstborn (πρωτότοκον) among many brothers and sisters (ἐν πολλοῖς ἀδελφοῖς). Thus God’s transformation of believers leads to the exaltation of his Son.

This passage is not without complexity. First, the description of believers as conformed to τῆς εἰκόνας τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ could be understood epexegetically i.e. ‘conformed to the image, which is his son’.<sup>161</sup> Alternatively, it could be understood in a simple possessive sense, i.e. ‘conformed to the image of his son’.<sup>162</sup> In other words, are

<sup>156</sup> Understanding ἔχοντες as concessive.

<sup>157</sup> On this translation see D. J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (NICNT, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 520.

<sup>158</sup> The ὅτι is explanatory rather than causal. So *Ibid.*, 531 n.133.

<sup>159</sup> An adjective with a ‘substantial significance’ (J. Kürzinger, ‘Συμμόρφους τῆς εἰκόνας τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ (Röm 8:29),’ *BZ NF2* (1958): 295).

<sup>160</sup> As Wilhelm Bousset, *Kyrios Christos: Geschichte des Christusglaubens von den Anfängen des Christentums bis Irenaeus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1913), 124 (among others) notes, in 2 Cor 3:18 Paul views this transformation (μεταμορφούμεθα ἀπὸ δόξης εἰς δόξαν) as a presently occurring process. However the close parallels here between our text and Phil 3:21 and 1 Cor 15:49 suggest that a final, eschatological transformation is primarily in view (so Wilhelm Thüsing, *Gott und Christus in der paulinischen Soteriologie* (Band I: Per Christum in Deum: das Verhältnis der Christozentrik zur Theozentrik, Münster: Aschendorff, 1986), 123-124). Käsemann, *An die Römer*, 236-237 is certainly incorrect to see *only* a present reference here.

<sup>161</sup> So e.g. James D. G. Dunn, *Romans* (2 vols., WBC, Texas: Word, 1988), 1:483; Ulrich Wilckens, *Der Brief an die Römer II* (EKK 6.2, Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1980), 163; Thüsing, *Gott und Christus in der paulinischen Soteriologie*, 124-125. Brendan Byrne, *Romans* (SP 6, Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1996), 272 argues that the complete phrase is ‘tautologous’ unless it is read epexegetically.

<sup>162</sup> So, e.g. John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans: the English Text with Exposition and Notes. Volume 1: Romans 1-8* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1960), 318-319; Brendan Byrne, *Sons of God, Seed of Abraham: a Study of the Idea of the Sonship of God of all Christians in Paul against the Jewish Background* (Rome: Biblical Institute, 1979), 117.

believers conformed to Christ who is the image of God, or are believers conformed to the image of Christ? On one level the difference is immaterial.<sup>163</sup> Certainly Paul speaks of Christ as the image of God (2 Cor 4:4 cf. Col 1:15), and so to be conformed to Christ is, necessarily, to be conformed to the image of God. However, in the parallel text, 1 Corinthians 15:49, Paul specifically refers to believers bearing the εἰκὼν of Christ. That is, ‘just as we have borne the image of the earthly man, we will bear<sup>164</sup> the image of the heavenly man (τοῦ ἐπουρανίου i.e. Christ)’. Believers will bear this image as their mortal bodies are ‘clothed with immortality’ (15:53). In this context, bearing Christ’s εἰκὼν in 1 Corinthians 15:49 means being conformed to his glorious body. It would seem, then, that the εἰκὼν refers to the exalted body of Christ.<sup>165</sup> This fits the generally agreed idea that εἰκὼν does not simply refer to an ‘image’ in the sense of a replica or reproduction but is a form that expresses the essence or being of something.<sup>166</sup> Christ’s resurrected body perfectly expresses his immortal, glorious, powerful, spiritual character (1 Cor 15:42-44). This fits with Philippians 3:20 (see the discussion below) where believers are waiting the transformation (μετασχηματίζω) of their humble bodies into the form (σύμμορφον) of his glorious body. These parallels then seem to indicate that Romans 8:29 is speaking of believers being conformed to Christ’s image which is more specific than simply ‘participating in the glory of the resurrected Lord’.<sup>167</sup> Rather, the εἰκὼν of Christ is his resurrected body, and so their bodies will be conformed to his body. In other words Paul is assuming the resurrected bodily nature of Christ which can be distinguished from the resurrected bodies of believers.<sup>168</sup>

Secondly, there is the question of whether the language of conforming (σὺμμορφος) has a participatory aspect. So, for example, Kürzinger argues that it is

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<sup>163</sup> Which may explain why this question is so frequently overlooked by commentators- a fact that Seyoon Kim, *The Origin of Paul’s Gospel* (Grand Rapids Eerdmans 1982), 233 notes in passing.

<sup>164</sup> See the earlier discussion on the textual issue with this verse.

<sup>165</sup> Hans Lietzmann, *An die Römer: Einführung in die Textgeschichte der Paulusbriefe* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1971), 87; Thüsing, *Gott und Christus in der paulinischen Soteriologie*, 124; Karl-Adolf Bauer, *Leiblichkeit das Ende aller Werke Gottes: die Bedeutung der Leiblichkeit des Menschen bei Paulus* (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1971), 135. Cf. Kim, *The Origin of Paul’s Gospel*, 227-228 who argues that the idea of Christ as the εἰκὼν of God is unique to Paul – a fact he explains by arguing that it originates in his Damascus Christophany when he saw the resurrected form of Christ.

<sup>166</sup> E.g. Hans Conzelmann, *Grundriss der Theologie des Neuen Testaments* (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1967), 100.

<sup>167</sup> Eduard Lohse, *Der Brief an die Römer* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003), 253.

<sup>168</sup> Even if we were to interpret the genitive expegetically and understand a reference to Christ as the εἰκὼν of God, we would then have a pointer to his role as the last Adam and hence his humanity. On the reasons for making a connection to Adam here see Klaus Schäfer, *Gemeinde als “Bruderschaft”: ein Beitrag zum Kirchenverständnis des Paulus* (Frankfurt/M: Peter Lang, 1989), 56. The parallel with 1 Corinthians 15:49 is especially important.

important to note that Paul says συμμόρφους and not ὁμο-μόρφους.<sup>169</sup> The important συν- prefix indicates that what is in view is not a mere ‘likeness’ to Christ but an actual ‘Verbundensein, Teilhaben, Verknüpftheit des Christen mit Christus’.<sup>170</sup> That incorporation or participation is involved in this verse is certainly not a new idea<sup>171</sup> and Kürzinger does not deny that a ‘likeness’ arises from this participation. However, the συν- prefix combined with the participatory theology in Romans (e.g. 6:6, 8) leads him to conclude that the idea of ‘likeness’ is not the *primary* aspect of Paul’s thought here.<sup>172</sup> He renders our phrase ‘die hat er auch vorausbestimmt, an der Bildgestalt seines Sohnes teilzuhaben’.<sup>173</sup> However, a συν- prefix does not in itself it does not *necessitate* an idea of participation.<sup>174</sup> Kürzinger correctly notes that συν- and ὁμο- compounds do not have to be synonymous.<sup>175</sup> Given that, as Kürzinger himself notes, ὁμομόρφους does not seem to appear in any extant Greek source,<sup>176</sup> it seems difficult to lay too much weight on the absence of the prefix. That is not to rule out participation, rather it is to question whether, on the basis of this prefix, one can say that the idea of ‘likeness’ is *secondary*.<sup>177</sup> Further, both the immediate context and the Pauline parallels indicate that the idea of believers bearing the likeness of Christ is actually the primary thought here. So, Paul’s immediately following description of Christ as the firstborn (πρωτότοκον)<sup>178</sup> among many brothers and sisters (ἐν πολλοῖς ἀδελφοῖς) functions as the climax of God’s plan.<sup>179</sup> The eschatological position of honour of Christ in the midst of his brothers and sisters is the dominant thought.<sup>180</sup> The idea of *differentiation* and *distinction* rather than *participation* is stressed.

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<sup>169</sup> Kürzinger, ‘Röm 8:29,’ 295.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid.

<sup>171</sup> The idea goes back at least as far as Athanasius who comments on this verse: ‘For though it was after us that He was made man for us, and our brother by similitude of body, still He is therefore called and is the ‘First-born’ of us, because, all men being lost, according to the transgression of Adam, His flesh before all others was saved and liberated, as being the Word’s body ; and henceforth we, *becoming incorporate* with It, are saved after Its pattern’ (Athanasius Against Arians 4.61).

<sup>172</sup> Kürzinger, ‘Röm 8:29,’ 297. Kürzinger is followed by Thüsing, *Gott und Christus in der paulinischen Soteriologie*, 122-123 who argues that the identification of Christ as ‘Son’ is key in this verse and, so, Paul is describing ‘our participation in the sonship of Christ’.

<sup>173</sup> Kürzinger, ‘Röm 8:29,’ 299.

<sup>174</sup> Cf. BDAG 961-962.

<sup>175</sup> Kürzinger, ‘Röm 8:29,’ 295 where he points to examples like ὁμογενής and συγγενής.

<sup>176</sup> It does not seem to appear in either the TLG or Perseus databases.

<sup>177</sup> See Horst Robert Balz, *Heilstrauen und Welterfahrung: Strukturen der paulinischen Eschatologie nach Römer 8, 18-39* (München: Chr. Kaiser, 1971), 110.

<sup>178</sup> As Kürzinger, ‘Röm 8:29,’ 297 notes, this term indicates ‘more than temporal precedence [zeitlichen Vorrang]’. Willhelm Michaelis, ‘πρωτότοκος’ in *TDNT* 6 (1968), 6:877 shows that on the basis of the use of the term in other Jewish texts that Paul is viewing Christ as like his brothers ‘but above them in rank and dignity, since he remains their Lord’.

<sup>179</sup> Indicated by the εἰς τό purpose clause.

<sup>180</sup> Schäfer, *Gemeinde als “Bruderschaft”: ein Beitrag zum Kirchenverständnis des Paulus*, 66.

So, the picture we have in this verse is of the Christ in the midst of his brothers and sisters who have been conformed to his resurrected body. There is similarity but it is not possible to think of Christ and believers fused into one indistinguishable corporate entity. Rather, Christ stands out as firstborn. He occupies the place of rank as he is surrounded by other humans who are like him. Even in their eschatological state, then there can be a distinction between believers and Christ that centres on their bodily nature. The idea of spatial distance is not present in this text but the *necessary* bodily distinction between Christ and his siblings is. Though less explicit, the picture we have here of the exalted Christ fits with what we have seen in 1 Corinthians 15, namely that he remains a human being with a body in distinction from other believers.<sup>181</sup>

### 3.3 Christ's Located Humanity (Rom 8:34)

In Romans 8:34 Paul locates Christ Jesus<sup>182</sup> at the right hand of God (ὄς καί ἐστιν ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θεοῦ).<sup>183</sup> Amongst some of the earliest Christian interpreters Romans 8:34 and other

<sup>181</sup> Walter Schmithals, *Der Römerbrief: ein Kommentar* (Gutersloh: G. Mohn, 1988), 301, in particular, argues that the christological difference and distinction between Christ and believers must not be lost here. The redeemer does not merge with the redeemed 'sondern wird nach seinem Bilde abbildhaft gestaltet'. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans* (AB 33, London: Doubleday, 1993), 525 puts the thought in a striking way. When believers are transformed in this way they 'look like Christ'.

<sup>182</sup> The absence of Ἰησοῦς after Χριστός has broad support across different traditions (B D 0289 1739 1881 ar m sy<sup>p</sup> sa Ir<sup>lat</sup> Ambst). However, its inclusion is also supported by a number of important texts (including ℱ<sup>46vid</sup>, א, A, C, 33 81 F G Ψ as well as L 6 104 365 1505 al sy<sup>h</sup> lat bo). It has been suggested that a scribe added Ἰησοῦς to fit with the elevated style of the verse (Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans* (BECNT, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 467) or to counter proto-Gnostic teaching that while Jesus died, the Christ did not (Bart D. Ehrman, *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture: the Effect of Early Christological Controversies on the Text of the New Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 152). However, it is ultimately impossible to evaluate these 'psychological' explanations. It seems preferable to suggest that the shorter reading arose due to *parablepsis* caused by the final 'ς'.

<sup>183</sup> This clause is generally recognised to be an allusion to Psalm 110[LXX 109]:1 εἶπεν ὁ κύριος τῷ κυρίῳ μου κάθου ἐκ δεξιῶν μου ἕως ἂν θῶ τοὺς ἐχθρούς σου ὑποπόδιον τῶν ποδῶν σου. So e.g. C. E. B. Cranfield, *Romans* (2 vols., ICC, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1975), 1:439, Robert Jewett, *Romans: a Commentary* (Hermeneia, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 542. In the Psalm, the Lord addresses David's Lord and says 'sit at my right hand' (κάθου ἐκ δεξιῶν μου). The change from ἐκ δεξιῶν μου to ἐν δεξιᾷ might be explained by the fact that Paul is referring to a different Greek text or that he is rendering the Hebrew directly. Perhaps a rendering of the Hebrew may reflect a contemporary stylistic preference, as might be suggested by the fact that in Hebrews whenever the author alludes to the psalm he uses ἐν δεξιᾷ (1:3; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2), while in his direct quote in 1:13 he uses ἐκ δεξιῶν (so David M. Hay, *Glory at the Right Hand: Psalm 110 in Early Christianity* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1973), 35-37). However, on balance, given that almost the exact same form of the allusion in Romans 8:34 is found in 1 Peter 3:22 (ὄς ἐστιν ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θεοῦ), it is more likely that Paul is using an existing Christological formulation cf. Col 3:1: ὁ Χριστός ἐστιν ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θεοῦ. Hay, *Glory at the Right Hand*, 40. See also Timo Eskola, *Messiah and the Throne: Jewish Merkabah Mysticism and Early Christian Exaltation Discourse* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2001), 185; Martin Hengel, *Studies in Early Christology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995), 142-143. This does not, however, rule out a conscious reference to the psalm. As Hay argues, since Paul quotes the Psalm in 1 Cor 15.25, he is probably conscious of alluding to it in Rom 8:34 – so Hay, *Glory at the Right Hand*, 43 n.31.

‘right hand’ texts created something of a problem.<sup>184</sup> The tendency was to balk at the seeming literal reference to Christ somehow being spatially located *with respect to God*. Thus, there is a ‘noticeable reserve’ in the Eastern church to this idea which, Hengel argues, may explain why it is missing from the Eastern confessions of the third and fourth centuries.<sup>185</sup> Similarly, the motif does not appear frequently in the writings of the Apologists. For Justin, though he quotes Psalm 110:1 frequently, ‘the pre-existence of the Son in v.3 and the indication of the priesthood of the Son in v.4 were more important than the exaltation to the right hand of God in v.1’.<sup>186</sup> Hengel suggests that one gains the impression that ‘Justin wants to avoid this motif because it demands an interpretation’.<sup>187</sup> Though the tension suggested by what this verse seems to imply regarding the localizability of God and Christ continues to be recognized by early interpreters,<sup>188</sup> there is also a significant strand of interpretation that sits more comfortably with regarding the idea simply as a metaphorical description of the exaltation of Christ.<sup>189</sup>

The reference to Christ at the right hand of God in Romans 8:34 may have more of a *conceptual* than a *local* significance in that it predicates an exalted status more than a location to Christ. It is certainly used elsewhere in the New Testament in this way.<sup>190</sup> However, it is also worth noting that another important issue that early interpreters wrestled with was whether Paul was here conceiving of Christ as exalted to the right hand of God by very nature of his eternal sonship or as an exalted *human* being. Cyril argued the former,<sup>191</sup> while others such as Epiphanius of Salamis were clear that when he sat down at

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<sup>184</sup> For a comprehensive survey see Christoph Marksches, ‘Sessio ad Dexteram: Bemerkungen zu einem altchristlichen Bekenntnismotiv in der christologischen Diskussion der altkirchlichen Theologen’ in *Le Trône de Dieu* (ed. M. Philonenko; *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament* 69; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1993), 252-317.

<sup>185</sup> Hengel, *Studies in Early Christology*, 124.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*, 126.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*, 128.

<sup>188</sup> E.g. Basil, *De Spiritu Sancto* 6.15 who suggests that if we understand the reference to God’s right hand in a bodily sense (σωματικῶς) we need to understand him to have a σκαιόν side (i.e. Basil seems to be playing on the negative sense of ‘left’).

<sup>189</sup> cf. Augustine’s Tractate on John 17 [Tract 111 in PL 35.1925] where he counsels the reader to ‘abscedat ab animo omnis imaginum corporalium cogitatio’.

<sup>190</sup> This is especially clear in Acts 2:33 and 5:31. See the discussion in Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel: God Crucified and other Studies on the New Testament’s Christology of Divine Identity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 21-23 who on 21 n.39 lists the following texts in addition to Romans 8:34: Matt 22:44; 26:64; 14:62; 16:19; Lk 20:42-43; 22:69; Acts 2:33-35; 5:31; 7:55-56; 1 Cor 15:25; Eph. 1:20; 2:6; Col. 3:1; Heb. 1:3,13; 8:1; 10:12-13; 12:2; 1 Pet. 3:22; Rev. 3:21.

<sup>191</sup> He argued that Christ did not receive his position at God’s right hand through ‘endurance’ (διὰ τὴν ὑπομονήν) but through his being ‘which is eternally generated from the Father’ (ἔστι δὲ γεννηθεὶς ἐκ πατρὸς ἄει) [W.C. Reischl and J. Rupp, *Cyrrilli Hierosolymorum archiepiscopi opera quae supersunt omnia* (2 vols., Munich: Lentner, 1848-1860)].



the right hand of God he did so as the *incarnate* Christ.<sup>192</sup> So, Augustine in his letter to Consentio is clear that the body of Christ in heaven is a body with ‘bones and blood’ like his body on earth.<sup>193</sup>

While this verse is not concerned about the nature of Christ’s body, there are two aspects to the text that point to the humanity of Christ being in view. First, the description of the exalted Christ as the one who died (ὁ ἀποθανών) and was raised (ἐγερθείς) maintains the continuity of identity between the historical Jesus and the exalted Christ. Second, at God’s right hand, Christ is interceding (ὃς καὶ ἐντυγχάνει ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν). The same word is used to describe the activity of the Holy Spirit in 8:26 (see the discussion in chapter 3 - section 3.3). However, in 8:34 the fact that Christ is not described as ‘Son’ but as ‘Christ Jesus’ may suggest that his humanity is primarily in view. Further, the reference to intercession here may be an allusion to the intercession of the highly exalted (cf. 52:13 ὑψωθήσεται καὶ δοξασθήσεται σφόδρα) *servant* in Isaiah 53:12. There is a linguistic issue though given that while Isa 53:12 is rendered in most Hebrew versions<sup>194</sup> i.e. ‘and makes intercession for the transgressors’, the LXX has καὶ διὰ τὰς ἀμαρτίας αὐτῶν παρεδόθη (‘and he was delivered because of their iniquities’). However, the context suggests that Paul may well be structuring his argument in light of Isaiah 53.

In the context of Paul’s reference to the intercession of Christ there are a number of parallels with Isaiah 53. Both Romans 8:34 and Isaiah 53:12 portray an exalted intercessor. Additionally, in both Isaiah 53:12 and Romans 8:34 intercession is positioned climactically. The intercession of the Servant in v.12 is in contrast to the rest of the song when he is silent (cf. Isa 53:7) and passive.<sup>195</sup> When he does speak we might expect that he would protest his innocence, but, instead, he intercedes for the guilty. This climactic accent on intercession in Isaiah 53:12 is matched in Romans 8:34. So, the addition of μᾶλλον δέ before ἐγερθείς implies progression as does the καί [...]καί syntax which could be translated as ‘not only [...] but also’.<sup>196</sup> In the immediate context of Romans 8 a number of references to Isaiah 53 have been suggested. Paul’s contention in v.32 that God did not spare (ἐφείσατο) his own son but gave him up for us all (ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν πάντων παρέδωκεν αὐτόν) has been linked to

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<sup>192</sup> Epiphanius of Salamis *de Fide* 17:9 cited in Marksches, ‘Sessio ad Dexteram’, 280.

<sup>193</sup> ‘Quaeris, utrum nunc corpus domini ossa et sanguinem habeat aut reliqua carnis liniamenta [...]? Ego proinde domini corpus ita in caelo esse credo, ut erat, quando ascendit in caelum’ (PL 33.205.2).

<sup>194</sup> 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> has a variation which may simply render the Hiphil defectively.

<sup>195</sup> David J. A. Clines, *I, He, We and They: a Literary Approach to Isaiah 53* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1976), 64–65.

<sup>196</sup> Jewett, *Romans: a Commentary*, 542.

Isaiah 53:6 (κύριος παρέδωκεν αὐτὸν ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις ἡμῶν).<sup>197</sup> A further allusion has been noted between Romans 8:31b, 33-34 and Isaiah 50:8-9. As well as the linguistic and syntactical similarities between these two texts,<sup>198</sup> both deal with the inability of anyone to bring charges against those justified by God.<sup>199</sup> If Paul's argument is being influenced by Isaiah 53, this would suggest that he is thinking of the exalted Christ in human terms analogous to the exalted Servant. Christ then is pictured as a human being in an exalted position at the right hand of God.

Is the right hand of God a *location*? We have already seen the reserve with which many early exegetes treated this passage, though some were happy to see it in quite specific localised terms. So Augustine comments

Having risen on the third day...he ascended into heaven; it is *to there [illuc]* that he raised his body; it is *from there [inde]* that he will come to judge the living and the dead; it is *there [ibi]* that meanwhile he sits at the right hand of the Father...He has ascended into heaven and he is not *here [hic]*.<sup>200</sup>

Is this simply an example of early Christians operating with mythological categories? Ralph Norman has argued that ancient cosmology was more complex than suggested by the simple 'triple-decker universe' reduction. He notes how certain ancient writers operated with the concept of the 'great outside' which lies beyond the ultimate sphere (of the fixed stars) - a kind of 'spatial eschaton'.<sup>201</sup> This was not the 'place' where God dwells, and it is 'not the top of a triple-decker universe because it is not properly part of the universe at all'.<sup>202</sup> Nevertheless, though it was seen as *beyond* the material universe, it was still conceived of as *spatially extended*.<sup>203</sup> Thus, the paradox of the New Testament's affirmation of the risen Christ possessing a material body but existing in an immaterial heaven led

<sup>197</sup> E.g. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 450 n.19; Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:436; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 532.

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Rom 8:31-34 <sup>31</sup> εἰ ὁ θεὸς ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν, τίς καθ' ἡμῶν; [...] <sup>33</sup> τίς ἐγκαλέσει κατὰ ἐκλεκτῶν θεοῦ; θεὸς ὁ δικαίων <sup>34</sup> τίς ὁ κατακρινῶν; Χριστὸς Ἰησοῦς ὁ ἀποθανών, μᾶλλον δὲ ἐγερθεὶς

Isa 50:8-9 <sup>8</sup> ὅτι ἐγγίξει ὁ δικαίωσας με τίς ὁ κρινόμενός μοι [...] <sup>9</sup> ἰδοὺ κύριος βοηθεῖ μοι τίς κακώσει με  
<sup>199</sup> Jewett, *Romans: a Commentary*, 541 n.85. Cf. Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 61.

<sup>200</sup> This citation of Augustine's Sermon 272 from Ralph Norman, 'Beyond the Ultimate Sphere: The Ascension and Eschatology,' *Modern Believing* 42.2 (2001). This section is a summary of Norman's article.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*: 7 citing Plato, *Phaed* 247c.

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>203</sup> This idea is perhaps clearer with the Stoics than with Plato and Aristotle. In fact the latter seem to have 'rejected the notion of space outside the cosmos' whereas the former 'argued for the existence of an infinite void external to the cosmos' [Edward Adams, 'Graeco-Roman and Ancient Jewish Cosmology' in *Cosmology and New Testament Theology* (London: T & T Clark, 2008), 16].

Origen, for example, to conceive of the ascension in *mental* terms.<sup>204</sup> In reaction to Origen's speculation, the fifth ecumenical council denounced the view that the body of the risen Christ was only ethereal.<sup>205</sup> Norman notes how in the ensuing history of interpretation, Christians accepted the 'paradox that the human body of Christ has been removed from the universe of space and time, has passed beyond the finite boundary of the cosmos, and is now located nowhere'.<sup>206</sup> He argues that the contention that Christ is at the right hand of God can be understood in a way that does not need to be demythologised, precisely because it was always understood in *acosmic* terms.<sup>207</sup>

Norman's analysis is questionable at points,<sup>208</sup> but his general point seems reasonable. The location of Christ at the right hand of God should not be understood in cosmic categories (that need to be demythologised). Nevertheless, in describing Christ in his humanity *with* God Paul is operating in *spatial* and *locational* terms. The risen, exalted, human Christ is not here, he is with God – beyond the realm of this universe. He is not making a point about the *geographical* location of Christ but about his *bodily absence*. As Barth put it 'man kann aber nicht sagen, daß es Sache des Menschen ist, dorthin zu gehen. Der eine Mensch Jesus aber geht [...] Nicht nur Gott ist jetzt dort, sondern indem Gott dort ist, ist auch er, dieser Mensch dort'.<sup>209</sup>

*Summary.* In this section we have considered three texts where Paul speaks of the individual body of the exalted Christ. Christ continues to possess a human (1 Cor 15), discrete (Rom 8:29) and localisable (Rom 8:34) body. Further, we have seen that Christ possessing this body – distinct and distinguishable from the bodies of believers – has a crucial role in his understanding of eschatological salvation. In Romans 8:29 and 1 Corinthians 15 we saw that the eschatological transformation of believers involves a

<sup>204</sup> Cf. his *On Prayer* 23.2 where he speaks of 'the ascension of the Son to the Father [...] as an ascension of the mind rather than the body' (cited in Douglas Farrow, *Ascension and Ecclesia: on the Significance of the Ascension for Ecclesiology and Christian Cosmology* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1999), 97.

<sup>205</sup> Concilia Oecumenica (ACO), Canones xv (contra Origenem sive Origenistas). 4.1.249 [E. Schwartz and J. Straub, *Acta conciliorum oecumenicorum* (vol. 4.1, Berlin: De Gruyter, 1971), 248-249]. The idea that the Lord's body was 'ethereal' or 'spherical' (i.e. perfect according to Stoic philosophy) was specifically condemned: Εἴ τις λέγει, ὡς τὸ τοῦ κυρίου ἐξ ἀναστάσεως σῶμα αἰθέριον τε καὶ σφαιροειδὲς τῷ σχήματι καὶ ὅτι τὰ τοιαῦτα καὶ τὰ τῶν λοιπῶν ἐξ ἀναστάσεως ἔσται σώματα καὶ ὅτι αὐτοῦ τοῦ κυρίου πρῶτον ἀποτιθεμένου τὸ ἴδιον αὐτοῦ σῶμα καὶ πάντων ὁμοίως εἰς τὸ ἀνύπαρκτον χωρήσει ἢ τῶν σωμάτων φύσις, ἀνάθεμα ἔστω.

<sup>206</sup> Norman, 'Beyond the Ultimate Sphere: The Ascension and Eschatology,' 8.

<sup>207</sup> On page 14 n. 40 he notes while both Copernicus and Kepler reorganized the inner structure of the universe, the *boundary* of the universe was left in place.

<sup>208</sup> See for example Douglas Farrow, *Ascension Theology* (London: T&T Clark, 2011), 45-49. He argues that thinking of the ascension in 'acosmological' terms is not sufficiently 'eschatological'. Rather, he suggests that it should be conceived as a 'transformative relocation'.

<sup>209</sup> KD IV/2,172.

transforming of their bodies to be like his body. Christ possessing an individual body is not merely accidental to Paul's theology, it is essential. And not merely for our eschatological salvation but for the very exaltation of the Son – who will remain as 'firstborn' over and among his many brothers and sisters for eternity (Rom 8:29).

#### 4. The Bodily Absence of Christ

##### 4.1 Christ's Current Bodily Absence (2 Cor 5:6-8)

In 2 Corinthians 5:6-8, Paul reflects on the current location of believers relative to Christ<sup>210</sup> namely that as long as they are in the body (ἐνδημοῦντες ἐν τῷ σώματι), they are absent from the Lord (ἐκδημοῦμεν ἀπὸ τοῦ κυρίου).<sup>211</sup> Verse 8 repeats the thought of verse 6 in negative terms so that there is an antithetic parallel between

ἐνδημοῦντες ἐν τῷ σώματι                      ἐκδημοῦμεν ἀπὸ τοῦ κυρίου (v.6b) and  
ἐκδημῆσαι ἐκ τοῦ σώματος καὶ ἐνδημῆσαι πρὸς τὸν κύριον (v.8)

Paul's statement in 5:6b provokes an exasperated reaction in many commentators. As Thrall asks, '[h]ow can the Christian living ἐν Χριστῷ [cf. 5:17] be said to be absent from Christ's "presence"?'<sup>212</sup> Murphy-O'Connor labels the verse 'one of the most problematic statements in the Pauline letters' given that it seems to contradict 'one of the most basic tenets of Pauline theology, namely, that the whole being of believers is infused with the grace of Christ (2 Cor 12:9), which has reconciled them with God (2 Cor 5:19), and which progressively transforms them into the image of Christ (2 Cor 3:18)'.<sup>213</sup>

Before examining these verses in detail, we need to sketch the context. In a letter where Paul spends considerable time discussing his suffering as an apostle (e.g. 2 Cor 1:3-11), chapter 5 performs an important role in showing that this suffering is not the ultimate reality. Already Paul has affirmed that although he is outwardly wasting away, inwardly he is continually being renewed (4:18). Paul develops this idea in the present section, by specifying the hope that he has as he faces death. The beginning of chapter 5 (5:1-5) swirls with interpretative complexity. In verse 1 Paul seems to be encouraging the Corinthians in

<sup>210</sup> In 5:6 and 8 the references to κύριος clearly refer to Christ, following as they do the reference to God and the Spirit in 5:5.

<sup>211</sup> Neither ἐνδημέω nor ἐκδημέω appear anywhere else in the Greek Bible, but their respective meanings of 'being at home or in one's country' and 'leaving one's country or being abroad or in exile' are fairly well attested elsewhere. Cf. BDAG 300, 332.

<sup>212</sup> Margaret E. Thrall, *A Critical And Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (2 vols., ICC, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1994), 386. Cf. F. Lindgård, *Paul's Line of Thought in 2 Corinthians 4:16-5:10* (WUNT 2.189, Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2005), 193.

<sup>213</sup> J. Murphy-O'Connor, "'Being at Home in the Body we are in Exile from the Lord'" (2 Cor. 5:6b), *RB* 93.2 (1986): 214.

the face of death – the destruction of our earthly bodies<sup>214</sup> – that they can be encouraged by provision of a ‘building’ (οἰκίαν) from God. This could be referring to some kind of individual or corporate temporary dwelling before the Parousia.<sup>215</sup> However, it is perhaps more likely that Paul is speaking of the resurrection body. As Harris argues, given that the ἐπίγειος οἰκία of 5:1a refers ‘primarily, if not solely’ to the physical body, the parallelism would be destroyed if ‘the second, antithetical οἰκία referred to anything other than some form of embodiment’.<sup>216</sup> Further, as he notes, the parallels with the description of the σῶμα πνευματικόν in 1 Corinthians 15:44 are strong. Like the body in 1 Corinthians 15:44, the body in 5:1 is envisaged as being of divine origin (ἐκ θεοῦ; cf. 1 Cor 15:40, 48-49), spiritual (ἀχειροποίητον; cf. 1 Cor 15:44, 46), permanent and indestructible (αἰώνιον; cf. 1 Cor. 15:42, 52-54), and heavenly (ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς; cf. 1 Cor. 15:40, 48-49).<sup>217</sup>

Paul could well be assuming in 5:2-4 a post-mortem bodiless existence for believers (an ‘intermediate state’) as they wait for the resurrection body.<sup>218</sup> Though they are

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<sup>214</sup> So most commentators including Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: a Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 372 who argues that understanding it as the body is ‘incontestable’; R. P. Martin, *2 Corinthians* (WBC, Texas: Word Books, 1986), 102; Thrall, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 360; M. Vogel, *Commentatio mortis. 2Kor 5,1-10 auf dem Hintergrund antiker ars moriendi* (FRLANT 214, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006), 226. Although σκηνός is not used anywhere else in the NT, in Wisdom 9:15 it is clearly used in parallel to the body. Also, in 1 Peter 1:13-14 the related term σκηνώμα is used of the body.

<sup>215</sup> Thrall, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 363-367 lists seven common understandings of οἰκοδομὴν ἐκ θεοῦ: a heavenly habitation like that mentioned in John 14:2; the ἔσω ἄνθρωπος of 4:16; the body of Christ i.e. the church; the heavenly temple; the resurrection body of Christ; the image of the glory of the eschatological age, which in Jewish apocalyptic is described by means of ‘building’ metaphors; and, finally, the heavenly dimension of present existence. For a more recent survey see Vogel, *Commentatio mortis*, 230-231.

<sup>216</sup> Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 372. Similarly Lindgård, *2 Corinthians 4:16-5:10*, 14: ‘If the earthly house in 5:1 is the earthly body, it seems plausible that the heavenly counterpart is the heavenly body’. Cf. Hans Windisch, *Der zweite Korintherbrief* (9th ed., Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1924), 160.

<sup>217</sup> Though ἔχομεν in verse 1 is a present tense-form, it most likely has a future time-reference. There is no compelling reason to understand Paul teaching anything different from what he teaches in 1 Corinthians 15 – the reception of the resurrection body at the Parousia of Christ. See for example J. Osei-Bonsu, ‘Does 2 Cor. 5.1-10 Teach the Reception of the Resurrection Body at the Moment of Death?’, *JSNT* 28.9 (1986): 87. For others who see the Parousia on view: Lincoln, *Paradise Now and Not Yet*, 64-65; R Berry, ‘Death and Life in Christ: The Meaning of 2 Corinthians 5.1-10,’ *STJ* 14 (1961): 62-65; J. Gillman, ‘A Thematic Comparison: 1 Cor 15:50-57 and 2 Cor 5:1-5,’ *JBL* 107.3 (1988): 439-454. To argue for the possession of the resurrection body at death would create a contradiction with not simply a ‘development from’ 1 Corinthians 15. See P. Woodbridge, ‘Time of Receipt of the Resurrection Body - A Pauline Inconsistency?’ in *Paul and the Corinthians: Studies on a Community in Conflict: Essays in Honour of Margaret Thrall* (ed. Trevor J. Burke and J. K. Elliott; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 252 who notes that it ‘would mean that the specific order of events in 1 Cor. 15:23-26 would now be incorrect and what is stated in 1 Cor. 15:51-53 that the dead would be raised imperishable at the last trumpet would now be untrue and thus Paul would be contradicting what he had said about a year earlier to the same Corinthian church’. See Lindgård, *2 Corinthians 4:16-5:10*, 132 for more discussion and how problematic it would be for Paul’s overall aim in 2 Cor 1-9 if he introduced a radically new eschatology. Gillman, ‘A Thematic Comparison: 1 Cor 15:50-57 and 2 Cor 5:1-5,’ 454 shows that the only shift is ‘from the use of more literal, abstract, and anthropological terminology in 1 Cor 15:50-55 to a rather intricate development of metaphorical language in 2 Cor 5:1-4’.

<sup>218</sup> Without actually using the term, as pointed out by J. N. Sevenster, ‘Einige Bemerkungen über den ‘Zwischenzustand’ bei Paulus,’ *NTS* 1.4 (1955): 292. The main reason for rejecting the idea of an intermediate

confident that they will receive their resurrection bodies, this ‘intermediate period’ would be a period of ‘groaning’ and ‘nakedness’ (5:2-3) as they long to be clothed with their resurrection bodies. Paul reminds the Corinthians in 5:5 that it is God himself who has prepared them (ὁ κατεργασάμενος) for this (τοῦτο) reception of the spiritual body and given the Spirit as a pledge (ἄρραβών).<sup>219</sup> There is an obvious parallel to Romans 8:11 where Paul points to the Spirit as a reason for confidence that believers’ bodies will be raised and where this resurrection (cf. 8:18-22) is expected at the *Parousia* of Christ.<sup>220</sup>

Paul then moves on to discuss how believers are to view life in the body. In response to the starkness of 5:6b (‘while we are at home in the body, we are away from the Lord’), a number of attempts are made to ‘reconcile’ it to Paul’s wider theology.<sup>221</sup> So, for example, Murphy-O’Connor argues that the slogan of 5:6b reflects the views of a group within the Corinthian church who devalue bodily existence (cf. 1 Cor 6:12-20; 15). He argues on the basis of the fact that Paul’s language here of ἐνδημῆν and ἐκδημῆν is unique not only in his own writings but also in the entire Greek Bible. The introductory phrase εἰδότες ὅτι parallels οἶδαμεν ὅτι in 1 Corinthians 8:1a and 4 where οἶδα is used to introduce the Corinthian slogans and ‘expresses only recognition, not acceptance of the sentiments expressed’.<sup>222</sup> Accordingly, Murphy-O’Connor argues that the δέ in 5:8 is adversative<sup>223</sup> not resumptive<sup>224</sup> and introduces a counter-statement to 5:6. That is, in 5:8 Paul reformulates the static opposition of ἐν τῷ σώματι and ἀπὸ τοῦ κυρίου into the dynamic form of ἐκ τοῦ σώματος and πρὸς τὸν κύριον. That is, he introduces ‘the idea of motion, which links the two states’ and thus ‘refutes a dichotomized perception of reality in favour of a unified one’. So, rather than ‘a chasm between the present and the eschaton, there is a difference

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state is the fact that it creates a tension between 5:3 (desiring not to be naked) and 5:8 (desiring to be away from the body). So, e.g. Lindgård, *2 Corinthians 4:16-5:10*, 168-169. But on this tension, see below.

<sup>219</sup> Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 392.

<sup>220</sup> On the ‘obvious’ parallels between 2 Cor 5:1-10 and Rom 8:18-27, see P. von der Osten-Sacken, *Römer 8 als Beispiel paulinischer Soteriologie* (FRLANT 112, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975), 104-124.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid., 121-122 attempts the reconstruction of the tradition behind 5:1-2, 6b, 8b but as Udo Schnelle, *Apostle Paul: His Life and Theology* (trans. Eugene M Boring, Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 248-249 n. 38 notes the ‘structure of the argument of 2 Cor. 5:1ff., however, speaks against the use of a connected tradition here and points rather to Paul as the composer’.

<sup>222</sup> Murphy-O’Connor, ‘2 Cor. 5:6b,’ 217.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid. cf. J-F Collange, *Enigmes de la deuxième épître de Paul aux Corinthiens: étude exégétique de 2 Cor. 2,14-7,4* (SNTSMS 18, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 233.

<sup>224</sup> E.g. Lindgård, *2 Corinthians 4:16-5:10*, 189; Victor Paul Furnish, *II Corinthians* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1984), 272; Alfred Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1915), 152; Thrall, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 389.

only of degree'.<sup>225</sup> Paul then dismisses the slogan as irrelevant in verse 9 where he makes clear that the only thing that matters is pleasing the Lord.<sup>226</sup>

The main problem with Murphy-O'Connor's proposal is that εἰδότες in 5:6 strictly parallels θαρροῦντες which introduces Paul's own view.<sup>227</sup> In other words in 5:6-8 Paul suggests that the confidence<sup>228</sup> that believers have from knowing that they are looking forward to the resurrection body (5:1-5)<sup>229</sup> and<sup>230</sup> the knowledge of their present separation from the Lord (5:6), means they can be confident and actually prefer to die (θαρροῦμεν δὲ καὶ εὐδοκοῦμεν μᾶλλον) so that they can be with the Lord (5:8).<sup>231</sup>

In what sense, then, are believers 'away from the Lord'? Plummer is typical in arguing in quite general terms. So he argues that Paul 'does not mean that while we are in the body we are absent from the Lord' since 'our union with Him both in life and in death is one of his leading doctrines (iv. 10, 11; Thess. v. 10)'.<sup>232</sup> Rather the apostle 'is speaking

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<sup>225</sup> Murphy-O'Connor, '2 Cor. 5:6b,' 218. Emphasis Added.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid.

<sup>227</sup> Thrall, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 386. Also, concerning the change in prepositions, as Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 401 points out, the distinction between rest and motion was not an absolute one so that πρὸς with the accusative when used of relationships between persons 'may mean simply "with," "in the presence of"'. See cf. BDF § 239(1).

<sup>228</sup> 5:6 is an anacoluthon. Given that θαρροῦμεν δὲ καὶ (v. 8a) interrupts the grammatical connection of εἰδότες ὅτι κτλ. (v.6b) and εὐδοκοῦμεν μᾶλλον (v.8). So Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 394. Some interpreters have understood the verse to be connected with φιλοτιμούμεθα in 5:9 ('Being confident, I make it my goal to please the Lord'). So C. Demke, 'Zur Auslegung von 2. Korinther 5,1-10,' *EvT* 29 (1969): 599; Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 301-302; Theo K. Heckel, *Der innere Mensch: die paulinische Verarbeitung eines platonischen Motivs* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1993), 119. This would render 5:6-8 as a subordinate section but is unlikely as it would mean that Paul would have failed to complete his thought twice (both in 5:6 and 5:8) (So Lindgård, *2 Corinthians 4:16-5:10*, 189). Probably 5:7 should be regarded as a parenthesis with the line of thought starting again with a different form of θαρρέω in 5:8.

<sup>229</sup> The οὖν in 5:6 points back to 5:1-5.

<sup>230</sup> The καὶ in 5:6 is conjunctive. So Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 253. C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (2nd ed., BNTC, London: A. & C. Black, 1973), 157 argues that it is explicative and renders the phrase 'we are confident since we know'. While this is possible, it seems to equate 5:1-5 and 5:6-8. That is, the thought becomes something like 'we are therefore (because of 5:1-5) always confident since we know (5:6-8). The NRSV sees the καὶ as concessive: 'So we are always confident; even though we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord'. However, this seems to make the knowledge of our present distance from the Lord a *problem* rather than an *encouragement* in the face of death. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 394 sees the καὶ as adversative: 'So we are always confident; but because we realise that we are absent from the Lord's presence as long as this body forms our residence [...] it is our chosen preference to take up residence with the Lord'. Again this breaks the link between our confidence and our desire to be with the Lord.

<sup>231</sup> This desire to depart from the body creates a surface contradiction with 5:3 where Paul says that we do not desire to be found in a bodiless state. However, as Ladd points out is this not 'precisely the kind of psychologically sound tension that a man could express when caught in the grasp of strong ambivalent feelings'? [G.E. Ladd, *The Pattern of New Testament Truth* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), 106 quoted in Osei-Bonsu, 'Does 2 Cor. 5.1-10 Teach the Reception of the Resurrection Body at the Moment of Death?,' 94]. That is, while Paul does not want to be found naked, that is disembodied, he knows that if he is, it will be better because he will be with the Lord.

<sup>232</sup> Plummer, *Second Corinthians*, 150. Cf. Barrett, *Second Corinthians*, 158: 'Paul cannot mean that in this life the Christian is separated from Christ; he has used too often such expressions as "in Christ". He thinks however of

relatively'. That is, the 'life of faith is less close and intimate than the life of sight and converse'. Thrall is more specific in speaking of a 'spatial' separation, indicating a lack of 'fellowship'.<sup>233</sup>

It may be that there is nothing particularly significant in Paul's statement regarding separation from the Lord given that, at least on the surface, Paul's expression does not seem to be unique. This is most clear in the Testament of Abraham 15:7 where we have Michael telling Abraham, 'Make disposition of all that you have, for the day has come near in which you will depart from the body and go to the Lord once for all (ἐκ τοῦ σώματος ἐκδημεῖν καὶ ἔτι ἅπαξ πρὸς τὸν κύριον).' Whether or not this particular text reflects an interpolation based on the Pauline text,<sup>234</sup> the thought of leaving the body to go to be with God/ the gods can be found elsewhere. So, Lindgård lists a number of parallels in antiquity including a passage where Seneca comments, 'When the day comes to separate the heavenly from its earthly blend, I shall leave the body here where I found it, and shall of my own volition betake myself to the gods'.<sup>235</sup> Feuillet notes this language resonates with OT ideas of 'sleeping with ones fathers' (e.g. Genesis 15:15) or 'being reunited with ones fathers' or 'one's people'.<sup>236</sup>

Is Paul simply reflecting a contemporary view of the necessity of death to be reunited with God? Paul's parenthesis in 5:7 where he seems to explain (γάρ) what he says in 5:6b may help us. Paul describes this state of being away from the Lord in terms of what is normally translated 'walking by faith not by sight' (5:7). There are a number of problems with this translation. First, 'by sight' renders διὰ εἶδους, Harris is typical in rendering it this way, despite acknowledging that in each of the other NT instances of this word (Lk 3:22; 9:29; Jn 5:37; 1 Thess 5:22) it has the meaning 'form' or 'appearance' and denotes the external appearance of something. He argues that perhaps Paul 'has used εἶδος in an

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Christ as reigning in heaven, and so long as the Christian lives on earth in this age he cannot be in the full sense *with Christ* as he will be when he departs (cf. Phil. i. 23; this is Paul's characteristic use of *with Christ*).'

<sup>233</sup> For Thrall, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 386 'since the risen Christ dwells in heaven, the believer whilst on earth is not present with him in the same sense as he hopes to be after death. There is a "spatial" separation, which entails a close degree of fellowship than will be possible beyond the present life. Hence, the metaphor of exile.' Cf. Lincoln, *Paradise Now and Not Yet*, 69: 'Since Christ is in heaven, being at home with him must involve being in heaven in his presence. Death before the Parousia will therefore bring a fuller enjoyment of heavenly existence than believers can experience in this life, yet their enjoyment will not be complete until they possess the heavenly body for which God has prepared them'.

<sup>234</sup> Dupont, *Syn Christōi: l'union avec le Christ suivant Saint Paul*, 168.

<sup>235</sup> Lindgård, *2 Corinthians 4:16-5:10*, 191-192 citing Seneca's Ep. 102:24.

<sup>236</sup> A. Feuillet, 'La demneure céleste et la destinée des chrétiens. Exégèse de 2 Co 5,1-10 et contribution à l'étude des fondements de l'eschatologie paulinienne,' *RSR* 44 (1956): 391.



unusual sense (=ὄψις, “seeing”, “sight”).<sup>237</sup> As such, he suggests, Paul is contrasting ‘seeing with believing’.<sup>238</sup> However, εἶδος everywhere else in the Greek Bible<sup>239</sup> means ‘form’ or ‘appearance’.<sup>240</sup> Numbers 12:8 is sometimes pointed to as an example where εἶδος means ‘sight’.<sup>241</sup> Here Moses is described as speaking with the Lord ‘mouth to mouth’ (στόμα κατὰ στόμα). This is further qualified as ἐν εἶδει καὶ οὐ δι’ αἰνιγμάτων. Typically this is rendered ‘clearly, not in riddles’ (NRSV) suggesting that εἶδει pertains to sight. However, δι’ αἰνιγμάτων can mean something like ‘through a reflection’ (cf. 1 Cor 13:12). Thus, the point may be that Moses speaks to God ‘in his real form’ not ‘in a reflection’. This is particularly important for 2 Corinthians 5:8 since the exact phrase διὰ εἶδους does not appear anywhere else in the Greek Bible, but the parallel made in Numbers 12:8 between ἐν εἶδει and δι’ αἰνιγμάτων suggests that διὰ εἶδους means something like ‘according to form’. The emphasis is on the fact that ‘we live our lives in the sphere of faith, not in the presence of his visible form’.<sup>242</sup>

This distinction between faith / physical form fits perfectly with the idea that Christ is *bodily* absent. Believers do not walk in the light of his ‘visible form’. Rather, they walk by faith. For Paul, then, being ‘in the body’ is to be absent from the Lord and it is to ‘walk by faith’ rather than ‘according to the form’ of the risen Christ. As long as believers are in this body they are separated from Christ. Their un-transformed bodies prevent them from seeing Christ or from being with Christ, *where* he is. In other words it is not *simply* the

<sup>237</sup> Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 396. He argues that there may be a parallel use in Num 12:8 – on which see below.

<sup>238</sup> For example see Hoffmann, *Die Toten in Christus*, 283; Hans Lietzmann, *An die Korinther I-II* (5th ed., HNT 9, Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1969 [1949]), 120-121; Adolf von Schlatter, *Paulus der Bote Jesu: eine Deutung seiner Briefe an die Korinther* (Stuttgart: Calwer, 1969), 552.

<sup>239</sup> Not simply in the 4 other NT that Harris mentions (396): Gen 29:17; 32:31f; 39:6; 41:2ff,18f; Exod 24:10,17; 26:30; 28:33; Lev 13:43; Num 8:4; 9:15f; 11:7; 12:8; Deut 21:11; Jdg 13:6; 1 Sam 16:18; 25:3; 2 Sam 11:2; 13:1; Est 2:2f,7; Jdt 8:7; 11:23; Prov 7:10; Song 5:15; Job 33:16; 41:10; Wis 15:4f; Sir 23:16; 25:2; 43:1; Isa 52:14; 53:2f; Jer 11:16; 15:3; Lam 4:8; Ezek. 1:16,26; Sus 1:7; Sut. 1:31; Lk 3:22; 9:29; Jn 5:37; 2 Co. 5:7; 1 Thess. 5:22.

<sup>240</sup> Cf. BDAG 280: (1): ‘the shape and structure of something, as it appears to someone, form, outward appearance’; (2): ‘a variety of something, kind’; (3): ‘the act of looking/seeing, seeing, sight’. For option (3), they list Num 12:8; Ps Clem Hom 17:8 and a couple of 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> C interpretations of 2 Cor 5:7. The Ps Clement text is citation of the Numbers text (στόμα κατὰ στόμα, ἐν εἶδει). For the passive sense (‘form’) see Norbert Baumert, *Täglich sterben und auferstehen: der Literalsinn von 2 Kor 4, 12-5, 10* (München: Kosel-Verlag, 1973), 227; Friedrich Gustav Lang, *2. Korinther 5:1-10 in der neueren Forschung* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1973), 195; Plummer, *Second Corinthians*, 150.

<sup>241</sup> E.g. BDAG 280 3; Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 396.

<sup>242</sup> Thrall, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 1:397. As Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 110 puts it ‘Paul is saying that the Christian is away from the Lord only in comparison with the prospect of seeing him face to face’. Cf. also Jane Heath, ‘Metamorphosis of the Beholder: Pauline Visual Piety in its Hellenistic and Jewish Setting (Romans; 2 Corinthians 2:14-5:21 and 1 Corinthians 10-13)’ (PhD Diss, rev. ed., University of Cambridge, 2011 [2009]), 178. Interestingly Chrysostom seems to understand διὰ εἶδους as a reference to the *earthly* life of Jesus in his *Homily on Philippians* 3 where he describes the μᾶλλον καὶ ἐγγύτερον experience of the believer who is with Christ. This believer sees Christ πρόσωπον πρὸς πρόσωπον and not διὰ εἶδους or διὰ πίστεως. That is, experiencing Christ διὰ εἶδους seems to be a limited state, just as διὰ πίστεως [PG 62.203].

unredeemed nature of believers' bodies that prevent them from being with Christ.<sup>243</sup> The spatial language of 'being at home' and 'being away' from the Lord indicate that the risen Christ, as an exalted *human being*, with a localisable, discrete body is not currently *here* and so they are away from him.

#### 4.2 Christ's Future Bodily Coming (Phil 3:20-21)

In Philippians 3 we have the clearest example in Paul that the exalted Christ possesses a discrete, human body. In fact Erhardt Güttgemanns claimed that '[a]ußer in Phil. 3,21 spricht er dabei nie von einem *individuellen* σῶμα des *auferstandenen* Christus'.<sup>244</sup> However, Güttgemanns (following Lohmeyer<sup>245</sup>) argues that Paul is using an existing hymn, the details of which do not reflect the rest of his theology.<sup>246</sup> In fact, it is very unlikely that Paul is quoting a hymn.<sup>247</sup> Further, even if he was, it is even less likely that Paul would include something that was in such (supposed) tension with the rest of his theology.<sup>248</sup> In fact, these verses do not contradict the rest of Paul's theology.<sup>249</sup>

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<sup>243</sup> Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 395-396 argues that Paul may have viewed this separation as not simply 'spatial' but 'somatic'. 'It is not simply a case of Christ's being "there" and Christians' being "here"; until Christians have doffed their earthly bodies and donned their heavenly, they are separated from their Lord by the difference between two modes of being, the σῶμα ψυχικόν and the σῶμα πνευματικόν'.

<sup>244</sup> Güttgemanns, *Der leidende Apostel*, 262. Here Güttgemanns is following Hans Grass, *Ostergeschehen und Osterberichte* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1956), 149. We have seen that though this is may be the only place where Paul *explicitly* refers to Christ possessing an individual body, Paul certainly assumes the same elsewhere. Further as Siber, *Mit Christus Leben*, 124 notes: 'angesichts der für Paulus wesentlichen Identität von irdischem und erhöhtem Jesus erscheint es fraglich, ob man zwischen dem Gekreuzigten und dem Auferstandenen so betont differenzieren darf. Daß Paulus sonst nirgends explizit vom Leib der Auferstandenen redet, beruht vielleicht eher auf Zufall als auf bewußter Reflexion.'

<sup>245</sup> Lohmeyer, *Der Brief an die Philipper*, 157. Lohmeyer describes it as a 'kleinen sechszeiligen hymnus'.

<sup>246</sup> Güttgemanns, *Der leidende Apostel*, 244-245 argues there are three theological differences between this passage and the rest of Paul: First, Christ is the agent of resurrection; second, 3:21 only speaks of those who are alive not the 'dead in Christ'; finally, 3:21 speaks of resurrection as transformation not new creation.

<sup>247</sup> The idea is perhaps most thoroughly refuted by Kim, *The Origin of Paul's Gospel*, 150-158. For a recent treatment that reaches the same conclusion see Dirk Schinkel, *Die himmlische Bürgerschaft: Untersuchungen zu einem urchristlichen Sprachmotiv im Spannungsfeld von religiöser Integration und Abgrenzung im 1. und 2. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007), 100-102. On the relationship between this passage and 2:6-8, N Flanagan, 'A Note on Philippians 3,20-21,' *CBQ* 18 (1956): 8-9 lays out the lexical similarities. However, on the basis of semantic differences, most commentators now reject any idea that 3:20-21 is significantly picking up on 2:6-8. [So, Stephen E. Fowl, *Philippians* (THNTC, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 175 n.40].

<sup>248</sup> As noted by, among others, Bauer, *Leiblichkeit*, 140 n.56.

<sup>249</sup> See especially O'Brien, *Philippians*, 470-471: First, Christ is described as 'life-giving' in 1 Cor 15:45 which refers to his raising the bodies of deceased Christians; second, the reference to τὸ σῶμα τῆς ταπεινώσεως is not exclusively a reference to the living as can be seen by the parallel text 1 Cor 15:51: 'We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed'; finally μετασχηματίζω is synonymous with ἀλλάσσω which is used in 1 Cor 15:51, 52. In this context the resurrection body is conformed to the image of Christ (15:49) which is the new creation. For similar arguments see Bauer, *Leiblichkeit*, 136; Siber, *Mit Christus Leben*, 123-124; Kim, *The Origin of Paul's Gospel*, 155-156.

In contrast to ‘the enemies of the cross of Christ’<sup>250</sup> (3:18) who are thinking on earthly things (τὰ ἐπίγεια φρονοῦντες 3:19), Paul and his readers’ citizenship (πολίτευμα)<sup>251</sup> is in heaven. Heaven is the location from where (ἐξ οὐ)<sup>252</sup> believers are waiting<sup>253</sup> their Saviour,<sup>254</sup> that is the Lord Jesus Christ who will transform<sup>255</sup> their bodies<sup>256</sup> of humiliation<sup>257</sup>

<sup>250</sup> The reference to their god being their belly (ὁ θεὸς ἡ κοιλία 3:19) has led to a range of interpretations concerning the identity of these enemies and whether they are ‘libertines’ or effectively ‘legalists’ like the ‘dogs’ of 3:2. Reumann, *Philippians*, 571-572 provides a recent survey of views but Bockmuehl, *A Commentary on Epistle to the Philippians*, 231 is probably right to argue that there is insufficient evidence to determine the exact referent to κοιλία and hence the exact nature of the opponents.

<sup>251</sup> Reumann, *Philippians*, 576-577 provides a helpful survey of the discussion, and argues that to translate this word some ‘reflection of “state, constitutive government,” etc., seems needed, but also the social world of clubs, guilds, and (religious) associations’. He settles for ‘civic association’. The problem with translating πολίτευμα as ‘civic association’ is that, in English, it is quite an un-intuitive phrase. Any perceived ‘governance’ by a ‘civic association’ would be, at most, minimal. The translation ‘citizenship’ is usually rejected because of its weak attestation (Lincoln, *Paradise Now and Not Yet*, 99 n. 56). However the idea of ‘citizenship’ in modern English usage, may have a stronger sense of identity and value than the ancient concept which was more associated with rights and privileges. Perhaps, then, as an English translation, ‘citizenship’, understood in this more modern, fluid sense captures the sense of the Greek word as an association with governance over its members.

<sup>252</sup> As Lincoln, *Paradise Now and Not Yet*, 101 notes if ‘Christ is to come from heaven, then he is envisaged as being there until that time’. As is frequently argued, though the antecedent of οὐ would be expected to be singular (and hence in this context πολίτευμα – thus suggesting this word has a strong local sense), Paul is here using a construction *according to sense* and the antecedent understood as the plural οὐρανοῖς (cf. Acts 24:11; Rom 2:14). This corresponds with 1 Thess 1:10 where the Thessalonians are said to wait Christ from heaven. Cf. Fee, *Paul’s Letter to the Philippians*, 380.

<sup>253</sup> ἀπεκδεχόμεθα, a term that is used in other eschatological contexts e.g. 1 Thess 1:9; Rom 8:19, 23. This is one reason for questioning Lohmyer’s contention that Paul is not speaking about Christians at the eschaton, but about the death of a martyr (Lohmeyer, *Der Brief an die Philipper*, 159).

<sup>254</sup> This is the only reference to Christ as σωτήρ in his undisputed letters (cf. Eph 5:23; 1 Tim 1:1; 2 Tim 1:10; Tit 1:4, 2:13; Tit 3:6). The application of this title to Christ may be an example of Paul attributing to Christ that which the OT (frequently in this instance) attributed to YHWH (particularly Isaiah 45:21; also Deut 32:15; 1 Sam 10:19; Psalm 24:5). It does seem overly pessimistic to state that one ‘cannot be confident that [the Philippians] would have known [the] OT usage’ (Reumann, *Philippians*, 578). These verses are thematically related to Romans 8:23-24 where Paul describes believers as waiting (ἀπεκδεχόμενοι cf. ἀπεκδεχόμεθα here) the redemption (ἀπολύτρωσιν) of their bodies. He then goes on to talk of believers being saved in this hope (τῇ γὰρ ἐλπίδι ἐσώθημεν). This connection between salvation and bodily redemption may further explain Paul’s reference to Christ as ‘Saviour’ here. Also, as Schinkel, *Die himmlische Bürgerschaft*, 105 argues, the term σωτήρ says nothing different in a theological sense to ῥύόμενος in 1 Thess 1:10 but ‘mit dem σωτήρ-Titel gewinnt die Rede von Jesus Christus als dem kommenden Retter jedoch stärker an Prägnanz’. Paul’s use therefore does not *necessitate* an implicit critique on the emperor as Saviour (but does not rule it out).

<sup>255</sup> μετασχηματίζω. Probably here BDAG 641 (1) ‘to change the form of something, transform, change’. Lincoln, *Paradise Now and Not Yet*, 103 argues that the word is not used of the creation of something entirely new, ‘but the transformation of something already there, in this case “our body of humiliation”. In this way the element of continuity is brought out as both present and future modes of existence involve some kind of σώμα’. This understanding of the word in this context goes back at least to Tertullian (*On the Resurrection of the Flesh* 55:11).

<sup>256</sup> σώμα is singular here. More likely a collective singular (cf. Rom 8:23; 1 Cor 6:10-20; so O’Brien, *Philippians*, 464) than an adaption for the sake of rhythm (so Lohmeyer, *Der Brief an die Philipper*, 159).

<sup>257</sup> A genitive of quality. Although older commentators and theologians understood it in a very negative sense, it is now commonly taken to signify that it belongs to the ‘state of humiliation caused by sin and is thus always characterized by physical decay, indignity, weakness, and finally death’ (O’Brien, *Philippians*, 464). However, P. Doble, “Vile Bodies” or Transformed Persons? *Philippians* 3.21 in Context, *JSNT* 24.4 (2002): 25-26 argues that the term here, in the light of the positive use of its cognates elsewhere in *Philippians* (2:3; 2:8; 4:12), ‘has nothing to do with disparaging bodiness nor with *being* humiliated; it has nothing to do with self-inflicted suffering and is certainly more than a noble attitude. In this sentence, ταπεινῶσις represents the

into the form<sup>258</sup> of his body of glory.<sup>259</sup> Jesus does this by his ability to bring all things under his control (κατὰ τὴν ἐνέργειαν τοῦ δύνασθαι αὐτὸν καὶ ὑποτάξει αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα). This last phrase is an allusion to Psalm 8:7 [LXX] (καὶ κατέστησας αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τὰ ἔργα τῶν χειρῶν σου πάντα ὑπέταξας ὑποκάτω τῶν ποδῶν αὐτοῦ). However, unlike Paul's use of this verse in 1 Corinthians 15:27 where God is the subject the action of subduing all things, here the power is attributed to Christ.<sup>260</sup> We thus have a tantalising combination of Christ as the fulfillment of humanity's dominion over creation and the one who bears the divine power to bring about this dominion. Right at the heart of his work of subjection and his identity as the one who subjects is his possession of a glorious body.<sup>261</sup>

From these verses we can draw a couple of important conclusions. First, as in 1 Thessalonians 1:9, Paul currently locates Christ in heaven. Though the language of 'coming' or *parousia* is not present the language of believers waiting for Christ 'ἐξ' heaven clearly indicates that it is in view. Christ is currently in heaven and believers are waiting for him to come from there. Christ is not just *in* heaven, he is absent from believers there. They are waiting for him and so are not with him. Secondly, in one sense, Paul's depiction of believers waiting for Christ is equivalent to descriptions in the OT of the faithful waiting for the coming salvation of God (e.g. Ps 25:5; Is 25:9; Mic 7:7). However, we note that here the *bodily* aspect is dominant. Christ's coming salvation *depends on* and is *determined by* the fact that Christ himself possesses a body that is *currently* distinct from our own body. This text, as even Gütgemanns noted, makes it clear that Christ possesses an individual body that can be distinguished from believers. We have, then, a strong connection between the absence of Christ in heaven and his possession of an individual, distinct body.

## 5. Conclusion

In this chapter we have seen that the exalted Christ possesses a distinct, human body that allows him to be distinguished from and not simply collapsed into believers (Rom 8:29; Phil 3:21). Christ's body plays an essential role in his eschatological redemption of believers – it

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antithesis of οἱ τὰ ἐπίγεια φρονοῦντες'. As he points out, if the phrase was a statement of fallenness, weakness or corruptibility, why did Paul urge ταπεινοφροσύνη (2:3) upon his readers?

<sup>258</sup> σύμμορφον. Here used in apposition to σώμα. As Lincoln, *Paradise Now and Not Yet*, 103 notes, the 'contrast between verse 21 and verse 10 where the verbal form συμμορφιζόμενος is used should be noted. Paul's point is very clear. Knowing Christ now means being conformed to his death; only when he comes from heaven will it mean being conformed to him in all the qualities possessed by his body of glory.' cf. Jürgen Becker, *Paulus: der Apostel der Völker* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1992), 407: 'Auch ist Christus als Auferstandener von verkürter Leiblichkeit, wohinein die Christen verwandelt werden'.

<sup>259</sup> As with τὸ σώμα τῆς ταπεινώσεως ἡμῶν, τὸ σώμα τῆς δόξης is a genitive of quality.

<sup>260</sup> L. J. Kreitzer, *Jesus and God in Paul's Eschatology* (JSNT Sup 19, Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987), 153.

<sup>261</sup> As Bauer, *Leiblichkeit*, 135 puts it: 'Leiblichkeit und universale Neuschöpfung gehören zusammen!'

is not an accidental aspect of Paul's theology. For Paul the *Parousia* will mean the eschatological transformation of believers into the same form (σύμμορφον) as the body of the risen Christ. In the intervening time, though, having an individual body that is distinct and distinguishable from the bodies of believers means that Christ is located *elsewhere* from believers. This *other place* is at the right hand of the Father (Rom 8:34) in heaven (e.g. 1 Thess 1:10). It is only when he comes at his *Parousia* that he will be with them (1 Thess 4:17). In the mean time, Paul expresses his longing to be with the Christ (Phil 1:23) from whom he is absent (2 Cor 5:6-8).

Thus, we conclude that Christ possessing a distinct and distinguishable body is highlighted by the Christian experience of the absence of Christ and, at the same time, explains that very absence.

## CHAPTER 3: THE EPIPHANIC AND DYNAMIC PRESENCE OF CHRIST

### 1. Introduction

In Romans 8 Paul locates Christ simultaneously *in* the believer (v.10) and at the right hand of God (v.34). This polarity between the presence and absence of Christ is repeated across Paul's letters and has led some interpreters to argue that precise 'conceptual clarity' regarding the exalted Christ may always remain 'elusive'.<sup>1</sup> This need not faze us, it is argued, since 'presence can take many different forms and is therefore compatible with forms of absence'.<sup>2</sup> As a result, interpreters have generally neglected to consider the possibility that these two aspects of the location of the exalted Christ might *mutually* interpret one another.<sup>3</sup> The two are simply held in a straightforward tension or, perhaps more commonly, Christ's *absence* is relativized and simply interpreted in terms of his *presence*. That is, if the believer is 'in Christ' and Christ is in the believer, his heavenly location is understood more as a mode of his ubiquitous presence than any kind of significant absence.<sup>4</sup>

To understand Christ's absence in light of his presence is not incorrect and indeed recognizes the importance of the presence of Christ to Paul. However, too often, the reverse move is not made i.e. to understand the presence of Christ in light of his absence. This has led to two unfortunate consequences. First, it has resulted in a truncated view of the absence of Christ so that the concept is regarded of little or no relevance to Paul's Christology.<sup>5</sup> Second, once the presence of Christ is used to effectively *relativize* his absence

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<sup>1</sup> Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 410. Dunn argues that we should simply allow the 'richness of [Paul's] vision of the exalted Christ, its poetry and harmonies, capture heart and spirit'.

<sup>2</sup> Richard Bauckham, 'The Future of Jesus Christ' in *The Cambridge Companion to Jesus* (ed. M. Bockmuehl; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 274.

<sup>3</sup> For a recent study which considers how these two aspects relate see Matthew Sleeman, *Geography and the Ascension Narrative in Acts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009). Sleeman applies the work of Edward W. Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996) who argues that the concept of 'thirdspace' generates 'an-Other form of spatial awareness' that denies dualism by considering spaces as 'simultaneously real [firstspace], imagined' [secondspace] and more (both and also)' (Soja 11). Applied to the exalted Christ (in Acts), Sleeman sees the supposed tension between absence and presence as reductionist. He concludes (264) that 'Luke's Christology and, with it, his geography, are more complex than such binary explanations'. Sleeman's study is an important contribution to Luke-Acts but his methodology is perhaps harder to apply in the essentially non-narrative world of the Pauline epistles and so we will not be interacting with it directly in what follows.

<sup>4</sup> For example, commenting on Luke-Acts, Beverly Gaventa suggests that 'Jesus' ascension does not mean his absence; it simply means that his presence is no longer constrained by space and time' [Beverly Roberts Gaventa, 'Learning and Relearning the Identity of Jesus from Luke-Acts' in *Seeking the Identity of Jesus: a Pilgrimage* (ed. Beverly Roberts Gaventa and Richard B. Hays; Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2008), 163].

<sup>5</sup> In a letter to Barth in 1951, Bultmann wrote 'Ich ziehe auf den Satz, daß Christus (sofern er uns angeht) das Kerygma ist, weil er der Christus nur als der Christus pro me ist, und als solcher begegnet er nur im Kerygma. Wenn er nicht im Geschehen (des Kerygma und des Glaubens) present wäre, so wäre er eine mythische

in this way, the latter motif is no longer used to interpret the former. Concerning the first of these consequences, our last chapter has shown the significance of the absence of Christ for understanding the exalted Christ as a human being with a discrete, localisable body. As a result, in this current chapter we can begin to address the second consequence. Since the *absence* of Christ is significant for Paul's Christology, it is reasonable to ensure that it informs and balances our interpretation of texts that deal with the *presence* of Christ.

In this chapter and the next we will consider three of the main modes of Christ's presence in Paul: his epiphanic presence, his dynamic presence, and his somatic presence.<sup>6</sup> At each point we will consciously bring the *absence* of Christ to bear on our interpretation. In practice this will mean specifically considering Christ's presence as a *mediated* presence and attending to the nature of the mediation. Considering Christ's absence prevents us from simply collapsing Christ and the medium of his presence - a tendency especially common when considering the Spirit's mediation. Moreover, we will see that Christ's absence actually highlights the depth and *transparency* of the mediation involved. Though Christ is absent, the mediation of his presence is so 'transparent'<sup>7</sup> that the absent Christ himself can operate in the world in 'real-time' terms. He is not merely represented in the world, but is himself active. Thus, in interpreting Christ's presence in light of his absence, it is hoped that the clarity which has proved to be so 'elusive' might be more firmly grasped.

## 2. The Epiphanic Presence of Christ

### 2.1 Introduction

In this section we will consider a mode of Christ's presence where the emphasis is placed on him being present to the *senses*. We have termed this mode Christ's 'epiphanic' presence. Though an epiphany is perhaps more strictly a *visual* manifestation, we use it here in the broader sense as referring to any *manifestation* of the exalted Christ directed to the

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Gestalt' [Karl Barth, *Karl Barth - Rudolf Bultmann: Briefwechsel 1922-1966* (Gesamtausgabe 5:1, Zürich: Theologischer Verlag Zürich, 1971), 178]. Or consider Kahler's statement that 'der wirkliche Christus ist der gepredigte Christus' [M. Kähler, *Der sogenannte historische Jesus und der geschichtliche, biblische Christus* (ed. E. Wolf, 4 ed., München: C. Kaiser, 1969 [1892]), 44]. Here, Christ is *reduced* and *restricted* to his presence in the Kerygma.

<sup>6</sup> We will show how these each come under the broad category of 'presence' which we are not considering in tight, philosophical terms. Rather, we understand the presence of Christ to simply refer to any particular mode whereby Christ is *experienced* in the world before his Parousia.

<sup>7</sup> This concept of 'transparent' mediation has been used in media studies e.g. Walter Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction' in *Illuminations* (ed. Hannah Arendt; New York: Schocken, 1999 [1935]); L. Gross, 'Life vs. Art: The Interpretation of Visual Narratives,' *Visual Communication* 11.4 (1985): 3.

believer's senses so that he or she *experiences* him in some way.<sup>8</sup> In this section we see Paul employing a number of images that describe the manifestation of the exalted Christ in the world. In the epiphanic mode of Christ's presence the emphasis is not on Christ as subject but object.<sup>9</sup> Accordingly, in this mode of his presence, Christ is essentially *passive*. This does not mean, as we will see, that his epiphanic presence is weak or ineffectual. Rather this 'passivity' highlights the fact that his presence is not a direct, unqualified presence but is *mediated*. In the section of 2 Corinthians we consider we see that the mediation switches between Paul, the gospel, the Spirit and the Corinthian church themselves. It is not that these different 'entities' simply represent Christ but rather through them the risen Christ himself is encountered and experienced. At each stage we will see that the absence of Christ necessitates that his presence is a *qualified* presence. So, Christ cannot be confused with the medium of his presence (something we will see is particularly important when considering his relationship to the Spirit).

Though there are other passages we could consider,<sup>10</sup> we will concentrate on one extended section in Paul's second letter to the Corinthians. 2 Corinthians 2:4-4:12 is part of

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<sup>8</sup> With Margaret M. Mitchell, 'Epiphanic Evolutions in Earliest Christianity,' *Illinois Classical Studies* 29 (2004): 186, I use this term in a very broad and non-technical sense. Mitchell suggests that rather than a technical analysis the NT lends itself to being investigated for its 'epiphanic logic' and defines an epiphany as a 'mediated manifestation of deity'. For my purposes I understand it to have a slightly more general understanding, namely the 'mediated manifestation of an exalted being' – Christ in this instance.

<sup>9</sup> One epiphanic-like mode of Christ's presence that we do not consider in this section is that of the *memory*. Jane Heath has recently argued that in 1 Thessalonians Paul is employing the classical literary technique of *enargeia* [Jane Heath, 'Absent Presences of Paul and Christ: *Enargeia* in 1 Thessalonians 1-3,' *JSNT* 32.1 (2009): 3-38]. Though the term resists translation, it essentially means something like 'imaginative memory' or 'that quality of language which makes the audience experience something absent as if present' (9). Heath suggests that Paul is writing in such a way as to evoke the experience of *his own* and *hence* Christ's presence. Paul describes his own visit to the Thessalonians in such a way that indicates that he understood Christ himself to be 'already in part present' with Paul's own presence (20). She suggests that language associated with the imperial Parousia (εἰσέρχομαι, εἰπορεύομαι and *introitus*) resonates with how Paul describes his own coming to them as an 'entry' (εἴσοδος 1:9, 2:1). While Paul is very careful to distinguish his own coming from Christ's, Heath argues that Paul deliberately chooses this language of εἴσοδος to 'associate his "entry" with Christ's' and understood that, with his own εἴσοδος, 'Christ is already in part present'. In consequence, she argues that Paul's repeated reminders (2:1 γὰρ οἴδατε; 2:5 καθὼς οἴδατε; 2:9 μνημονεύετε; 2:10 ὑμεῖς μάρτυρες καὶ ὁ θεός; 2:11 καθάπερ οἴδατε cf. 3:6 ἔχετε μνησίαν ἡμῶν ἀγαθὴν πάντοτε) are 'designed to evoke' the experience of his visit and hence Christ's presence (20). Given that the Parousia of Christ will involve being in the company of Christ (4:17; 5:10), this 'enhances the sense that company with one another [i.e. apostle with believers] is experienced as partial realization of *parousia*' (26). Heath is careful to underline that Paul's use of memory 'achieves only a *seeming* presence, not the solid reality'. The discrepancy between the feeling evoked and the reality 'results in longing for that reality' (28). Accordingly, Hans Frei would seem to be overstating his case when he makes his famous claim that 'knowing [Christ's] identity is identical with having him present or being in his presence' (Hans W. Frei, *The Identity of Jesus Christ: the Hermeneutical Bases of Dogmatic Theology* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 1997), 53). This *commemorative* aspect of Christ's presence is precisely required *because* Christ is absent. It *presupposes* his absence. Paul identifies him and brings him to the Thessalonians memory precisely so that they will continue to *wait* for him (1:10; 3:13; 4:18).

<sup>10</sup> For example Galatians 3:1 where Paul states that before the eyes of the Galatians he had 'portrayed' Jesus Christ as crucified. On the implications of this verse for the epiphanic presence of Christ mediated through



a larger section stretching to 7:4<sup>11</sup> and in the literature commentators generally suggest that Paul's main concern in this section is to defend or at least to commend his apostleship.<sup>12</sup> However, Jane Heath notes the frequency of verbs and themes related to sense-perception in this section.<sup>13</sup> Accordingly, she concludes that Paul's main concern in this section (and through to 5:12) is 'to teach people how to perceive Christ'.<sup>14</sup> Correct perception of the manifestation of Christ is essential because it anticipates our own manifestation (φανερωθῆναι) before Christ's judgment seat on the last day (5:10). Whether or not this theme should wholly replace the idea of Paul's (at least implicit) 'defence' of his apostleship, Heath is certainly correct to see it as dominant to Paul's line of argument.<sup>15</sup> In 2 Corinthians 2:14-4:17 we encounter a high density of images relating to the exalted Christ that we can term *epiphanic*. In this section, the apostles are described as the 'aroma' (εὐωδία) of Christ (2:14-16) and the Corinthian church as a 'letter' of Christ (3:3). In 3:18 believers *behold* the glory of the Lord and are transformed by his Spirit. In 4:1-6 we have the combination of *auditory* ('the gospel [...] of Christ' 4:4 cf. 'the word of God' 4:2) and *visual* imagery (unbelievers are blinded 'so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ' 4:4) culminating in the striking image of believers seeing the very 'face of Christ' (προσώπῳ Χριστοῦ). Finally, in 4:7-12 we have the life of Jesus (ἡ ζωὴ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ) *manifested* in the bodies of the apostles and at work (ἐνεργεῖται) in the lives of the Corinthians. The combination here of the language of manifestation (φανερῶ) and working (ἐνεργέω) particularly highlights something that we will see throughout this section, namely the dynamic, powerful nature of this mode of Christ's presence.

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the apostle Paul (though he does not use this language), see Basil S. Davis, 'The Meaning of προεργάφῃ in the Context of Galatians 3:1,' *NTS* 45 (1999): 194-212.

<sup>11</sup> Commentators note the references to Macedonia in 2:13 and 7:5 that seem to bracket the section [e.g. Scott J. Hafemann, *Suffering and Ministry in the Spirit: Paul's Defence of His Ministry in II Corinthians 2:14-3:3* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 9]. In fact the references to both Macedonia and Titus in 2:13 and 7:5-6 seem so connected that to some the idea of separating them seems impossible. Weiss argued that 2:13 and 7:5 'paßten genau aufeinander wie die Bruchstellen eines Ringes' [J Weiss, *Das Urchristentum* (ed. Rudolf Knopf, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1917), 265 cited in Lang, *2. Korinther 5:1-10 in der neueren Forschung*, 173]. The question of the relationship of 2:14-7:4 to the rest of the letter is beyond the scope of this section. However, there do seem to be good reasons for regarding it as a piece with the rest of chapters 1-9 (e.g. Thrall, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 1:20-25 and Martin, *2 Corinthians*, xliii).

<sup>12</sup> Lindgård, *2 Corinthians 4:16-5:10*, 65 argues that it is not polemic but that it is 'an apologetic self-commendation'.

<sup>13</sup> Particularly the use of φανερώ (2:14; 3:3; 4:2; 4:10; 4:11; 5:10).

<sup>14</sup> Heath, 'Metamorphosis of the Beholder', 141. Cf. P. B. Duff, 'Transformed "from Glory to Glory": Paul's Appeal to the Experience of His Readers in 2 Corinthians 3:18,' *JBL* 127.4 (2008): 775: 'Paul's attention to accurate and faulty perception throughout 2 Cor 2:14-4:6—and particularly his claim that the clarity of one's perception is tied to one's status vis-à-vis salvation—recommends that this entire section is concerned with the distinction between appearance and reality'.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Heath's comment: 'Paul was *most* concerned not with self-justification' (ibid., 157; emphasis added).

## 2.2 The Aroma of Christ (2 Cor 2:14-17)

The first sensory description of the exalted Christ is not visual but olfactory where Paul describes himself<sup>16</sup> as the ‘aroma’ of Christ which brings death to those who are perishing (τοῖς ἀπολλυμένοις) and life those who are being saved (τοῖς σωζομένοις). He thus ‘anticipates in olfactory mode what he goes on to present in visual mode’ in 2 Corinthians 4:1-6 where he describes the gospel as veiled ἐν τοῖς ἀπολλυμένοις while others see in it the very face of Christ (4:4).<sup>17</sup>

Paul does use visual imagery in this section though when, with language evocative of the Roman triumph,<sup>18</sup> he pictures himself being led ‘in Christ’ by God in triumphal procession as a captive slave.<sup>19</sup> As he is led in this way, ‘the fragrance of the knowledge of Christ’ (τὴν ὁσμὴν τῆς γνώσεως αὐτοῦ [v.15])<sup>20</sup> spreads (φανεροῦνται) everywhere (ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ) through him. This fragrance spreads because (ὅτι) Paul himself is the aroma of Christ (Χριστοῦ εὐωδία) to God (τῷ θεῷ) for both those being saved (ἐν τοῖς σωζομένοις) and those perishing (ἐν τοῖς ἀπολλυμένοις).<sup>21</sup> As well as being related causally, verses 14 and 15 parallel one another.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> It is generally accepted that Paul is employing an epistolary plural here cf. Hafemann, *Suffering and Ministry in the Spirit*, 15-16; T. D. Stegman, *The Character of Jesus: The Linchpin to Paul’s Argument in 2 Corinthians* (AnBib 158, Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 2005), 263; Thrall, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 1:195-196. However, for an argument that Paul’s use of ‘we’ has considerable theological significance, see M. Carrez, ‘Le ‘Nous’ En 2 Corinthiens,’ *NTS* 26:4 (1980). With Carrez’s cautions in mind, we will proceed by primarily referring to Paul except where a wider reference seems important to the context.

<sup>17</sup> Heath, ‘Metamorphosis of the Beholder’, 141.

<sup>18</sup> As is frequently noted, θριαμβεύειν corresponds to the Latin *triumphare* (e.g. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 242).

<sup>19</sup> From the extant evidence it seems that when the verb is followed by an accusative noun the latter refers to the person or thing being conquered and not to the person triumphing or sharing in the victory (Hafemann, *Suffering and Ministry in the Spirit*, 33-39; Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 244-245). The paradox of Paul thanking God for leading him as a captive slave leads a number of commentators to suggest alternative understandings of the verb, none of which are convincing (see the discussion in Thrall, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 1:191-195). Collange, *Enigmes*, 24,25 and Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 46 note that this is a typical Pauline ‘paradox’.

<sup>20</sup> Though τῆς γνώσεως αὐτοῦ could be a subjective genitive (‘the fragrance that comes from knowing him’), e.g. NRSV, it is more likely epexegetic (‘the fragrance that is the knowledge about him’). So B. Kuschnerus, *Die Gemeinde als Brief Christi: Die kommunikative Funktion der Metapher bei Paulus am Beispiel von 2 Kor 2--5* (FRLANT 197, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002), 103; Anacleto de Oliveira, *Die Diakonie der Gerechtigkeit und der Versöhnung in der Apologie des 2. Korintherbriefes: analyse und Auslegung von 2 Kor 2, 14-4,6; 5, 11-6, 10* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1990), 20. The second genitive αὐτοῦ refers to Christ rather than God given that Christ is mentioned immediately prior to this phrase which parallels the phrase ‘aroma of Christ’ in 2:15 (so Kuschnerus, *Brief Christi*, 103; Oliveira, *Diakonie der Gerechtigkeit*, 20).

<sup>21</sup> Kuschnerus, *Brief Christi*, 104 suggests that these antonyms expound the sense of ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ in 2:14 and increase ‘den Eindruck der Universalität des Geschilderten’ that is ‘die Begegnung mit dem Apostel kommt als ein Geschehen in den Blick, das alle Menschen betrifft’. At the same time it prepares for the distinction Paul makes in 2:16.

<sup>22</sup> Oliveira, *Diakonie der Gerechtigkeit*, 21. Oliveira also suggests a parallel between God as the implied subject of φανεροῦνται (v.14) and τῷ θεῷ (v.15).

**Verse 14**

τὴν ὄσμήν τῆς γνώσεως αὐτοῦ  
 δι' ἡμῶν  
 ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ

**Verse 15**

Χριστοῦ εὐωδία  
 ἐσμέν  
 ἐν τοῖς σωζομένοις καὶ ἐν τοῖς  
 ἀπολλυμένοις

Thus, the ὄσμή 'of the knowledge of [Christ]' spreads δι' ἡμῶν because 'we are' the εὐωδία of Christ. It spreads 'in every place' that is ἐν τοῖς σωζομένοις καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἀπολλυμένοις.

There then seems to be a chiasmic arrangement between verses 15 and 16 with verse 16 expanding on the nature of the spread of knowledge to these two groups:<sup>23</sup>

A	ἐν τοῖς σωζομένοις
B	καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἀπολλυμένοις
B'	οἷς μὲν ὄσμή ἐκ θανάτου εἰς θάνατον
A'	οἷς δὲ ὄσμή ἐκ ζωῆς εἰς ζωὴν

Paul therefore functions as the aroma of Christ in a dual way. To one group he is the fragrance (ὄσμή) 'from death to death' (ἐκ θανάτου εἰς θάνατον); to the other he is the fragrance 'from life to life' (ἐκ ζωῆς εἰς ζωὴν).<sup>24</sup> This leads Paul to ask rhetorically 'who is sufficient for these things' (καὶ πρὸς ταῦτα τίς ἰκανός)? This question implies the difficulty of genuine apostolic ministry - a difficulty that stems from the fact (γάρ) that he does not, like so many, 'peddle' (καπηλεύω) the word of God (2:17). Rather, in sincerity (ἐξ εὐλικρινείας) and as one from God (ἐκ θεοῦ), he 'speaks in Christ before God' (κατέναντι θεοῦ ἐν Χριστῷ λαλοῦμεν).

The christological shape of this epiphany is emphasised by the 'organic' description of Paul as the aroma of Christ combined with the dynamic image of him speaking ἐν Χριστῷ. The resulting knowledge of Christ that is spread like a fragrance leads to either death or life. Though Christ is absent and hence only present through the medium of his apostle, his presence is not merely a static representation. Rather, as Paul speaks he does so 'in Christ' and so the aroma of Christ himself is experienced. However, we need to probe

<sup>23</sup> As suggested by Kuschnerus, *Brief Christi*, 104 who notes that the repetition and parallelism is 'eindringlich vor Augen'. However, M. Carrez, 'IKANOTHΣ: 2 Cor 2,14-17' in *Paolo Ministro del Nuovo Testamento (2 Co 2,14 - 4,6)* (ed. Lorenzo De Lorenzi; Rome: Benedictina Editrice, 1987), 79-80 suggests that the phrases may be strictly parallel and so assume a positive outcome for both groups. That is those who are being saved are those who discover the meaning and the power of Christ's death, while those who are lost are those who encounter the power of Christ's risen life and are turned from death to life. As Thrall, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 1:203 notes, this idea is unconvincing not least because the gospel is veiled to οἱ ἀπολλυμένοι in 4:3.

<sup>24</sup> Note the parallels with 4:10-12 where Paul says that he carries the 'death of Jesus' in his body, so that the 'life of Jesus' may also be manifested in his body; and with 1 Corinthians 1:18 where the 'word of the cross' is 'folly to those who are perishing' but to those being saved it is 'the power of God'.

more carefully the relationship Paul is presupposing between himself and Christ, and so we will examine the background to Paul's description of himself as an aroma (εὐωδία) of Christ.

*Background to Aroma Imagery.* The change from ὁσμή in verse 14 to εὐωδία in verse 15 and then back to ὁσμή in verse 16 suggests that the two words are being used interchangeably. This use of fragrance imagery here may continue the picture of the triumphal procession accompanied as it was with the burning of incense.<sup>25</sup> Or it may reflect the general idea that fragrance was an indication of the presence of divinity.<sup>26</sup> However, commentators tend to concentrate on two potential backgrounds: the OT sacrificial cult and later Wisdom theology.<sup>27</sup>

The two words εὐωδία and ὁσμή are used together in multiple sacrificial contexts in the OT (e.g. Gen 8:21; Ex 29:18; Lev 1:9; Num 15:3) to mean something like 'a fragrant aroma'. This sacrificial use later developed in a spiritual or metaphorical direction. So, in the rest of the NT the language is employed in a spiritual sense. For example, in Philippians 4:18, Paul describes the gifts that the Church have sent to him as an ὁσμὴν εὐωδίας. And in Ephesians 5:2 Christ's death on the cross is described as a θυσίαν τῷ θεῷ εἰς ὁσμὴν εὐωδίας. The use of sacrificial imagery is especially appropriate in our context since it fits the fact that Paul's own life of suffering, in some sense, parallels the sacrificial suffering of Christ.<sup>28</sup> That is, it reflects the fact that 'per essere autentico ed avere potere apocalittico', Paul's

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<sup>25</sup> However as Thrall, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 1:197 points out the textual evidence for the presence of incense at these processions is relatively uncommon suggesting that it was not widely known and so would not have been an easily recognized by the Corinthians. Also, the incense was offered to the gods whereas here its effect on humanity is underlined.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid. The fragrance that brings the divine presence, however, normally *gives life* and so, it is objected (e.g. Thrall, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 1:198), the death giving properties of the fragrance in this passage (2:16) are not reflected in this potential background.

<sup>27</sup> Other suggestions for the background include Rudolf Bultmann, *Der zweite Brief an die Korinther* (KEK, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1976), 68 who suggests that in mystery religions and later Gnostic Christianity the idea of fragrance was a 'Zeichen göttlicher Gegenwart und ein Zeichen göttlichen Lebens'. For Windisch, *Der zweite Korintherbrief*, 98 the connection between Christ and the apostles turns on the fact that the latter are anointed with the Holy Spirit and bear Christ within themselves (cf. 4:10-11; Gal 2:20). The main problem which is often noted with such suggestions is the fact that the aroma achieves a dual effect i.e. death and life. To overcome this problem T. W. Manson, '2 Cor 2:14-17: Suggestions towards an Exegesis' in *Studia Paulina (FS J. de Zwaan)* (ed. J.N Sevenster and W.C. van Unnik; Haarlem: Bohn, 1953), 157 suggests a parallel with the rabbinic literature that compared the Torah to a medicine or a drug that acts either as an 'elixir of life' or a 'deadly poison' to those who come into contact with it i.e. to Israel and to the Gentiles. While Paul offers the gospel rather than the Torah, the effects remain the same.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. 4:10-12.

preaching ‘deve essere rapportato al sacrificio di Cristo’.<sup>29</sup> But perhaps most importantly the fact that he is an aroma that is ‘pleasing’<sup>30</sup> to God (τῷ Θεῷ)<sup>31</sup> is a *defence* of his ministry that he then goes on to expand by considering the positive and negative outcomes of his ministry.

However, as well in sacrificial contexts, the same words are also employed with a slightly different meaning in Sirach 24:15. Here Wisdom describes herself as ‘giving forth the aroma of spices’ (ἀρωμάτων δέδωκα ὀσμὴν) and spreading a pleasant fragrance (διέδωκα εὐωδίαν). Later in 39:13-16 the holy sons (υἱοὶ ὅσιοι) are commanded to ‘bud like a rose growing by a stream of water’ and ‘send forth fragrance like frankincense’ (ὡς λίβανος εὐωδιάσατε ὀσμὴν). This idea is expanded when they are told to

Scatter the fragrance (διάδοτε ὀσμὴν) and sing a hymn of praise; bless the Lord for all his works; ascribe majesty to his name and give thanks to him with praise, with songs on your lips, and with lyres; and this you shall say in thanksgiving: ‘All things are the works of the Lord, for they are very good, and whatever he commands will be done in his time’.<sup>32</sup>

Here we have the idea of messengers ‘scattering the fragrance’ by publicly declaring praise to God in a didactic manner.<sup>33</sup> This is all in the context of the imagery of life-giving (‘bud like a rose’ [v.13]; ‘put forth blossoms like a lily’ [v.14]).

So, Paul may employ the phrase in a way that picks up on the life giving fragrance in Wisdom; or he may have in mind the more common sacrificial use – understood in a spiritual sense as in the other NT uses. A reference to Wisdom is favoured by context concerning the spread of knowledge (cf. the spread of Wisdom herself in Sirach 24:15 or the spread of the knowledge of the Lord in 39:13-16). A sacrificial reference is favoured by the fact that Paul uses both ὀσμὴ and εὐωδία in the same context thus echoing the stereotypical use of ὀσμὴ εὐωδίας in OT sacrificial contexts.<sup>34</sup> However, the wisdom and sacrificial contexts are not mutually exclusive and, in fact, the former presupposes the

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<sup>29</sup> G. Baldanza, ‘Osme e euodia in 2 Cor 2:14-17: quale interpretazione?’, *Laurentianum* 48.3 (2007): 501 [‘to be authentic and have apocalyptic power, [Paul’s preaching] must be related to the sacrifice of Christ’]. Cf. 1 Cor 1:18.

<sup>30</sup> As commentators frequently point out εὐωδία always has a positive sense.

<sup>31</sup> Kuschnerus, *Brief Christi*, 103 n.36: ‘Der Dativ läßt sich im prädikativen Sinne (“Gott hat an uns einen Wohlgeruch”) oder – stärker zu εὐωδία gezogen – als dativus commodi in engerer Bedeutung (“Wir sind ein Wohlgeruch zugunsten Gottes”) auffassen’.

<sup>32</sup> RSV.

<sup>33</sup> Thrall, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 1:200 though notes that there is no ‘death giving’ property to the dissemination of the fragrance in this context.

<sup>34</sup> Hafemann, *Suffering and Ministry in the Spirit*, 40.

latter.<sup>35</sup> After all, in Sirach 24:15 the verse ends with reference to the tabernacle (ὡς λιβάνου ἀτμὶς ἐν σκηνῇ). Here we see a pattern already present in the Psalms<sup>36</sup> and the Prophets<sup>37</sup> of a spiritualising of the OT sacrificial language.<sup>38</sup> This pattern that continues in the NT (cf. Rom 12:1) – and is the case in the two other Pauline instances where these words are employed – Philippians 4:18 and Ephesians 5:2. However, the employment of this sacrificial language in a metaphorical way does not mean that it is simply cut off from its original cultic context.<sup>39</sup>

*Paul's Apostolic Preaching and Existence.* Granted that Paul may be employing this metaphor because of the appropriateness of its sacrificial and sapiential resonances to his own ministry, we can address the question whether Paul is applying this imagery to his preaching, his very existence as an apostle or both. In other words, what exactly is the point of contact with the believer in this form of Christ's epiphanic presence? McDonald argues that 2:14-17 'is a theme statement for a discourse or sermon, the gist of which is given in 3:1-7:1'.<sup>40</sup> As such, 2:14 'is a thanksgiving to God for his instance that Paul should come out into the open to proclaim the gospel' and 'for the presence of God made real through the preaching of the Word in every place'.<sup>41</sup> McDonald sees Paul in this passage exalting preaching to the extent that it is 'virtually sacramental, mediating the real presence of God to his children'.<sup>42</sup> However, Bultmann is typical of those who posit a distinction between v.14b as referring to Paul's preaching of the word and v.15 to refer to Paul himself.<sup>43</sup> Similarly, Stegman notes the use of φανερώω here in 2:14 parallels 4:10-11

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 43 suggests that Sirach 24:15 is actually strong evidence for the sacrificial reading. He argues that the phrase ὀσμὴ εὐωδίας was so established as a metonymy for sacrifice that the εὐωδία could be used alone to designate the aroma of an acceptable sacrifice (cf. Sirach 35:5; 38:11). Further, the two terms could actually be used in the same context as synonyms as in Sirach 24:15. Here the stereotyped phrase has been split up but the two terms retain their sacrificial meaning. Hafemann contends that this is precisely what is happening in 2 Corinthians 2:14-16. He suggests that there is no compelling reason to interpret the meaning of these words against any other background than that of the OT sacrificial cult.

<sup>36</sup> See the discussion in Kuschnerus, *Brief Christi*, 121.

<sup>37</sup> So, Jeremiah in preaching against Moab and his unchanging nature makes the charge that 'his odour is not changed' (ὀσμὴ αὐτοῦ οὐκ ἐξέλιπεν [Jer 31:11 LXX]). Ezekiel tells Israel that after the exile Yahweh will accept her 'like a pleasing fragrance' (ἐν ὀσμῇ εὐωδίας προσδέξομαι ὑμᾶς [Ezek 21:41]). In these cases the idea seems to be that something can have the same effect (positive or negative) as a fragrance would (cf. BDAG ὀσμῆ:2).

<sup>38</sup> Kuschnerus, *Brief Christi*, 121.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid. 'der kultische Kontext [wird] nicht aufgehoben, sondern vorausgesetzt'.

<sup>40</sup> James I.H. McDonald, 'Paul and the Preaching Ministry: A Reconsideration of 2 Cor.2:14-17 in its Context' *JSNT* 5 (1983): 48.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.: 48-49.

<sup>43</sup> Bultmann, *Der zweite Brief an die Korinther*, 70. Paul is 'identified' with the word he proclaims, not in the sense of the 'Selbstbewußtsein des Pneumatikers, sondern in der Sache begründet: Gottes Wort ist nicht eine allgemeine Wahrheit, eine Idee, sondern das gesprochene, anredende Wort, das als solches nicht ohne den

where it is used by Paul to describe how the ‘life of Jesus’ is made manifest in Paul’s own body.<sup>44</sup> He argues that by using the metaphor of fragrance in 2:14 Paul wants to indicate that ‘his very existence is somehow revelatory of Christ’.<sup>45</sup>

Hafemann argues, however, that the two images (being led in triumph and being the aroma of Christ) in 2:14-17 that seem to be disparate are tied together by Paul himself: For from start to finish the focus of attention in 2:14ff. is on Paul’s revelatory role as the apostolic slave of Christ, who is being led to death is spreading the knowledge of God by means of the Spirit. For although the two aspects are distinct and ought not to be collapsed into one another, they nevertheless do interpenetrate and confirm each other as the essential hallmarks of the genuine apostolic calling. The apostolic message is embodied in the life of the apostle itself, and in both cases this twofold apostolic activity takes place “in Christ”.<sup>46</sup>

Hafemann is correct to emphasise the need to hold the two aspects together. Nevertheless the flow of Paul’s argument in 2:14-17 puts the *focus* in this section on his preaching. We have seen that his concluding question (καὶ πρὸς ταῦτα τίς ἰκανός; ) in 2:15b is expanded in 2:17 with a discussion of his *preaching* (οὐ [...] καπηλεύοντες τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ [...] ἀλλ’ ὡς ἐκ θεοῦ κατέναντι θεοῦ ἐν Χριστῷ λαλοῦμεν). Distorting (καπηλεύοντες)<sup>47</sup> the word of God would seem to be the easy option. To preach sincerely (ἐξ εὐκρινείας) means that one is part of the eschatological procession of verse 14 – and who is sufficient for that? While Paul’s suffering as an apostle is clearly here in the context, it is his *preaching* ministry that is the *focus* of that suffering. As Paul preaches ‘in Christ’, the aroma of Christ is experienced. His preaching is the point of contact of the epiphanic presence of Christ, the ‘canvas’ on which Christ himself is made manifest.

*Paul, the Aromatic Presence of Christ.* However can we probe even further concerning the exact nature of the relationship presupposed between Christ and apostle in this image? We have seen how appropriate the idea of his ministry being considered as a pleasing aroma to God but what is the significance of the fact that it is an ‘aroma of Christ’? When Paul

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Träger des Wortes existiert. Wie das Wort, so gehört der Apostel selbst in das eschatologische Heilsgeschehen hinein’.

<sup>44</sup> See below.

<sup>45</sup> Stegman, *The Character of Jesus*, 265 (emphasis added). Likewise, Kuschnerus notes that Paul presents himself as Χριστοῦ εὐωδία ‘nicht nur Christus zu verkündigen, sondern die von Christus erfüllte Verkündigung in seiner Existenz selbst zu repräsentieren’.

<sup>46</sup> Hafemann, *Suffering and Ministry in the Spirit*, 46-47.

<sup>47</sup> Or possibly ‘adulterating’ cf. BDAG.

describes himself as Χριστοῦ εὐωδία, most commentators agree that Χριστοῦ is placed first for emphasis.<sup>48</sup> There is less agreement concerning the nature of the genitive. Suggestions include objective (the aroma ‘consists of Christ’);<sup>49</sup> epexegetical (such that it *explains* the nature of the aroma);<sup>50</sup> subjective (Christ is ‘der ursprüngliche Träger des Duftes’)<sup>51</sup> a genitive of origin (the aroma ‘comes from Christ’)<sup>52</sup> or simply possessive (we are ‘Christ’s aroma’ ascending to God).<sup>53</sup> Alternatively the emphasis could lie on the fact that Paul is suggesting that his sufferings are a continuation of Christ’s sufferings and are, therefore ‘a sacrifice with which God is well pleased’.<sup>54</sup> An argument can be made for each of these understandings of the genitive. And so, perhaps rather than thinking in grammatical categories, it is more helpful to consider the relationship between Paul and Christ in the broadest possible way.<sup>55</sup>

As the suffering apostle preaches Christ, he functions as an aroma of Christ. As his message is *heard* and the suffering by which carries his message is *viewed*, then Christ is *manifested* and *known* (v.16) The reaction of those encountering Paul’s preaching is not simply a reaction to Paul as *any human being*, but is a reaction with eschatological consequences (death or life) pointing to the significance of the one that Paul makes manifest. This image combined with the fact that Paul speaks ‘in Christ’ points to the fact that Paul is more than simply a representative or substitute for an absent Christ but that he embodies Christ to such an extent that those who are encountering him are actually encountering a manifestation of Christ with the ensuing eschatological outcome of that encounter. Though Paul has been sent by God (ἐκ θεοῦ), he speaks ‘before God’ (κατέναντι θεοῦ) and ‘in Christ (ἐν Χριστῷ [2:17])’.<sup>56</sup> Where the suffering preaching apostle is encountered, Christ, the one ‘in whom’ he speaks, is made manifest.

Christ is absent and cannot be encountered directly. However in his apostolic existence and especially in his preaching, Paul mediates Christ’s presence. He is not a static image or ‘snapshot’ of Christ but such a ‘powerful place of Christophanic encounter’ that he

<sup>48</sup> E.g. Kuschnerus, *Brief Christi*, 103; Oliveira, *Diakonie der Gerechtigkeit*, 21.

<sup>49</sup> Oliveira, *Diakonie der Gerechtigkeit*, 21: ‘Christus ist Gegenstand des Wohlgeruchs bzw. der apostolischen Verkündigung’. Cf. McDonald, ‘Paul and the Preaching Ministry,’ 42.

<sup>50</sup> Thus in parallel with the earlier expression τὴν ὄσμην τῆς γνώσεως αὐτοῦ Kuschnerus, *Brief Christi*, 103.

<sup>51</sup> Barrett, *Second Corinthians*, 99.

<sup>52</sup> J. Lambrecht, *Second Corinthians* (SP 8, Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2006), 39.

<sup>53</sup> Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 248-249.

<sup>54</sup> Lambrecht, *Second Corinthians*, 39.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Collange, *Enigmes*, 33.

<sup>56</sup> Anticipating 13:5 where Christ speaks in him.



is the very aroma of Christ.<sup>57</sup> The organic image of Paul as an *aroma* is reflected in the dynamic connection between him and Christ - he speaks 'in Christ'. He is not simply a static substitute for an absent Christ but one through whom people encounter the risen Christ - with the consequence of death or life.

### 2.3 The Letter of Christ (2 Cor 3:1-3)

It is not simply the apostle who mediates Christ. In this section his presence is mediated by the Corinthian church who act as an epistle authored by Christ for the world to read. Paul wants to distinguish himself from others who commended themselves and each other by operating with a system of letters of recommendation. Instead, Paul describes the Corinthians themselves as proof of his apostolic credentials.<sup>58</sup> He describes them as 'our letter' (v.2), written not on paper but on his own<sup>59</sup> heart and known and read by everyone (ὕπὸ πάντων ἀνθρώπων).<sup>60</sup> However, Paul immediately qualifies this by stating that the Corinthians are shown (φανερούμενοι)<sup>61</sup> to actually be a letter of Christ (ἐπιστολή Χριστοῦ)<sup>62</sup> that has been 'delivered' by the apostles (διακονηθεῖσα ὑφ' ἡμῶν).<sup>63</sup> The letter is

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<sup>57</sup> Mitchell, 'Epiphanic Evolutions in Earliest Christianity,' 189.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. 1 Corinthians 9:1-2 where Paul describes the church at Corinth as the seal of his apostleship in the Lord. So Thrall, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 1:222.

<sup>59</sup> Here we have an important and difficult textual variant. Did Paul describe the Corinthians as a letter written on 'our' (ἡμῶν) hearts or on 'your' (ὕμῶν) hearts? It is generally agreed that, on external grounds, ἡμῶν is the stronger reading. Cf.  $\text{B}^46$  A B C D (ὕμῶν is read by , 33, 88, 436, 1881, eth). In fact, Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (2nd ed., D-Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994 [1971]), 509 argues that the external support for ἡμῶν is 'overwhelming'. Despite its weaker external support, though, a number of commentators opt for ὕμῶν. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 44 is typical in arguing that though this reading 'is weakly attested', it 'seems required by the context' cf. Bultmann, *Der zweite Brief an die Korinther*, 75: 'sinnvoll ist nur ὕμῶν'. However, Metzger (509) and others are equally insistent that ἡμῶν 'seems to be demanded by the context'! This diversity of opinion regarding the internal evidence suggests that any appeal to Paul's argument in the immediate context is inconclusive and that we probably have to settle for a decision based on the external evidence (so Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 257).

<sup>60</sup> Paul may be flattering the Corinthians here (Lambrecht, *Second Corinthians*, 41), but the importance of the city as a commercial centre makes it understandable that news about them would be widespread (Thrall, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 1:223).

<sup>61</sup> The verb could be middle ('you show that you are') or passive ('you are shown to be'). The difference is not particularly important here.

<sup>62</sup> On this genitive see below.

<sup>63</sup> On this meaning for διακονέω, see BDAG:1. Thrall, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 1:225 has some sympathy with this translation. However, she argues that it could scarcely imply that 'Paul imagines himself as carrying the letter (i.e. the picture of Christian life in Corinth) around with him, to recommend to anyone who will listen. This would be a continuous process, in flat contradiction of the aorist tense of the participle. The aorist indicates a specific past event, and in the circumstances, must refer to the initial creation of the Corinthian church. But this would produce the nonsensical idea that the unconverted Corinthians constituted Christ's letter, delivered to them by Paul and resulting in their acceptance of his credentials and so of his message.' As such, Thrall suggests that 'it might be better, then, to accept the sense "written", and to see the apostle as Christ's amanuensis, the human agent who brought the Corinthian church into being'. Thrall here seems to push too heavily on both the meaning of the aorist (which does not necessarily have to refer to a past event) and the degree which Paul's metaphorical language can be tied to specific aspects of his ministry. There is

written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God (πνεύματι θεοῦ ζῶντος) and not on tablets of stone but on tablets of ‘fleshly hearts’ (ἐν πλαξίν καρδίαις σαρκίνας).

For our purposes the most pressing question is how to understand the phrase in 3:3 ‘you are a letter of Christ’ (ἐστὲ ἐπιστολὴ Χριστοῦ). How are we to understand the relationship between Christ and the Church here? How does the church make Christ present? Is Χριστοῦ an authorial genitive or an objective genitive (Christ is the content of the letter)?<sup>64</sup> Is the Church sent like a letter by Christ into the world, or does the Church display the character of Christ in the world? Until recently most commentators argued for an authorial genitive.<sup>65</sup> As is commonly pointed out, the *content* of the letter is not under question. It is ‘the existence of the letter (as constituting Paul’s credentials), rather than its contents, that is the point at issue’.<sup>66</sup> In particular ‘Paul wants to avoid giving the impression in v.2 that either he or the Corinthians actually authored the letter: the letter was “from Christ”’.<sup>67</sup> However, a number of German scholars have begun to swing opinion towards the objective genitive. That is, Christ is not the author of the letter but its content. That leaves the question of who the actual author of the letter is and here there is variation. Kuschnerus contends that God is the author. In 2:14 God is the subject of the Christ revealing event. Similarly, the OT texts that Paul is alluding to (Jer 38:33; Ezek 11:19;

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thus no reason not to use the eminently possible translation ‘delivered’ and not try to press the imagery too hard (a possibility that Thrall herself allows on page 225).

<sup>64</sup> Although these two suggestions are the most common, there are others. So, H.W. Hollander, ‘A Letter Written on Tablets of Human Hearts’: Ezekiel’s Influence on 2 Corinthians 3:3’ in *The Book of Ezekiel and its Influence* (ed. H.J. de Jonge and J. Tromp; Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 109 argues for a ‘possessive’ genitive – like ἡμῶν in the phrase ἡ ἐπιστολὴ ἡμῶν in 3:2. He argues (108) that Christ would not be the *content* of the letter since ‘letters of recommendation are first of all meant to recommend the persons who are carrying them’. Further, Christ should not be seen as the *author* of Paul’s letter since in the context it is *God* who is responsible for Paul’s task as a missionary (2:14, 17). He argues that the two references to ‘letter’ are slightly different metaphors. Though both refer to the Corinthians, in verse 3, ‘Paul seems to abandon the metaphor of the Corinthian Christians as his letter of recommendation and to go on to describe them as another type of letter, namely “a letter of Christ”. With this new metaphor, Paul wants to indicate that the Corinthian Christians are a Community belonging to Jesus Christ’. K. Scholtissek, “‘Ihr seid ein Brief Christi’” (2 Kor 3,3): Zu einer ekklesiologischen Metapher bei Paulus,’ *BZ* 44.2 (2000): 193 argues that it should be understood as both a subjective and objective genitive. He argues that the Corinthians recommend the Apostle – to whom they owe their very existence, but that he in turn also recommends the one to whom he owes his origin, namely God himself who reveals himself in Jesus Christ. Christ, then can be seen as the one recommended and the author of the letter.

<sup>65</sup> Sometimes this is labelled a subjective genitive but strictly speaking, a subjective genitive qualifies a *verbal* noun – which ἐπιστολή is not. Commentators who argue for the authorial (or subjective) genitive include Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 182; Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, 127; Max Alain Chevallier, *Esprit de Dieu, paroles d’hommes: le rôle de l’esprit dans les Ministères de la parole selon d’apôtre Paul* (Neuchatel: Delachaux & Niestlé, 1966), 102; Ingo Hermann, *Kyrios und Pneuma: Studien zur Christologie der paulinischen Hauptbriefe* (München: Kösel-Verlag, 1961), 22.

<sup>66</sup> Thrall, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 1:224 cf. Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 182. See Thrall, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 1:224 n.249 for a list of others who take the authorial genitive.

<sup>67</sup> Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 263.

Ezek 36:26) all refer to God as the one who writes and who gives the Spirit.<sup>68</sup> In contrast, Rabens argues for the Spirit as the author and the content as Christ since this ‘agrees with ἐγγεγραμμένη [...] πνεύματι θεοῦ ζῶντος and would parallel the concept of transformation “into Christ” in 3:18’.<sup>69</sup> Schröter, on the other hand, suggests that Paul himself should be regarded as the author. He has transformed and inscribed Christ on their hearts by turning them to him.<sup>70</sup>

Perhaps the variety of options suggested above simply reflects the complexity of this passage. Or perhaps it reflects the way that Paul views the different agencies of God, Christ, the Spirit and himself interacting. This ἐπιστολή Χριστοῦ is in some sense delivered (διακονηθεῖσα) by the apostles (ὑφ’ ἡμῶν) and is inscribed by the Spirit of the living God (πνεύματι θεοῦ ζῶντος). This leads to apostolic confidence through Christ (διὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ) to God (πρὸς τὸν θεόν[3:4]) and an affirmation that their qualification to minister in this way comes from God (ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ [3:5]) who has made them ministers of the Spirit. The language of agency permeates this passage. It would seem that this letter involves more than a single author taking a pen and writing. It involves multiple agents – Paul, God, the Spirit and Christ. However, while not denying the involvement of God, the Spirit and Paul himself in the creation of this ‘letter’, it seems most likely that when the Corinthian church is described as an ἐπιστολή Χριστοῦ, that Christ is viewed at this point as the author of the letter. The fact that ἐπιστολή Χριστοῦ occurs so soon after ἐπιστολή ἡμῶν suggests that Paul is clarifying or being more specific – the real author is Christ.<sup>71</sup> Further, given that the Corinthians stand in contrast to the ‘letters of recommendation’ that ‘others’ possess, it would seem to make sense that Paul is actually appealing to Christ as the author of *his* equivalent letter of recommendation.

It may seem that this is an image that merely highlights the *absence* of Christ. After all, one only sends a letter when one is physically separated from the recipient(s). However, we may have an instance here where considering both the presence and absence of Christ is beneficial. In antiquity letters could also be understood as a mode of personal presence.

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<sup>68</sup> Kuschnerus, *Brief Christi*, 163. He also argues that the connection between the Spirit and Christ in 3:17-18 indicates that Christ be understood as the *content*, rather than the author.

<sup>69</sup> Rabens, *The Holy Spirit and Ethics in Paul*, 198. Rabens is here following Frances Back, *Verwandlung durch Offenbarung bei Paulus: eine religionsgeschichtlich-exegetische Untersuchung zu 2 Kor 2,14-4,6* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2002), 131 n.12, 156.

<sup>70</sup> J Schröter, ‘Schriftauslegung und Hermeneutik in 2 Korinther 3: Ein Beitrag zur Frage der Schriftbenutzung des Paulus,’ *NovT* 40 (1998): 249 n.56.

<sup>71</sup> Lambrecht, *Second Corinthians*, 41. In addition, the immediate context favours the authorial genitive. Paul needed to show that he himself did not write the letter since a letter of recommendation had to come from a third party – so Thrall, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 1:242.

Certainly it seems that Paul understood his own letters to function in this way. In his discussion of *apostolic parousia*, Robert Funk argued that Paul regarded his apostolic presence to his congregations ‘under three different but related aspects at once: the aspect of the letter, the apostolic emissary, and his own personal presence’.<sup>72</sup> Though Paul’s presence by letter ‘may be less effective’<sup>73</sup> given that it does not ‘bear the apostolic power to the same degree as Paul’s personal presence’,<sup>74</sup> it is nevertheless an expression of apostolic *parousia* in and of itself. Although details of Funk’s proposal have been criticised,<sup>75</sup> Paul certainly understands a consistency between his letters and his personal presence.<sup>76</sup> Further, in 1 Corinthians 5:3-4, we have a striking example. As he writes to the Corinthians from Ephesus (cf. 16:8), Paul tells his readers that though he is absent in body, he is present in spirit (ἀπὸν τῷ σώματι παρὼν δὲ τῷ πνεύματι) and his spirit is assembled with them (συναχθέντων ὑμῶν καὶ τοῦ ἐμοῦ πνεύματος). It would seem that in writing to the Corinthians Paul understands himself to be present ‘in spirit’ and that his letter is the means of his spiritual presence. However we understand the precise nature of Paul’s spiritual presence in 1 Corinthians 5:3-4,<sup>77</sup> the idea of a letter functioning as a mode of

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<sup>72</sup> Robert W. Funk, ‘The Apostolic *Parousia*: Form and Significance’ in *Christian History and Interpretation: Studies Presented to John Knox* (ed. W.R. Farmer, C.F.D. Moule and R.R. Niebuhr; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964), 249.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 258.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.* 259 n.1 commenting on 2 Corinthians 13:10.

<sup>75</sup> In Margaret M. Mitchell, ‘New Testament Envoys in the Context of Greco-Roman Diplomatic and Epistolary Conventions: The Example of Timothy and Titus,’ *JBL* 111 (1992): 643, Mitchell questions Funk’s idea of a hierarchy of apostolic presence which privileges his own personal presence over that of the envoy. She argues that Paul evaluated each case and decided which form of his presence would be most effective. She further suggests, especially in the case where there has been a rift with a church, Paul ‘sent envoys not as mere substitutes for himself but also with the understanding that they could perform special functions that he himself could not perform even if present’. Cf. L. A. Johnson, ‘Paul’s Epistolary Presence in Corinth: A New Look at Robert W. Funk’s Apostolic Parousia,’ *CBQ* 68.3 (2006): 481-501.

<sup>76</sup> See particularly 2 Corinthians 10-13 and the discussion in section 3.2 below.

<sup>77</sup> Some argue that it is simply an expression of his authority [e.g. Michael J. Gorman, *Apostle of the Crucified Lord: A Theological Introduction to Paul and his Letters* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 74] or his personality (e.g. Barrett, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 124). Others have understood this verse in a more metaphysical sense. According to this interpretation it is argued that Paul understood the human spirit to not be bound in the same way as the human body. A parallel is sometimes made with 2 Corinthians 12:2 where Paul describes being transported to the third heaven (‘whether in the body or not’). Thus, we should not see it as strange that his spirit should be transported to Corinth. So, for example Richard B. Hays, *First Corinthians* (Int, Louisville: Knox, 1997), 84; H.L. Goudge, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (WC, London: Methuen, 1903), 37. Such ideas of ‘super-natural transportations’ form a recognizable strand in Jewish tradition - see the discussion in Laura L. Brenneman, ‘Corporate Discipline and the People of God: A Study of 1 Corinthians 5:3-5’ (PhD Diss, University of Durham, 2005), 99-102. She notes that as far back as Origen, comparisons have been drawn with Elisha in 2 Kings 5:26. Here Elisha’s spirit is able to travel and observe Gehazi’s dealings with Naaman. Origen argued that if this was possible for a prophet, how much more for an apostle. In fact the conceptual agreement between these passages may indicate a deeper connection, namely that Paul saw himself as acting in line with the prophets. More recently, Troels Engberg-Pedersen has argued that Paul ‘saw his letter writing as a bodily practice through which the pneuma might (once more) be transmitted to his addressees’ (Engberg-Pedersen, *Cosmology and Self*, 207).

personal presence seems to be relatively common in antiquity.<sup>78</sup> Thus Paul's description of the Corinthian church as an ἐπιστολή Χριστοῦ should be understood as the Church functioning as a mode of Christ's epiphanic presence in the world. As any letter can effectively communicate the authority and the character of a person so that their voice is *heard* though they themselves are absent, so Christ is here revealed and made manifest through the Corinthian church.<sup>79</sup> The Corinthian church communicates and displays the risen Christ to the world – with the result that Paul himself is vindicated. Though we have categorised this as a mode of Christ's *epiphanic* presence, as we have noted, it also highlights that the one who is being made present is also an active agent. We see this more fully developed in the next section, but it is important to note in passing that even here where the dominant note is of Christ being *made* present, his agency is not entirely suppressed. To anticipate our conclusion to section 3, the Christ who is present through different media (Paul; the Corinthians; the Spirit) is not an inert *object* to be presented to the senses but remains an active agent.

#### 2.4 The Spirit of the Lord (2 Cor 3:4-17)

We have been arguing that the absence of Christ necessitates that the epiphanic presence of Christ be understood as a mediated presence. So far we have seen how Paul mediates Christ as his 'aroma' (2 Cor 2:14-17) and the Corinthian church mediate Christ as his 'letter' (3:3). This next section brings the role of the Spirit into focus both in relation to Paul's own ministry and to Christ himself. With this move we will see that there is a depth to the mediation of Christ's epiphanic presence that highlights its dynamic nature, so that Christ is not merely presented as an idea to be accepted or rejected. His Spirit-carried epiphanic presence has a dynamic, transformative character that goes beyond the mere communication of an 'idea'.

In 3:6 Paul describes himself as a minister καινῆς διαθήκης, οὐ γράμματος ἀλλὰ πνεύματος since τὸ γράμμα kills and τὸ πνεῦμα makes alive. This long-debated

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<sup>78</sup> See the examples listed in Hans-Josef Klauck, *Ancient Letters and the New Testament: a Guide to Context and Exegesis* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2006), 192-193. Gustav Karlsson has suggested that the Pauline phrase 'absent in body, present in spirit' in 1 Corinthians 5:3 (cf. Col 2:5) was understood by Christians through to the middle-ages *in combination* with this ancient epistolary tradition in a technical sense to refer to the presence of the letter-writer through their letter [Gustav Karlsson, 'Formelhaftes in Paulusbrieffen?,' *Eranos* 54 (1956): 141]. So, for example, Cyril of Alexandria in his EP.20 at one point states: 'Ἐπειδὴ δὴ ἦν ἀναγκαῖον ἀπόντας τῷ σώματι, παρόντας δὲ τῷ πνεύματι περιπτύξασθαι [...] διὰ τοῦ γράμματος [...] δεῖν ὡθήθην ἐπιστέλλειν' [ACO 1.1.1, p.116, l.11]. Here it is understood that the very process of letter-writing makes the sender present.

<sup>79</sup> Given that the letter is here authored by Christ, we could classify this as an example of his *dynamic* presence. However, the emphasis here is not so much on his ongoing relationship to the church, but rather on the church as the manifestation of his authority and person.

differentiation is worked out in the following argument which climaxes in 3:17 with Paul stating that the Lord is the Spirit (ὁ δὲ κύριος τὸ πνεῦμά ἐστιν). If we understand Paul here to *identify* Christ and the Spirit then one consequence is that Christ's presence is not, in fact, a *mediated* presence but an *unqualified* presence. If Christ is identical to the Spirit without remainder then he would simply be present wherever the Spirit was present.

We need, then, to explore the relationship between Christ and the Spirit to grasp the latter's role in mediating Christ. In his important monograph, *Kyrios und Pneuma*, Ingo Hermann isolates 2 Corinthians 3:17 as of central importance for understanding the relationship between Christ and the Spirit in Paul. Margaret Thrall provides a clear, recent summary of the main positions on 3:17. The three main groups differ on the meaning of the κύριος who is identified with the Spirit: simply 'God' (considered abstractly); Christ or 'the Lord' of 3:16. The first option is unlikely<sup>80</sup> and we will return to the third option when we consider the passage in more detail.<sup>81</sup> For our purposes, though, the second option is the most interesting – is Paul making an identification between Christ and the Spirit, and if so what is the nature of this identity? If κύριος does refer to 'Christ' in 3:17 then, Thrall argues, there are four main ways of understanding the relationship between Christ and the Spirit. The first two are fairly unlikely – namely that 'Christ is the inward spiritual meaning of the Old Testament'<sup>82</sup> or 'Christ is spirit'.<sup>83</sup> That leaves the idea that Paul is somehow identifying Christ with the Holy Spirit either in an absolute sense or in a functional sense (a 'dynamic' identity). We will consider both these positions in turn.

*An Absolute Identity between Christ and Spirit.* Commenting on 2 Corinthians 3:17 and verses where Paul switches between 'in Christ' and 'in [the] Spirit' (e.g. Rom 8:9-11), Adolf Deissmann notes the 'Hellenistisch-mystische Stimmung des Christuserlebnisses' that 'der lebendige Christus ist das Pneuma'.<sup>84</sup> As Spirit, Christ is 'nicht fern über Wolken und Sternen, sondern er ist gegenwärtig auf der armen Erde' where he 'wohnt und waltet in den

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<sup>80</sup> Thrall, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 1:279. If τὸ πνεῦμά is the subject and ὁ κύριος the predicate this would mean 'the Spirit is God.' As Thrall notes given that both nouns have the article, this inversion of the word order is extremely unlikely). If ὁ κύριος is the subject: 'God is Spirit'. As Thrall notes, the definite article before πνεῦμά rules this out.

<sup>81</sup> Thrall (Ibid., 1:281) argues that this option is the most likely, namely that 'Paul is not concerned with dogmatic definition, but is simply interpreting his Exodus text in terms of the salvific events of his own day'.

<sup>82</sup> As Thrall (Ibid., 1:79) notes, on this understanding 'the word πνεῦμά is determined by the letter-spirit antithesis of 3:6, which relates to the opposition between exterior sign and inward reality'. See Hermann, *Kyrios und Pneuma*, 47 for a rejection of this view.

<sup>83</sup> As with the interpretation 'God is Spirit', the definite article before πνεῦμά rules this out.

<sup>84</sup> Deissmann, *Paulus: eine kultur- und religionsgeschichtliche Skizze*, 85 (emphasis added). Cf. Bousset, *Kyrios Christos: Geschichte des Christusglaubens von den Anfängen des Christentums bis Irenaeus*, 145.

Seinen'.<sup>85</sup> This type of absolute identification is also present in forms of 'Spirit-Christology'. For instance, Berkhof argues that for Paul 'Christ and the Spirit are identical and that the Spirit is Christ in action' and thus 'we go far beyond the traditional connection between Christ and the Spirit'.<sup>86</sup> He notes that 'traditional theology' avoids the word 'identity' to express the relationship between the Spirit and the exalted Lord and speaks instead of 'an identity in functions'. Berkhof, however, argues that this position is 'untenable'.<sup>87</sup>

However, another proponent of Spirit-Christology, Lampe, actually argues that Paul was inconsistent precisely because he does *not* identify Christ and Spirit. He argues that Paul was inhibited 'from completing [his] partial identification of Christ with Spirit by [his] concept of the pre-existence [...] of the actual person Jesus Christ'.<sup>88</sup> He argues that, in contrast, Christian *experience* does not correspond with the idea of the Spirit simply mediating Christ's presence. Rather, 'when we speak of the "presence of Christ" and the "indwelling of the Spirit" we are speaking of one and the same experience of God'.<sup>89</sup> As soon as one regards the Spirit as distinct from Christ (as Lampe argues that Paul does), the Spirit 'then has to be regarded as a second and subsidiary manifestation of God's outreach towards man'.<sup>90</sup> Lampe argues that 'this reduction of the Spirit to a second, and very ill-defined, place in God's outreach towards the world could have been avoided if the term "Spirit" had been allowed to express the totality of God in his creativity'.<sup>91</sup> Lampe argues however that Paul did not make this absolute identification because he wanted to affirm 'the personal pre-existence of Jesus Christ as Son of God, the continuing personal "post-existence" of Jesus Christ, resurrected and ascended and also experienced by present believers, and the future return of the ascended Christ in glory'.<sup>92</sup>

So, both Lampe and Berkhof reject the idea of the Spirit simply mediating Christ's presence. Berkhof argues that the Spirit *is* Christ in action. Hence, to experience the Spirit is to experience Christ. Lampe wishes that Paul had been less restrained and, in fact, been more consistent in his understanding of Christian experience. Both Lampe and Berkhof then essentially reject the notion of an absent Christ being only present in a mediated way.

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<sup>85</sup> Deissmann, *Paulus: eine kultur- und religionsgeschichtliche Skizze*, 85.

<sup>86</sup> Hendrikus Berkhof, *The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1977), 25 emphasis added.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 28. Nevertheless, and perhaps somewhat inconsistently, he pulls back from the idea that 'the Spirit is another name for the exalted Christ' because 'the risen Lord transcends his own functioning as life-giving Spirit'.

<sup>88</sup> G. W. H. Lampe, *God as Spirit* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 117.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 118.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 119.

*A Dynamic Identity between Christ and Spirit.* Hamilton is typical of those who argue for a dynamic or functional identity between Christ and the Spirit. He argues that in 2 Corinthians 3:17 Paul ‘equate[s] the source of the benefits with the agent of their distribution’.<sup>93</sup> That is, ‘the Spirit so effectively performs His office of communicating to men the benefits of the risen Christ that for all intents and purposes of faith the Lord Himself is present bestowing grace on His own’.<sup>94</sup> The Spirit actually ‘brings the ascended Lord to earth again’ and ‘bridges the gap between transcendence and immanence’.<sup>95</sup> Hamilton uses the analogy of an actor playing a role so well that he seems to become the person he is portraying. It is ‘*in just this sense* that the Lord is the Spirit’.<sup>96</sup> The Spirit ‘portrays the Lord so well that we lose sight of the Spirit and are conscious of the Lord only’.<sup>97</sup>

For Hermann, this dynamic understanding flows from his understanding of the Spirit, namely that the expression *Pneuma* ‘ist nicht eine statische, aus sich selbst heraus erklärbare Größe, sondern drückt dynamisch die Präsenz und Wirklichkeit des erhöhten Herrn in seiner Kirche aus’.<sup>98</sup> It is the question of the *experience* of the Spirit that is key.<sup>99</sup> As such, the expression ‘the Lord is the Spirit’ is ‘eine existentielle Aussage’ in that it concerns ‘das Verhältnis von Kyrios und Pneuma nicht in der Art einer spekulativen Wesensschau, sondern gibt eine Erfahrung wieder: für mich, auf mich hin ist der Herr das Pneuma, er stellt sich für mich als Pneuma dar’.<sup>100</sup>

What we have then is a spectrum ranging from Christ *identified* as the Spirit or *experienced* as the Spirit.<sup>101</sup> In both cases the notion of mediation is to a greater or lesser

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<sup>93</sup> N.Q. Hamilton, *The Holy Spirit and Eschatology in Paul* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1957), 6.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.* Emphasis added.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>98</sup> Hermann, *Kyrios und Pneuma*, 51.

<sup>99</sup> Cf. James D. G. Dunn, ‘2 Corinthians 3:17: the Lord is the Spirit,’ *JTS* 21.2 (1970): 319 ‘The Spirit for Paul was above all a reality of experience’.

<sup>100</sup> Hermann, *Kyrios und Pneuma*, 50. A number of other commentators argue for a similar dynamic understanding of the relationship between Christ and the Spirit. So, Schweizer argues that insofar as ‘Christus in seiner Bedeutung für die Gemeinde, in seinem kraftvollen Handeln an ihr gesehen wird, kann er mit dem πνεῦμα identifiziert werden; insofern als er auch Herr über seine Kraft ist, kann er von ihr unterschieden werden, wie man das Ich immer auch unterschieden kann von der Kraft, die von ihm ausgeht’ [E. Schweizer, ‘πνεῦμα’ in *TWNT* 6 (1959), 416]. Similarly, for Barrett, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 123 it is ‘in the realm of action rather than of person that the terms *Lord* and *Spirit* are identified’.

<sup>101</sup> However, Fatehi argues that we should not think of a hard and fast distinction between these two ideas of identity. In Mehrdad Fatehi, *The Spirit’s Relation to the Risen Lord in Paul: An Examination of its Christological Implications* (WUNT 2.128, Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2000), 305 he essentially argues for a dynamic identity that includes an ontological aspect. Crucially he notes that ‘one should not speak merely of the Spirit playing



extent elided. Even with a dynamic understanding of the relationship between Christ and the Spirit, the question of the *distinction* between Christ and Spirit and hence any ‘reserve’ in the believer’s experience is effectively eroded. The epiphanic presence of Christ would actually be a direct encounter with Christ in his risen corporeity. We will return to some of these broader questions concerning the relationship of Christ and the Spirit in the next chapter, but in this section we will consider 2 Corinthians 3:17 in more detail and the crucial issue of whether κύριος here actually does refer to Christ.

*Identifying the Lord of 2 Corinthians 3:17.* Part of Paul’s aim in chapter 3 Paul is to establish the effectiveness of his ministry – an effectiveness that rests not on the ‘letter’ (3:6) but on the work of the Spirit. In contrast to Moses who would keep himself veiled to prevent the Israelites seeing that the glory of his face was fading,<sup>102</sup> Paul and the apostles are ‘very open’ (3:12). Paul then plays on the motif of the veil by using it both as a reference to the physical object that covered Moses’ face and as a spiritual covering that remains over hearts when the old covenant is read (3:14-15). Only in Christ is this spiritual veil taken away (3:14). Verses 14b-16 contain two thematically parallel pairs that follow the basic pattern of:<sup>103</sup>

- A Statement about covering by veil remaining to this day (14b)  
ἄχρι γὰρ τῆς σήμερον ἡμέρας τὸ αὐτὸ κάλυμμα ἐπὶ τῇ ἀναγνώσει τῆς παλαιᾶς διαθήκης μένει
- B Statement about veil being removed ‘in Christ’ (v.14c)  
μὴ ἀνακαλυπτόμενον ὅτι ἐν Χριστῷ καταργεῖται
- A’ Statement about covering by veil remaining to this day (v.15)  
ἀλλ’ ἕως σήμερον ἡνίκα ἂν ἀναγινώσκηται Μωϋσῆς, κάλυμμα ἐπὶ τὴν καρδίαν αὐτῶν κεῖται
- B’ Statement about veil being removed upon ‘turning to the Lord’ (v.16)  
ἡνίκα δὲ ἐὰν ἐπιστρέψῃ πρὸς κύριον, περιαιρεῖται τὸ κάλυμμα

It would seem, on first glance that ‘turning to the Lord’ (B’: v.16) parallels ‘in Christ’ (B: v.14c) thus implying that Christ is the Lord who is then identified as the Spirit in verse 17.

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the role of Christ, or of the Spirit only representing Christ’. Without reducing Christ to the Spirit we should see the risen Lord as actually himself ‘present and active through the Spirit which is hardly imaginable without there being some ontic or ontological connection between the two’.

<sup>102</sup> F. Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith* (London: T&T Clark International, 2004), 293.

<sup>103</sup> For more detail on the parallelism see W.C. van Unnik, “‘With Unveiled Face’”, an Exegesis of 2 Corinthians iii 12-18,’ *NT 6* (1963): 163.

However, the picture is more complicated when we examine verse 16 in more detail. It has been argued that in this verse Paul is specifically drawing on<sup>104</sup> Exodus 34:34. If we observe the two texts next to each other we can see both the similarities and the differences:

<b>Exodus 34:34 LXX</b>	<b>2 Corinthians 3:16</b>
ἦνίκα δ' ἄν	ἦνίκα δὲ ἐάν
εἰσεπορεύετο	ἐπιστρέψῃ
Μωυσῆς	
ἔναντι κυρίου	πρὸς κύριον
λαλεῖν αὐτῷ	
περιηρεῖτο τὸ κάλυμμα	περιαιρεῖται τὸ κάλυμμα

Three differences are especially notable:<sup>105</sup> the change in verb (and tense) from 'entering' (εἰσεπορεύετο - imperfect) to 'turning' (ἐπιστρέψῃ - aorist); the omission of Moses as the subject and the change from the imperfect middle (περιηρεῖτο) to the present middle (περιαιρεῖται).<sup>106</sup> However, as Belleville notes, the similarities must not be overlooked: ἦνίκα δὲ ἐάν is found only here in the NT; the verb περιαιρέω is found only here in Paul; the phrase περιαιρεῖν τὸ κάλυμμα is unique to 2 Corinthians 3:16 and Exodus 34:34 and the syntax of the two verses is identical.<sup>107</sup>

On the basis of these differences and similarities commentators have displayed a range of opinion concerning the relationship between the two texts. From Hermann who argues that 3:16 is simply 'ein freies Spiel mit einer bekannten Vorstellung aus dem Alten Testament'<sup>108</sup> to Horn who admits that while it is not a citation argues that it is 'eine spezifische Verwendung des alttestamentlichen Textes'<sup>109</sup> to Hafemann who argues that it is 'the most explicit reference to Exod. 32-34 in our passage'.<sup>110</sup> The similarities surely do

<sup>104</sup> To keep the exact nature of the relationship vague at this point.

<sup>105</sup> Linda L. Belleville, *Reflections of Glory: Paul's Polemical use of the Moses-Doxa Tradition in 2 Corinthians 3. 1-18* (JSNTSup 52, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1991), 251 argues that the other differences are minimal. The change from ἄν to ἐάν may reflect a different underlying Greek text or simply a stylistic variation. Even Emily Wong, 'The Lord is the Spirit (2 Cor 3:17a),' *ETL* 61.1 (1985): 52 who suggests that Paul may be introducing an idea of conditionality not present in the original concedes 'taken by themselves, strictly speaking, there is no distinction'. The change in preposition (πρός) is required by Paul's choice of verb.

<sup>106</sup> Or possibly passive e.g. Hermann, *Kyrios und Pneuma*, 38; Wong, 'The Lord is the Spirit (2 Cor 3:17a),' 49.

<sup>107</sup> Thrall, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 1:268 n.547: 'A temporal clause introduced by ἦνίκα is followed by a main clause in which the essential point, removal of the veil, is expressed in virtually the same words (the verb περιαιρέω and τὸ κάλυμμα); in each case in the subordinate clause there is reference to encounter with (the) κύριος'.

<sup>108</sup> Hermann, *Kyrios und Pneuma*, 38 cf. Wong, 'The Lord is the Spirit (2 Cor 3:17a),' 67: 'a Pauline creation'.

<sup>109</sup> Friedrich Wilhelm Horn, 'Kyrios und Pneuma bei Paulus' in *Paulinische Christologie: Exegetische Beiträge, Hans Hübner zum 70. Geburtstag* (ed. Udo Schnelle; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000), 67.

<sup>110</sup> Scott J. Hafemann, *Paul, Moses, and the History of Israel: The Letter/Spirit Contrast and the Argument from Scripture in 2 Corinthians 3* (WUNT 81, Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1995), 387, cited in Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of*

point to *some* kind of relationship, but how do we account for the differences? Has Paul changed the specific reference to Moses entering the tabernacle and removing the veil to a general statement to the effect that ‘anyone who turns to the Lord has the veil removed’.<sup>111</sup>

Paul may simply be providing his own translation of Exodus 34:34 and referring directly to Moses’ entry into the presence of Yahweh.<sup>112</sup> However, most commentators argue that Paul has deliberately changed a verb that basically refers to physical movement (εἰσπορεύομαι) to one that refers to turning, often with reference to conversion (ἐπιστρέφω).<sup>113</sup> The change in tense also most likely suggests that Paul is broadening the reference with the aorist subjunctive ἐπιστρέψῃ functioning in a future sense. This ‘broadening’ may similarly account for the change from περιηρεῖτο to περιαιρεῖται.<sup>114</sup>

Perhaps more significant, though, is the omission of the subject. The loss of Moses from the text suggests to some that Paul is ‘cutting the sentence loose from its immediate narrative moorings’.<sup>115</sup> However, equally it is worth noting that Paul does not simply add a generic ‘whoever’ (τίς). The text simply reads ‘whenever *he* turns to the Lord, he removes the veil’, suggesting a clear if not explicit reference to Moses.<sup>116</sup> In consequence the changes which Paul has introduced while admittedly pointing to a broader application of the text do not, in fact, cut it loose from the original Exodus text altogether. Thus the statement ὁ δὲ κύριος τὸ πνεῦμά ἐστιν is an *interpretative* and hence *pneumatological* statement rather than a *christological* one. Paul is identifying the Lord in the text as the Spirit, not making an assertion about Christ.

It is often pointed out that when citing the LXX Paul κύριος nearly always refers to Christ.<sup>117</sup> However, Paul is not *simply* bringing the OT text into the present. The actors in

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*Faith*, 297 n.47. Watson himself argues that that the syntax and the scriptural background ‘make the reference to Moses unambiguously clear’.

<sup>111</sup> Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 202 who assumes the verb is passive.

<sup>112</sup> See Wong, ‘The Lord is the Spirit (2 Cor 3:17a),’ 56 n.27 for a list of commentators who take this position.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*: 58; Belleville, *Reflections of Glory*, 252-253 suggests that Paul has changed the verb because he is influenced by the frequency of OT language which speaks of turning to the Lord as ‘the appropriate response within a covenant relationship’.

<sup>114</sup> The change from περιηρεῖτο (imperfect) to περιαιρεῖται (present) may serve to highlight the action by heightening its proximity. Although περιαιρεῖται (like περιηρεῖτο) could be middle, it could also be a passive. Perhaps this ambiguity suits Paul’s purpose of the text working on both levels (Moses removing the veil; the veil being removed cf. v.14).

<sup>115</sup> Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, 147.

<sup>116</sup> Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith*, 297.

<sup>117</sup> See Gordon D. Fee, *Pauline Christology: an Exegetical-Theological Study* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2007), 636-638 for a list of possible exceptions.

the original scene as Paul alludes to it remain Moses and Yahweh.<sup>118</sup> Hays has aptly summarised the difficulty that interpreters have with this passage, namely that

its central figure, Moses, bears within himself metaphorical tensions that resist reduction into a one-for-one allegorical scheme [...] Moses pre-figures Christian experience, but he is not a Christian. He is both the paradigm for the Christian's direct experience of the Spirit and the symbol for the old covenant to which that experience is set in antithesis.<sup>119</sup>

Paul is emphasising that the Spirit is the divine agent whom *we* experience in the present just as Moses encountered Yahweh in the past.<sup>120</sup> Paul is essentially arguing that 'within the sanctuary, which is the dwelling place of the Lord who is the Spirit, the unveiled Moses signifies the reality of Christian worship'.<sup>121</sup> Thus, the text resists a simplistic κύριος = Christ identification. Paul's use of κύριος already has a degree of flexibility in that as much as he applies it to Christ in the present, he also knows that it refers to Yahweh in the Old Testament. Here he brings the Spirit into that same relationship. The Spirit too is 'Lord'. When someone turns to 'the Lord' whether Moses turning to Yahweh, or a Gentile turning to Christ, it is the *Spirit* who is Lord at work.<sup>122</sup>

Paul, then, does not *identify* (either dynamically or ontologically) Christ and the Spirit. What this passage does highlight, though, is the *agency* of the Spirit. The Spirit is key to the removal of the veil (v.16) and *where* the Spirit operates, there is freedom (v.17).<sup>123</sup> As such, though there is no *direct* identity made between Christ and the Spirit, in their impact on the believer they are inextricably linked. The Spirit who brings freedom is the Spirit of

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<sup>118</sup> The idea that Paul is alluding to the Lord as the pre-existent Christ (e.g. Thrall, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 1:272) seems unlikely – otherwise Paul would surely have specifically identified the Lord as Christ in verse 17 rather than the Spirit.

<sup>119</sup> Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, 144.

<sup>120</sup> Thrall, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 1:281.

<sup>121</sup> Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith*, 297.

<sup>122</sup> This is the position essentially argued by Fee when he suggests that 'the Lord in the text is understood analogically as referring to the Spirit [...] not because this is the proper identification of the Lord in the Exodus text, but because in this argument that is the proper way to understand what happens to those who, as Moses, now "turn to the Lord"' [Gordon D. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence: the Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 311-312]. However, Fee changes this view in his later *Pauline Christology* where he argues that Lord should be understood as Christ (Fee, *Pauline Christology*, 179). He notes the overwhelmingly consistent application of OT κύριος language to Christ. However, as Dunn, '2 Corinthians 3:17,' 317-318 notes, context is the most important factor in this discussion and the ambiguity we have noted between the OT text and Paul's application argues against a simple identification in verse 16 between κύριος and Christ.

<sup>123</sup> Thrall, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 1:273 surveys three options for the referent to freedom here. Freedom is a reference to the παρρησία of verse 12; it is a reference to freedom from slavery to the law of Moses and the destiny of sin and death which goes with it; or freedom is primarily the positive state that believers find themselves in as sons of God with the prospect of glory ahead (cf. Rom 8:21). Thrall settles for this third option.

*the Lord* (τὸ πνεῦμα κυρίου [v.17]). This complex switching in the referent of ‘the Lord’ points to an underlying complexity in the relationship between Christ and the Spirit. The qualification ‘Lord’ here is used in differentiation from the Spirit. Presumably as we move away from the Exodus text, it seems reasonable to understand κύριος to refer, as it usually does in Paul, to Christ. Thus while the Spirit and Christ *share* the divine status of ‘Lord’, they can be distinguished at the personal<sup>124</sup> level so that the Spirit can be identified as the ‘Spirit of the Lord’. Though this relationship is complex it does point to the Spirit’s suitability in mediating Christ. The depth of their relationship – *approaching* identity without being collapsed into one another – suggests that the mediation of Christ’s presence by the Spirit is of a different order than the mediation even by his apostle.<sup>125</sup>

As the Spirit is encountered, so too is Christ.<sup>126</sup> We will wait to chapter 4 to explore more fully the nature of this relationship but in the next verse Paul further coordinates this active presence of the Spirit and as he does so focuses on the role of the Spirit as mediator of the epiphanic presence of Christ.

## 2.5 The Glory of Christ (2 Cor 3:18)

2 Corinthians 3:18 is a crucial verse with respect to the epiphanic presence of Christ. Here Paul widens the scope of what the Spirit of the Lord does - nothing less than the glorious transformation believers into the same image of Christ (τὴν αὐτὴν εἰκόνα).<sup>127</sup> This transformation occurs as all believers (ἡμεῖς δὲ πάντες) with unveiled face (ἀνακεκαλυμμένω προσώπῳ)<sup>128</sup> are enabled to ‘see’<sup>129</sup> the glory of Christ (τὴν δόξαν

<sup>124</sup> I return to this controversial term in the next chapter. I use it here in anticipation of my conclusion there.

<sup>125</sup> This is something that we will see repeated in 3:18 with the equally difficult construction ἀπὸ κυρίου πνεύματος.

<sup>126</sup> One element in Paul’s argument that it is easy to skip over is verse 17b. Here Paul states that it is *where* the Spirit is that there is freedom (οὗ δὲ τὸ πνεῦμα κυρίου, ἐλευθερία 3:17b). Paul is widening the concept of divine presence but not in an unrestricted way. The divine presence where the veil can be removed is not restricted to the tent of meeting but to wherever the Spirit of the Lord is found. Nigel Turner, *Grammatical Insights into the New Testament* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1965), 128, however, argues that the text should be read οὐ (‘not’) and the sentence understood to mean ‘The Spirit is not independence of (freedom from) the Lord’. But as Barrett, *Second Corinthians*, 124 points out Paul expresses ‘freedom from’ not with the genitive but with a preposition (ἀπὸ, Rom 6:18; 22; 8:3; 8:2, 21; ἐκ, 1 Cor 9.19).

<sup>127</sup> This εἰκὼν language points, as we have seen in chapter 2, to the ongoing humanity of the exalted Christ.

<sup>128</sup> The singular is distributive (Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 313). In describing believers with unveiled faces (ἀνακεκαλυμμένω προσώπῳ) is Paul contrasting them with the Israelites (Cf. [Windisch, *Der zweite Korintherbrief*, 127]) or with Moses (Thrall, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 1:283)? Certainly the description of a visual encounter with the glory of the Lord points to similarity with Moses. However, the fact that it is their hearts rather than faces which are unveiled suggests the parallel is being drawn with Israel. As such, perhaps the two veils are ‘mutually implicative’ and what is ‘being underscored is the abolition of all veiling in the glorious light of the new covenant’ (Heath, ‘Metamorphosis of the Beholder’, 158-159).

<sup>129</sup> To give κατοπτριζόμενοι a broad sense at this stage.

κυρίου).<sup>130</sup> Here the exalted Christ is made manifest in his glory. The believer is able to gaze on the risen and exalted Christ. Naturally, this verse raises questions. Two in particular press themselves forward from this verse. First, what is the exact visual nuance and meaning of the verb κατοπτρίζω; and second, exactly what experience does Paul have in view –how does this experience of ‘seeing’ the glory of the Lord occur?

Generally κατοπτρίζω is either understood as ‘seeing’ or ‘reflecting’.<sup>131</sup> The extant usage of the word would suggest the former. In the active form, the meaning ‘reflect’ is possible (though rare), but in the middle form (as here) this meaning of the word is nowhere attested.<sup>132</sup> Further, the idea of ‘transformation through vision’ is a widespread concept in Hellenism, Judaism and Christianity – unlike the idea of ‘transformation through reflecting’.<sup>133</sup>

On balance, then, we should understand *some kind of* ‘seeing’. However, does Paul intend a ‘visionary’ experience or a more ‘mental’ beholding? Part of the answer to that question lies in understanding how the ‘mirror’ aspect of κατοπτρίζω contributes to its meaning here. The rareness of the word prior to Paul suggests that the word should be understood to retain something of its original ‘mirror’ motif.<sup>134</sup> But what exactly does this motif contribute to the meaning of the word? It might be that Paul employs the word because he has a particular ‘mirror’ in mind e.g. the gospel,<sup>135</sup> Christ himself<sup>136</sup> or believers.<sup>137</sup> The gospel as mirror would imply a ‘mental’ beholding; Christ as the mirror would suggest some kind of visionary experience while viewing other believers would

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<sup>130</sup> Commentators debate whether ‘the Lord’ here refers to God (Thrall, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 1:283) or Christ [Karl Prümm, *Diakonia Pneumatos: der zweite Korintherbrief als Zugang zur apostolischen Botschaft: Auslegung und Theologie* (2 vols., Rome: Herder, 1960), 1:170]. The fact that in 4:6 Paul seems to qualify the glory as being the glory ‘of God’ seen ‘in the face of Jesus Christ’ suggests that τὴν δόξαν κυρίου in 3:18 refers to God. However, in 4:4 Paul speaks of unbelievers being blinded from seeing ‘light of the gospel of the glory of Christ’ who is the εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ. He then goes on in 4:6 to describe the believer being able to see the glory of God ἐν προσώπῳ Χριστοῦ. Accordingly, any distinction between the glory of God and the glory of Christ cannot be pressed, but crucially the *object* of vision in both 4:4 and 4:6 is Christ. As he is seen as the εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ (4:4) or his face is seen (4:6), God is revealed. This suggests that ‘the Lord’ in 3:18 whom believers see is the exalted Christ.

<sup>131</sup> van Unnik, “‘With Unveiled Face’”, an Exegesis of 2 Corinthians iii 12-18,’ suggests that the context suggests that reflecting is in view i.e. the outward appearance of Christians change so that they now reflect the glory of God.

<sup>132</sup> Bultmann, *Der zweite Brief an die Korinther*, 93; Rainer Schwindt, *Gesichte der Herrlichkeit: eine exegetisch-traditionsgeschichtliche Studie zur paulinischen und johanneischen Christologie* (Freiburg: Herder, 2007), 224. Cf. BDAG: κατοπτρίζω. This verb is a *hapax* in both the NT and LXX.

<sup>133</sup> See Heath, ‘Metamorphosis of the Beholder’, 160-161.

<sup>134</sup> See the references and discussion in J. Lambrecht, ‘Transformation in 2 Cor 3,18,’ *Bib* 64 (1983): 248-249.

<sup>135</sup> Cf. Back, *Verwandlung durch Offenbarung*, 135-136 who notes the parallel between 3:18 and 4:4.

<sup>136</sup> Thrall, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 1:384. Hafemann, *Paul, Moses, and the History of Israel*, 419 understands the mirror to be Christ but suggests that more than cognitive revelation is in view: ‘2 Cor 3:18 is an expression of real participation in the presence of God mediated through the Spirit’.

<sup>137</sup> Duff, ‘Transformed “from Glory to Glory”’, 773-774.

involve natural sight. It may be, though, that rather than a particular mirror, Paul primarily employs the word to preserve a notion of mediation<sup>138</sup> and hence ‘eschatological reserve’<sup>139</sup> in this vision of the glory of Christ. Accordingly, perhaps the best understanding of the word is that of Rabens who suggests that we understand κατοπτρίζω here as ‘contemplation’ - an idea which encompasses *both* visual and mental beholding.<sup>140</sup> Not only does this idea have parallels in Jewish literature,<sup>141</sup> but for Rabens it ‘is a welcome *via media*’ between the dominant interpretations of the word. Following Hafemann and others, Rabens thus suggests that ‘beholding the glory of the Lord’ takes place ‘*for one thing*, through the existential confrontation that is brought about by the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ’.<sup>142</sup>

Believers then do not gaze *directly* on the exalted Christ, but through the mediation of the gospel, they can truly behold the glory of the Lord. The idea that κατοπτρίζω here refers to an epiphanic encounter with the exalted Christ mediated by the gospel is strengthened as we note the thematic parallels with chapter 4:1-6:

- |         |  |
|---------|--|
| 3:13-15 | <b>A</b> Moses’ face is veiled   |
|         | <b>B</b> Israel’s minds are hardened and their hearts are veiled   |
| 3:16-18 | <b>C</b> Turning to the Lord, the veil is taken away   |
|         | <b>D</b> so that with unveiled face we gaze on the glory of the Lord                                       |
| 4:3-4   | <b>A’</b> The Gospel is veiled   |
|         | <b>B’</b> Unbelievers minds are hardened so they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ |
| 4:6     | <b>C’</b> God, has shone in our hearts   |
|         | <b>D’</b> to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.              |

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<sup>138</sup> Though the verb κατοπτρίζω is not used in 1 Corinthians 13:12, in this verse the notion of seeing via a mirror (βλέπομεν δι’ ἐσόπτρου) implies indirectness (ἐν αἰνίγματι). Cf. (possibly) Philo Leg 3:101. Rabens, *The Holy Spirit and Ethics in Paul*, 181-182 cites A. Weissenrieder, ‘Der Blick in den Spiegel: II Kor 3,18 vor dem Hintergrund antiker Spiegeltheorien und ikonographischer Abbildungen’ in *Picturing the New Testament: Studies in Ancient Visual Images* (ed. A. Weissenrieder, F. Wendt, and P. von Gemünden; WUNT 2:193; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2005) to argue that mirrors in antiquity were not associated with ‘indirectness’ but with ‘participation and transformation’. This may be true, but the mirror still means that the transforming divine presence is *mediated*. As Weissenrieder herself concludes, this participation is enabled ‘*durch den Blick in den Spiegel*’ (343; emphasis added).

<sup>139</sup> As Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence: the Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul*, 317 notes, ‘indirectly’ does not mean in a distorted way but in contrast to eschatologically seeing the Lord face to face.

<sup>140</sup> Rabens, *The Holy Spirit and Ethics in Paul*, 184.

<sup>141</sup> See *Ibid.*, 187-189 for a survey.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, 190 cf. Hafemann, *Paul, Moses, and the History of Israel*, 425.

In very broad terms, there seems to be a thematic repetition along the lines of: object of revelation veiled (A/A’); potential recipients of revelation are also veiled (B/B’);<sup>143</sup> the means to have this veil removed (C/C’) and the resultant revelation (D/D’).<sup>144</sup> Given that in 3:16-18 we are not *simply* left in the tabernacle, both D and D’ are *contemporary* experiences. It seems reasonable to suggest that 4:1-6 builds on, expands and even explains the contemporary aspect of 3:16-18 suggesting, with Rabens, that an existential experience centred on the gospel is in view. Through the gospel the Christian believer has her veil removed and is able to contemplate the very glory of the exalted Christ. As she does so, she is transformed into the same image as the exalted Christ (τὴν αὐτὴν εἰκόνα [3:18]). Though the mirror language (κατοπτρίζω) suggests the *mediated* nature of this vision of Christ, we should not down-play its power. Through this epiphany of Christ in the gospel, nothing less than transformation of the believer from ‘glory to glory’ occurs.<sup>145</sup>

<sup>143</sup> On the veil attaching to both the objects and subjects of revelation, see particularly Mitchell, ‘Epiphanic Evolutions in Earliest Christianity,’ 190: ‘Our attention to epiphanic logic may help resolve the exegetical quandary of why the veil seems to dance somewhat illogically in this dense argument between and among Moses and the Israelites, on the one hand, and Paul, the gospel, and the Corinthians, on the other; that is because the veil signals the very point of possible epiphanic intersection and obfuscation between divine presence and human attentive capabilities, even as it functions as a symbol of the seer and the danger his epiphanic knowledge as raw divine power could cause unprotected eyes’.

<sup>144</sup> This is only one possible arrangement of this passage Cf. Rabens, *The Holy Spirit and Ethics in Paul*, 177 for the following chiasmatic arrangement:

- A - the Israelites could not look at Moses’ face because of its glory, fading as it was (3:7)
- Moses put a veil over his face because the glory was fading away (3:13)
- B - a veil lies over the minds of Israel whenever Moses/the old covenant is read (3:14–15)
- C - turning to the Lord removes the veil (3:16);
- we all behold the glory of the Lord with unveiled face (3:18)
- B’ - the gospel is veiled to those perishing (4:3),
- their minds are blinded, keeping them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the likeness of God (4:4)
- A’ - God has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ (4:6)

As a result, Rabens suggests that the ‘unveiling’ in 3:18 has two aspects – one cognitive and one immediate. On the cognitive level, the Spirit unveils the minds of the people and thus enables them to understand the gospel. However, this is not merely cognitive in that it leads to a knowledge of Christ (4:4) which implies a ‘relational’ understanding. Secondly, on an immediate level the unveiling of the face allows an encounter with the glory of Christ so that ‘immediacy of access to and intimacy with God is possible (knowing “in our hearts... the glory of God on the face of Christ” [4:6]). Rabens suggests that by this cognitive /immediacy-bringing unveiling, believers are enabled to behold the glory of the Lord (τὴν δόξαν κυρίου κατοπτριζόμενοι). Rabens’ suggestion is plausible and has explanatory power. He does not suggest that Paul consciously arranged the text in this way but offers the structure as a ‘heuristic model for understanding how Paul connected “(un)veiling” to the surrounding concepts’. I do not think there is an essential contradiction with Rabens’ structure and my own (simpler) structure. Where his is based on verbal parallels (e.g. ‘face’ in A and A’), mine operates at a more ‘thematic’ level. Rabens’ structure, however, I think does obscure the potential parallel between Moses’ face and the gospel as sources of revelation (they are A and B’ in his schema thus down-playing the parallel).

<sup>145</sup> Duff suggests that the expression ἀπὸ δόξης εἰς δόξαν refers to the change the Corinthians have undergone from Moses’ glorious ministry to Paul’s glorious ministry [Duff, ‘Transformed “from Glory to Glory”,’ 774]. More likely it simply refers to the transformation of believers from ‘one degree of glory to a greater degree’ [J. Lambrecht, ‘From Glory to Glory (2 Corinthians 3,18): a Reply to Paul B Duff,’ *ETL* 85.1 (2009): 145-146].



This transformation occurs ἀπὸ κυρίου πνεύματος'. This unusual phrase has been understood in three main ways:<sup>146</sup> (1) 'the Lord of the Spirit', thus understanding πνεύματος to be an objective genitive and is a simple but otherwise unprecedented construction in the New Testament;<sup>147</sup> (2) 'the Spirit of the Lord' thus reversing the word order. This might be explained by Paul's desire to emphasise πνεύματος by placing it last (an example of hypallage);<sup>148</sup> (3) 'the Lord, the Spirit'<sup>149</sup> or 'the Lord who is the Spirit',<sup>150</sup> thus understanding the two words to be in apposition.<sup>151</sup> Although the abbreviated and unusual nature of the phrase caution against too dogmatic a reading,<sup>152</sup> it would seem that the third version fits best with the context of 3:17 where the agency of the Spirit is stressed. Here it is the Spirit who is the agent of transformation and this Spirit is identified as the Lord. As in 3:17, Paul is not identifying the Spirit and *Christ*. Rather, he is assuming their shared status as 'Lord' (cf. 3:17c). The Spirit who is Lord thus enables transformation of the believer as she contemplates Christ who is also Lord. Understanding the Spirit as Lord in this way highlights the ability of the Spirit to *mediate* Christ. Though not *identified* with Christ, in sharing the same status as 'Lord', the Spirit is a uniquely appropriate agent of mediation.

Thus the epiphanic presence of Christ is not simply a static contemplation of the character of Christ as one might view a picture in a book. Rather, as Christ is contemplatively encountered in the gospel his presence effects a glorious transformation in the life of the believer through the mediation of the Spirit with whom he shares the divine status of κύριος.

## 2.6 The Face of Christ (2 Cor 4:1-6)

But perhaps the most dramatic image of the epiphanic presence of Christ occurs in 2 Corinthians 4:1-6 where Paul describes how through the gospel the very *face* of Christ is 'seen' thus revealing the glory of God. Here we have the concept of the epiphanic presence of Christ in its most focussed form. The very face of the Christ who is absent can, *in some sense*, be grasped by the believer. This is obviously not a naked visual experience where

<sup>146</sup> The following list based on Thrall, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 1:287. Thrall also includes three other suggestions which she rejects as they are linguistically more difficult: 'a sovereign Spirit'; 'A Yahweh who is (now with us as) Spirit'; 'the Spirit which is the Lord'.

<sup>147</sup> Bultmann, *Der zweite Brief an die Korinther*, 99; Lietzmann, *An die Korinther I-II*, 113-114

<sup>148</sup> As suggested by Horn, 'Kyrios und Pneuma bei Paulus', 70. Cf. Thrall, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 1:287

<sup>149</sup> Barrett, *Second Corinthians*, 110, 126.

<sup>150</sup> Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 57.

<sup>151</sup> The related translation: The Lord who is Spirit – e.g. Plummer, *Second Corinthians*, 108-109 is unlikely given that it 'does not fit v.17, which speaks of "the Spirit" as an entity rather than a mode of being' (so Thrall, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 1:287).

<sup>152</sup> Cf. Heath, 'Metamorphosis of the Beholder', 165.

Christ is physically regarded but a mediated epiphanic experience. Nevertheless, we will see that the mediated and non physical mode of Christ's presence does not detract from the power of the experience in view.

Paul starts this section with διὰ τοῦτο and in this case it seems best to read it as indicating that Paul is building on what he has just said.<sup>153</sup> The strong verbal parallels with both 2:14-3:6<sup>154</sup> and 3:7-18<sup>155</sup> indicate that he is continuing to develop what he has already stated. However we understand the exact relationship between 4:1-6 and the previous context, having reached the climactic statement of 3:18, it is significant that as Paul turns to describe *his own* ministry, he focuses on the proclamation of the truth of God's word in the gospel. Paul understands the transforming contemplation of the glory of Christ to come through the gospel that he proclaims. In the gospel Christ is made present to be gazed upon by the believer.

Since Paul has received this ministry (τὴν διακονίαν ταύτην) as a recipient of God's mercy (καθὼς ἠλεήθημεν),<sup>156</sup> he does not slacken (οὐκ ἐγκακοῦμεν). In contrast (v.2), he has renounced 'underhand and disgraceful ways'.<sup>157</sup> He expands this with two participial phrases which relate to the execution of his ministry. He has not acted in cunning (περιπατοῦντες ἐν πανουργίᾳ) or manipulated God's Word (δολοῦντες τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ).<sup>158</sup> In contrast by a plain *setting forth* or *making known* of the truth (τῇ φανερῶσει τῆς ἀληθείας) he commends himself to the conscience of every person before God (ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ) the ultimate judge. Here we have the existential impact of the gospel. As the truth of God's word is manifested, the consciences of human beings are confronted (concerning Paul's genuineness). But this confrontation is not merely between Paul and his hearers – it happens ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ. This echoes the idea we have already seen that Paul speaks

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<sup>153</sup> See Hans-Josef Klauck, 'Erleuchtung und Verkündigung. Auslegungsskizze zu 2 Kor 4,1-6' in *Paolo: Ministro del Nuovo Testamento (2 Co 2,14 - 4,6)* (ed. L. de Lorenzi; *SMBen.BE 9*; Rome: Abbazia di S. Paolo, 1987), 268 for different options. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 76 sees it referring forward since 'it is not easy to connect 4:1 with the immediately antecedent section'; Barrett, *Second Corinthians*, 127 is open to both possibilities; Bultmann, *Der zweite Brief an die Korinther*, 102 sees it pointing back to the whole of 3:7-18.

<sup>154</sup> As noted by J. Lambrecht, 'Structure and Line of Thought in 2 Cor 2:14-4:6,' *Bib* 64 (1983): 349.

<sup>155</sup> As noted by Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 320. Windisch, *Der zweite Korintherbrief*, 131 overstates his case when he suggests that '4,1-6 nach Stil und Inhalt mehr auf 2,17-3,6 zurückgreift', i.e. more than 'auf 3,7-18'.

<sup>156</sup> Understanding ἠλεήθημεν as a 'divine passive' – so Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 323. The aorist does not have to refer to a specific time in the past, though Paul may well here be referring to his conversion and call.

<sup>157</sup> So *Ibid.*, 324.

<sup>158</sup> Does this refer to the Christian message, the gospel or the OT Scriptures? Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 77 argues for Paul's handling of the OT. On balance the mention of the gospel in the following verses (Thrall, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 1:301) and the parallel in 2:17 between τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ and ἐν Χριστῷ λαλοῦμεν suggests that the Christian message is in view. Cf. also Klauck, 'Erleuchtung und Verkündigung', 275.

κατέναντι θεοῦ ἐν Χριστῷ (2:17) and that with this preaching comes the life-bringing knowledge of Christ (2:14, 16). But this preaching also brings death (2:16) and in 4:2 Paul returns to this theme. If his gospel is veiled (ἔστιν κεκαλυμμένον), it is veiled amongst those who are perishing (ἐν τοῖς ἀπολλυμένοις) due to the agency of the god of this age (ὁ θεὸς τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου), namely Satan.<sup>159</sup> He has blinded the minds of unbelievers so that<sup>160</sup> they are prevented from seeing (εἰς τὸ μὴ ἀυγάσαι)<sup>161</sup> the light (τὸν φωτισμόν) of the gospel.

Regarding the imagery and the context, two things are particularly important to note. First, Paul applies *visual* language to the *hearing* of the gospel. The gospel is *veiled* because unbelievers' minds are *blinded* so they cannot *see* (with their minds) *the light* of the gospel. This mixing of sensory imagery suggests that to understand the earlier visual language of 3:18 as referring to 'hearing' the gospel does not *necessarily* simply reveal the interpreter's 'ecclesial allegiances'.<sup>162</sup> Second, what is seen is the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ who is the image of God (τὸν φωτισμόν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου τῆς δόξης τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὅς ἐστιν εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ).<sup>163</sup> There is general agreement concerning the relationships between the elements in this 'cascade de génitifs'.<sup>164</sup> The first genitive (εὐαγγελίου) is a genitive of origin and represents the logical subject of the light i.e. the light goes forth from the gospel.<sup>165</sup> 'Glory' (τῆς δόξης) is a genitive of content i.e. glory is the form or substance of the light<sup>166</sup> and it belongs to Christ (τοῦ Χριστοῦ).<sup>167</sup> Christ is here

<sup>159</sup> Thus nearly every modern commentator.

<sup>160</sup> As Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 330 suggests, this infinitive probably carries both a sense of result and purpose.

<sup>161</sup> This word is used only here in the NT and in Leviticus (13:24, 25, 26, 28, 38, 39; 14:56) in the LXX where it means 'to be bright'. If the word has the same sense as in Leviticus it could mean 'to shine' here. The sense would be that 'the light of the gospel does not shine forth to them' with αὐτοῖς supplied (as it is in some later witnesses). On balance, while this reading is entirely possible, understanding ἀυγάζω here as 'to see' (BDAG: 1) perhaps fits the immediate context better where the action of Satan blinding unbelievers would obviously hinder them from *seeing* (for this reading see Bultmann, *Der zweite Brief an die Korinther*, 108-109; Collange, *Enigmes*, 134).

<sup>162</sup> Heath, 'Metamorphosis of the Beholder', 132. For example on page 121 Heath cites Jacob Jervell, *Imago Dei. Gen 1: 26f. im Spätjudentum, in der Gnosis und in den paulinischen Briefen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960), 186-187 and criticises the fact that he 'argues at length that the motif of "seeing" in 2 Cor. 3:18 actually means "hearing"'. Heath's book is an excellent treatment of the importance of visual piety to Paul and (as noted) has influenced my own exegesis at points. However, I think she perhaps downplays an important Pauline emphasis, namely that 'hearing' the gospel can be a form of 'seeing' as here and that 'visual' and 'aural' piety may be related more closely than she allows.

<sup>163</sup> See Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 330 for a brief discussion on the nature of these genitives.

<sup>164</sup> E. B. Allo, *St Paul: Seconde Épître aux Corinthiens* (2nd ed., Études Bibliques, Paris: J. Gabalda, 1956), 102 n.31.

<sup>165</sup> So Klauck, 'Erleuchtung und Verkündigung', 284.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.* argues that in 3:7-18 'glory' undergoes a 'vertiefende christologische Qualifizierung' so that it 'eignet auch Christus als dem auferstandenen Herr'.

described as the εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ - a description that wherever its exact origin<sup>168</sup> here seems to point to the risen Christ in *human* and hence visible form. The gospel then manifests the exalted Christ who, in turn, is the image of God.

The medium of this revelation is *the gospel*. Here is the point of interface between the believer and the exalted Christ. Though this presence of Christ in the hearing of the gospel is a mediated event, Paul can compare it to God’s act of creation. Specifically, God’s activity at creation of bringing light out of darkness is compared to his activity in illuminating (ἐλάμψεν) our hearts so that we have the *light* of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ (ἐν προσώπῳ Χριστοῦ<sup>169</sup> [v.6]). Though there is debate concerning the exact Scriptural allusion that Paul is making when he states that ‘God is the one who said (ὁ θεὸς ὁ εἰπὼν):<sup>170</sup> “Light will shine out of darkness (ἐκ σκοτῶν φῶς λάμψει)” ‘,<sup>171</sup> the allusion to creation is unmistakable. Salvation is the work of the creator God and even the activity of the ‘god of this age’ cannot stand in his way.

That this work of God centres on the gospel is made clear as we examine the parallels between verses 4 and 6:<sup>172</sup>

**Verse 6**

ὁ θεὸς ὁ εἰπὼν· ἐκ σκοτῶν φῶς λάμψει  
 ὃς ἐλάμψεν  
 ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν  
 πρὸς φωτισμόν  
 τῆς γνώσεως τῆς δόξης  
 τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν προσώπῳ Χριστοῦ.

**Verse 4**

ὁ θεὸς τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου  
 ἐτύφλωσεν  
 τὰ νοήματα τῶν ἀπίστων  
 εἰς τὸ μὴ αὐγάσαι τὸν φωτισμόν  
 τοῦ εὐαγγελίου τῆς δόξης  
 τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὃς ἐστὶν εἰκὼν τοῦ  
 θεοῦ.

In verse 6 τῆς γνώσεως τῆς δόξης parallels τοῦ εὐαγγελίου τῆς δόξης in verse 4 with both following a reference to φωτισμός. This suggests that τῆς γνώσεως like τοῦ εὐαγγελίου is a genitive of origin<sup>173</sup> and that ‘the knowledge that produces illumination is nothing other

<sup>168</sup> See Ibid., 284-286 and Thrall, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 1:309-310.

<sup>169</sup> The alternative reading Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ is slightly less well supported – see the discussion in Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 510.

<sup>170</sup> Understanding ἐστὶν to be supplied.

<sup>171</sup> Paul seems to be alluding to Genesis 1:3-4 and Isaiah 1:9. Certainly the reference to God speaking reflects Genesis 1:3-4. However, the phrases φῶς λάμψει and ἐκ σκοτῶν are found in Isaiah 9:1 and Psalm 107:14 LXX respectively. Thus a reference to both creation and salvation (suggested by the Psalm) as re-creation may be in view.

<sup>172</sup> Oliveira, *Diakonie der Gerechtigkeit*, 108.

<sup>173</sup> So Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 335. Alternatives include an epexegetic genitive ‘illumination that consists in knowledge’ or objective ‘to reveal the knowledge’.

than the knowledge of the gospel'.<sup>174</sup> This knowledge is defined by another chain of genitives. It is a knowledge of the glory<sup>175</sup> of God<sup>176</sup> in the face<sup>177</sup> of Christ mediated through the gospel.

We see here just how important the epiphanic presence of Christ is. Christ as the 'icon' of God is the revelation of God in human form. The knowledge of God is revealed in the face of Christ. Thus, with Christ removed from the earth the availability of this revelation seems compromised. However, through the gospel and the illuminating work of God in the heart, Christ is made manifest, his face can be comprehended, the icon of God grasped and the knowledge of the glory of God attained. The use of κατοπτρίζω in 3:18 introduces an idea of mediation (but not distortion) to this encounter and the internal location (ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν [4:6]) of this encounter underlines the bodily absence of Christ. However, we must not down-play the reality of the encounter. As in 3:18 where the believer is transformed 'from glory to glory', here this encounter with the risen Christ involves nothing less than God's work of re-creation. In the gospel and by the Spirit the believer can encounter the risen Lord Jesus and experiences the same form of glorious divine power that Paul did on the Damascus Road.<sup>178</sup>

## 2.7 The Life of Jesus (2 Cor 4:7-12)

Though commentators usually consider 2:14-4:6 as a unit, for our purposes we will continue into the next section as we encounter another important image concerning the risen

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<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>175</sup> An objective genitive.

<sup>176</sup> A possessive genitive.

<sup>177</sup> Barrett, *Second Corinthians*, 135 takes πρόσωπον to refer to the 'person' of Christ but the fact that each of the uses in chapter 3 (7, 13, 18) clearly means 'face' suggests that this is the meaning here [so Thrall, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 1:316 n.876].

<sup>178</sup> There is a strong possibility that Paul is comparing this epiphanic experience of Christ to his own conversion. The phrase ὃς ἔλαμψεν ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν standing as it does in opposition to the blinding activity of the god of this age would seem to apply to believers in general and not simply Paul. However, the aorist of ἔλαμψεν which is said to 'point to one specific moment in the past' and the references to light (cf. Acts 9:3) and the 'face of Christ' (ἐν προσώπῳ Χριστοῦ) suggest that Paul is referring to his own 'conversion and call' on the Damascus Road (Thrall, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 1:316). While the use of the aorist cannot necessarily be pressed in this way, and the idea of light shining 'in the heart' does not quite fit the situation as described in Acts 9 (although Paul does refer to a clear inward element in his conversion cf. Gal 1:16 [ἀποκαλύψαι τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ ἐν ἐμοί] – so Thrall, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 1:317), the reference to the 'face of Christ' suggests a *personal* encounter with Christ. It would seem that *in some sense* that Paul understands his own encounter with the risen Christ as paradigmatic. So Klauck, 'Erleuchtung und Verkündigung', 294. Klauck quotes Gerd Theissen, *Psychologische Aspekte paulinischer Theologie* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983), 129 n.16: 'Paulus schildert hier einen für alle Christen typischen Vorgang auf dem Hintergrund seines persönlichen Erlebens'.

Christ.<sup>179</sup> In 2 Corinthians 4:10 Paul states that as an apostle he is permanently carrying around the death of Jesus so that the life of Jesus might also be manifested in his body. Erhardt Güttgemanns argues that this manifestation (φανερώω) should be specifically understood as ‘ein christologisches Epiphaniengeschehen’.<sup>180</sup> Güttgemanns is following Käsemann at this point who himself argues that Paul is ‘gleichsam selber die Erscheinungsweise des Christus incarnatus nach dessen Himmelfahrt’.<sup>181</sup> Güttgemanns further argues that

Der Kyrios dokumentiert und qualifiziert sich selbst am Soma des Apostels als der gekreuzigte Jesus. Man kann in dem Epiphaniengeschehen der apostolischen Leiden die Dynamis des Kyrios am Werke sehen, der in ihnen seine Identität dokumentiert. Die Leiden des Apostels offenbaren, daß gerade der von den Korinthern abgelehnte irdische Jesus, der am Kreuz endigte, jetzt als Kyrios präsent ist und deshalb auch im Pneuma als Auferwecker bekannt und verkündigt werden muß.<sup>182</sup>

The suffering apostle *in himself* makes the risen Lord epiphatically present. He is the very appearance of the incarnate Christ after his ascension. Both Güttgemanns and Käsemann then argue for the epiphanic presence of Christ mediated through the apostle Paul but can we probe further concerning the nature of this ‘necroctic epiphany’ of Christ?<sup>183</sup>

Paul begins this section by referring back to ‘this treasure’ (τὸν θησαυρὸν τοῦτου), that ‘we’<sup>184</sup> have in our hearts – probably referring to the gospel itself.<sup>185</sup> In contrast (δέ) to

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<sup>179</sup> Cf. Jane Heath, ‘Corinth, a Crucible for Byzantine Iconoclastic Debates? Viewing Paul as an Icon of Christ in 2 Cor 4,7-12’ in *Religiöse Philosophie und philosophische Religion der frühen Kaiserzeit* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2008), 275.

<sup>180</sup> Güttgemanns, *Der leidende Apostel*, 107.

<sup>181</sup> E. Käsemann, ‘Die Legitimität des Apostels. Eine Untersuchung zu II Korinther 10-13,’ *ZNW* 41 (1942): 56 although at this point Käsemann is not commenting directly on 2 Corinthians 4.

<sup>182</sup> Güttgemanns, *Der leidende Apostel*, 107.

<sup>183</sup> Mitchell, ‘Epiphanic Evolutions in Earliest Christianity,’ 190.

<sup>184</sup> On the use of ‘we’ in 2 Corinthians see Carez’s summary in Carrez, ‘Le ‘Nous’ En 2 Corinthiens,’ 484-485. Probably given the context of 4:12 where ‘us’ is contrasted with ‘you’, the use of ‘we’ here suggests that Paul is speaking as an apostle or minister – probably considering himself alongside Timothy (cf. 1:1). At this point the distinction between Carrez’s groups 1 and 2 is not great. For convenience from this point on I will refer to Paul in the singular, acknowledging that what applies to him applies to Timothy as well. On the more difficult question of the applicability of what Paul says to *all* Christians, see below.

<sup>185</sup> J. T. Fitzgerald, *Cracks in an Earthen Vessel: An Examination of the Catalogues of Hardships in the Corinthian Correspondence* (SBLDS 99, Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), 168 n.145 summarises the five main possibilities for the antecedent of ‘this treasure’: ‘this ministry’ (4:1); ‘the word of God’ (4:2); ‘the truth’ (4:3); ‘the gospel of the glory of Christ’ (4:3-4); all or part of the phrase ‘the illumination of the glory of God in the face of Christ’ (4:6). Although absolute certainty may not be possible, Paul’s immediate contrast between the treasure and the vessel that contains it suggests that the treasure is something objectively identifiable such as the gospel – which of course is the ‘word of God’ and ‘the truth’. So Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 339; Thrall, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 1:321; B. Kuschnerus, “‘You Yourself are our Letter’: 2 Cor 3 as an Example for the Usage of Metaphor in Paul” in *Metaphor, Canon and Community* (ed. Ralph Bisschops and James Francis; *Religion and Discourse* 1; Frankfurt/M: Peter Lang, 1999), 329.

the treasure of the gospel, the containers, God’s ministers, are ‘jars of clay’<sup>186</sup> so that the glory goes only to God. Paul expands on how this embodied revelation takes place with a series of pairs of antithetical participles (vv.8-9) that stress both the frailty of the vessel and the power of God. In each case the second element ‘does not indicate a mere mitigation of the hardship; rather, it points to an actual divine deliverance; not simply a change of outlook on Paul’s part, but God’s intervention’.<sup>187</sup> Verses 10 and 11 then provide a ‘christological interpretation’ of the experiences described in verses 8-9.<sup>188</sup> These two verses are broadly parallel both having a ‘death bearing’ leading to a manifestation of the life of Jesus. The parallelism<sup>189</sup> can be observed if we set the verses out as follows:

**Verse 10**

πάντοτε

τὴν νέκρωσιν τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἐν τῷ σώματι  
περιφέροντες,

ἵνα

καὶ ἡ ζωὴ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ

ἐν τῷ σώματι ἡμῶν φανερωθῇ.

**Verse 11**

ἀεὶ<sup>190</sup>

γὰρ ἡμεῖς οἱ ζῶντες

εἰς θάνατον παραδιδόμεθα διὰ Ἰησοῦν

ἵνα

καὶ ἡ ζωὴ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ

φανερωθῇ ἐν τῇ θνητῇ σαρκὶ ἡμῶν

Specifically in verse 10 the death bearing is a continual ‘carrying’ (περιφέρω) of the ‘death of Jesus’ (τὴν νέκρωσιν τοῦ Ἰησοῦ)<sup>191</sup> in the body in order to ‘manifest’ (φανερώω) the life of

<sup>186</sup> The force of this metaphor is debated but Fitzgerald, *Cracks in an Earthen Vessel*, 167 is probably right to understand these ‘earthen vessels as ‘the disposable bottles of antiquity, as inexpensive as they were fragile’. Collange’s argument (Collange, *Enigmes*, 146) that the image of the ‘vessel’ primarily emphasises God’s choice, perhaps puts more emphasis on the honour of the vessel than is warranted by the context and the use of the adjective ὀστράκιος. As to the specific referent, Paul could mean the body or the whole person. As Fitzgerald, *Cracks in an Earthen Vessel*, 167 notes, the context suggests the body is primarily in view (cf. 4:10-11; 5:6,8,10), but ‘since he lists psychic (4:8) as well as physical distress, it seems clear that more than corporeality is intended by his metaphor’.

<sup>187</sup> Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 342 who notes that ‘in each case, the second element is an intense or extreme form of the first’.

<sup>188</sup> Kuschnerus, ‘You Yourself are our Letter’, 254.

<sup>189</sup> Apart from the general parallelism that can be observed in the table above, Kuschnerus (259) notes certain other chiasmic and repetitive patterns. So, in 4:10b and 4:11b he notes the chiasmic structure of a. ἐν τῷ σώματι ἡμῶν b. φανερωθῇ. b’. φανερωθῇ a’. ἐν τῇ θνητῇ σαρκὶ ἡμῶν and argues that this underlines the revelatory function that the bodily existence of the apostle possesses (unterstreichen deutlich die Offenbarungsfunktion, die der leiblichen Existenz des Apostels zugeschrieben wird). Less convincing is his argument that the chiasmic structure of verse 11 (a. ἡμεῖς b. διὰ Ἰησοῦν b’. τοῦ Ἰησοῦ a’. ἡμῶν) stresses the opposition between ‘us’ and ‘Jesus’.

<sup>190</sup> Though the alternative εἰ (B46 F G it<sup>a,b</sup> syr<sup>p</sup> Ir<sup>lat</sup> Tert Ambst) is the more difficult reading given that it ‘wrecks the syntax’ (Thrall, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 1:335 n. 1000), it is perhaps more likely that the α was omitted than added given the relatively infrequent occurrence of ἀεὶ in Paul’s writings compared to the very common phrase εἰ γάρ.

<sup>191</sup> νέκρωσις is generally either understood as the ‘process of dying’ or the ‘state of death’ – both of which appear to be potential meanings (see BDAG). For a partial list of proponents of both views see Furnish, *II*

Jesus in the body. Verse 11 is linked with a γάρ suggesting that it is an expansion of verse 10. Here the subject is identified as ‘we who are living’ (ἡμεῖς οἱ ζῶντες) and the carrying of the death of Jesus is more specifically described as being ‘handed over’<sup>192</sup> to death for the sake of Jesus’. The reference to the manifestation of the life of Jesus remains the same but the location of this manifestation is changed from ‘our body’ to ‘our mortal flesh’ (ἐν τῇ θνητῇ σαρκὶ ἡμῶν). Verse 12 serves as summary of this argument (ὥστε) but comes as a slight surprise.<sup>193</sup> Here Paul uses the same life/death parallelism but locates the apostles on the side of death (ὁ θάνατος ἐν ἡμῖν ἐνεργεῖται)<sup>194</sup> and the Corinthians on the side of life (ἡ δὲ ζωὴ ἐν ὑμῖν).

Two issues particularly concern us. First, the meaning of ἡ ζωὴ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ and second, the specific way in which Paul relates to Jesus so that he can manifest this life in his body (v.10) or his mortal flesh (v.11). On the first question, debate turns on whether the earthly life of Jesus or the resurrection of life of Jesus is in view. At first glance the use of the name Ἰησοῦς and the parallel with τὴν νέκρωσιν τοῦ Ἰησοῦ suggest that the earthly life is in view. However, the pattern of death followed by life suggests that the life of the resurrected Christ is intended.<sup>195</sup> Further, not only does Paul have no problem referring to the risen Christ by the name ‘Jesus’ (cf. especially 1 Thess 1:10), this life of Jesus is surely related to the power of God (4:7) that preserves Paul’s body and spirit. The context of divine power (ὑπερβολὴ τῆς δυνάμεως τοῦ θεοῦ [4:7]) that is active in the life of the treasure holding vessel suggests that we should understand the ‘life of Jesus’ as a manifestation of divine power. Specifically that ‘it is God’s power, taking shape in the form it took in the resurrection of Jesus, i.e. rescue from death, or its equivalent’.<sup>196</sup> Paul is happy to connect the resurrection life of Jesus with the power of God elsewhere (see esp. 2 Cor 13:4 cf. Phil 3:10). Stegman is more specific and argues that not only can the ‘life of Jesus’ be regarded as

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*Corinthians*, 255-256. It may be unwise to build too much on the particular nuance of this word especially given that in 4:12 when Paul summarises his argument he uses the more common word for ‘death’ (θάνατος).

<sup>192</sup> παραδιδόμεθα. Though this could be a reflexive middle (i.e. ‘we are surrendering ourselves to death’ e.g. Fitzgerald, *Cracks in an Earthen Vessel*, 180) the context is one of passivity on the part of the apostles suggesting that we read it as a passive with God as the implied agent.

<sup>193</sup> Collange, *Enigmes*, 159 ‘parce que rien, semble-t-il, ne l’a préparé’.

<sup>194</sup> ‘Death is at work in us’ understanding ἐνεργεῖται as a middle with active sense cf. e.g. Robert C. Tannehill, *Dying and Rising with Christ: a Study in Pauline Theology* (Berlin: Töpelmann, 1967), 85 n.4.

<sup>195</sup> Kar Yong Lim, “The Sufferings of Christ are Abundant in Us” (2 Corinthians 1.5): a Narrative Dynamics Investigation of Paul’s Sufferings in 2 Corinthians (London: T & T Clark, 2009), 112.

<sup>196</sup> Thrall, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 1:335. Also Tannehill, *Dying and Rising with Christ*, 84-85; Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 347. So also Lim, *Paul’s Sufferings in 2 Corinthians*, 112; Barrett, *Second Corinthians*, 140; Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 256; Stegman, *The Character of Jesus*, 152; Thrall, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 1:335.



a form of the power of God, but also that it is ‘an apt description of the transforming agency of the Spirit in 3:18’.<sup>197</sup>

Two verses in the context link the Spirit and life. First, in 3:6 the Spirit is specifically identified as the agent who gives life (τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα ζωοποιεῖ). Second, in 5:4 Paul refers to the time when death will ultimately be defeated by life and God has prepared us for this by giving his Spirit as a guarantee (τὸν ἀρραβῶνα τοῦ πνεύματος [5:5]). Here the Spirit is specifically tied to resurrection life. That is, ‘Paul’s affirmation concerning the *all-surpassing power* that is from God, therefore, has an important *pneumatological substratum*’.<sup>198</sup> More broadly in Paul, we have this strong connection between the Spirit and life (e.g. Romans 8:10 τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα ζωή cf. Rom 8:2; 8:6; 1 Cor 15:45; Gal 6:8). However, if this ‘life of Jesus’ is a pneumatic mode of divine power, it is christologically shaped. It is not divine power in the abstract but the ‘life of Jesus’ mediated by the Spirit. Here we have the closest possible association between Christ and the Spirit. The depth of the Spirit’s mediation of Christ means that as the Spirit operates on the believer’s body that body becomes the location of the epiphanic presence of Christ. The very life of Jesus is manifested (φανερωθῆ) in the body of the believer and is at work (ἐνεργεῖται [vv.11, 12]). Here we see clearly that the epiphanic presence of Christ has a dynamic effect and is not merely the presentation of an ‘idea’.

Understanding the ‘life of Jesus’ in Paul’s body as the resurrection power of God mediated by the Spirit, leads us to our second question concerning the relationship between Paul and the risen Christ. As we have seen Güttgemanns and Käsemann understand Paul’s manifesting of the ‘life of Jesus’ as a Christological epiphany. Others have understood the relationship to be one of ‘imitation’,<sup>199</sup> ‘analogy’<sup>200</sup> or ‘participation’.<sup>201</sup> More recently, Jane Heath has suggested that Paul is portraying himself as an icon of Christ.<sup>202</sup> Though the specific εἰκὼν language is not present in this section, it would seem that this is ‘the point at which that εἰκὼν of 3:18 and 4:4 becomes available to viewers at the level of shared sense perception’. Specifically, there is ‘visual continuity between the images of

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<sup>197</sup> Stegman, *The Character of Jesus*, 251.

<sup>198</sup> P. J. Gräbe, *The Power of God in Paul’s Letters* (WUNT 2.123, Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2000), 251 [Italics original].

<sup>199</sup> Discussed as a possibility in Merrill Proudfoot, ‘Imitation or Realistic Participation: A Study of Paul’s Concept of “Suffering with Christ”,’ *Int* 17.2 (1963): 140-160.

<sup>200</sup> Thrall, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 1:332.

<sup>201</sup> Schweitzer, *Die Mystik des Apostels Paulus*, 17.

<sup>202</sup> Heath, ‘Paul as an Icon of Christ’, 271-284.

Christ and Paul in their shared anthropological shape'.<sup>203</sup> This idea has parallels across his letters in his call for his readers to imitate him as he imitates Christ (e.g. 1 Cor 11:1) and where he 'emphasises the Christological character of his own role in encountering the community (1 Cor 2:1-5; 2 Cor 13:3-4)'.<sup>204</sup> It also fits with Paul's portrayal of himself earlier in this section as the 'aroma' of Christ.

Heath argues that understanding Paul as an icon of Christ causes us to focus on different points than those normally raised in scholarly discussion on this passage which focuses on questions of 'analogy', 'participation' and 'identity'. Particularly important is the fact that rather than focussing on the nature of the union between Christ and Paul (analogy vs. substantial), it raises questions concerning the generation of the image (thetic vs. substantial). The key concern is whether God has generated this image – a concern reflected in Paul's words: ἵνα ἡ ὑπερβολὴ τῆς δυνάμεως ἧ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ μὴ ἐξ ἡμῶν (v. 7b) and the divine passives φανερωθῆ and παραδιδόμεθα.<sup>205</sup>

Heath's presentation highlights a key aspect of this text. However, we have suggested that Paul has *already* 'made' the εἰκῶν of 3:18 and 4:4 'visible' in the gospel. We need to consider the relationship of *Paul* as epiphanic medium to the *gospel* as epiphanic medium. Mitchell notes the fact that 'the necrotic epiphany currently on display in [Paul's] body actually signals the resurrection epiphany to come'.<sup>206</sup> So

it is precisely here that we can see how the visual and the verbal clearly come together in the Pauline gospel, for these two epiphanic events (death, life) correspond precisely with the two main episodes of narrative proclamation about Jesus which Paul calls 'the gospel'. The gospel that Paul orally proclaimed to the Corinthians, and all others he encountered, had a simultaneous visual counterpart in Paul's own physical self as *participating in and replicating* the dying ('co-

<sup>203</sup> Ibid., 275. She cites J Schröter, *Der versöhnte Versöhner: Paulus als unentbehrlicher Mittler im Heilsvorgang zwischen Gott und Gemeinde nach 2 Kor 2, 14-7,4* (Tübingen: Francke, 1993), 142: 'in 4,7-12 geht es nun also um die konkrete Gestalt, in der sich diese Erleuchtung [sc. 4,6] an ihren Träger manifestiert'. Heath further elaborates: '[t]he visual, external aspect of the image is much in view even though Paul uses no verbs of seeing in 4,7-12. The image of clay pots (ἐν ὄστρακίνοις σκεύεσιν) highlights externals, albeit it alludes (as is often pointed out) not merely to the physical bodies but actually to the persons of the apostles. ἐν τῷ σώματι and ἐν τῇ θνητῇ σαρκί with φανερωθῆ (repeated) underscore physically evident manifestation, in particular drawing the eyes onto the apostolic flesh. [...] The literary context of 2 Cor 2,14-5,10 also cues visual response, in that it concentrates heavily on visually effective imagery, including the triumphal procession, incense, tablets of stone and writing on them, gleaming faces of ministering prophets, clay vessels, temples earthly and heavenly, garments and judgement seats. Not only is Paul presenting himself as a manifestation of the image Christ, then, but he is also encouraging the audience particularly to respond to that as a *visible, physical* form (142).

<sup>204</sup> Heath, 'Paul as an Icon of Christ', 275.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid., 282-283.

<sup>206</sup> Mitchell, 'Epiphanic Evolutions in Earliest Christianity,' 190.

crucifixion’) and, by the logic of replication of the narrative, the promise of living (‘co-resurrection’) in the gospel story of Jesus.<sup>207</sup>

Mitchell further notes how this idea was later taken up in 2 Timothy 1:9-10. Here the author makes a parallel between *διὰ τῆς ἐπιφανείας τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ* and *διὰ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου*.<sup>208</sup> Mitchell notes that there is a ‘clear parallelism and indeed an identification between the Christophany in the flesh of Jesus and that to be found in the apostolic teaching of Paul’.<sup>209</sup> Basler similarly notes that the author is construing the Christ event and proclamation as ‘parallel epiphanic events’ such that the ‘event and the proclamation of it are functionally equivalent’.<sup>210</sup>

Thus, it would seem that Paul ‘saw himself as a one-man multi-media presentation of the gospel of Christ crucified’ and that the ‘message and the messenger were indivisibly united in re-presenting to the audience an aural-visual icon of Christ crucified, which is the gospel’.<sup>211</sup> Thus the oral gospel had a visual counterpart in ‘Paul’s own physical self as participating in and replicating the dying (“co-crucifixion”) and, by the logic of replication of the narrative, the promise of living (“co-resurrection”) in the gospel story of Jesus’.<sup>212</sup>

In the description of Paul as ‘aroma of Christ’ we saw that the knowledge available through Paul was a result of his ‘sincere’ preaching of the word of God ‘in Christ’ (2:17). Paul as a suffering preacher of the true gospel brings death and life as Christ is encountered. The same idea is here in 4:10-12. As Paul suffers in preaching the gospel the ‘life of Jesus’ is mediated by the Spirit to his (believing) hearers. As with the deep transformation in 3:18, this encounter with Jesus has profound effects operating (*ἐνεργεῖται*) as it does at the level of their ‘mortal bodies’.

## 2.8 Summary and Conclusion

The epiphanic presence of Christ is the mediated presence of the absent Christ to the senses of believers. In this epiphanic mode of his presence he is portrayed as essentially passive. He does not act as the subject of his presence but is *made present* through the

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<sup>207</sup> Ibid.: 190-191. Emphasis added. In her forthcoming book, Heath also notes the connections in this passage to the language of Isaiah 52-53. She suggests that the ‘visual piety taught by Isa 52-53 enables the sacred gaze to find theological and personal meaning in the outward suffering of an individual to whom the community is indebted and in whose identity they find their own part’ (Heath, ‘Metamorphosis of the Beholder’, 169).

<sup>208</sup> Mitchell, ‘Epiphanic Evolutions in Earliest Christianity,’ 200.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid.: 200-201.

<sup>210</sup> J. M. Bassler, *1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus* (ANTC, Nashville: Abingdon, 1996), 321 cited in Mitchell, ‘Epiphanic Evolutions in Earliest Christianity,’ 200.

<sup>211</sup> Mitchell, ‘Epiphanic Evolutions in Earliest Christianity,’ 189.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid.

person of Paul and through the Spirit carried preaching of his gospel. He is the object rather than subject of his presence. However this objectivity does not mean that this is an inert mode of Christ's presence. Believers encounter him in a mediated but powerful way. The power of this encounter is revealed in the *effects* of this presence as believers come to know Christ (2:14); are 'known and read' by all (3:2); are transformed from glory to glory (3:18); experience God's re-creating light (4:6) and have the Spirit formed life of Jesus work even in their mortal bodies (4:11).

Considering Christ's epiphanic presence and his absence together helps us to conceptualise both more clearly. Though Christ is absent his influence is not removed from the world. His epiphanic presence has powerful epistemological, transformative and eschatological (death or life) effects in the world. For Wolfhart Pannenberg given the fact 'daß Jesus durch seine Erhöhung der Erde und auch seinen Jüngern entrückt worden ist', no-one now *experiences* him as risen and exalted. He further suggests that in his Corinthian correspondences, Paul battled 'den Wahn' that 'man könne schon gegenwärtig die Herrlichkeit des erhöhten Herrn *erfahren*'. For Paul 'die *Erfahrung* der Gegenwart Christi ist erst für das Ende aller Tage verheißen'.<sup>213</sup> Pannenberg is certainly correct that Christ is absent and that Paul longs for a future reunion with the Lord – a reality that cannot be experienced in the present. However, in this section we have seen that even in the present the believer can encounter and experience the risen Lord in the most profoundly, transforming way. However, though this mode of Christ's presence is so significant it does not override his absence. It is a mediated presence and though Christ himself is involved in the mediation (e.g. Paul speaks 'in Christ'; the Corinthians are a letter authored by Christ; the Spirit is the Spirit of the Lord), in this mode his *agency* is not stressed. The dominant note is that Christ is experienced as an object of perception rather than as a subject of operation.

The different entities involved in the mediation of Christ's presence point to the complexity involved in this mode of his presence. However, Paul does not randomly switch between himself, the Spirit and the gospel. Rather we have seen that the gospel and the apostle (and by analogy the Corinthian church) provide the external canvas upon which Christ is displayed. As the gospel is heard, Christ's glory and 'face' are seen (3:18 [κατοπτριζόμενοι]; 4:4-6). As the apostle is heard preaching and seen suffering, the aroma of Christ is smelt (2:14-17) and the 'life of Jesus' encountered (4:7-12). This latter encounter,

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<sup>213</sup> Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Grundzüge der Christologie* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1972), 22.

though, brings the role of the Spirit into focus. It is the Spirit who provides the ‘depth’ to this mode of Christ’s presence. Believers do not simply encounter Christ as a cinema-goer observes a screen or a reader engages a text. Rather, the Spirit, who shares Christ’s divine status as ‘Lord’, enables the epiphanic presence of Christ to penetrate to the very depth of the recipient’s being (3:18; 4:10-11; cf. 4:2).

### 3. The Dynamic Presence of Christ

#### 3.1 Introduction: Christ as Agent

In this section we will examine a mode of Christ’s presence with a quite different emphasis. In contrast to his epiphanic presence where Christ is powerfully but essentially passively portrayed to the senses, here Christ acts as the agent, the subject of the activity. This activity is mediated, but in this section we see that the mediation becomes increasingly transparent even to the point that it *seems* to disappear and the exalted Christ is portrayed as working directly and causing sickness and even death in the Corinthian congregation (1 Cor 11:30-32). However, even here with this stark ‘intervention’ by the risen Lord, his intense presence does not negate his absence and we see that Christ is, in fact, operating in a mediated fashion.

#### 3.2 Personal Mediation: Revelation (Rom 15:18-19; 2 Cor 13:1-4)

In section 2.2 we have already touched on the way in which the apostle mediates the presence of the exalted Christ. There we saw how in 2 Corinthians 4:7-12 the apostle *manifested* the very life and death of Jesus. Again, however, the presentation of Jesus is passive.<sup>214</sup> His life and death are *made* present through the apostle. However, Paul’s very description of himself as ‘apostle of Christ’ fundamentally speaks of the ongoing *active* relationship of Christ to the world. At the beginning of Galatians he states that he received his apostleship neither ‘from’ nor ‘through (διά) human beings’ but ‘through (διά) Jesus Christ and God the Father’ (1:1). The exalted Christ is thus the ‘ultimate source’ (with God) of Paul’s apostleship.<sup>215</sup> In 1:12, Paul draws another sharp antithesis, this time concerning his *reception* of the gospel. It was neither revealed to him nor taught to him by any human

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<sup>214</sup> Though not *powerless* – the life of Jesus that is made manifest is at work in the Corinthians (4:12).

<sup>215</sup> So e.g. R. N. Longenecker, *Galatians* (WBC, Texas: Word, 1990), 4; Ernest Burton, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1921), 5-6; F.F. Bruce, *The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians: a Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 72-73. Paul is probably referring to his Damascus Road encounter with the risen Christ (cf. e.g. Acts 9:15-16).

being but came through a revelation by Jesus Christ (δι' ἀποκαλύψεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ).<sup>216</sup> Paul's apostleship rests firmly on the agency of the exalted Lord Jesus who commissioned him (1:1) and revealed himself to him (1:12). The activity of the exalted Christ is fundamental to Paul's Christian identity as an apostle.

However, at the same time this term speaks of the *distance* between Christ and the world and highlights his *absence*. A person or group of people presumably only needs to send an apostle if they themselves are absent and (presumably) unable to fulfil a particular task.<sup>217</sup> What can we say concerning any *ongoing* involvement of Christ in Paul's apostleship? Is Paul simply commissioned to act as a substitute or representative for an absent Christ? Some have argued that the very term *apostle* presupposes an intense level of involvement on the part of the sender.<sup>218</sup> It seems, however, that the widespread and patently prosaic use of the term<sup>219</sup> suggests that the term itself does not contain any presuppositions about the 'degree of presence' of the sender. Others suggest that motifs such as that of Paul functioning as the *example* of Christ suggests a dynamic connection between Paul and the exalted Christ. In 1 Corinthians 11:1, Paul exhorts his readers to imitate him as he imitates Christ (μιμηταί μου γίνεσθε καθὼς κἀγὼ Χριστοῦ). Similarly, in 1 Thessalonians 1:6, he describes how the Thessalonians became imitators of him (and his

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<sup>216</sup> On the basis of the similarity with vv.16-17 (εὐδόκησεν ὁ θεὸς [...] ἀποκαλύψαι τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ ἐν ἐμοί) many commentators argue that Paul received the gospel by a revelation of Jesus Christ by God i.e. understanding Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ as an objective genitive (e.g. Bruce, *Galatians*, 89). However, Longenecker, *Galatians*, 24 argues on the basis of the structural parallel between 1:11-12 (οὐκ [...] οὐδὲ [...] οὔτε [...] ἀλλά) and 1:1 (οὐκ [...] οὐδὲ [...] ἀλλά) that δι' ἀποκαλύψεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ here corresponds to διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ in verse 1. Hence Jesus Christ is the *agent* of revelation (reading the genitive as subjective). See also Albrecht Oepke, *Der Brief des Paulus an die Galater* (3rd ed., Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1973 [1971]), 57. It would seem that even if we do not accept the structural parallels with verse 1, the immediate context would suggest a contrast between revelation by Jesus and revelation by men. This antithesis would be weakened if Jesus was merely the content of the revelation and that God's agency simply had to implied God.

<sup>217</sup> Although see Mitchell who argues that human envoys were sent because they could actually fulfil a task better than if the sender was present [Mitchell, 'New Testament Envoys,' 641-662].

<sup>218</sup> The roots of this discussion lie in a note in Lightfoot's Galatians commentary where he argues that the background to the term 'apostle' is the Jewish term *shaliach*. J.B. Lightfoot, *Saint Paul's Epistle to the Galatians: A Revised Text with Introduction, Notes, and Dissertations* (10th ed., London: MacMillan, 1921 [1865]), 92. This idea was further developed by Rengstorff who argues that like a *shaliach*, an apostle 'represents [the sender] to such a degree that the sender is present in the one sent'. K.H. Rengstorff, 'Apostolos' in *TDNT 1* (1964), 1:414-415. This understanding of apostleship has been subject to critique. So, John Howard Schütz, *Paul and the Anatomy of Apostolic Authority* (SNTSMS 26, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 27-28 summarises the main objection: 'the term is not used for missionaries or prophets, even by the Rabbis' and the Rabbinic 'institution' is late. However, more recent scholarship seems to be swinging back to the older view, albeit in modified form. Here the dependence is not traced to a rabbinic *shaliach* figure (in nominal form) but by 'showing the existence of the *slch/apostellein* sending- convention in the OT and the NT with reference to figures of profound religious and theological significance' [F. H. Agnew, 'The Origin of the NT Apostle-Concept: A Review of Research,' *JBL* 105.1 (1986): 96].

<sup>219</sup> Even in the NT where it can be used more prosaically e.g. Philippians 2:25.

colleagues) ‘and the Lord’ (καὶ ὑμεῖς μιμηταὶ ἡμῶν ἐγενήθητε καὶ τοῦ κυρίου).<sup>220</sup> This is no mere ‘commonsense piece of advice’, rather Paul is ‘setting himself in a *structurally similar position* to that of Christ’.<sup>221</sup> However, it seems most likely that Paul is not here picturing himself as a dynamic visualisation of the exalted Christ whom believers otherwise would have no access to. Rather it seems that it was Christ’s earthly life that is the content of this imitation.<sup>222</sup>

<sup>220</sup> Galatians contains a related motif. Having explained how his readers are no longer slaves but sons, Paul expresses exasperation that they are turning back to the elements of their slavery (4:10). He calls them to imitate him (4:12) and reminds them of the beginning of their relationship. Though he came to them because of sickness (4:13), they gladly received him. In fact, Paul says, they received him ‘as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus’ (ὡς ἄγγελον θεοῦ ἐδέξασθέ με, ὡς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν[4:14]). The two descriptions ‘as angel of God’ and ‘as Christ Jesus’ stand in apposition. The Galatians received Paul as if he were Christ Jesus himself. However, it seems to be an overloading of this verse to posit an angelomorphic Christology as does Charles A. Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology: Antecedents and Early Evidence* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 315-325. As Sullivan notes, Paul is probably using hyperbole here and so it is hard to press this verse too strongly for its christological value [Kevin P. Sullivan, *Wrestling with Angels: a Study of the Relationship between Angels and Humans in Ancient Jewish Literature and the New Testament* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 124]. What seems to be in view is similar to the thought in *Didache* 11:4, that the apostle should be received ‘as the Lord’ (ὡς κύριος).

<sup>221</sup> E. A. Castelli, *Imitating Paul: A Discourse of Power* (LCBI, Louisville: Westminster/Knox, 1991), 112. Emphasis added. Castelli sees this as an abuse of power in that it indicates that Paul appears ‘to confuse his own position with that of Christ’. Others have responded. In response see K. Ehrensperger, *Paul and the Dynamics of Power: Communication and Interaction in the Early Christ-Movement* (LNTS 325, London: T&T Clark, 2007) and Victor A. Copan, *Saint Paul as Spiritual Director: an Analysis of the Imitation of Paul with Implications and Applications to the Practice of Spiritual Direction* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2007).

<sup>222</sup> Most of this debate centres on the question of whether Paul is relying on knowledge of the earthly life of Jesus from the ‘Jesus Tradition’ or whether he is claiming revelation from the exalted Christ (See the discussion in Seyoon Kim, ‘Imitatio Christi (1 Corinthians 11:1): How Paul Imitates Jesus Christ in Dealing with Idol Food (1 Corinthians 8-10),’ *BBR* 13.2 (2003): 198-210). However, even those who deny that Paul is drawing on the life and teaching of the historical Jesus, generally tend to argue that Paul is focussing on the example of the *past* redemptive activity of God in Christ. More broadly, Otto Merk, ‘Nachahmung Christi: Zur ethischen Perspektiven in der paulinischen Theologie: Festschrift für R. Schnackenburg’ in *Neues Testament und Ethik* (ed. H. Merklein; Freiburg: Herder, 1989), 201 argues that this imitation is centred on events of salvation history – the cross, the coming of the pre-existent one. It does not refer an imitation of the earthly Jesus, based on the details of his life. Similarly Wolfgang Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther (1Kor 6,12-11,16)* (EKKNT 8.2, Zürich: Neukirchener Verlag, 1995), 477. This seems to fit the broad context of 1 Corinthians 11:1 where Paul appeals to the death of Christ (e.g. 6:20; 8:11; 10:16-17) rather than the details of Christ’s life. Paul in trying to please both Jew and Greek refused to seek his own advantage (10:33) is imitating the Lord who gave his own life for others. However, in 1 Thessalonians 1:6, Paul qualifies their imitation of him and the Lord by the phrase δεξάμενοι τὸν λόγον ἐν θλίψει πολλῇ μετὰ χαρᾶς πνεύματος ἁγίου. Their reception of the word under pressure surely mirrors in a broad sense the oppression that the Lord suffered *throughout his earthly ministry*. The participle with δεξάμενοι could be instrumental or temporal i.e. they became imitators *by* receiving the word under pressure or *when* they did so. The latter seems more likely given, as Wanamaker points out (Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 81), it is hard to understand how Paul would have thought of the Lord specifically receiving the word under pressure. In any case, whether Paul refers to the earthly life of Jesus or simply the past salvation-historical actions that God worked through Christ (incarnation, death, resurrection), in both cases this imitation motif is focussed on the *past activity* of the one, undivided Christ. It does not seem to be focussed on *his current exalted state*. Betz [Hans Dieter Betz, *Nachfolge und Nachahmung Jesu Christi im Neuen Testament* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1967), 144] argues that the Thessalonians mimesis ‘of the Lord’ is grounded in the coming of the gospel to Thessalonica. As such, although Betz assumes that there is a unity of identity with Christ, he argues that the Thessalonians’ mimesis is directed not to the ‘Jesus of the Gospels’ since the Gospels never describe Jesus preaching the gospel as Paul does here ἐν δυνάμει καὶ ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ καὶ ἐν πληροφορίᾳ πολλῇ (1:5). Rather their imitation is directed to Paul as he ‘lives in Christ’. In other words, the imitation ‘sieht sich nicht verbunden mit dem Leben und Wirken Jesus *damals*, sondern mit dem *gegenwärtig* wirkenden Christus, der freilich kein anderer ist als der gekreuzigte Jesus’. However, even though

In this section we will not then consider the motifs of apostleship or imitation. Rather our approach will be to examine a number of passages where Paul explicitly refers to the ongoing agency of Christ in his apostleship.<sup>223</sup> Here we see that Christ is not simply someone *made present* by the apostle, but one who is actively at work *through* his apostle. Paul's role as an apostle was more than *simply* acting as the representative of an absent sender.

### 3.2.1 Christ Working through Paul (Rom 15:18-19)<sup>224</sup>

As Paul begins to draw his letter to the Church at Rome to a close, he returns to many of the themes with which he started the letter,<sup>225</sup> including the nature of his relationship with the church (cf. 1:11-15) – a church which he did not found but to which, nevertheless, he has written quite boldly (15:15). Paul's 'right' to write in this way stems, he argues, from his God-given role as a minister (λειτουργός)<sup>226</sup> of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles (εἰς τὰ ἔθνη [v.16]). This term λειτουργός is sufficiently flexible that its precise nuance is hard to determine, though some kind of cultic aspect seems to be presupposed given the immediate context where Paul describes the nature of his role in priestly terms.<sup>227</sup> He

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Betz goes on to note that it is the current suffering of the Thessalonians that connects them to the Lord Jesus, he fails to see that it is precisely this suffering that is the content of their imitation (ὕμεις μιμηταὶ ἡμῶν ἐγενήθητε καὶ τοῦ κυρίου δεξάμενοι τὸν λόγον ἐν θλίψει [1:6]). They are imitating the Lord Jesus as he suffered on earth.

<sup>223</sup> A number of other studies have examined the dynamic relationship between Christ and the apostle. For example Fritz Neugebauer, *In Christus: Eine Untersuchung zum Paulinischen Glaubenverständnis* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1961), 113-130; Gerhard Saß, *Apostlesamt und Kirche: Eine theologisch-exegetische Untersuchung des paulinischen Apostelbegriffs* (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1939), 73-75 and Schütz, *Paul and the Anatomy of Apostolic Authority*, 205-224. However these tend to consider the relationship in terms of how it functions to establish apostolic authority. Our purposes are different in that we will examine the motif from the christological angle.

<sup>224</sup> The question of whether and in what way Christ actively works through human beings other than Paul touches on the relationship between the mission of Christians in relationship to the mission of the apostle. On this question see J. Patrick Ware, *The Mission of the Church in Paul's Letter to the Philippians in the Context of Ancient Judaism* (Leiden: Brill, 2005). 1 Corinthians 15:58 may be relevant in this regard. In this concluding verse to Paul's discussion on the future resurrection, Paul exhorts his readers to be 'steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord (περισσεύοντες ἐν τῷ ἔργῳ τοῦ κυρίου πάντοτε)'. They can do so because they know that their 'labour in the Lord is not in vain' (ὁ κόπος ὑμῶν οὐκ ἔστιν κενὸς ἐν κυρίῳ). Although Paul may simply be exhorting the Corinthians to continue to abound in the work that the Lord requires of them, it may be that Paul has something more dynamic in view. They are to join in this work which the Lord is actively involved in.

<sup>225</sup> So most commentators including e.g. Dunn, *Romans*, 2:857; Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 886.

<sup>226</sup> Various other translations of this term have been suggested: 'servant' [Ulrich Wilckens, *Der Brief an die Römer* (3 vols., EKK, Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1978), 3:118]; 'priestly servant' (Fee, *God's Empowering Presence: the Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul*, 627; Lohse, *Der Brief an die Römer*, 394); 'ambassador' (Jewett, *Romans: a Commentary*, 906).

<sup>227</sup> In order to capture the fact that Paul did not envisage his ministry involving literal cultic activity, his priesthood has been described as 'metaphorical' [L. Ann Jervis, *The Purpose of Romans: a Comparative Letter Structure Investigation* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), 121]; 'verbalized' [Jewett, *Romans: a Commentary*, 907] or perhaps best: 'eschatological' [Dunn, *Romans*, 859; Käsemann, *An die Römer*, 376].



serves the gospel of God as a priest (ἱεουργοῦντα) so that the offering of the Gentiles<sup>228</sup> might be acceptable, sanctified in the Holy Spirit (15:16). Paul can therefore boast in Christ Jesus of *the things concerning God* (τὰ πρὸς τὸν θεόν) (15:17).<sup>229</sup> Paul can boast in this way, because he would not dare to speak of anything<sup>230</sup> except what Christ has worked (κατεργάσατο)<sup>231</sup> through him (δι' ἐμοῦ) for the obedience of the Gentiles.<sup>232</sup>

Paul expands on the nature of this work of Christ through him in a number of qualifying phrases: λόγῳ καὶ ἔργῳ, ἐν δυνάμει σημείων καὶ τεράτων, ἐν δυνάμει πνεύματος.<sup>233</sup> The first phrase (λόγῳ καὶ ἔργῳ) seems to be a summary of Paul's entire ministry.<sup>234</sup> The reference to signs and wonders is often linked to the Exodus event<sup>235</sup> and seen as proof that Paul sees his ministry as an 'eschatological fulfilment of God's great past salvation of his people'.<sup>236</sup> However, in the first instance we must not miss the testifying or validating function of this phrase in this context.<sup>237</sup> These signs and wonders underscore

<sup>228</sup> Understanding the genitive epexegetically. Many commentators note the parallel with Isa. 66:19-20, where God proclaims that in the last days he would send survivors from the nations to declare his glory among the nations and bring all their kindred 'from all the nations as an offering (LXX ἐκ πάντων τῶν ἐθνῶν δῶρον) for the Lord'. If the genitive is subjective then the understanding would be that Paul is offering the praise or obedience of the Gentiles [as argued by Rolf Dabelstein, *Beurteilung der Heiden Bei Paulus* (Frankfurt: Peter D Lang, 1981), 112-114].

<sup>229</sup> Probably referring to what Paul is about to discuss – hence the γάρ at the beginning of 15:18 (so Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 891; contra Jervis, *The Purpose of Romans: a Comparative Letter Structure Investigation*, 123).

<sup>230</sup> On the meaning of this slightly convoluted phrase, see most helpfully Cranfield, *Romans*, 2:757 who suggests that Paul used the negative expression ('I will not dare to speak of what Christ has not worked through me') in order to give 'greater emphasis to his rejection of the possibility of referring to something other than what Christ has wrought through him'. The grammatical disagreement between τι (singular) and ὧν (plural) is resolved if we understand the relative pronoun to be plural 'according to the sense' and to be referring to the many different 'things' alluded to by τι (so Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 892 n.47).

<sup>231</sup> A number of commentators suggest that the full force of the compound verb κατεργάζομαι (instead of the simple ἐργάζομαι or even ποιέω) should be retained (Dunn, *Romans*, 2:862; Jewett, *Romans: a Commentary*, 909). However, given Paul's use of κατεργάζομαι and ἐργάζομαι in 2 Corinthians 7:10 with no apparent difference in meaning, we should be cautious in reading too much into its use here in Romans 15:18.

<sup>232</sup> Probably meaning the conversion of the Gentiles –so Lohse, *Der Brief an die Römer*, 395.

<sup>233</sup> There is a difficult textual problem here. Both θεοῦ and ἀγίου as qualifiers of πνεύματος are well attested. However the absence of any qualifier though preserved in only one Uncial (B) is quite possibly the original with the others understood as expansions to complete the phrase (so Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 473 – though the UBS committee could not bring themselves to go with such slender evidence and went with the earliest witness B46).

<sup>234</sup> Cf. 2 Corinthians 10:11 and also Colossians 3:17 where the author instructs his readers to thankfully do whatever they do 'in word or in deed' ἐν λόγῳ ἢ ἐν ἔργῳ cf. Jewett, *Romans: a Commentary*, 910; Käsemann, *An die Römer*, 379.

<sup>235</sup> A fixed formula for Paul (Schmithals, *Der Römerbrief: ein Kommentar*, 529) which points back to the exodus (Ex 7:3; Deut 4:34; 6:22; 7:19; 26:8; 34:11; Neh 9:10; Ps 104:27 LXX).

<sup>236</sup> Schreiner, *Romans*, 768 cf. S Schreiber, *Paulus als Wundertäter: redaktionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zur Apostelgeschichte und den authentischen Paulusbriefen* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1996), 202.

<sup>237</sup> Jewett, *Romans: a Commentary*, 910; B. Kollmann, 'Paulus als Wundertäter' in *Paulinische Christologie. Exegetische Beiträge. Hans Hübnert zum 70 Geburtstag* (ed. U. Schnelle, T. Söding, and M. Labahn; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000), 82. This seems to be especially the use of the phrase in the NT cf. 2 Corinthians 12:12 (though sometimes in a negative sense cf. Matt 24:24; Mark 13:22 cf. Deut 13:1-5).

Paul's claim that Christ is, in fact, working through him.<sup>238</sup> The final qualifying phrase *in the power of the Spirit* (ἐν δυνάμει πνεύματος)<sup>239</sup> is the most intriguing. Some have suggested a chiasmic arrangement whereby ἐν δυνάμει σημείων καὶ τεράτων qualifies λόγῳ and ἐν δυνάμει πνεύματος qualifies ἔργῳ.<sup>240</sup> While possible, it seems more likely with most commentators that Paul would understand all his ministry to be done ἐν δυνάμει πνεύματος.

For our purposes, two questions are important to consider. First, what is the relationship between Christ and the Spirit in this activity? Some understand the connection quite generally: the work of Christ is simultaneously the work of the Spirit.<sup>241</sup> Jewett, however, argues specifically that the 'genitive construction indicates that the *source* of the power is the Spirit, while the parallel expression in the preceding verse shows that Christ is the *agent* in such exhibitions of power'.<sup>242</sup> However, it seems better to see Christ as the agent and the Spirit here not as the source but as the 'medium through which and the mode in which the exalted Lord is present and active in his minister'.<sup>243</sup>

Second, how are we to understand the relative contributions of Christ and Paul? Jewett takes an extreme position when he states that the 'accomplishments to be touted are "in Christ" and, as the next verse will show, they have been performed by Christ *rather than* by Paul himself'.<sup>244</sup> However, this overstates Paul's portrayal of Christ here. Rather with Dunn we should note 'the balance of Χριστὸς δι' ἐμοῦ: anything achieved has been done by Christ; but the agency is Paul's'.<sup>245</sup>

Both qualifiers (δι' ἐμοῦ and ἐν δυνάμει πνεύματος) highlight the absence of Christ since they underline the fact that he does not act *directly* or in an *unmediated* way. However,

<sup>238</sup> Käsemann, *An die Römer*, 376 'die Erfahrung göttlicher Gegenwart in eschatologischen Machttaten bezeichnet'; cf. Kollmann, 'Paulus als Wundertäter', 82.

<sup>239</sup> The genitive πνεύματος may be exegetical 'the power that is the Spirit' (e.g., Käsemann, *An die Römer*, 376), but perhaps is more likely subjective 'the power exercised [through me] by the Spirit' (Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 893).

<sup>240</sup> E.g. Otto Michel, *Der Brief an die Römer* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978), 329.

<sup>241</sup> So Kollmann, 'Paulus als Wundertäter', 82-83; Lohse, *Der Brief an die Römer*, 395-396 and Schreiber, *Paulus als Wundertäter*, 206.

<sup>242</sup> Jewett, *Romans: a Commentary*, 911.

<sup>243</sup> Fatehi, *The Spirit's Relation to the Risen Lord in Paul*, 172. He further notes (173) that Paul is relating the agency of Christ and the Spirit in a way that understands Christ to be working *through* the Spirit. In other words, contra Hermann Gunkel, *Die Wirkungen des heiligen Geistes nach der populären Anschauung der apostolischen Zeit und der Lehre des Apostels Paulus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1899), 90, the picture here is not simply that Christ has sent the Spirit down from heaven to work in believers –rather he himself is at work through the Spirit. Cf. Hermann, *Kyrios und Pneuma*, 122: 'Christus wirkt durch den Apostel in der Kraft des Gottesgeistes. Christus ist das eigentliche Subjekt des apostolischen Wortes und er der durch Zeichen und Wunder und Pneuma-Erweis bestätigten Handlung. Und er wirkt vermittelt der Kraft des Gottesgeistes' (emphasis added).

<sup>244</sup> Jewett, *Romans: a Commentary*, 909. Emphasis added. Cf. Wilckens, *Der Brief an die Römer*, 3:118-119.

<sup>245</sup> Dunn, *Romans*, 2:862. Cf. Schreiber, *Paulus als Wundertäter*, 205.

crucially he is here portrayed as the *subject* (κατειργάσατο Χριστὸς δι' ἐμοῦ). Paul is not *simply* a substitute or representative working on *behalf* of an *absent* Christ. No he is a minister, *through whom* Christ actively works. The fact that Christ works in this mediated way reflects the fact of his bodily absence. However, the mediation is almost transparent – it is Christ *himself* who is working through Paul.<sup>246</sup> Believers who are impacted by Paul's apostolic ministry are actually being worked on by the exalted Lord Jesus himself. Christ's absence does not entail inactivity. The proclaimed remains the proclaimer.<sup>247</sup>

### 3.2.1 Christ Speaking through Paul (2 Cor 13:1-4)

In 2 Corinthians 13:3 Paul raises the issue of whether Christ is speaking through him. Here Paul continues to address an issue that he has already touched upon in chapter 10 (cf. 10:1, 11), namely the supposed distinction between his physical presence with the Corinthians and his letters written to them in his absence. The Corinthians seem to understand Paul to have double standards. He is humble when present with them (κατὰ πρόσωπον μὲν ταπεινὸς ἐν ὑμῖν) but bold while away (ἀπὼν δὲ θαρρῶ εἰς ὑμᾶς) from them (10:1). In fact, some were saying that while his letters were 'weighty and strong' (βαρεῖαι καὶ ἰσχυραί), his bodily presence (ἡ παρουσία τοῦ σώματος) was weak (ἀσθενής) and his speech (ὁ λόγος) worthy of contempt (ἐξουθενημένος [10:10]). In defence, Paul affirms that what he is 'in his<sup>248</sup> words' (οἳοί ἐσμεν τῷ λόγῳ) through his letters while absent (δι' ἐπιστολῶν ἀπόντες), this he is while present 'in deed' (παρόντες τῷ ἔργῳ 10:11). Paul then spends the next chapter and a half (10:12-12:10) comparing himself to the 'super-apostles' (οἱ ὑπερλίαν ἀπόστολοι) concluding that even though he is 'nothing', he is not inferior to these super-apostles – since the 'signs' of an apostle were performed among them by him (σημεῖοις τε καὶ τέρασιν καὶ δυνάμεσιν 12:12). Paul is about to make his third visit to the Corinthians (12:14; 13:1)<sup>249</sup> and as he prepares he does so in fear – fear that he will not find them as he wants them to be and that they will not find him as they want him to be (12:20). Paul expands his own fear in terms of finding the Corinthians beset by sins such as arrogance

<sup>246</sup> It is this fact that leads to the overstatements of Jewett et al above. Cf. also Schmithals, *Der Römerbrief: ein Kommentar*, 529: 'Nicht Paulus selbst, sondern Christus hat also gewirkt'.

<sup>247</sup> To reverse Bultmann's oft-quoted phrase 'aus dem Verkündiger ist der Verkündigte geworden' [Rudolf Bultmann, *Theologie des Neuen Testaments* (2 vols., Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1953), 1:34]. In fact, for Bultmann the great 'Rätsel' of NT theology was *how* 'aus dem Verkündiger der Verkündigte wurde' [Rudolf Bultmann, 'Die Christologie des Neuen Testaments' in *Glauben und Verstehen: Gesammelte Aufsätze Band 1* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1933), 266]. On Bultmann see further the conclusion of this chapter.

<sup>248</sup> As we have seen elsewhere in 2 Corinthians, Paul seems to alternate between first person singular and plural. For our purposes, as previously, we will assume that the plural references primarily apply to Paul himself.

<sup>249</sup> The previous visits were presumably the founding visit and the 'painful visit' (2:1).

and disorder,<sup>250</sup> and also his being humbled before them by God over those who had sinned earlier (τῶν προημαρτηκότων) but remain unrepentant of their impurity (ἀκαθαρσία), sexual immorality (πορνεία) and sensual practices (ἀσελγεία ἢ ἔπραξαν 12:21).

Paul continues these ideas into chapter 13 by warning them in the same way in his absence (ἀπὼν νῦν) as he did when he was with them (ὡς παρῶν 13:2)<sup>251</sup> that when he comes (ἐὰν ἔλθω)<sup>252</sup> he will not spare those who sinned earlier or ‘any of the others’ (13:2).<sup>253</sup> Paul underlines the *continuity* in his stance towards them whether he is absent or present (cf. 13:10). Paul issues this warning ‘since’ (ἐπεὶ) they are demanding proof (δοκιμὴν ζητεῖτε) that the exalted Christ is speaking through him (ἐν ἐμοί [13:2]).<sup>254</sup> Here, as we have already seen, is the strong connection between Christ and his apostle. Paul does not simply speak as a representative for an absent Christ. Rather, the risen Lord speaks *through* (ἐν) his apostle<sup>255</sup> and so ‘der Auferstandene selbst begegnet im Apostel’.<sup>256</sup>

<sup>250</sup> Specifically quarrelling (ἔρις), jealousy (ζῆλος), anger (θυμοί), enmity (ἐριθείαι), slander (καταλαλιά), gossip (ψιθυρισμοί), pride (φουσιώσεις) and disorder (ἀκαταστασία).

<sup>251</sup> Some argue that ὡς παρῶν should be read with προλέγω i.e. ‘I warn you now as if present’. However, as Thrall, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 2:876 points out, that would render the reference to his absence (καὶ ἀπὼν νῦν) superfluous.

<sup>252</sup> The normal meaning of ἐὰν is ‘if’ but it can be understood as ‘when’ (See BDAG 268.2 which lists 1 Jn 2:28; Jn 12:32, 14:3; Heb 3:7 in the NT cf. also 1 Jn 3:2). As Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 472 notes, ‘it makes little sense to “threaten” someone if the person issuing the threat is doubtful of returning to make good on that threat’.

<sup>253</sup> Most likely the rest of the congregation who may not have sinned but may have tacitly condoned the sin (Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 576). Less likely are the suggestions that it refers to those who have also sinned since Paul’s last visit (Plummer, *Second Corinthians*, 373) or recent converts unknown to Paul who have been sinning (Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 471).

<sup>254</sup> Aspects of the syntax of the clause ‘δοκιμὴν ζητεῖτε τοῦ ἐν ἐμοί λαλοῦντος Χριστοῦ’ have been debated. There is no significant difference between reading τοῦ [...] Χριστοῦ as a subjective genitive (i.e. they seek the proof *which consists in* Christ speaking through Paul) or as an objective genitive (i.e. they seek proof that Christ is speaking through Paul) though the latter is probably more likely (thus understanding the clause as equivalent to ὅτι ὁ Χριστὸς λαλεῖ with Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 912). More significant is the question concerning whether ἐν ἐμοί should be rendered ‘in me’ (e.g. Barrett, *Second Corinthians*, 334) or ‘through me’ (Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 570). In favour of the former is the parallel reference to Christ being among or ‘in’ the Corinthians (ἐν ὑμῖν) at the end of the verse (so Thrall, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 2:879). However, as well as possible parallels in the LXX where God’s speaking through prophets is followed by the preposition ἐν e.g. Zech 7:7; Hag 2:1 (though as Thrall notes the LXX more frequently uses the phrase ἐν χειρὶ rather than the simple ἐν), it would seem that neither Paul nor the Corinthians are questioning Paul’s spirituality but his apostolic legitimacy (Käsemann, ‘Die Legitimität des Apostels. Eine Untersuchung zu II Korinther 10-13,’ 37-43; 47).

<sup>255</sup> Cf. 12:19 where Paul states that he has been speaking before God in Christ (κατέναντι θεοῦ ἐν Χριστῷ) for their up-building (ὕπερ τῆς ὑμῶν οἰκοδομῆς). There is a possible parallel here in Paul’s statement in 1 Thessalonians 4:15 when Paul tells the Thessalonians that what he says ‘by a word of the Lord (ἐν λόγῳ κυρίου)’. For a recent survey of approaches to this passage see Luckensmeyer, *Eschatology of First Thessalonians*, 192-211. As Luckensmeyer notes, a decision as to whether this represents a saying of the earthly Jesus or the exalted Jesus is ‘often predicated upon a methodological predilection regarding a minimalist or maximalist inclination of each scholar’ (189). He also notes that the question of whether there was a distinction between the sayings of the earthly Jesus and exalted Jesus further complicates the discussion’ (189). Luckensmeyer’s own opinion is that ‘[f]ailing the discovery of a new variant in the Synoptic Apocalypse or a new *agraphon* which identifies the λόγος κυρίου as from the earthly Jesus, *one* solution is to interpret Paul’s reference as an indication that he received a word from the exalted Lord, paraphrased it into his own words and uses it as an authoritative solution to the Thessalonians’ questions about those asleep’. If this is the

What sort of proof were the Corinthians seeking? How could Paul have demonstrated that Christ was indeed speaking through him? Commentators suggest a number of possibilities, but it is most likely that it is Paul's execution of his warning not to spare them (οὐ φείσομαι [13:2]) that provides the proof that Christ is speaking through him.<sup>257</sup> Though this may not be the proof that they are expecting,<sup>258</sup> it does underline the unity of Paul's stance towards the Corinthians whether absent from or present with them. This is confirmed as we see how Paul continues his argument.

Having noted that the Corinthians are seeking proof that Christ is speaking through Paul, he immediately defines Christ as ὃς εἰς ὑμᾶς οὐκ ἄσθενεῖ ἀλλὰ δυνατεῖ ἐν ὑμῖν (13:3). Paul may be ironically re-stating a Corinthian slogan<sup>259</sup> or correcting the Corinthians' understanding of power.<sup>260</sup> However, it would seem most likely that Paul is building his argument – you seek proof that Christ is speaking through me, well first you need to know that Christ is not weak among you, but powerful. Here is a strong statement concerning the presence of Christ amongst his people. How are we to understand this presence (in the light of Christ's bodily absence cf. 2 Cor 5:6)? It is generally agreed that verse 4 substantiates verse 3.<sup>261</sup> Paul then continues to correct this understanding of the 'power of Christ'. Yes, Christ is powerful among them for indeed Christ was crucified because of his human weakness<sup>262</sup> but lives because of God's power (ἐκ δυνάμεως θεοῦ).<sup>263</sup>

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case, then as L. W. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 150-151 notes, this 'attribution of prophecy to the exalted Jesus is simply extraordinary' and 'provides us another important and remarkable way in which the risen Christ functioned in the corporate devotional life of early Christians'.

<sup>256</sup> Bultmann, *Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, 1:301. Emphasis added.

<sup>257</sup> Plummer, *Second Corinthians*, 374; Thrall, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 2:882.

<sup>258</sup> Such as charismatic signs: Walter Schmithals, *Die Gnosis in Korinth. Eine Untersuchung zu den Korintherbriefen* (FRLANT 66, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1969 [1956]), 226; Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 455.

<sup>259</sup> Thrall, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 2:881; Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 913. Or it could be a simple reference to the power of Christ that has resulted in the foundation of the church – the very fact that there was a Church in the city of Corinth. E.g. Plummer, *Second Corinthians*, 374.

<sup>260</sup> Cf. J Calvin, *Commentary on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians* (trans. John Pringle, Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1848), 13:3.

<sup>261</sup> Ulrich Heckel, *Kraft in Schwachheit: Untersuchungen zu 2. Kor 10-13* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1993), 131; Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 571.

<sup>262</sup> For a history of the interpretation of ἐξ ἄσθενείας, see the extensive survey in Heckel, *Kraft in Schwachheit: Untersuchungen zu 2. Kor 10-13*, 125-130 who summarises 5 main interpretations: some textual witnesses add εἶ thus indicating a concessive sense ('though Christ was crucified in weakness, he was raised by the power of God'); some early exegetes understood the weakness to be human sin; Chrysostom argues that the 'weakness' is only such from the viewpoint of unbelievers i.e. it is only an 'apparent' weakness; others have denied that the ἐκ has a causal sense and that the phrase should be rendered 'as a weak person' (e.g. Bultmann, *Der zweite Brief an die Korinther*, 245); finally the position of D. A. Black who argues that 'Christ's weakness was the weakness of obedience to God' [David Alan Black, *Paul, Apostle of Weakness: Astheneia and its Cognates in the Pauline Literature* (New York: Lang, 1984), 162]. On balance, it seems best to give ἐκ (ἐξ) the same sense in both parts of 13:4ab. Accordingly, a causal sense fits best. The weakness which is 'essentially inherent in mortal

Christ is powerful amongst the Corinthians (δυνατεῖ ἐν ὑμῖν). Paul expands on this statement in two parallel clauses in 13:4:

- A καὶ γὰρ ἐσταυρώθη ἐξ ἀσθενείας,  
 B ἀλλὰ ζῆ ἐκ δυνάμεως θεοῦ.  
 C καὶ γὰρ ἡμεῖς ἀσθενοῦμεν ἐν αὐτῷ,  
 D ἀλλὰ ζήσομεν σὺν αὐτῷ ἐκ δυνάμεως θεοῦ εἰς ὑμᾶς.<sup>264</sup>

The parallelism is obvious but it is also important to notice the differences.<sup>265</sup> Firstly, there is the perhaps unsurprising lack of reference to crucifixion in C. Secondly, in C, Paul adds the emphatic ἡμεῖς.<sup>266</sup> Thirdly, both Paul's weakness and his strength are 'christologically conditioned'.<sup>267</sup> That is, he is weak in Christ (ἐν αὐτῷ) and he will live with Christ (σὺν αὐτῷ). Fourthly, there is a difference in tenses from aorist (ἐσταυρώθη) to present (ζῆ, ἀσθενοῦμεν) to future (ζήσομεν). But perhaps the most surprising difference is that in D Paul's living is qualified with respect to the Corinthians. He will live by the power of God 'towards the Corinthians' (εἰς ὑμᾶς).

What does Paul mean by this statement 'we will live with him because of the power of God towards you' (ζήσομεν σὺν αὐτῷ ἐκ δυνάμεως θεοῦ εἰς ὑμᾶς)?<sup>268</sup> His reference to living stands in parallel to the resurrection life of Christ. As a consequence, this reference to living *with Christ* (σὺν αὐτῷ) suggests to some an eschatological context.<sup>269</sup> Again, however, the context and the concluding εἰς ὑμᾶς suggest that Paul has his upcoming visit to Corinth in view.<sup>270</sup> When Paul visits he will live *with Christ* by the power of God *with respect to the Corinthians*. Is Paul simply pointing to 'his own inclusion in the story and character of Jesus'?<sup>271</sup> That is, 'because of the apostle's intimate relationship with Jesus [...] he embodies the same mode of human existence as the latter'.<sup>272</sup> It may be that a parallel in

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human existence' was the cause of his death (Thrall, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 2:884. So also Barrett, *Second Corinthians*, 327; Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 914).

<sup>263</sup> Quite probably a reference to the Spirit cf. Rom 1:4; 8:11.

<sup>264</sup> On the textual variant here see Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 518 who argues that the change to σὺν αὐτῷ in a number of witnesses occurred under the influence of the σὺν αὐτῷ in 13:4d. In other witnesses, the reverse change occurs (i.e. ἐν αὐτῷ in 13:4d). The text as here has strong external support.

<sup>265</sup> See J. Lambrecht, 'Philological and Exegetical Notes on 2 Cor 13,4,' *Bijdragen* 46.3 (1985): 589-590.

<sup>266</sup> *Ibid.*: 589.

<sup>267</sup> *Ibid.*: 590.

<sup>268</sup> On the use of the plural primarily referring to Paul himself see Carrez, 'Le 'Nous' En 2 Corinthiens,' 482, 485.

<sup>269</sup> E.g. Adolf Deissmann, *Die neutestamentliche Formel 'in Christo Jesu'* (Marburg: N. G. Elwert, 1892), 126 who argues that Paul understood the formula in a purely eschatological sense (as cited in Hoffmann, *Die Toten in Christus*, 303).

<sup>270</sup> Lambrecht, 'Philological and Exegetical Notes on 2 Cor 13,4,' 598; Thrall, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 887.

<sup>271</sup> Stegman, *The Character of Jesus*, 209.

<sup>272</sup> *Ibid.*

1 Corinthians 5:4 where the community is gathered with Paul and with τῆ δυνάμει τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ may help us.

*Excursus: A Possible Parallel in 1 Corinthians 5.* In 1 Corinthians 5, Paul tells the Corinthians that he has found out that a member of their congregation has been sleeping with his step-mother. Paul is outraged not only by this behaviour but also because the Corinthians have done nothing about it *and* continue to have a high opinion of their spiritual status (5:2). Paul is astounded that the Corinthians have not acted to remove this man from their congregation (5:2). Writing from Ephesus (16:8), it does not seem as if Paul is in any position actually to do anything about this offence. However, Paul continues in verse 3 to tell the Corinthians that though he is absent in body (ἀπὸν τῷ σώματι), he is present in spirit (παρὸν δὲ τῷ πνεύματι) and that ‘as present’ (ὡς παρὸν) he has already passed judgment (ἤδη κέκρικα) on the one who has sinned in this way that he should be excluded from the congregation (v. 5).<sup>273</sup> Though currently in Ephesus, Paul is with them ‘in spirit’ meaning that when they are assembled it with his spirit (καὶ τοῦ ἑμοῦ πνεύματος). Further, they are assembled together with the power of the Lord Jesus (σὺν τῆ δυνάμει τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ [v.4]). The passage forms a strong parallel with Matthew 18:15-20. Without suggesting dependence one way or another, it does seem that these two passages reflect a very similar understanding of church discipline and may both reflect an earlier common tradition.<sup>274</sup> In the Matthew passage, Jesus tells the disciples that the unrepentant offender is to be treated like a tax collector or sinner. This seems to be parallel to the sinner being ‘handed over to Satan’ in 1 Corinthians 5. Jesus further tells the disciples that if two or three are gathered ‘in his name’ (εἰς τὸ ἕμὸν ὄνομα), then he is ‘in their midst’ (εἶμι ἐν μέσῳ αὐτῶν [18:20]). Here the assembling, then, is in the name of the Lord Jesus and Jesus is with the disciples. If 1 Corinthians 5:1-5 and Matthew 18:20 are to be read in parallel, this would suggest that the phrase σὺν τῆ δυνάμει τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ has a stronger sense than simply ‘in [or with] the authority of the Lord Jesus’. Rather, in some sense, Jesus is actually

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<sup>273</sup> Paul’s description of himself as ‘absent in body’ but ‘present in spirit’ has obvious parallels with Christ’s own location.

<sup>274</sup> Brian S. Rosner, *Paul, Scripture and Ethics: a Study of 1 Corinthians 5-7* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 89-90 notes three similarities between the two passages. In both passages the whole church is involved in the process of excommunication. Secondly, in both cases the Lord Jesus is ‘the real agent of judgment’. Finally, both passages ‘share a concern for the welfare of the sinner’. In Matthew the series of cautious steps up to the excommunication are steps to winning the brother (Matt 18:15). As G. W. H. Lampe, ‘Church Discipline and the Interpretation of the Epistles to the Corinthians’ in *Christian History and Interpretation: Studies Presented to John Knox* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 346 notes we are ‘introduced to the Corinthian story at a late stage’ possibly after such appeals.

understood to be powerfully present. The Lord *himself* is present in power.<sup>275</sup> It would seem that the ‘absent in body present in spirit’ dynamic that Paul understood about his own location applies to Christ too. He is present *by the Spirit*.

Paul may be assuming a similar dynamic in 2 Corinthians 13:1-4. When he visits to discipline the Corinthians and is assembled with them, it will not simply be the Corinthians and Paul but the Lord Jesus himself will be *spiritually* present too. As such, Paul will live *with Christ* by the power of God to the Corinthians (σὺν αὐτῷ ἐκ δυνάμεως θεοῦ εἰς ὑμᾶς [13:4]). However, in 1 Corinthians 5 though Christ is present, it is *Paul’s* action that is emphasised. He is the one who passes judgment (5:3).<sup>276</sup> In contrast in 2 Corinthians 13 it is Christ who is powerful among the congregation (δυνατεῖ ἐν ὑμῖν [v.3]),<sup>277</sup> but the nature of his powerful activity is not expanded upon. In our next section, however, we see a clear description of Christ’s activity.

### 3.3 Impersonal Mediation: Discipline (1 Cor 11:27-34)

In his analysis of Paul’s description of the Lord’s Supper in 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 Hans-Josef Klauck discerns four modes of Christ’s presence.<sup>278</sup> First, the *prinzipale Personalpräsenz* is the personal presence of exalted Lord in ‘seiner pneumatischen-leiblichen Seinsweise’ whereby he acts in his role as head of the table who summons his own to the meal and gives gifts to them.<sup>279</sup> Second, the *kommemorativ Aktualpräsenz* reflects the fact that the exalted one who is spiritually present also bears the marks of the crucified one. In this ‘commemorative’ look at the cross it becomes present here and now (*actualiter*).<sup>280</sup> Third,

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<sup>275</sup> Gräbe, *The Power of God in Paul’s Letters*, 74: ‘Although it almost seems as if the power of Christ is hypostatized in this passage, this is not the case. The presence of the power of Christ is the presence of Christ with his power. The *reality* of the presence of the Lord within the gathering of the congregation is underlined by referring to the presence of the power of Jesus. Within the context of Pauline theology (and the way in which it is expressed in 1 Corinthians), it is certainly correct to associate the presence of the exalted Lord with the power of his *Spirit* in the midst of the praying congregation’.

<sup>276</sup> Though there is significant debate concerning the relative activity of Paul and the Corinthians.

<sup>277</sup> Assuming this is not a Corinthian slogan.

<sup>278</sup> First presented at the conclusion of Hans-Josef Klauck, *Herrenmahl und hellenistischer Kult: eine religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zum ersten Korintherbrief* (N.T.A 15, Münster: Aschendorff, 1982), 373-374 and then developed in Hans-Josef Klauck, ‘Präsenz im Herrenmahl: 1 Kor 11:23-26 im Kontext hellenistischer Religionsgeschichte’ in *Gemeinde - Amt - Sakrament: Neutestamentliche Perspektiven* (ed. H. J. Klauck; Würzburg: Echter, 1989), 313-330.

<sup>279</sup> Klauck argues (Klauck, ‘Präsenz im Herrenmahl’, 326-327) that this is an aspect of the description of the meal as κυριακὸν δεῖπνον (1 Cor 11:20) and finds a strong parallel in the description of the meals of the Serapis cult where Serapis is ‘Spendengeber und Spendenempfänger in einem’ (Aristides Or 45:27).

<sup>280</sup> Although there are parallels with the mystery cults, the issue of time is the most significant factor in that, the Lord of the Lord’s Supper ‘ist keine Gestalt mythischer Vergangenheit, sondern Jesus von Nazareth, dessen Kreuzestod zur Zeit, da Paulus schreibt, noch kein Menschenalter zurückliegt’ (Ibid., 327).



the aspect of the *proleptische Finalpräsenz* reflects the fact that this meal proleptically anticipates the eschatological meal as reflected in the important phrase ‘until he comes’ (1 Cor 11:26).<sup>281</sup> However, of most significance for Klauck is the motif of the *somatische Realpräsenz* on which he comments

Somatische Realpräsenz besagt, daß Leib (σῶμα) und Blut des gekreuzigten Christus in den Mahlelementen Brot und Wein *real* gegenwärtig sind. Auch die anderen Seinsweisen, die Gegenwart, Vergangenheit und Zukunft umspannen, sind real, aber sie verdichten sich in der somatischen Realpräsenz in einem konkreten Punkt.<sup>282</sup>

Klauck’s taxonomy of Christ’s presence in this passage is helpful but his concentration on Christ’s *somatische Realpräsenz* is problematic for two reasons. First, it is not at all clear that Paul is localizing Christ’s bodily presence *in* the bread and the wine.<sup>283</sup> At best the ontological import of Jesus’ words, ‘this is my body’ is elusive.<sup>284</sup> In fact, perhaps more significantly, the bread and the wine in this passage are fundamentally tied to the *absence* of Christ. The bread is to be eaten and the cup drunk *in remembrance of* Christ (εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν).<sup>285</sup> The mode of this remembrance is expounded (note the inferential γάρ) in verse 26. As often as they eat and drink, they proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes (τὸν θάνατον τοῦ κυρίου καταγγέλλετε ἄχρι οὗ ἔλθῃ).<sup>286</sup> The connection between remembering and proclaiming suggests that the former takes place in the latter.<sup>287</sup> Certainly, the Lord’s

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<sup>281</sup> Again though parallels can be seen with other religious meals, it is the question of time that is the important difference with the Lord’s Supper anticipating the ‘apocalyptic end time’ rather than the ‘timeless beyond’ (Ibid.).

<sup>282</sup> Klauck argues that this view derives from ‘die eigentümlich realistisch wirkende Argumentation des Paulus in 1 Kor 11,27–30, das Einbringen des κοινωνία-Begriffs in 1 Kor 10,16 und der Ausschließlichkeit in 1 Kor 10 zu hellenistischen Opfer- und Mysterienmählern’ (Ibid., 328). This analogy, Klauck argues, lies behind the references to ‘the cup of demons’, ‘the table of demons’ and the danger of becoming partakers in the table of demons. Klauck argues that there may be an example here of ‘theophagy’ – the idea of material appropriation of the divine life-force through participation in sacrifice and meal ceremonies. This is rightly rejected by Otfried Hofius, ‘The Lord’s Supper and the Lord’s Supper Tradition: Reflections on 1 Corinthians 11:23b-25’ in *One Loaf, One Cup: Ecumenical Studies of 1 Cor 11 and Other Eucharistic Texts The Cambridge Conference on the Eucharist August 1988* (ed. Ben F. Meyer; *New Gospel Studies* 6; Macon: Mercer University Press, 1993), 100 n.136).

<sup>283</sup> Klauck offers very little exegetical support for his contention.

<sup>284</sup> Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 621: ‘exegetically the meaning of “This is my body” (11.24) is as open and as ambiguous as the earlier talk of “spiritual” food (10.3)’. Cf. Hofius, ‘Lord’s Supper Tradition’, 100 n.136.

<sup>285</sup> Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 879 is correct to reject the view that ‘remembering’ in ancient religions mean that what is remembered was ‘tangibly experienced’. In his summary of the Biblical idea of ‘remembering’ he also correctly suggests that ‘failure to remember is not absent-mindedness but unfaithfulness to the covenant and disobedience’. However, when he states that the idea of remembering includes ‘the experience of being “there” in identification with the crucified Christ who is also “here” in his raised presence’ he seems to go beyond the Biblical evidence.

<sup>286</sup> As Hofius, ‘Lord’s Supper Tradition’, 107 notes this is an indicative not an imperative.

<sup>287</sup> Ibid. See his discussion on a number of Psalms that display a similar connection between remembering and proclaiming. However on page 108 he strains this parallel by suggesting that the proclamation does not occur in the celebration of the Lord’s Supper as such or in the accompanying preaching but in the ‘eucharistic prayers spoken over bread and cup’.

Supper itself cannot be reduced to a memorial meal for someone departed and the mandate to remember Jesus cannot simply be understood as a command to not forget Jesus.<sup>288</sup> However, particularly the command to *remember* Jesus presupposes his absence. ‘Remembering’ in the Bible certainly involves *more than* simply ‘not forgetting’<sup>289</sup> but it does not *exclude* that concept – and thus presupposes the absence of the person or thing which needs to be remembered. The need to remember in the Biblical tradition occurs precisely because the person or thing to be remembered is not present to the consciousness. For example, remembering the poor (Gal 2:10) certainly involves more than bringing them to mind. However, the very use of the word ‘remember’ (μνημονεύω) rather than, for example, the more specific ‘make a contribution’ (κοινωνίαν τινὰ ποιήσασθαι [Rom 15:26]) highlights the fact that they too easily slip from the consciousness and need to be actively ‘remembered’. Even God needs to be ‘remembered’<sup>290</sup> precisely because he too can slide from the consciousness of the believer. The need to ‘remember’ Christ occurs precisely because he is absent.<sup>291</sup>

Further, the Lord’s Supper is to be celebrated *until* he comes.<sup>292</sup> This phrase as well as defining the temporal limits of the celebration of the Lord’s Supper<sup>293</sup> also points to Jesus’ identity as the risen and exalted Lord.<sup>294</sup> The one whose death is proclaimed did not remain dead but is alive and will return one day. Thus, again, his absence is presupposed.<sup>295</sup>

Secondly, Klauck misses what may arguably be the most significant mode of Christ’s presence in this passage. Christ’s bodily absence in heaven does not preclude his activity amongst Christian believers on earth. In fact in this passage we have one of the most ‘intense’ descriptions of his presence. Here Christ acts as an agent of judgment. The language of judgment permeates this passage (ἀναξίως, ἔνοχος, δοκιμάζειν, κρίμα,

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<sup>288</sup> Ibid., 104.

<sup>289</sup> As both Ibid., 104-106 and Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 879 point out.

<sup>290</sup> With all that entails (see the discussion in Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 880).

<sup>291</sup> Thus Hofius, ‘Lord’s Supper Tradition’, 104. Hofius’ contention that ‘the expression εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν has [nothing] to do with the ancient meals in memory of the dead’ may be correct in terms of the structure and form of those meals. But that does not rule out a thematic correspondence that allows for the absence of Christ in the meal.

<sup>292</sup> Jeremias argued that ἄχρι οὗ ἔλθῃ had a purposive as well as temporal – cf. ‘Maranatha’ in 16:22. His view is rightly rejected by Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 887.

<sup>293</sup> Daniel G. Powers, *Salvation through Participation: an Examination of the Notion of the Believers’ Corporate Unity with Christ in Early Christian Soteriology* (Leuven: Peeters, 2001), 187.

<sup>294</sup> Ibid.

<sup>295</sup> [T]he meal acknowledges the absence of the Lord and mingles memory and hope, recalling his death and awaiting his coming again’ (Hays, *First Corinthians*, 197). Cf. Gunton, “‘Until He Comes’: Towards an Eschatology of Church Membership,’ 193: ‘In that respect, Paul is speaking of real absence, not real presence’.

διακρίνειν, κρίνειν, παιδεύειν, κατακρίνειν).<sup>296</sup> Eating and drinking in an unworthy manner (ἀναξίως) makes one guilty (ἔνοχος) of the body and blood of the Lord (v.27).<sup>297</sup> Thus a person should examine themselves (δοκιμαζέτω δὲ ἄνθρωπος ἑαυτὸν [v.28]). To eat and drink without discerning the body (μὴ διακρίνων τὸ σῶμα),<sup>298</sup> is to eat and drink judgment (κρίμα) on oneself (v.29). Because of this (διὰ τοῦτο) many of the Corinthians (ἐν ὑμῖν πολλοί) have become weak, or sick or even died (ἀσθενεῖς καὶ ἄρρωστοι καὶ κοιμῶνται ἱκανοί [v. 30]).<sup>299</sup> However (δέ), Paul states, ‘if we examine ourselves (ἑαυτοὺς διεκρίνομεν), we would not be judged (ἐκρινόμεθα)’ (v. 31). Paul then makes a clarification. When ‘we’ are judged (κρινόμενοι), it is by the Lord (δὲ ὑπὸ τοῦ κυρίου) and it is ‘discipline’ (παιδευόμεθα) so that we are not condemned with the world (ἵνα μὴ σὺν τῷ κόσμῳ κατακριθῶμεν [v. 32]).

<sup>296</sup> Judith M. Gundry Volf, *Paul and Perseverance: Staying in and Falling Away* (WUNT 2.37, Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1990), 99. cf. C. F. D. Moule, ‘The Judgment Theme in the Sacraments’ in *The Background of the New Testament and its Eschatology: Studies in Honour of C. H. Dodd* (ed. W.D. Davies and D. Daube; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956) cf. Calvin J. Roetzel, *Judgement in the Community: a Study of the Relationship between Eschatology and Ecclesiology in Paul* (Leiden: Brill, 1972), 136-137.

<sup>297</sup> Many English versions insert a gloss after ἔνοχος. So, the RSV has ‘guilty of profaning the body’, and the NIV has ‘guilty of sinning against the body’. However, the KJV reflects the Greek with ‘shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord’. While it may be fair to insert a ‘milder’ gloss like ‘so treating’ i.e. ‘guilty of so treating the body and blood of the Lord’ (e.g. Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 890), it may be that Paul rather wants to emphasise that those who are acting in this way are actually aligning themselves with the rulers of the present age who crucified the Lord (1 Cor 2:8) – so David E. Garland, *1 Corinthians* (BECNT, Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 550. As Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 890 suggests, what is in view here is not sacrilege of against the elements of the Lord’s Supper, but of actually sinning against Christ himself. That ‘body is not to be interpreted here as equivalent to church is shown by the addition of blood’ (Barrett, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 273 contra Schweitzer, *Die Mystik des Apostels Paulus*, 262-263. Rather partaking of the Lord’s Supper in a way which is not ‘fitting’ (Fee, *First Corinthians*, 560) renders one *in some sense* guilty of the Lord’s death.

<sup>298</sup> There is much debate concerning the referent of body in this verse with the Church and Christ’s own body being the most common views. That is, ‘not recognizing the body’ means acting in a way that fails to reflect the nature of the church or failing to reflect on the death of Jesus while eating the Supper. It has been argued that the lack of any kind of qualifier (i.e. ‘his’, ‘of Christ’) and the lack of mention of ‘blood’ tips the balance more towards seeing this as a reference to the Church (See Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 893 for a list of those who take this position). However, on the other side, and perhaps more convincingly, it is argued that the immediate context which speaks of Christ’s own crucified body tips us towards seeing this as a reference to the crucified body of Christ. As Thiselton puts it: ‘In this sense our verse states that they must recognize what characterizes the body as different, i.e., be mindful of the uniqueness of Christ, who is *separated* from others in the sense of giving himself for others in sheer grace. The Lord’s Supper, by underlining participation in, and identification with, the cruciform Christ, thereby generates the social transformation, which is Paul’s second concern. Nevertheless, he never leaves behind the proclamation of the cross (1:18-25) as the ground of identity transformation, and it is of the very essence of the Lord’s Supper (and of baptism) to keep this anchorage in grace and in the cross in sharp focus’ (Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 893).

<sup>299</sup> Pace Ilaria Ramelli, ‘Spiritual Weakness, Illness, and Death in 1 Corinthians 11:30,’ *JBL* 130.1 (2011): 145-163 cf. S. Schneider, ‘Glaubensmängel in Korinth. Eine neue Deutung der “Schwachen, Kranken, Schlafenden” in 1 Kor 11:30,’ *FNT* 9 (1996): 3-20 who argues that the three key words should be understood spiritually – culminating with spiritual death. She notes that the verb κοιμῶμαι usually refers to death in the NT but in quoting verses that refer to *spiritual* death (e.g. Rom 7:6; 1 Tim 5:6 etc.) does not explain the fact that in none of these references is κοιμῶμαι used. In fact, the verb – with its obvious physical imagery – is only ever used to refer to *physical* death.

Thus, the Corinthians are to reform their practice of the Lord's Supper so that when they come together it is not for judgment (ἵνα μὴ εἰς κρίμα συνέρχησθε [v. 34]).<sup>300</sup>

There are three things that are important to note concerning this judgment. First, it is a judgment which occurs in the present not the future.<sup>301</sup> Second, though the form of the judgment is serious enough to include death (κοιμῶνται), this judgment is not an anticipation of the eschatological judgment that the world will face.<sup>302</sup> There is a clear distinction between both the object and nature of this judgment ('we are disciplined' [παιδευόμεθα]) while the world is condemned (ἵνα μὴ σὺν τῷ κόσμῳ κατακριθῶμεν). Third, and most importantly, this present judgment does not result from magical property of the sacraments<sup>303</sup> or as a mere causal effect of the gluttony.<sup>304</sup> Rather it is carried out directly by the risen Lord (κρινόμενοι δὲ ὑπὸ [τοῦ] κυρίου [v.32]).<sup>305</sup>

A coming-together that fails to discern the body (v. 29) means a coming together for judgment (v. 34). The Lord acts in judgment (cf. 10:22 where he is provoked to jealousy by abuse of the Lord's Supper). Here is the risen Lord acting in the present with tangible,

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<sup>300</sup> In the first instance Paul's concern is on the nature of their *coming together* rather than the Lord's Supper as a sacramental meal Cf. Gunton, "'Until He Comes": Towards an Eschatology of Church Membership,' 193: 'In that respect, Paul is speaking of real absence, not real presence. The passage, furthermore, is devoted to the church's polity, its social and political constitution, as much as to its eucharistic worship, indeed, more than that, at least if the latter is narrowly conceived'.

<sup>301</sup> Pace Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 898 who offers no explanation. See the helpful discussion in Gundry Volf, *Paul and Perseverance*, 100-102 who summarises (and refutes) the two main reasons for seeing this judgment as *future* rather than present. First, when Paul uses κρίμα elsewhere it refers to the final judgment (Rom 2:2, 3; 3:8). However, in the other instances the noun is arthrous rather than anarthous as here. Second, the parallel reference to guilt (ἔνοχος) in 11:27 uses a future verb (ἔσται). If this refers to the future then one would expect the parallel in 11:29 to be future too. However it is more likely that this is a *futurum intensivum* [So e.g. Christian Wolff, *Der erste Brief des Paulus an die Korinther: Auslegung der Kapitel 8-16* (2nd ed., THKNT 7.2, Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1982), 94].

<sup>302</sup> On how death could be a form of discipline see Gundry Volf, *Paul and Perseverance*, 103-112. On page 102 she also interacts with Käsemann's idea (Käsemann, 'Anliegen und Eigenart der paulinischen Abendmahlslehre', 25-27) that Paul is here developing a dialectical interpretation – evoking judgment in its present and future terms. But as she notes Paul does not align the two judgments but contrasts them.

<sup>303</sup> Gundry Volf, *Paul and Perseverance*, 103. Cf. The idea in Ignatius EpEph 20:3 of the bread as φάρμακον ἀθανασίας ἀντίδοτος τοῦ μὴ ἀποθανεῖν cf. Roetzel, *Judgement in the Community: a Study of the Relationship between Eschatology and Ecclesiology in Paul*, 139.

<sup>304</sup> Fee rightly rejects this idea (Fee, *First Corinthians*, 544).

<sup>305</sup> The context of 11:26, 11:29 and 12:3 clearly indicate that κύριος here refers to Christ. In her otherwise excellent treatment of this passage, Gundry Volf consistently (e.g. 102, 103) refers to this as a judgment carried out by God. (Neither Fee in his *Christology* nor Thiselton in his commentary commented on the christological aspect of this verse). Others who see it referring to Christ include Wolff, *Der erste Brief des Paulus an die Korinther: Auslegung der Kapitel 8-16*, 96; Klauck, *Herrenmahl und hellenistischer Kult: eine religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zum ersten Korintherbrief*, 326. M. Konradt, *Gericht und Gemeinde: Eine Studie zur Bedeutung und Funktion von Gerichtsaussagen im Rahmen der paulinischen Ekklesiologie und Ethik im 1 Thess und 1 Kor* (BZNW 117, Berlin: de Gruyter, 2003), 440 n.1287 is more ambivalent. He notes 1 Cor 4:4 f where Christ is described as the Lord and the coming judge. However, at his coming people will receive praise from God. Similarly he notes the parallel between 2 Corinthians 5:10 which refers to the judgment seat of Christ and Romans 14:10 which refers to the judgment seat of God. That there is some level of synonymity between Christ and God is unquestionable, but in this context the referent to κύριος is unambiguously Christ.

dramatic effects (sickness and even death) in the midst of a congregation located on earth. Here Christ's presence is at its most 'dense'. However, even here the absence of Christ is not overridden. The context of the Lord's Supper emphasises, as we have seen, the absence of Christ (11:24-26). Further, the fact that Paul needs to *tell* the Corinthians that their sickness is a result of Christ's judgment points to the fact that even though this is a direct action of the exalted Christ, it remains, in some sense, veiled and needs interpretation. Christ's presence in judgment is not unmediated. He works through sickness and death which though not personal entities are still forms of mediation. Christ is not present in a direct, unqualified way.

### 3.4 Summary and Conclusion

In contrast to his epiphanic presence, in this section we have seen Christ acting as the subject of his presence. With Christ's agency we have seen the mediation involved becoming increasingly transparent. As he works through and speaks through his apostle, we see Christ himself in operation. It is not *simply* that Paul represents or serves as a substitute for an absent Christ,<sup>306</sup> rather Christ is the active agent. In 1 Corinthians 11, the risen Christ acts dramatically and concretely on the congregation, disciplining them to preserve them from the condemnation to come. However, even here the absence of Christ means that this activity is achieved through mediation in the form of sickness and death. Paul needs to reveal to the Corinthians that these events actually indicate the activity of Christ.

### 4. Conclusion

In this chapter we have examined two different modes of Christ's presence. The epiphanic presence of Christ is the mediated presence of the absent Christ to the senses of believers. In this mode of his presence Christ does not act as the subject of his presence but is *made present* through the person of Paul and through the Spirit carried preaching of his gospel. In the dynamic mode of Christ's presence Christ acts as an agent using personal and impersonal entities to mediate his presence.

The fact that Christ can be present in these different ways highlights the uniqueness of his own exalted state. His bodily absence does not render him irrelevant or impotent. The epiphanic mode of his presence where he is *made present* to the senses is not the same

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<sup>306</sup> Although he certainly does see himself as such cf. the very description of himself as an apostle and particularly the discussion in 2 Corinthians 5:11-6:2.

as, say, an author making the character of a story present to the ‘mind’s eye’ of her readers. Rather, the ontological effects that flow from the epiphanic presence of Christ point to the fact that in his risen state he is not statically conditioned or constrained. Though absent when made present his *very life* can flow to believers. The dynamic presence of Christ underlines the fact that though absent from believers Christ is not uninvolved in the world from which he is absent. Christ’s absence does not negate his presence. But Christ’s presence does not override his absence.

We saw that the focal point of Christ’s epiphanic presence is the gospel.<sup>307</sup> As Bultmann put it ‘aus dem Verkündiger ist der Verkündigte geworden’.<sup>308</sup> Without this aspect Christ’s mediated presence would lack form, focus and content. However, Christ is not inertly or statically contained in the Kerygma. Rather, the dynamic mode of his presence means that he actually proclaims himself (cf. Rom 15:18-19) and underlines the fact that Christ is Lord – even of his own presence. The proclaimed remains the proclaimer.<sup>309</sup>

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<sup>307</sup> As we saw where Paul points to himself as the locus of the epiphanic presence it was in relation to his own suffering paralleling the suffering of Christ in the gospel.

<sup>308</sup> Bultmann, *Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, 1:34.

<sup>309</sup> J. F. Kay, *Christus Praesens: A Reconsideration of Rudolf Bultmann’s Christology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 2-3 recounts how Bultmann was criticised for failing to emphasise this aspect of Paul’s portrayal of Christ. For example he cites J. Louis Martyn [*Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 23 (Winter 1968): 143-144, n.21] who labels Bultmann’s classic formulation ‘a disastrous half-truth. For it is precisely one of the central aspects of the Easter faith that Jesus Christ remains the proclaimer’. Kay continues by observing that ‘Martyn underscores that for the primitive church Jesus Christ is the rendering agent, and not simply the rendered object, of Christian proclamation. Thus, the eschatological function of Jesus is to communicate the kerygma and not just to be communicated by it’. In the rest of his book, though, Kay argues that Bultmann does hold that ‘der Verkündigte zugleich als der Verkünder präsent ist’ [citing Rudolf Bultmann, ‘Allgemeine Wahrheiten und christliche Verkündigung’ in *Glauben und Verstehen: Gesammelte Aufsätze Volume 3* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1961 [1957]), 169]. However, this theme is decidedly underdeveloped in Bultmann’s theology and the criticisms of Martyn and others retain their force.

## CHAPTER 4: THE BODILY PRESENCE OF CHRIST

### 1. Introduction: Christ's Bodily Presence

In this chapter we examine a motif in Paul which at first glance actually calls into question the notion that Christ is, *in any significant sense*, actually absent. I have argued that because Christ has a discrete, localisable, human body, he is currently absent from believers. Because he continues to possess this distinct human body and is located *somewhere else*, Christ is not with us and we are not with him. However, Paul also employs the concept of the body to suggest Christ's intense *presence* with his people – seemingly at both the individual (Rom 8:10) and corporate (1 Cor 12:27) levels. He also appears to equate Christ's body with the bread broken at the Lord's Supper (1 Cor 10:16) thus rendering the bodily location of Christ not only in heaven at God's right hand but in the midst of believers at the Eucharist service.<sup>1</sup>

This body imagery has frequently been understood in a way that minimises any distinction between Christ and his earthly 'bodies'. So, Engberg-Pedersen suggests that Paul understood the ecclesial body of Christ to be a 'physical body' that could be identified with Christ himself and that Christians should be 'literally' (i.e. 'physically') considered as members of Christ.<sup>2</sup> Statements where Paul locates Christ 'in' the bodies of individual Christians (e.g. Rom 8:10) lead Barth to conclude 'daß die räumliche Distanz zwischen Christus und den Christen verschwindet, daß Christus auch räumlich dort ist, wo die Christen sind, die Christen auch räumlich dort sind, wo Christus ist: nicht irgendwo daneben, sondern genau dort'.<sup>3</sup> Finally, with respect to the Eucharistic body, Jerome Murphy-O'Connor suggests that real participation in Christ is possible 'only if the bread and wine are in fact the body and blood of Christ'.<sup>4</sup> Taken by themselves these statements suggest that we should significantly revise our conclusions regarding the significance of the absence of Christ.

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<sup>1</sup> The exact phrase 'the body of Christ' occurs three times in the undisputed Pauline letters. In Romans 7:4, the phrase is used to refer to the crucified body of Christ; in 1 Corinthians 10:16 it is used in a sacramental context and in 1 Corinthians 12:27 it refers to the Church (Cf. Eph 4:12; Col 2:17). These three uses of the 'body of Christ' match the three more general uses of 'body' language with respect to Christ. See the typical analysis in C. Strecker, *Die liminale Theologie des Paulus: Zugänge zur paulinischen Theologie aus kulturanthropologischer Perspektive* (FRLANT 185, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999), 336-337: 'Der physische bzw. Individuelle Leib Christi' (Rom 7:4; Phil 3:20); 'Der sakramentale Leib Christi (vertikale Dimension) (e.g. 1 Cor 10:16); 'Der soziale Leib Christi (horizontale Dimension) (e.g. 1 Cor 10:27). In this chapter we will consider both the vertical and horizontal dimensions.

<sup>2</sup> Engberg-Pedersen, 'The Material Spirit: Cosmology and Ethics in Paul,' 191.

<sup>3</sup> KD IV/3, 628-629.

<sup>4</sup> J. Murphy-O'Connor, 'Eucharist and Community in First Corinthians,' *Worship* 51 (1977): 59.

In this chapter we will examine each of these somatic modes of Christ's presence. In each section we consider one or more interpretation which understands the relationship between Christ and the particular body in a maximal sense. We will then examine the relevant passages to see if reading them in conversation with the notion of Christ's absence (and, hence, *mediated*<sup>5</sup> presence) actually helps qualify the nature of the relationship between Christ and his body.

## 2. Christ and the Ecclesial Body (1 Cor 12:1-31)<sup>6</sup>

How does Paul understand the relationship between Christ and the Church when he describes the latter as the 'body of Christ' (1 Cor 12:27)? In particular we need to consider 1 Corinthians 12:12 where Paul does not simply compare the *church* to a many-member body but compares *Christ* himself (οὕτως καὶ ὁ Χριστός).<sup>7</sup> Does Paul see Christ *himself* then as a many-member body made up of believers themselves? Before we examine the relevant passages directly we will consider two important interpretations concerning the relationship between Christ and his ecclesial body.

### 2.1 Christ Embodied in the World by the Church (Käsemann et al.)

Ernst Käsemann's understanding of the Church as the body of Christ, as we saw in chapter 1, turns on the meaning of the word 'body' - namely that it should be understood as a person's 'Wirklichkeit der Kommunikation'.<sup>8</sup> He argues that while we should categorically deny any idea of the church as *Christus prolongatus*<sup>9</sup> at the same time we should understand it as 'sein gegenwärtiger Herrschaftsbereich'.<sup>10</sup> To describe the church as the 'body of

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<sup>5</sup> In particular we will see that Christ's bodily presence is consistently qualified with a reference to the Spirit. So, while believers' *bodies* may be members of Christ (1 Cor 6:15), being joined to Christ in this way means that they are one *spirit* with him (6:17). The Corinthians may be the *body* of Christ (ὕμεις δὲ ἕστε σῶμα Χριστοῦ [12:27]) but they were baptised into this body by the Spirit (ἐν ἐνὶ πνεύματι [12:13]). Finally, while Paul describes the breaking of bread as a participation in the body of Christ (10:16), he does so in the context of speaking about spiritual (πνευματικός) food and drink (10:3-4).

<sup>6</sup> In this section we will not address the issue of the origin of the 'body of Christ' concept. This question has been extensively discussed and any kind of thorough treatment is ultimately beyond the scope of our question. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 550 is probably right to argue for the simple solution: 'Much the most plausible source of the imagery is the use of the metaphor of the body elsewhere in precisely the way that Paul most consistently uses it - the body as a vital expression of the unity of a community despite the diversity of its many members'. He points (as do many others) to a similar use in the Menenius Agrippa fable (recorded in Livy *Hist.* 2.32). Cf. Michelle V. Lee, *Paul, the Stoics, and the Body of Christ* (SNTSMS 137, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 9 n.38 for a list of those who have held this position.

<sup>7</sup> Robinson, *The Body*, 58.

<sup>8</sup> Käsemann, 'Das Theologische Problem', 198.

<sup>9</sup> To do so would be to confuse the different bodies of Christ and to deny the primacy of Christology over Ecclesiology (Ibid., 209 cf. Käsemann, *An die Römer*, 276).

<sup>10</sup> Käsemann, 'Das Theologische Problem', 204.



Christ', then, is fundamentally to assert that it is the means by which Christ communicates his Lordship and is present to the world. So, the Body of Christ is the 'Bereich, in dem und durch den Christus sich nach seiner Erhöhung irdisch als Kyrios erweist'.<sup>11</sup> It is the 'Raum seiner Ubiquität und Omnipotenz'.<sup>12</sup>

While the church is not an extension of the incarnation, it is the means by which Christ exercises his lordship over the world. This understanding of the body of Christ is a theologically promising way of holding together the different body language in Paul and in particular in understanding how we relate the bodily absence and bodily presence of Christ. However, there are problems with Käsemann's understanding. As we saw in chapter 1, Käsemann's analysis of the body of Christ is not actually based on exegesis of the specific passages where Paul refers to the motif.<sup>13</sup> Thus, it needs to be asked whether Paul does, in fact, use the imagery of the Church as the 'body of Christ' to emphasise the ongoing relation of an (otherwise absent) Christ to the world? Gundry argues that when Paul actually uses the phrase it is purely to discuss 'the *inner* structure and workings of the body in the interrelationship of its various organs and limbs' and Paul 'nowhere relates the Body of Christ to outward activities in relationship to others'.<sup>14</sup> This certainly seems to be the case when one looks at the texts where Paul discusses the Church as the body of Christ. So, in Romans 12:5 Paul's point is deliberately focussed inwards. Having pointed to the fact that a body has many members (12:4), he states that we who are many (οἱ πολλοί) are one body in Christ (ἐν σῶμά ἐσμεν ἐν Χριστῷ). He then discusses the use of the different gifts within the church. It is only at verse 14 that we begin to move outside the church with Paul's command to 'bless those who persecute you' but by this point in the argument we have moved away from the concept of the body. Similarly, throughout 1 Corinthians 12 the focus is on the internal structure of the body.<sup>15</sup> The fact that though it is a unity it is made up of many parts that should be concerned for one another (12:12-26); and that each of them has different roles within the body (12:27-31).

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Käsemann, 'Leiblichkeit bei Paulus', 48.

<sup>13</sup> As noted by Way, *The Lordship of Christ*, 71-72.

<sup>14</sup> R.H. Gundry, *Sōma in Biblical Theology with Emphasis on Pauline Anthropology* (SNTSMS 29, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 226; Cf. R.Y.K. Fung, 'The Body of Christ' in *DPL* (1993), 81.

<sup>15</sup> As others have observed, Paul nowhere thinks of the Body of Christ as 'his instrument of the working of his Spirit in the world or as his visible form of manifestation in it; he is concerned rather with the significance of the limbs for one another' [A. J. M. Wedderburn, 'The Body of Christ and Related Concepts in I Corinthians,' *STJ* 24.1 (1971): 82]. Cf. Ernest Best, *One Body in Christ: a Study in the Relationship of the Church to Christ in the Epistles of the Apostle Paul* (London: S.P.C.K, 1955), 113.

Eduard Schweizer presents a slightly different argument for why the church as the Body of Christ should be understood as a fundamental aspect of Christ's presence in the world. He suggests that 'body' for Paul means 'man as a whole when his physical-psychical corporeity is stressed'.<sup>16</sup> With reference to Christ, Schweizer argues that 'body' means his person 'given for the sake of the world' specifically 'Christ himself in his "for-our-sake-ness" (Rom 7:4)'.<sup>17</sup> This prior understanding of 'body' points to the possibility that 'body of Christ' in Paul may be a 'means in which the church would be considered as the instrument by which Christ did his *continuing* service to the world'.<sup>18</sup> However, even Schweizer is forced to concede that this thought does not yet appear in the undisputed letters.<sup>19</sup> Nonetheless he argues that in Romans 12, 'Paul shows that the members of the body of Christ are rendering their services *to the world* as well as *to one another*'.<sup>20</sup> However, in Romans 12, as we have just pointed out, though 'Paul cannot separate service for the community and service for the world', 'he does not seek to express the latter idea in terms of the "body of Christ" language'.<sup>21</sup> Further, even in the later epistles, the concept of the Body of Christ does not seem to be explicitly described as the instrument of mission.<sup>22</sup>

Käsemann and Schweizer both understand the motif of the 'body of Christ' to speak of Christ's place, his embodiment within the world. However, it seems that the 'body of Christ' motif is not employed by Paul to describe the interaction between Christ and the world. Certainly the church does fulfil that function in some sense (as we saw, for example, in the description of the Church as the 'letter of Christ' in 2 Cor 3:1-3), but Paul does not express it with *this* particular motif. The idea of the ecclesial body of Christ is a motif employed by Paul to speak of the relationship between Christ and the Church, not between Christ and the World through the Church. But what exactly is the nature of this Christ-Church relationship? In the following example we see one recent interpretation that argues that this relationship should be regarded as 'literal' and physical.

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<sup>16</sup> E. Schweizer, 'The Church as the Missionary Body of Christ,' *NTS* 8 (1961): 4.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*: 5.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* Emphasis added.

<sup>19</sup> When we turn to the disputed epistles of Ephesians and Colossians, Schweizer argues that (particularly in Col 1:15-23) the author may be correcting the idea that when Christ fills the world he is not doing so like 'like the Stoic world-soul or like some divine atmosphere wrapping in the whole world' (*Ibid.*: 9). Namely, that the argument in this passage was developed to correct those who had (10): 'reinterpreted Paul's term of the body of Christ in a way familiar to every Hellenist: Christ is the world-soul permeating and ruling the whole cosmos'. Rather, argues Schweizer, the author of Colossians shows that Christ permeates the world by the preaching of the gospel (Col 1:23).

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*: 5-6.

<sup>21</sup> Wedderburn, 'The Body of Christ,' 81.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

## 2.2 Christ Embodied in the Church as the Spirit (Engberg-Pedersen)

In chapter 2 we examined the idea suggested by Troels Engberg-Pedersen that Paul understood *pneuma* as a material entity. We saw how this shaped his understanding of 1 Corinthians 15 and the nature of Christ's resurrection body. His understanding of *pneuma* also has wider implications for how we should interpret Pauline body language.<sup>23</sup> Engberg-Pedersen argues that Paul's frequent employment of body language in 1 Corinthians has the specific aim of building a corporate identity (a 'habitus')<sup>24</sup> that overcomes their internal divisions (1:10).<sup>25</sup> But Paul is not simply using 'body' (and the related 'temple') language metaphorically. So, Paul's question in 3:16, 'Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's *pneuma* lives in you?'<sup>26</sup> indicates that he 'understood the Corinthians as being God's temple *in the sense that – and because – they possessed the *pneuma**'.<sup>27</sup> That is, the temple here *is* 'that same thing which is shared by all *pneuma*-possessed believers' and that thing *is* the '*pneuma* itself as present in them'.<sup>28</sup> In 6:13-20 Paul then shows that the temple consists of 'the single body that is made up of the individual bodies of the Corinthians as transformed by the *pneuma*'.<sup>29</sup> Clearly 'the temple "of the holy *pneuma* in you" *is* the *pneuma* and just as much of a bodily thing as their individual bodies themselves'.<sup>30</sup>

In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul brings in the 'conceit' of the 'social body'. In 12:12-13 where he introduces the notion he 'virtually states that the single body (also called "Christ") that believers *are* is made up of the single *pneuma*'.<sup>31</sup> This is not to deny individual differences between believers (12:14-31), but Paul has already shown (12:4-11) that 'although individual believers may have very many different functions it is the "one and the same *pneuma*" that distributes these functions to each individual "as it sees fit" (12:11).<sup>32</sup> In short, then, for Paul 'Christ' *is* that 'one and the same' *pneuma* that is present in the bodies of all baptised believers, thereby constituting them as a single body.<sup>33</sup> Engberg-

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<sup>23</sup> In chapter 2 we argued that his contention that the Spirit is a material entity was highly unlikely. In this section we examine one important implication of Engberg-Pedersen's view.

<sup>24</sup> Here Engberg-Pedersen is applying Pierre Bourdieu's notion of 'habitus' as an alternative conception of the 'self'.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 169.

<sup>26</sup> Engberg-Pedersen's own translation.

<sup>27</sup> Engberg-Pedersen, *Cosmology and Self*, 170.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.* Engberg-Pedersen interprets 'power' (δύναμις) in 6:14 as a reference to the *pneuma*.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 171.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

Pedersen further underlines the fact that, on the basis of 12:13, the body of Christ is Christ. Christ is a body, one that is constituted by the pneuma. That is, since ‘the pneuma is itself a physical entity, the body that is Christ is in fact a real, physical body’.<sup>34</sup> On this reading, the reference in 12:13 to the ‘single body’ into which believers are baptised by the pneuma is not a metaphor. Paul ‘intends it literally as referring to an entity that is a (tri-dimensional) body just as much as a normal, physical body, only it is made up of a different kind of “stuff” from a body of flesh and blood’.<sup>35</sup> In summary,

By concretely transforming the body of flesh and blood even in the present, the pneuma eradicates what constitutes the physical basis for sarkic, sinful desires and practices. And so the Corinthians *literally* become God’s holy temple (3:16-17; 6:19), members of Christ (6:15), a single body energized by the single *pneuma* (chap. 12) and so forth. Here the self is transcended for the sake of what is shared, which is Christ or the *pneuma*. *And it is all to be understood quite literally.*<sup>36</sup>

For Engberg-Pedersen, then, ‘the self becomes transcended for the sake of what is shared’. The dominant thought, then, is that Christ, the Spirit and the Church coalesce to such an extent that they become one entity. Christ is the Pneuma which is the Body. This is the explicit trajectory that Engberg-Pedersen’s thought takes him and overrides places where he might qualify himself.<sup>37</sup> The descriptions of the different ‘bodies’ of Christ should then be taken absolutely literally. The believer is a literal, physical member of Christ. We have seen that Engberg-Pedersen’s proposal that Paul was operating with a Stoic understanding of the materiality of the Spirit rests on very shaky ground. In this chapter, we will see that the resultant collapse of distinction between Christ, believer and the Spirit does not fit with a close reading of the relevant ‘body’ texts. That in each case Paul maintains a distinction between Christ, believer and the Spirit. They are related but not identified. He does not collapse them into one another but distinguishes them in terms of *relationship*. The Spirit mediates Christ to his Body. Paul understands the relationship between Christ and the believer in the Body to be *mediated* by the *personal* Spirit rather than *physically localised* by the *material* Spirit.

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 174.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Engberg-Pedersen, ‘The Material Spirit: Cosmology and Ethics in Paul,’ 191.

<sup>37</sup> So Engberg-Pedersen argues that he does not make an *absolute* identification between either Christ and the believer or Christ and the pneuma. He maintains that Christ remains a person who while he can be identified with the pneuma (‘Christ is pneuma’) is something more than just pneuma. Similarly with respect to believers he is ‘someone “before” whose judgement seat believers will appear and on whose “face” the pneumatic shine can be seen’ (Engberg-Pedersen, *Cosmology and Self*, 56).

### 2.3 Christ Present to the Church by the Mediation of the Spirit (1 Cor 12:1-31)

*1 Corinthians 12:1-11.* 1 Corinthians 12 is the text where Paul treats the Body of Christ most extensively. These verses form part of a larger section (1 Cor 12:1-14:40) of Paul's letter where he primarily deals with the question of what constitutes the 'spiritual'. This question fits into the letter as whole with Paul's overarching concern to address the desire for 'status enhancement'.<sup>38</sup> It seems as if different spiritual gifts or abilities were being used by the Corinthians to establish their status with respect to one another. In 12:1 Paul turns to consider the issue of what constitute 'spiritual realities' (πνευματικῶν).<sup>39</sup> His discussion concentrates on the question of knowledge (v.1 οὐ θέλω ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν; v.2 οἴδατε; v.3 διὸ γνωρίζω ὑμῖν) as he makes known to them the marks of 'spiritual' speech. That is, no-one who is speaking 'by the Spirit of God'<sup>40</sup> can curse Jesus (λέγει Ἀνάθεμα Ἰησοῦς) and no-one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except 'by the Holy Spirit'.<sup>41</sup> As Thiselton puts it, the issue is 'what experiences and actions, as well as words, will count as manifestations of the Holy Spirit'.<sup>42</sup> These manifestations of the Spirit are to be tested by christological criteria – both negatively and positively.

Paul then turns to consider the diversity of gifts and how these do not undermine the notion of an essentially united body being acted upon by a unified God. In verses 4-6 Paul states that there are different gifts (χαρισμάτων) but the same Spirit; different ways of serving (διακονιῶν) but the same Lord and different 'workings' (ἐνεργημάτων) but the same God who brings about 'everything in everyone' (τὰ πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν[12:6]). Most commentators argue that the variation here between χαρισμάτα-διακονίαι-ἐνεργήματα is

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<sup>38</sup> Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 900.

<sup>39</sup> The word could be neuter referring to 'spiritual gifts' or masculine referring to 'spiritual people'. Paul uses the term to refer to both people and 'things of the Spirit' in this letter – even in the same verse (1 Cor 2:13). In the following context Paul discusses both people (vv.1-3) and gifts (vv.4-11). The translation 'spiritual realities' [Raymond F. Collins, *First Corinthians* (ed. Daniel J. Harrington, SP 7, Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1999), 445] is not ideal but reflects this ambiguity. Clint Tibbs, *Religious Experience of the Pneuma: Communication with the Spirit World in 1 Corinthians 12 and 14* (WUNT 2.230, Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2007), 151 interprets the phrase as 'now concerning spiritism' and argues that as 'an "-ism" the term "spiritism" maintains the plurality of Paul's text "spiritual things" by functioning grammatically in the capacity of a system that recognizes a variety of ways in which spirit beings communicate and interact with the human world.' His interpretation is unconvincing.

<sup>40</sup> Understanding this as a dative of agency with Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 917. The second half of the verse highlights the question of ability (οὐδεὶς δύναται) which suggests that 'agency' is involved.

<sup>41</sup> Hays, *First Corinthians*, 208: 'not just mouthing the words but making the self-involving confession of the lordship of Jesus'. Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Corinthians: a Literary and Theological Commentary* (Macon, Ga.: Smyth & Helwys, 2002), 81-82 argues that these three verses describe three different religious experiences: 1. Pagan experience: being led astray to dumb idols 2. Jewish experience; declaring Jesus is anathema 3. Christian experience in the Spirit: confessing Jesus is Lord.

<sup>42</sup> Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 917.

simply for rhetorical purposes.<sup>43</sup> Hermann, however, argues that χαρισμάτα-διακονίαι-ἐνεργήματα should be understood as an *'integrierende Klimax, in welcher der zweite Begriff den ersten und der dritte die beiden voraufgehenden aufnimmt, erweitert und integriert'*.<sup>44</sup> He further suggests that this relationship actually mirrors the relationship between πνεῦμα-κύριος-θεός which he also sees as a *'klimaktische Integrationsformel'*.<sup>45</sup> In other words, the work<sup>46</sup> of the κύριος encompasses the work of the πνεῦμα and *is in turn encompassed* in the work of God or conversely *'die Wirksamkeit des Pneuma ist ein Teil der Wirksamkeit des Kyrios, wie diese zum Allwirken des θεός gehört'*.<sup>47</sup> Hermann argues that the activity of the Pneuma should not be understood as something *independent* from the activity of Christ and of God. That is, *'es werden nicht einfach drei Wirkweisen statisch nebeneinandergestellt and addiert'*, rather *'es handelt sich vielmehr um ein dynamisches Ineinander der den verschiedenen Größen zuerteilten Wirksamkeiten'*.<sup>48</sup>

Hermann's analysis flows from the earlier part of his work in which he equates the Spirit and the risen Christ *dynamically* or at the level of *experience* i.e. the latter is experienced as the former.<sup>49</sup> He also notes the parallel between verses 11 and 12:

Verse 11: das alles bewirkt das eine selbige Pneuma, einem jeden zuteilend wie es will

Verse 12: Denn wie der Leib einer ist und er doch viele Glieder hat, alle die vielen Glieder aber ein Leib sind – so ist es auch mit dem Christus

Laid out in parallel like this, Hermann argues that rather than οὕτως καὶ ὁ Χριστός one *expects* οὕτως καὶ τὸ (ἐν) πνεῦμα.<sup>50</sup> Verse 11 brings the previous argument together: the many different gifts are produced by the *single* Pneuma. For Hermann then verse 12 brings an illustrative example which would be expected to read: For as the many different members make up a single body - so it is also with the *single* Pneuma and the *various* gifts. In verse 13, Paul continues to speak of the single Pneuma. Accordingly Hermann argues that here we have an example where Paul uses πνεῦμα and Χριστός as synonymous expressions. Their dynamic identity leads him to argue further that all the *'soma-ekklesiologischen*

<sup>43</sup> E.g. J Weiss, *Der erste Korintherbrief* (9th ed., KEK 5, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1910 [1839]), 297-298; cf. Fee, *First Corinthians*, 286; Hays, *First Corinthians*, 210.

<sup>44</sup> Hermann, *Kyrios und Pneuma*, 74.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.* stresses that *'nur das Wirken hat Paulus hier im Blick'* i.e. he is not arguing about their relationship as *persons*.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 77.

Aussagen' in 1 Corinthians 12 are only possible because for Paul 'der Christus immer schon der als *Pneuma* wirkende Kyrios ist'.<sup>51</sup>

Hermann overplays the dynamic nature of the relationship between Christ and the Spirit and underplays (without denying) the personal aspect of this relationship. Even at the level of the believer's experience, Christ and the Spirit remain distinct entities and Paul does not collapse them into one another.<sup>52</sup> However, he is correct to see that in this description of the body of *Christ*, it is the *Spirit* who is the focus. Here we see the significance of the absence of Christ. Christ is not present to or located in his body in an unqualified way so that he is the dominant agent of activity. Rather, the fact of his absence means that his presence is mediated by the Spirit who in turn is the dominant agent *in* the body.<sup>53</sup> So, in verses 7-11 the discussion of the different gifts is started by Paul when he says 'to each one is given the manifestation of the *Spirit* (ἡ φανέρωσις τοῦ πνεύματος)' (v.7) and concluded by Paul when he says that all of these different gifts are worked by the *Spirit* as he wills (πάντα δὲ ταῦτα ἐνεργεῖ τὸ ἐν καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα διαιροῦν ἰδίᾳ ἐκάστῳ καθὼς βούλεται [v.11]). In between these statements, Paul mentions four times the agency of the Spirit (διὰ τοῦ πνεύματος [v.8], ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ πνεύματι, ἐν τῷ ἐνὶ πνεύματι [v.9]) or the standard of the Spirit (κατὰ τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα [v.8]). Particularly striking is the fact that in verse 6, God is specifically named as the agent who works all things (ὁ δὲ αὐτὸς θεὸς ὁ

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 79.

<sup>52</sup> Thus Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 934 is surely correct to describe this passage as an example of 'clear' trinitarian language; cf. Neil Richardson, *Paul's Language about God* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 217-218. However, others disagree with this view. So, Tibbs, *Religious Experience of the Pneuma: Communication with the Spirit World in 1 Corinthians 12 and 14*, 195 argues that there is no Trinitarianism here because Paul does not express any 'relationship between "spirit", "Lord" and "God"'. He cites Marion L. Soards, *1 Corinthians* (NIBC, Carlisle: Paternoster, 1999), 256 who argues that '[Paul] is not in this first-century correspondence doing full-blown fourth-century Trinitarian reflection'. Similarly Collins, *First Corinthians*, 449 argues that Paul's three parallel statements [...] should no more be construed as an expression of Trinitarian theology than the other so-called "Trinitarian formulae" in the Pauline writings (2 Cor 1:21-22; 13:13; Gal 4:6; Rom 8:11; 15:15-16, 30)' before adding that 'Trinitarian theology is a later development'. Soards and Collins surely set the bar too high in suggesting that since *fully-formed* Trinitarianism is not found in Paul then there is no trace of it. Fee, *First Corinthians*, 588 is correct to note that 'such passages as this are the "stuff" from which the later theological constructs are correctly derived.' Hays, *First Corinthians*, 210: 'Paul of course had no explicit doctrine of the Trinity [...] This passage shows, however, that he experienced God as Trinity'. Tibbs, *Religious Experience of the Pneuma: Communication with the Spirit World in 1 Corinthians 12 and 14*, 195-196 n.58 is more circumspect in arguing that while verses like these obviously did pave the way for fourth-century Trinitarian theology, 'this does not necessarily justify the legitimacy of fourth-century theology as an appropriate prism through which to view the NT'. However, he does nothing to evaluate the claims of 4<sup>th</sup> C theology nor does he reflect on the elements in the text which *do* correspond to this later theology.

<sup>53</sup> Hermann, *Kyrios und Pneuma*, 85: Der Begriff 'Leib Christi' ist zunächst – ohne Hinzunahme des Begriffsinhaltes von *Pneuma* – ein statischer Begriff, der erst durch die Dynamik des *Pneuma*-Begriffes aktualisiert und für die Gemeinde der Glaubenden zum Ereignis wird.

ἐνεργῶν τὰ πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν) while in verse 11 the universal agency in the church (πάντα δὲ ταῦτα) is attributed to the one and the same Spirit (ἐνεργεῖ τὸ ἓν καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα).<sup>54</sup>

What we see in this passage corresponds well with the fact of Christ's absence. The distance between Christ and his body cannot be collapsed to the extent that Christ operates in a direct, unmediated way on his Church. The emphasis of the activity of the Spirit corresponds with the fact of Christ's absence. It is the Spirit who is the dominant agent and who works πάντα δὲ ταῦτα (v.11).

1 Corinthians 12:12-31. In verse 12 Paul turns from the 'oneness' of the Spirit to the oneness of the body – which though it is made up of many members remains one body. This does not apply simply to any generic human body but also to Christ (οὕτως καὶ ὁ Χριστός). As we have seen, some exegetes make a point of noting that Paul does not say 'and so the body of Christ' or 'and so the Church' but 'and so Christ'. This has led them to posit an *identity* between Christ and the Church which, in turn, led to emphasis on the church as an 'extension of the incarnation'<sup>55</sup> and the resurrection body of Christ being revealed 'not as an individual, but as the Christian community'.<sup>56</sup>

Jerome Murphy-O'Connor argues that it is not surprising that Paul makes a direct link between the Church and Christ in 1 Corinthians 12:12 since for Paul 'the community is Christ'.<sup>57</sup> He argues that the community and Christ are *functionally* identical. That is, 'the community mediates the salvation won by Christ', and as such, is 'the incarnational prolongation of the mission of the saving Christ'.<sup>58</sup> In terms of 'the reality of salvation the community is the physical presence of Christ'.<sup>59</sup> In a more recent article, Murphy-O'Connor clarified and re-articulated his position

It would be absurd to imagine that Paul confused the individual Jesus Christ and the local church. Time and time again his letters make it clear that one was not the

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<sup>54</sup> On this verse Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 988-989: 'Virtually every Greek word and phrase takes up the vocabulary of 12:4-7, to recapitulate the principles articulated in vv.4-7 and to summarize the trinitarian theology behind 12:4-10'. Cf. Wolff, *Der erste Brief des Paulus an die Korinther: Auslegung der Kapitel 8-16*, 106 'Was in V. 6 von Gott ausgesagt wurde, wird jetzt fast gleichlautend auf das Pneuma übertragen; Gottes Wirken vollzieht sich durch seinen Geist. Auf ihn sind alle zuvor genannten Betätigungen zurückzuführen'.

<sup>55</sup> E.g. Lionel Spencer Thornton, *The Common Life in the Body of Christ* (London: Dacre Press, 1964), 310 cited in Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 991.

<sup>56</sup> Robinson, *The Body*, 58. See also Ward, 'The Displaced Body', 176-177; Jenson, *Systematic Theology Volume 1: The Triune God*, 202-204.

<sup>57</sup> Murphy-O'Connor, 'Eucharist and Community in First Corinthians,' 375. See the references below for later re-articulations of this view.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.: 376.



other. The identity of predication, therefore, cannot be explained in terms of being. The only remaining possibility is function. The local church prolongs the ministry of Jesus. The words he spoke are not heard in our contemporary world unless they are proclaimed by the community.<sup>60</sup> The power that flowed forth from him to enable conversion is no longer effective today unless mediated by the community. What Jesus was in his physical presence to his world, the church is in its physical presence in our world. It is this identity of function that justifies the double predication of 'Christ'. The local church is Christ in the world.<sup>61</sup>

Murphy-O'Connor is correct to distinguish between the individual Jesus Christ and the local church. However, at the same time, a number of problems remain with his understanding of the body of Christ. First, Murphy-O'Connor's argument that Paul's comparison in 12:12 *καθάπερ γὰρ τὸ σῶμα [...]* οὕτως καὶ ὁ Χριστός means that he is *equating* Christ and the body is making Paul's language bear too much weight. The only other option, which he rejects in passing, is that Paul 'made an accidental slip'.<sup>62</sup> However, it may simply be that Paul is elliptically referring to the body of Christ. In other words, Paul's thought is that what is true of any body is true of Christ's body: namely that though it is made up of diverse members it is a unity. And in fact, that is precisely what Paul goes on to argue in the following verses (13-27), starting with the work of the Spirit in baptising the Corinthians into one body (*not* 'into Christ' [v.13]) and culminating with the description of the Corinthians as 'the body of Christ' (v.27).<sup>63</sup> To read verse 12 as positing an identity between Christ and the body is not the only way to read the verse, and in the context, I would argue, not the best reading.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> In the earlier article he refers to 1 Thessalonians 1:6-8 where Paul says that not only the Word of God sounded from the Thessalonians but their faith in God. Murphy-O'Connor comments, 'This passage underlines the importance, not only of verbal proclamation ("the word of God"), but also of the existential affirmation ("your faith in God") without which the other is powerless. Both, moreover, are presented as being in imitation of the Lord who is Christ (1:6). The community, therefore, is the incarnational prolongation of the mission of the saving Christ'.

<sup>61</sup> J. Murphy-O'Connor, 'The Whole Christ,' *Liber Annuus* 49 (1999): 191.

<sup>62</sup> Murphy-O'Connor, 'Eucharist and Community in First Corinthians,' 375.

<sup>63</sup> So J. A. Ziesler, *Pauline Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 62 who argues that 'the apparent equation of the church with Christ in v.12 must be understood in the light of the whole argument, which is that the church is the body empowered and controlled and defined by the Spirit. "So also is Christ" in v.12 is thus a condensed expression for this view, which is more fully set out in v.27, "Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it", and which rests on the understanding of the church as the community of the Spirit'.

<sup>64</sup> As a section, 1 Corinthians 12:12-26 breaks into four sub-sections – 12:12-14 where Paul establishes that the Church like any other body is a unit made up of many parts (so Fee, *First Corinthians*, 601); 12:15-20 where he establishes the necessity of a body possessing many parts and 12:21-26 the dependence of the different parts on each other. In 12:27-31, Paul sums up the argument he began in 12:4 by tying the two parts (12:4-11 and 12:12-26) together (Fee, *First Corinthians*, 617). So, in 12:27 the imagery of the body is explicitly applied to the

Secondly, and more fundamentally, it seems that Murphy-O'Connor is conflating related but distinct Pauline ideas. Paul's concern in 1 Corinthians 12:12 is the relationship between Christ and the Church not the relationship of Christ to the world through the Church. Any 'identity' of Christ and Church in 1 Corinthians 12:12 is *not* made in terms of 'function' or 'mission' to the world but in the context of the *spiritual relationship* between Christ and the Church. That is, their unity is grounded on the work of the Spirit<sup>65</sup> who baptises believers into the one body (εἰς ἓν σῶμα [v.13]). Murphy-O'Connor argues that Paul also predicates 'Christ' of the community in 1 Corinthians 6:15 where Paul asks the Corinthians if they do not know that 'your bodies are members of Christ' (τὰ σώματα ὑμῶν μέλη Χριστοῦ ἐστίν).<sup>66</sup> However, this is not a predication of the Church and Christ but part of the argument at the end of which Paul concludes by stating that whereas sexual union relates to the physical body (6:16), union with the Lord is a *spiritual* union (ὁ δὲ κολλώμενος τῷ κυρίῳ ἐν πνεύματι ἐστίν [6:17]). Murphy-O'Connor does not explicitly *deny* this aspect,<sup>67</sup> but simply to say that in seeing the relationship between Christ and the Church primarily in terms of a *functional identity*, he underplays this important dimension which unlocks the nature of the relationship between Christ and the Church. This spiritual union is of such an order (as significant as the marriage union), that Christ and the Church are *one* with one another.

Perhaps most importantly Murphy-O'Connor effectively makes Christ *dependent* on the church to extend his ministry when he states that the 'power that flowed forth from [Christ] to enable conversion is no longer effective today unless mediated by the community'.<sup>68</sup> However (and this is the point that Käsemann was so insistent to stress), Christ is Lord over the church and may choose to operate through it but not in such a way as to make himself dependent on it. As Moltmann puts it

Nicht [die Kirche] hat eine Mission des Heils an der Welt zu erfüllen, sondern die Mission des Sohnes und des Geistes durch den Vater hat sie und schafft sich auf

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Church. Paul's point is not to equate Christ and the Church but to underline the fact that the body to which the Corinthians are joined by the Spirit is not just *any* body but is the body *of Christ*. This is the point he makes in anticipation in v.12. The two verses are essentially saying the same thing and so v.12 cannot be pressed to yield a metaphysical understanding of the Church in relation to Christ.

<sup>65</sup> Ὁν ἐν ἐνὶ πνεύματι being a dative of agency see below. The point stands, though, even if ἐν ἐνὶ πνεύματι is locative here.

<sup>66</sup> Murphy-O'Connor, 'The Whole Christ,' 191.

<sup>67</sup> J. Murphy-O'Connor, 'Christ and Ministry,' *Pacifica* 4 (1991): 126: 'The community is "Christ" insofar as it is the sphere where the saving power of the Spirit is at work' cited in Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 477.

<sup>68</sup> Murphy-O'Connor, 'The Whole Christ,' 191.

ihrem Wege Kirche. Nicht sie verwaltet den Geist [...] Der Geist “verwaltet” die Kirche.<sup>69</sup>

Christ is not dependent on the church to give him a localised presence in the world. He stands above the church as its Lord.

In 12:13 Paul returns to the theme of the Spirit when he states that ἐν ἐνὶ πνεύματι ‘we all’ were baptised ‘into one body’ (εἰς ἐν σῶμα).<sup>70</sup> The description of the Spirit as ‘one’ recalls the language earlier in the passage (12:11) where the Spirit’s agency was stressed, suggesting that ἐν ἐνὶ πνεύματι means ‘by the one Spirit’<sup>71</sup> here rather than ‘in the one Spirit’.<sup>72</sup> Paul is probably referring to baptism here as ‘*pars pro toto* for conversion-initiation’.<sup>73</sup> Having described the universality of the ‘all’ who have been added to the body in this way (εἴτε Ἰουδαῖοι εἴτε Ἑλληνας εἴτε δοῦλοι εἴτε ἐλεύθεροι), Paul then adds that πάντες ἐν πνεύμα ἐποτίσθημεν. The verb ἐποτίσθημεν may refer to drinking (‘we have been caused to drink one Spirit’)<sup>74</sup> or to watering / drenching (‘we have been watered or drenched with the one Spirit’).<sup>75</sup> Those who argue for the latter often understand a reference to baptism,<sup>76</sup> while the former is seen as a reference to the Lord’s Supper.<sup>77</sup> However, whether we take the verb to refer to drinking or drenching, it may be that Paul is

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<sup>69</sup> Jürgen Moltmann, *Kirche in der Kraft des Geistes: ein Beitrag zur messianischen Ekklesiologie* (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1975), 81.

<sup>70</sup> With most commentators.

<sup>71</sup> Understanding the dative to be *instrumental*. See also Rabens, *The Holy Spirit and Ethics in Paul*, 105-106 who argues (convincingly) on the basis of word order and the use of ἐν.

<sup>72</sup> Understanding the dative to be *locative*. (e.g. Barrett, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 288). Though the meaning is not perhaps that different between these two options given that ‘since on the one interpretation the Spirit is viewed as the Agent of baptism to membership in the Body and on the other He is the element in which one is baptised so as to be in the Body’ [George R. Beasley-Murray, *Baptism in the New Testament* (London: Macmillan, 1962), 167].

<sup>73</sup> Rabens, *The Holy Spirit and Ethics in Paul*, 107. See his argument from 105-107 where he extends the arguments of Fee and Dunn and, in so doing, answers the criticisms of Stephen J. Chester, *Conversion at Corinth: An Exploration of the Understandings of Conversion Held by the Apostle Paul and the Corinthian Christians* (SNTW, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2003), 281-282. Where Fee, *First Corinthians*, 604-606 and James D. G. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit: a Re-examination of the New Testament Teaching on the Gift of the Spirit in Relation to Pentecostalism Today* (SBT 2.15, London: SCM, 1970), 130 argue that ‘baptism’ is meant metaphorically here, Rabens suggests that it should be understood as a synecdoche.

<sup>74</sup> Cf. e.g. Matt 10:42; Rom 12:20; 1 Cor 3:2. Some witnesses have πόμα for πνεῦμα (e.g. 630 920 1505 1738 1881): ‘all were made to drink one *drink*,’ turning the expression into a more explicit allusion to the Lord’s Supper.

<sup>75</sup> Cf. 1 Cor 3:6-8; Isa 29:10.

<sup>76</sup> Rabens, *The Holy Spirit and Ethics in Paul*, 109-110 summarises the main interpretative reasons appealed to: the aorist tense does not fit the repetition of the Lord’s Supper (cf. Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 1001: ‘Even if the aorist is understood to be gnomic rather than alluding to a single past event, a “timeless” aorist remains ravingly inappropriate or repeating the memorial of the Lord’s Supper, which is not “timeless,” but re-enacts a temporal recital of a temporal event’); 13a and 13c seem to be related both with regard to style and content; this conclusion is supported by OT prophecies about the coming of the Spirit (e.g. Ezek 36:25-27; Joel 3:1-2; Zech 12:10).

<sup>77</sup> Suggested as an option by Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 212 n.17.

more broadly speaking again of conversion-initiation.<sup>78</sup> Thus, as well as being the agent who acts upon believers by adding them to the body (12:13a), the Spirit is acts in believers when they receive him.<sup>79</sup> The Spirit remains the dominant agent in the Body of Christ – a fact that we have said reflects Christ’s own absence.

*Conclusion: The Absent Christ and his Present Spirit.* In considering the Church as the body of Christ then we have seen that for Paul this is a motif that speaks not so about the relationship of Christ in the world as about the Spirit mediated relationship between Christ and his people. Nor do Christ and the Church coalesce into one entity but are related to one another by the work of the Spirit. Believers belong to Christ’s body because of the activity of the Spirit (12:13) and it is the Spirit who is the focus of divine activity in the body for its building up (12:4-11). It is the Spirit then who makes Christ present to his body.<sup>80</sup> Though Paul parallels the activity of the Spirit and Christ (vv.4-5) suggesting that for him ‘l’action du pneuma ne se sépare pas de l’action du Kyrios’,<sup>81</sup> his focus is on the Spirit. This dominant activity of the Spirit underlines the current absence of Christ. The dominant agent in the body of Christ is not Christ himself but the Spirit. In fact in this chapter, apart from 12:5, Christ is not portrayed as a subject or agent with respect to his own body. It is the Spirit and God (12:18, 28) who are the agents acting on this body.

This operation of the Spirit which mediates the relationship between Christ and the believer (12:13), points to the Spirit’s own rational, even personal nature.<sup>82</sup> That is, we can

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<sup>78</sup> Convincingly argued by Rabens, *The Holy Spirit and Ethics in Paul*, 112-118: ‘The metaphor “drinking” stresses this internality more than a simple “you have received the Spirit” would have done. It may also hint more clearly at the experiential dimension of Spirit-reception than do the classical metaphors of Spirit-indwelling’.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 118-119: In 13a πνεῦμα is the subject of divine action in that the Spirit is portrayed as the instrument of baptism. In 13c πνεῦμα is the object of divine action in that the Spirit is granted to be taken in by the converts.

<sup>80</sup> Hays, *First Corinthians*, 213 is therefore correct to argue that while [c]ertainly “body of Christ” is a metaphor; just as certainly, Paul believes the metaphor illumines the truth about the church’s union with and participation with Christ. The church is not merely a human organization, rather it is brought into being by the activity of the Holy Spirit, which binds believers into a living union with the crucified and risen Lord’.

<sup>81</sup> Chevallier, *Esprit de Dieu*, 150: Paul insiste sur le fait que l’action du pneuma ne se sépare pas de l’action du Kyrios et de l’action de Dieu. Il ne faut pas se laisser fasciner par un quelconque pneumatisme. Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 989: God is essentially one, as an “ordered” being, but manifests himself in acts of the Spirit, acts of the Lord, and acts of God, both jointly and in differentiated ways. Any account of “spiritual gifts” which is merely Spirit-centred rather than Christomorphic (12:3) and Trinitarian (12:4-6) is untrue to Paul. Nevertheless, the Spirit has an especially close association with the nine gifts (12:7-10)’.

<sup>82</sup> In the next section we will consider how appropriate it is to employ this term. I am aware of debates in Systematic Theology concerning the appropriateness of the term ‘person’ – see for example Thomas Weinandy, *The Father’s Spirit of Sonship: Reconceiving the Trinity* (London: T. & T. Clark, 1995), 120 who argues that to use the term person ‘may not do full, or even adequate, justice to the truth of who God is, but it would be deceptive and wrong to say anything less’. Similarly Walter Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ* (trans. Matthew J. O’Connell, New York: Crossroad, 1989 [1982]), 155: person ‘is the highest category we have at our disposal’.

say more than simply that ‘the Spirit is seen as God’s power at work’<sup>83</sup> or that ‘the Spirit represents the activity of God in the lives of believers’.<sup>84</sup> Paul’s stress in verse 11 on the distribution of the gifts occurring ‘as the Spirit wills’ (καθὼς βούλεται) has been *overlooked* by modern exegetes<sup>85</sup> to the same extent that it was *emphasised* by earlier exegetes.<sup>86</sup> This personal nature of the Spirit suggests that his mediation of Christ’s presence is more significant than simply providing some kind of supra-physical structure in which the risen Christ can somehow exist everywhere.<sup>87</sup> The Spirit’s mediation is personal but the nature of the relationship between Christ and the Spirit means that the depth or the transparency of the mediation is of a different order than that provided by, say, a human ambassador.

Although Stăniloae’s opinion of the Western Tradition is questionable, his statement captures well the fact that it is the Spirit who makes the absent Christ present to the Church:

‘Hristos e distant [în protestantism și catolicism] pentru că amindouă au uitat practic de Duhul Sfânt, prin care Hristos e prezent [...] Biserică ca trup al lui Hristos există efectiv acolo unde e prezent Duhul Sfânt’.<sup>88</sup>

<sup>83</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 456 who immediately adds the Spirit should not be seen ‘as a distinct person of the Trinity’.

<sup>84</sup> Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 574.

<sup>85</sup> So, for example Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 207 n.4 commenting on 12:4-6 argues that it ‘is not yet possible to speak of a “Trinity,” not even in view of Mt 28:19’. He then asserts that the ‘Spirit is not a Person’. When he comments on 12:11 he simply notes that the free distribution of the gifts by the Spirit ‘underlines the character of free grace’ (209). There is no discussion of the potential for this verse to question his earlier conclusion regarding the personality of the Spirit.

<sup>86</sup> Perhaps most significantly the Cappadocians. So, for example Basil on 12:11: ‘here are varieties of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit; and varieties of ministries, but the same Lord; and varieties of operations, but the same God who produces all in all’ [1 Cor 12:4-6]. Do you see how the activity of the Holy Spirit is regarded as co-ordinate (συντεταγμένη) with the activity of the Father and Son? Moreover, the divine nature of the Holy Spirit is manifest to an even greater degree from what follows. For what does it say? “But one and the same Spirit produces all these things, distributing to each one as he wills” [1 Cor 12:11]. Nothing less than independent authority befitting a lord (αὐθεντικὴν καὶ δεσποτικὴν ἐξουσίαν) is testified of him’. This quote from PG 29:664 and is cited in Michael A. G. Haykin, *The Spirit of God: the Exegesis of 1 and 2 Corinthians in the Pneumatomachian Controversy of the Fourth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 149 who goes on (167) to show that this distinction between being a lord or a servant is ‘the crucial axiom for Cappadocian theology: within the universe there are basically two types of entities, which can be characterised as “Lord” or “servant”’. cf. Calvin commenting on 12:11 argues that the fact that Paul ascribes a will to the Spirit leads him to conclude that ‘spiritum vere et proprie Deum esse’ (CO 78:500).

<sup>87</sup> For example Käsemann, as we saw in chapter 1, understood the Spirit to be ‘die Substanz der Auferstehungsleiblichkeit and die Seinsweise des Auferstandenen’ (Käsemann, ‘Anliegen und Eigenart der paulinischen Abendmahlslehre,’ 19). Needless to say Käsemann also held to the Spirit’s personhood (Käsemann, *Leib und Leib Christi*, 126). However, the Spirit’s personhood does not seem to have been applied to his mediation of the presence of the exalted Christ.

<sup>88</sup> Dumitru Stăniloae, ‘Relațiile Treimice și Viața Bisericii,’ *Ortodoxia* 16 (1964): 506: ‘Christ is distant [in Protestantism and Catholicism] because both have in practice forgotten the Holy Spirit, through whom Christ is present [...] The church as the body of Christ exists effectively where the Holy Spirit is present’.

### 3. Christ and the Individual Body (Rom 8:9-10)

One of the most important texts concerning the presence of Christ and particularly his bodily presence in the believer is Romans 8:9-11. Here we have a concentration of ‘in’ language. Paul has already described the believer as ἐν Χριστῷ (8:1). In this passage, they are not ἐν σαρκί but ἐν πνεύματι. However, it is the language of Christ and the Spirit being ‘in’ the believer that is perhaps most interesting. In 8:10 Paul states that Christ is in the Roman believers (Χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν [8:10]). Paul’s language here has led to certain interpretative tendencies whereby Christ, the believer and the Spirit are effectively collapsed into one another. We will briefly outline two such interpretations before turning to examine Romans 8:9-10 in more detail.

#### 3.1 Christ Experienced by the Believer as the Spirit (Dunn)

For some interpreters the indwelling of Christ and the indwelling of the Spirit are simply ‘identical’ since the ‘spirit is none other than Jesus Christ’.<sup>89</sup> Christ is not mediated *through* the Spirit but *as* the Spirit. For others, while the Spirit and Christ can be distinguished in that they are not to be identified without remainder, at the level of *experience* they are indistinguishable. So, for example Dunn, commenting on Romans 8:9-10 (and other similar passages), suggests that such passages

make it abundantly clear that for Paul *no distinction can be detected in the believer’s experience between exalted Christ and Spirit of God*. The experience of new life and of charismatic endowment can be referred equally to God, the Spirit and the exalted Christ; the experience of intimate union with the exalted Christ is only possible insofar as Christ can be understood and recognized in terms of spiritual power. If Christ is the definition of the Spirit, then the Spirit is the medium for Christ in his relation to men. If the Spirit of God is now to be recognized only by the Jesus-character of the spiritual experience he engenders, then it is also true that for Paul Christ can be experienced now only in and through the Spirit, indeed only as the Spirit. [...] The exalted Christ and the Spirit of God are one and the same so far as the believer’s experience is concerned [...] That is to say, in Paul’s understanding the exalted Christ is not merely synonymous with the Spirit, has not been wholly absorbed as it were by the Spirit [...] the equivalence between Spirit and Christ is

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<sup>89</sup> Hans Dieter Betz, ‘The Concept of the “Inner Human Being” (ὁ ἔσω ἄνθρωπος) in the Anthropology of Paul,’ *NTS* 46.3 (2000): 333.

only a function of the believer's limited perception [...] Christ [is] experienced as Spirit and 'limited' to Spirit in his relationship with men.<sup>90</sup>

For Dunn and others<sup>91</sup> while Christ and the Spirit are not synonymous, they are indistinguishable at the level of experience. To anticipate our examination of Romans 8:9-10, we will see that this approach simultaneously overplays the synonymity in Paul's language regarding Christ and Spirit and underplays the significance of the absence of Christ. The *absence* of Christ is, as we have seen, an experience (cf. Phil 1:23) of Christ that has christological significance and cannot be 'over-ridden' by the experience of the Spirit.

### 3.2 Christ Localised in the Believer by the Spirit (Barth)

For other commentators Paul's language in Romans 8:9-10 calls into question the idea of any spatial distinction between Christ and believers. So for example Karl Barth asks

Was heißt 'in' in allen diesen Zusammenhängen? Gibt es da etwas zu 'entmythologisieren', weil das offenbar eine lokalisierende Redeweise ist? Antworten wir ruhig: Gewiß hat dieses 'in' allen Ernstes auch lokalen Sinn. Handelt es sich in der Gemeinschaft zwischen Christus und den Christen, den Christen und Christus, wie durch Alles hindurch festzuhalten ist – den das ist die Grenze, über die hinaus es unter allen Umständen nichts zu 'entmythologisieren' gibt! – um eine in der Zeit sich ereignende Begegnung von zwei ihre Identität und Eigenart nicht verlierenden, sondern gerade in dieser Begegnung bewährenden personalen Partnern, dann muß das 'in' in seinen beiden Anwendungen auch besagen: daß die räumliche Distanz zwischen Christus und den Christen verschwindet, daß Christus auch räumlich dort ist, wo die Christen sind, die Christen auch räumlich dort sind, wo Christus ist: nicht irgendwo daneben, sondern genau dort!<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> James D. G. Dunn, *Christology in the Making: a New Testament Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation* (2nd ed., London: SCM Press, 1989 [1980]), 146-147.

<sup>91</sup> Cf. Ziesler, *Pauline Christianity*, 46: If the Spirit and Christ are not to be confused, neither in practice from the believer's point of view can they be distinguished. Because the Spirit communicates Christ, his earthly work and his present authority, Paul can pass from one to another almost without noticing. Christ is in us and the Spirit is in us (Rom.8:9f); we are in Christ and in the Spirit (Rom. 8:1, 9) [...]. It is because the Spirit now conveys Christ and conversely since *Christ now encounters mankind as the Spirit*, that such sets of statements can be drawn up. [...] Christ and the Spirit in effect define one another. [...] Christ is exalted and in a sense absent, as Christ. He is present and active in lordship, however, because he is now understood and experienced as the Spirit. Also Hermann, *Kyrios und Pneuma*, 64-65 argues that the relationship between the Lord and the Spirit is such that 'das Pneuma ist das, worin der Erhöhte erreichbar, erfahrbar wird. Wenn der Mensch dem Pneuma begegnet, trifft er in dieser Begegnung auf die Person des Herrn. Denn der Herr ist das Pneuma.'

<sup>92</sup> KD IV/3, 628-629.

Barth argues, then, that we should read Paul's language with its full 'local' sense. Christ is *embodied* in and spatially present to the believer. The significance of the absence of Christ diminishes here as the spatial distance between Christ and the Christian collapses so that they are 'spatially' present to one another.

### 3.3 Christ Present to the Believer by the Mediation of the Spirit (Rom 8:9-10)<sup>93</sup>

In this section I will argue that if Romans 8 is read as a whole we see that Paul operates with the concepts of experiential distinction between Christ and the Spirit and hence spatial distance between Christ and the believer. We will see this as we understand both Paul's dominant hypostatic or personal concept of the Spirit and the fact of Christ's *absence* (cf. 8:34). All too often Romans 8:9-11 is simply read in isolation<sup>94</sup> and this, I will argue, distorts the relationship between Christ and Spirit such that they are effectively collapsed into one another. While there is, as we shall see, a degree of synonymy in 8:9-11 between Christ and the Spirit dwelling in the believer, neither is this an absolute identity nor should this passage be read in isolation from the rest of the chapter. If the Spirit is understood as a 'hypostatic' entity as the rest of the chapter suggests, then his mediation of the absent Christ is a *personal* mediation. While it is an extremely 'effective' mediation, nevertheless it

<sup>93</sup> The other important text regarding the bodily presence of Christ to the individual is 1 Corinthians 6:15 where Paul states that the bodies of believers are members (μέλη) of Christ. Thus the union between Christ and believer is expressed corporeally. However, in 1 Corinthians 6:17 Paul states that the one who is joined (ὁ δὲ κολλώμενος) to the Lord is ἐν πνεύμα with him. It seems as if this is something substantially different from the *bodily* union (ἐν σῶμα) with a prostitute that Paul has just warned against in 6:16. Bodily and spiritual union thus appear to be distinct modes not to be conflated with one another. Believers then are united with Christ *spiritually* not corporally. However, May has argued that in making the comparison between the two unions, Paul is stressing their similarity rather than emphasising the difference between σῶμα and πνεῦμα [A.S May, *The Body for the Lord: Sex and Identity in 1 Corinthians 5-7* (JSNTS 278, London: T&T Clark International, 2004), 115]. This can be seen when the two clauses are compared:

v. 16a	ὁ κολλώμενος	τῇ πόρνῃ	ἐν σῶμά ἐστιν
v. 17	ὁ δὲ κολλώμενος	τῷ κυρίῳ	ἐν πνεύμα ἐστιν

May admits that the difference between σῶμα and πνεῦμα is 'not without significance' but suggests that the grammatical similarities are more striking and point to a comparison rather than contrast. He argues that the latter 'pneumatic union must *include* some notion of somatic union' (116. *Emphasis added*). He does this on the basis that 6:16-17 are best understood as a development and explanation of 6:15 where Paul reminds the Corinthians that their bodies are members of Christ (τὰ σώματα ὑμῶν μέλη Χριστοῦ ἐστιν) before strongly rejecting (μὴ γένοιτο) the suggestion that a person should take the members of Christ (τὰ μέλη τοῦ Χριστοῦ) and make them members of a prostitute (ποιήσω πόρνης μέλη). If Paul then goes on to *contrast* somatic and pneumatic union it would be difficult, May contends, to see how it would *develop* his contention in verse 15. May goes on to explore the nature of this corporeal union and argues that these verses primarily indicate that the spiritual nature of this union does not preclude an *impact* on their bodies. Paul wants to underline that what they do with their bodies matter - their bodies belong to Christ. This passage speaks of the relationship between the bodies of believers and Christ in terms of ownership and lordship rather than any materiality or physicality.

<sup>94</sup> Or read solely in terms of what precedes it. Cf. Fatehi, *The Spirit's Relation to the Risen Lord in Paul*, 206-209 who situates the passage in the context of 7:7-8:17 but does not look to 8:18-26 to contribute to the discussion. Similarly Hermann, *Kyrios und Pneuma*, 65-66.



must not be understood in such a way that the absence of Christ is elided. The idea of Christ being present *materially* through the Spirit or being present as the Spirit are also both ruled out. Though the idea that the Spirit mediates Christ's presence is not a new conclusion,<sup>95</sup> our emphasis on the hypostatic nature of the Spirit combined with the absence of Christ brings into clearer focus the mode of this mediation.

*The Hypostatic Spirit.* The extent to which Paul presents the Spirit in hypostatic or personal terms in Romans 8<sup>96</sup> has been disputed. One end of the spectrum are scholars such as Fee who argues that a number of motifs across the Pauline corpus (not just in Romans 8) 'presuppose the Spirit as person'.<sup>97</sup> Horn is more circumspect. In his developmental scheme, he suggests that this hypostatic conception of the Spirit is only found in the last stage of Paul's Pneumatology (in his letter to the Romans).<sup>98</sup> Rabens is similarly cautious in applying the language of 'personhood' to the Spirit. He suggests that we 'should go no further than to say that [...] Paul understands the Spirit as having personal traits'.<sup>99</sup> Kruss is perhaps even more reticent to apply the term 'person' to the Spirit. He notes a number of instances in Paul where the Spirit is described as 'acting' in a seemingly personal way.<sup>100</sup> However, these are personifications that are similar to others that Paul uses (for example with death, sin or the law) and so cannot be pressed to imply full blown personhood.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Fee, *God's Empowering Presence: the Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul*, 548; cf. Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:389; Fatehi, *The Spirit's Relation to the Risen Lord in Paul*, 215.

<sup>96</sup> This is not the only text that is discussed in this connection (see for example our treatment of 1 Cor 12:11 above).

<sup>97</sup> Fee, *God's Empowering Presence: the Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul*, 831. So, the Spirit is spoken of as a *personal* agent e.g. *searching* (1 Cor 2:10); bearing witness (Rom 8:16) etc. Further, he is sometimes the subject of a verb or implied activity 'that elsewhere is attributed to the Father or to the Son'. Cf. Bertrams, *Das Wesen des Geistes nach der Anschauung des Apostels Paulus*, 144-171.

<sup>98</sup> Friedrich Wilhelm Horn, *Das Angeld des Geistes: Studien zur paulinischen Pneumatologie* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992), 60. On pages 406 – 428 Horn analyses the idea of the Spirit as a hypostatic concept using categories from the early Church and Reformation: Repraesentio (Der Geist vergegenwärtigt die Liebe Gottes (Rom 5:5); Testificatio (Der Geist bezeugt den Stand der Sionschaft [8:15-16]); Adiuvatio (Der Geist hilft in der Schwachheit auf [Romans 8:26]); Intercessio (Der Geist tritt für die Gläubenden ein [Romans 8:26]); Glorificatio (Der Geist verwandelt zur Doxa hin [8:17c; 29]).

<sup>99</sup> Volker Rabens, 'The Development of Pauline Pneumatology: A Response to F.W. Horn,' *BZ* 43 (1999): 177. He argues this 'on the basis of the similarity of the nexus of activities that elsewhere is attributed to the Father or the Son (cf. 1 Cor 12:6 and 11; Rom 8:11; and 2 Cor 3:6; Rom 8:27)'. He also criticises Horn's developmental scheme at this point arguing that it is not as drastic as Horn proposes since Paul 'would already have conceived of the Spirit, as a personal agent from the time of 1 Cor (or even 1 Thess [see 5,19] onwards'.

<sup>100</sup> Otto Kuss, *Der Römerbrief* (3 vols., Regensbrug: F. Pustet, 1963-1978), 2:580: living and dwelling (Rom 8:9,11; 1 Cor 3:16; 6:19); teaching (1 Cor 2:13); helping (Rom 8:26); interceding (Rom 8:27).

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:581. Kurt Stalder, *Das Werk des Geistes in der Heiligung bei Paulus* (Zürich: EVZ-Verlag, 1962), 50 suggests that it is problematic to apply the essentially modern term 'person' to the Holy Spirit. He argues that when used in contemporary speech the term 'person' does not even mean the same thing as the term 'person' in the original Trinitarian doctrine – much less what Paul meant. Stalder suggests that when speaking of the

These cautions are to a certain extent valid. The personality or otherwise of the Spirit cannot be established by a simplistic appeal to the language of personification and there may be deeper philosophical problems with the term ‘person’ itself. However, there is one aspect of Romans 8 which is consistently under emphasised (even if it is acknowledged), namely the intercession of the Spirit. This is usually treated as simply one of the ‘personifications’ of the Spirit that Paul employs in this chapter (like ‘leading’ [v.14] or ‘bearing witness’ [v.16]). However, when Paul describes the Spirit himself (αὐτὸ τὸ πνεῦμα) as ‘interceding’ (ὑπερεντυγχάνει)<sup>102</sup> for the ‘saints’ with wordless groaning (στεναγμοῖς ἀλαλήτοις) according to the will of God (κατὰ θεόν [v.26]), we are moving beyond the realm of personification and into the realm of personal relationship. Here is the Spirit *relating* in prayer to God.

*The Personal Intercession of the Spirit.* Paul opens his treatment of the Spirit’s intercession by describing it in terms of helping us in our weakness (συναντιλαμβάνεται τῇ ἀσθενείᾳ ἡμῶν). Importantly, this is introduced by the phrase ὡσαύτως δὲ καί (‘in a similar way also’). Although the antecedent of the adverb ὡσαύτως is widely disputed,<sup>103</sup> perhaps the best view is to see the ‘likewise’ picking up on the repeated reference to ‘groaning’.<sup>104</sup> In v. 18 Paul sets forth his basic thesis: ‘The glory to come far outweighs the afflictions of the present’. In vv. 19-27 three examples are given that contrast the suffering of the present with the glory to come, and that show that this glory, though future, is certain. So, in vv.

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Spirit Paul was conceiving of ‘ein besonderes göttliches Sein, das sogar bei Gott für uns einstehen kann’ but not of a ‘Gottwesen außerhalb und neben Gott’. Cf. the similar point made by Schweizer, ‘πνεῦμα’, 433-434.  
<sup>102</sup> The compound verb ὑπερεντυγχάνω is not used anywhere else in the Greek Bible, perhaps coined by Paul in anticipation of ‘the expression “for the saints” of the following verse’ – so P. T. O’Brien, ‘Romans 8:26, 27: A Revolutionary Approach to Prayer?’, *RTR* 46:3 (1987): 73 n.8. The word ἐντυγχάνω itself (v.27 cf. v.34), though rare in Biblical Greek, clearly indicates verbal communication of some kind. Outside this chapter in the rest of the NT, the verb is used twice. In Acts 25:24, the Jewish community ‘petition’ or ‘appeal to’ Festus, while in Romans 11:2 Elijah ‘complains’ against Israel. Though the word can have broader meanings (‘read’, ‘encounter’), by far the most common idea (especially in reference to God) is that of verbal communication. In the LXX, it can mean ‘appeal’ (Dan 6:13; 1 Macc. 8:32; 10:61, 63, 64; 11:25; 2 Macc. 4:36; 3 Macc. 6:37); ‘read’ (2 Macc. 2:25; 6:12; 15:39); ‘pray’ (Wis. 8:21; 16:28). In Jewish Hellenistic writing, the context of relationship between two parties dominates. So for example: ‘to encounter’ (*J.W.* 2:305); ‘to meet (admit) envoys’ (*Ep. Aris.* 174); ‘to approach’ someone with a request (*J.W.* 1:278, 281, 298; *Ant.* 12:18); ‘to pray for’ (*Mos* 1:173) ‘to raise a complaint’ (*Ant.* 16:170); ‘to have an audience with someone’ (*J.W.* 1:256). It can also mean ‘to read’ (*Spec.* 4:161). The word is used in a similar way elsewhere – broadly referring to a personal encounter (Examples include Xenophon, *Anabasis*, IV:2:10; Aristophanes, *Acharnians*, 845; Demosthenes, *Against Medias*, 88; Herodotus 1:134; 2:70).

<sup>103</sup> See the discussions in B. Holdsworth, ‘The Other Intercessor: The Holy Spirit as Familia-Petitioner for the Father’s Filiusfamilia in Romans 8:26-27,’ *AUSS* 42.2 (2004): 341 and G. Smith, ‘The Function of ‘Likewise’ (ὡσαύτως) in Romans 8:26,’ *TynBul* 49.1 (1998): 36.

<sup>104</sup> Horst Robert Balz, *Heilstrauen und Weltfahung: Strukturen der paulinischen Eschatologie nach Römer 8*, 18-39 (München: Chr Kaiser, 1971), 93. The following summary is based on O’Brien, ‘Romans 8:26, 27: A Revolutionary Approach to Prayer?’, 68.

19-22 the creation groans (συστενάζει, v.22) waiting for the liberation ‘from its bondage to decay’ (v. 21). In vv. 23-25, ‘we Christians’ groan (στενάζομεν, v. 23) waiting for the redemption of our bodies (v. 23). In these verses Christians are described as those who ‘have the firstfruits of the Spirit’ and this idea is picked up in the following section, vv. 26-27, where the Spirit helps us in our weakness by interceding for us with groanings (στεναγμοῖς, v. 26). The implication is that this groaning of the Spirit will continue until believers are glorified and no longer exist in a state of weakness. Their glory is assured because it is the work of the Spirit that sustains them. Vv. 28-30 then form the theological conclusion to the section where the electing plan of God provides the ultimate basis for the certainty and assurance that has been developed in vv. 18-27. In each section, then, we have a reference to groaning, and this groaning becomes more and more specific from creation to Christians to the Spirit himself. The ‘likewise’ in v.26, then, is a reference to the fact that the Spirit *too* groans.

Paul continues by saying that the Spirit helps (συναντιλαμβάνεται) our weaknesses. The verb means ‘helps’ with the *συν-* prefix *probably* adding intensity rather than any sense of ‘with’.<sup>105</sup> It may be that this weakness includes the general sense of ‘the condition of man in this age’,<sup>106</sup> or perhaps a little more pointedly the ‘whole range of situations in the present time in which [...] *believers* experience their impotence, ineffectuality and inadequacy’.<sup>107</sup> That said, the following γάρ specifies, or at least exemplifies the weakness with respect to prayer. Paul unpacks this prayer weakness as τὸ [...] τί προσευξώμεθα καθὸ δεῖ οὐκ οἶδαμεν.<sup>108</sup> It is weakness in the realm of *ignorance*: specifically lack of knowledge of *what* to pray, rather than *how* to pray given that τί should not simply be reduced to a virtual synonym for πῶς.<sup>109</sup> The parallel between the two phrases καθὸ δεῖ (v.26) and κατὰ θεόν (v.27) combined with the common understanding of κατὰ θεόν as ‘according to the will of God’, suggests that Paul means that we do not know what to pray because we do not know the will of God.<sup>110</sup> Our prayers, like everything in creation, have been subject to

<sup>105</sup> So Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:421; O’Brien, ‘Romans 8:26, 27: A Revolutionary Approach to Prayer?’, 69.

<sup>106</sup> Dunn, *Romans*, 1:477 cf. also Jewett, *Romans: a Commentary*, 522; Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 523.

<sup>107</sup> Andrzej Gieniusz, *Romans 8:18-30: Suffering Does Not Thwart the Future Glory* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999), 213. Emphasis added.

<sup>108</sup> Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 523 n.82: ‘the “what-we-are-to-pray-as-it-is-necessary” we do not know’.

<sup>109</sup> Specifically the parallel expressions καθὸ δεῖ (v.26) and κατὰ θεόν (v. 27) indicate that right content is in view. So Käsemann, *An die Römer*, 231.

<sup>110</sup> It is widely agreed that ‘he who searches hearts’ (ὁ [...] δὲ ἐραυνῶν τὰς καρδίας) refers to God and ‘since God searches the secrets of men’s hearts, he must *a fortiori* [...] know the unspoken desires of His own Spirit’ (Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:424). So, in v. 27, Paul is focussing on the *effectiveness* of the Spirit’s intercession –he does it in accordance with God’s will (κατὰ θεόν) for the saints. See also Jewett, *Romans: a Commentary*, 524; Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 526 n.99. Although see Gieniusz, *Romans 8:18-30*, 228-247 for an alternative view.

ματαιότης ('futility' v.20).<sup>111</sup> This ignorance on our part is overcome by the intercession (ὑπερεντυγχάνει) of the Spirit himself (αὐτὸ τὸ πνεῦμα). Our inability to pray is matched by the Spirit's own intercession. Paul then sees the Spirit helping believers by *actively* praying for them according to the will of God.

The content of the Spirit's prayer is described by Paul as στεναγμοῖς ἀλαλήτοις ('inaudible groanings').<sup>112</sup> This phrase has led some interpreters to suggest that the Spirit's distinct praying is not in view. Rather the Spirit somehow 'inhabits' believers' own prayers. Key to this idea is the contention that στεναγμοῖς ἀλαλήτοις actually refers to glossolalia uttered by believers. This suggestion goes back at least as far as Origen and Chrysostom<sup>113</sup> but was revived in the 20th century by Ernst Käsemann, particularly in his Romans commentary.<sup>114</sup> One of the most recent articulation has been by Fee who argues on the basis that what is in view here is the believer's 'prayer in the Spirit'.<sup>115</sup> However, Paul seems to go out of his way to insist that it is the *Spirit* who intercedes for us. He uses ἀλλά as a strong contrast to the 'actions' of believers who do not know (οὐκ οἶδαμεν) what to pray; he uses the pronoun to emphasise that it is the Spirit *himself* (αὐτὸ τὸ πνεῦμα)<sup>116</sup> who intercedes; and this intercession is not *by* the saints but *for* the saints (ὑπὲρ ἁγίων [v.27]) with inaudible groanings.

This description of intense prayer goes beyond mere personification.<sup>117</sup> Whether or not we apply the term 'person' to the Spirit - it seems that, at the very least, the possession of 'personal traits' is the *dominant* description of the Spirit in this chapter. As such, this

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<sup>111</sup> E. A. Obeng, 'The Reconciliation of Rom. 8.26f. to New Testament Writings and Themes,' *STJ* 39 (1986): 167.

<sup>112</sup> Obeng has surveyed the main applications of στεναγμοῖς ('groanings') in the Greek Bible and has highlighted its use as intense prayer to God. Ex 2:24; Ex 6:5; Psalm 78 (79):11 and Tob 3:1. For the other uses see Gen 3:16; Ex 2:24; Jn 14:16; Mal 2:13 (E. A. Obeng, 'The Spirit Intercession Motif in Paul,' *ET* 95.12 (1984): 362).

<sup>113</sup> This intense prayer is further qualified as ἀλαλήτοις. Translations for this word in this context range from 'ineffable' to 'inaudible' and generally depend on whether the commentator sees the prayer as purely the activity of the Spirit (and hence 'inaudible') or prayer by the believer *by* or *in* the Spirit (and hence audible but 'ineffable' or 'inarticulate'). As Gieniusz, *Romans 8:18-30*, 226 argues, given the intrinsic ambiguity in meaning of this word, it alone cannot determine whether the 'glossolalic' (see below) interpretation of this verse is correct. Though as O'Brien, 'Romans 8:26, 27: A Revolutionary Approach to Prayer?,' 70 notes, the passive form might suggest 'unspoken' rather than 'inexpressible'. As such, the context must determine the meaning of the word. Thus, given our argument below, we should probably render it 'inaudible'.

<sup>114</sup> For references see Gieniusz, *Romans 8:18-30*, 222 n.730.

<sup>115</sup> Käsemann, *An die Römer*, 232-234.

<sup>116</sup> Fee, *God's Empowering Presence: the Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul*, 579-586. Cf. Engberg-Pedersen, *Cosmology and Self*, 67.

<sup>117</sup> Gieniusz, *Romans 8:18-30*, 223.

<sup>118</sup> It is not merely the description of the Spirit praying. The parallel – though distinct – reference to Christ interceding in Romans 8:34 points to more than a metaphorical intercession by a non-personal entity (though there are examples of such in Christian literature e.g. in Herm Man 5:1:6 where if anger is mixed with patience, the latter loses its ability to intercede: οὐκ εὔχρηστος ἐστὶ τῷ θεῷ ἢ ἔντευξις αὐτῆς).

suggests that in this context the *other* personifications (e.g. 8:13 putting evil deeds to death by the Spirit; 8:14 being led by the Spirit; 8:15 the Spirit of sonship by whom we cry ‘Abba Father’; 8:16 the Spirit witnesses with our Spirit) are more than that – that they in turn are evidence of Paul operating with a personal conception of the Spirit here.

Before returning to 8:9-10, one other aspect needs to be noted and that is the *heavenly location* of Christ and his intercession there. The presentation of Christ in 8:34 as being ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θεοῦ from where he ἐντυγχάνει ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν is important in connection with the intercession of the Spirit for two reasons. First, it underlines the fact that Christ is absent. However we understand his in-dwelling in 8:10, it cannot be absolutised or conceived as a presence without remainder. Any *embodiment* of Christ in the believer must be understood in the light of his location at God’s right hand and the mediation of the Spirit understood accordingly. Second and related to this is the fact that while Christ is present as interceding in heaven at God’s right hand, the Spirit is present as interceding ‘in the midst of’ or ‘with’ believers. True, the Spirit is not localized per se in 8:26-27, but the context suggests that his intercession is occurring in the midst of the earthly life that the believer experiences in weakness (8:26). This is significant because the Spirit is presented as operating *in parallel* with Christ. It is not simply that Christ’s intercession is mediated to us through the Spirit. Rather, the Spirit is operating as a discrete<sup>118</sup> agent. He serves – in some sense – as a *substitute* for an absent Christ. While the absent Christ intercedes in heaven, the Spirit is the one who intercedes for believers in their very midst. The two intercessions are related but cannot be collapsed into one another.

Attendance to the significance of the *absence* of Christ and the parallel activity of the Spirit who *acts* as a *discrete* agent in Christ’s absence helps us as return to consider the nature or mode of Christ’s embodiment *by the Spirit* in 8:9-11.

*The Interdependence but Non-Identity of Christ and Spirit in Romans 8:9-11.* Paul begins Romans 8:9 by stating that believers are in the Spirit and not in the flesh since (ἐῴπερ)<sup>119</sup> the Spirit of God (πνεῦμα θεοῦ) dwells (οἰκεῖ) ‘in them’ (ἐν ὑμῖν).<sup>120</sup> If someone (τις) does not have (οὐκ

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<sup>118</sup> We avoid the word independent here.

<sup>119</sup> The word can imply both a fulfilled (‘since’) or unfulfilled condition (‘if’) and therefore the meaning needs to be determined by the context. It seems best to understand Paul as providing assurance here (cf. Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:388; Jewett, *Romans: a Commentary*, 489). Dunn, *Romans*, 1:428 suggests that Paul ‘would be conscious that many of those hearing his letter read out would be at the inquiry stage’. However, this does not seem to reflect his statements about his recipients elsewhere e.g. 1:8; 6:11; 8:2 (at least on the more difficult reading)).

<sup>120</sup> Paul could, however, mean that the Spirit dwells ‘among them’, in their midst. Jewett, *Romans: a Commentary*, 409 argues for this on the basis of the strong parallels found in Judaism (Exod 29:45-46; T. Levi

ἔχει)<sup>121</sup> the Spirit of Christ (πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ), this person (οὗτος) does not belong to Christ. In contrast (δέ),<sup>122</sup> if<sup>123</sup> Christ is in the Christian (ἐν ὑμῖν)<sup>124</sup> then while the body may be ‘dead’, the Spirit is ‘life’ through righteousness.<sup>125</sup> Paul expands on this by stating that if the Spirit of the one who raised Jesus from the dead (τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ ἐγείραντος τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐκ νεκρῶν) dwells (οἰκεῖ) in them, then the one who raised Christ from the dead (ὁ ἐγείρας Χριστὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν) will also give life to their mortal bodies (τὰ θνητὰ σώματα ὑμῶν).<sup>126</sup> He will do this through the Spirit who already indwells the believer (διὰ τοῦ ἐνοικοῦντος αὐτοῦ πνεύματος ἐν ὑμῖν).<sup>127</sup>

Two aspects of this passage especially demand attention. First, Paul seems happy to switch without comment from πνεῦμα θεοῦ to πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ. The former phrase in Judaism seems to speak of God’s own presence.<sup>128</sup> The analogous phrase πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ thus suggests the experience and presence of Christ.<sup>129</sup> The Spirit within the Christian is nothing less than the Spirit of Christ. Paul’s intention, then, is ‘to connect the work of the Spirit to the Roman Christians’ belonging to Christ and his dwelling within them as Christians’.<sup>130</sup> The Spirit mediates the presence of Christ in the same way that he mediates the presence of God.

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5.2) though he also notes the individual form in T.Zeb 8.2 where God promises that when he finds a compassionate person ‘in that person he will dwell (ἐν αὐτῷ κατοικεῖ)’. He suggests that the individual language of v.9c (‘someone’ [τις]) stands *in contrast* to the collective language of v.9a-b. This is correct, but the contrast is not on the individual-collective axis, but on possession or non-possession (οὐκ ἔχει) of the Spirit. Accordingly, it seems better to understand ὑμῖν distributively as referring to the individual.

<sup>121</sup> This language may be resonant of the language of possession – see Dunn, *Romans*, 1:429 cf. more recently and more problematically Guy Williams, *The Spirit World in the Letters of Paul the Apostle: a Critical Examination of the Role of Spiritual Beings in the Authentic Pauline Epistles* (FRLANT 231, Göttingen: Vanenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009).

<sup>122</sup> Dunn, *Romans*, 1:432.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:430.

<sup>124</sup> Again from the immediate preceding context taking this to refer to the individual.

<sup>125</sup> On the difficult τὸ μὲν σῶμα νεκρὸν διὰ ἁμαρτίαν τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα ζωὴ διὰ δικαιοσύνην see Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:389–390.

<sup>126</sup> The plural here suggests that the earlier reference to τὸ σῶμα νεκρὸν refers to the individual body.

<sup>127</sup> This (διά + genitive) is more likely than (διά + acc i.e. ‘because of the Spirit). See Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:391–392.

<sup>128</sup> Fatehi’s study of the Spirit in Judaism (the Old Testament; Qumran Literature; Wisdom Literature; Josephus; Jewish Apocalypses; Rabbinic Literature and Targums) leads him to conclude that the Spirit ‘refers to God in his active role of relating to his creation and his people’ (Fatehi, *The Spirit’s Relation to the Risen Lord in Paul*, 163). The Spirit is ‘never conceived of or experienced as an entity distinct or somehow separable from God. The Jewish experience of the Spirit is *always and essentially* an experience of God himself. [...] In fact, the Spirit-language is used precisely when God’s own personal presence and activity, *in distinction from* his use of other agents, is in view’.

<sup>129</sup> For Hermann this passage ‘ist sogar ein besonders deutliches Beispiel für die auf der selbstverständlichen Identifizierung des Pneuma mit seinem Träger (Gott oder Christus) beruhende Eigenart des paulinischen Sprachgebrauchs’ (Hermann, *Kyrios und Pneuma*, 65).

<sup>130</sup> Fatehi, *The Spirit’s Relation to the Risen Lord in Paul*, 207.

Second, Paul is also happy to switch between Christ being in the believer<sup>131</sup> to the Spirit being in the believer.<sup>132</sup> It is this perceived synonymity between Christ indwelling the believer and the Spirit indwelling the believer that has prompted the understanding of the Spirit as being in some sense equivalent to Christ.<sup>133</sup> For, example, for Jewett ‘it raises problems for later trinitarian thought’ but ‘there seems little doubt “that Christ and the Spirit are perceived in experience as one”’.<sup>134</sup> However, this is incorrect. We have already seen from the context of the rest of the chapter, that the presence of the Spirit does not nullify the absence of Christ. Christ is at the right hand of God and is interceding there (8:34) while the Spirit is interceding in the midst of believers. Further, while Paul does indeed describe Christ as ‘in you’ (Χριστός ἐν ὑμῖν [8:10]), the language of the presence of the Spirit is *more* concrete. It is the Spirit who *dwells* within (οἰκεῖ[8:9, 11]; ἐνοικοῦντος [8:11]) in believers; it is the Spirit whom believers *possess* (ἔχει[8:9]). There is *not* an *absolute* synonymity or reciprocity between the Spirit and Christ in this immediate passage or indeed the chapter as a whole.<sup>135</sup>

How are we then to understand the embodiment of Christ in the believer (Χριστός ἐν ὑμῖν [8:10])? The location of Christ as absent from believers at God’s right hand (8:34) combined with Paul’s *emphasis* on the indwelling of the Spirit suggests that it is reasonable to understand Paul to mean that Christ is in believers *by his Spirit*.<sup>136</sup> However, the emphasis on the *personality* of the Spirit in this chapter clarifies the nature of this mediation as a *personal* mediation. That is, the Spirit does not make Christ present *materially* or (purely) *experientially*. Rather, he is *in some senses* a *substitute*, though not a substitute who can be ever fully disconnected from his sender (as the very expression πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ suggests). However, neither can he be fully *collapsed* even at the level of experience with his sender. The bodily presence of Christ in the individual believer is qualified by the mediation of the

<sup>131</sup> εἰ δὲ Χριστός ἐν ὑμῖν (8:10).

<sup>132</sup> εἴπερ πνεῦμα θεοῦ οἰκεῖ ἐν ὑμῖν; εἰ δὲ τις πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ οὐκ ἔχει(8:9); εἰ δὲ τὸ πνεῦμα [...] οἰκεῖ ἐν ὑμῖν; διὰ τοῦ ἐνοικοῦντος αὐτοῦ πνεύματος ἐν ὑμῖν (8:11).

<sup>133</sup> As we have seen there is a spectrum concerning the extent to which we can identify Christ and the Spirit. On this verse some commentators make a direct identification e.g. Michel, *Der Brief an die Römer*, 254: ‘Wo der Geist Christi ist, ist er selbst gegenwärtig’. Others are more reserved e.g. Kuss, *Der Römerbrief*, 2:502: ‘Christus ist in den Glaubenden und Getauften, natürlich in der Seinsweise des Pneuma (V. 9 b)’ and Lohse, *Der Brief an die Römer*, 233: ‘Durch das πνεῦμα handelt der erhöhte Herr an den Seinen’. To others Paul is ‘ambivalent about whether it is the Spirit of God or the risen Christ who dwells in the church. In [this passage] the indwelling of Christ and of the Spirit are spoken of synonymously’ (Gary D. Baddock, *The House Where God Lives: Renewing the Doctrine of Church for Today* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 126).

<sup>134</sup> Jewett, *Romans: a Commentary*, 491 citing Dunn, *Romans*, 1:431.

<sup>135</sup> See Fatehi, *The Spirit’s Relation to the Risen Lord in Paul*, 269; C. F. D. Moule, *The Origin of Christology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 56-58.

<sup>136</sup> Cf. G. Eichholz, *Die Theologie des Paulus im Umriss* (4th ed., Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1983 [1972]), 274.

Spirit. Even in Galatians 2:20 where Paul seems to starkly state that the exalted Christ lives – not in heaven – but in him (ζῆν δὲ ἐν ἐμοὶ Χριστός). Even if we do understand this language in a locative sense,<sup>137</sup> it is further qualified in Galatians 4:6. Here Paul states that God has sent (ἐξαπέστειλεν)<sup>138</sup> ‘the Spirit of his Son’ into their hearts so that they can cry ‘Abba Father!’ Again we have the idea that Christ is present by the Spirit.<sup>139</sup> Christ’s presence to and in believers is by the Holy Spirit.

Christ then is not ‘embodied’ in the believer in a *spatial* or *material* sense but is present in a *personal* sense by the presence of the Spirit himself in the believer. The relationship between Christ and Spirit is such that if the Spirit is present to the believer then Christ is. The depth of the relationship between Christ and the Spirit (inherent in the very phrase πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ with its parallels to πνεῦμα Θεοῦ) means that the ‘density’ of mediation that the Spirit provides is such that if the Spirit is ‘in’ a person, in a *real* sense Christ is too. However this ‘real’ presence of Christ is a qualified presence. The presence of Christ by the Spirit must be understood in the context of the absence of Christ. These two aspects of the Christian’s experience are held together most clearly in Romans 8, a chapter which helps us to see both the personal dimension of the Spirit’s mediation and the Spirit

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<sup>137</sup> Although this may seem to be the most natural way of reading ἐν here, it may not be correct. D. A. Carson, *Love in Hard Places* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2002), 165-166 suggests that ἐν ἐμοί here may have the meaning ‘in relation to me’ or ‘on my behalf’ i.e. ‘Christ lives on my behalf’. This, Carson argues, is similar to how Paul uses the preposition in 1:24 where he states that the Jerusalem apostles ἐδόξαζον ἐν ἐμοὶ τὸν Θεόν. Here the sense is not that they glorified God ‘in’ Paul but ‘because’ of Paul (cf. BDAG n.8). He concludes that in this context ‘the point is not that Christ by his Spirit lives in Paul [...] but that just as Christ’s death is Paul’s death, so Christ’s life is Paul’s life. In both cases the idea is forensic, substitutionary, judicial’. It is perhaps also worth noting that Paul does not use the verb οἰκέω here which has a more clearly localised sense. There may further be a parallel with 4:19, where Paul describes himself as being in the ‘anguish of childbirth’ until such time that ‘Christ is formed in them’ (μορφωθῆναι Χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν) which may speak of the indwelling presence of Christ (so e.g. Burton, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians*, 249; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 195) but more likely speaks of conformity to the character of Christ (Fee, *Pauline Christology*, 231 cf. Richard B. Hays, ‘Christology and Ethics in Galatians: The Law of Christ,’ *CBQ* 49.2 (1987): 283.

<sup>138</sup> Cf. 4:4 the same verb used of God’s sending of his son.

<sup>139</sup> The expression ‘the Spirit of [God’s] Son’ here leads commentators to posit different levels of identification between the Spirit and the Son as we have already seen. Some argue Paul simply means that the Spirit who indwells believers is the *same* Spirit who indwelt Jesus. So, Bruce, *Galatians*, 199; L. Tichý, ‘Christ in Paul—the Apostle Paul’s Relation to Christ Viewed through Gal 2:20a’ in *Testimony and Interpretation. Early Christology in Its Judeo-Hellenistic Milieu: Studies in Honour of Petr Pokorný* (ed. J. Mrázek and J. Roskovec; *JSNTSup* 272; London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 46. Others argue that while Paul never explicitly identifies the Spirit and Christ, he ‘is not careful to distinguish’ them. So, Burton, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians*, 222 who argues that in their experience, the early Christians could not distinguish between ‘the Christ who by his resurrection had become a spirit active in their lives, and the Spirit of God [who was] similarly active’. Others argue that the genitive is one of identity - the Spirit is the Son. So, Heinrich Schlier, *Der Brief an die Galater* (14th ed., KEKUDNT 7, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1971), 198; Hans Dieter Betz, *Galatians: a Commentary on Paul’s Letter to the Churches in Galatia* (Hermeneia, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 210 puts it even more strongly. He sees ‘Spirit’ and ‘Son’ as identical. That is ‘the Spirit “of his son” in effect means the present reality of Christ’ cf. 124: The underlying assumption ‘is that the resurrected Christ is identical with the “Spirit” which is given to the Christians’. Note the parallel in 5:5-6 between ‘through the Spirit’ and ‘in Christ’.



acting as a ‘substitute’ for the absent Christ. The absence of Christ is too often overlooked when both the relationship of Christ to the Spirit and the mode of the presence of Christ by the Spirit are explored. By ensuring that we do not neglect the *heavenly location* of Christ (Rom 8:34), the nature of his ‘embodiment’ by the Spirit comes into clearer focus. It is neither a material embodiment nor an experiential identification *without remainder*. To have the Spirit is to have Christ because the Spirit is the Spirit *of* Christ not because the Spirit *is* Christ nor even because Christ is experienced *as* Christ. The very fact that Christ’s presence to the bodies of believers is *by the Spirit* is explained by and underlines the fact of his own *bodily* absence and indeed a ‘*räumlich*’ separation from believers.

#### **4. Christ and the Eucharistic Body (1 Cor 10:1-16)**

In 1 Corinthians 10:16 Paul poses the rhetorical questions: ‘The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not (οὐχί) a participation (κοινωνία) in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not (οὐχί) a participation (κοινωνία) in the body of Christ?’ It is Paul’s discussion here of the Lord’s Supper where the question of Christ’s presence and his ‘embodiment’ has been most acutely debated. Tempting as it would be to dive into the historical controversies that have attended these verses, for the purposes of this thesis we will restrict ourselves to briefly considering two contemporary interpretations. Jerome Murphy-O’Connor represents a Roman Catholic interpretation and understands Paul to be essentially arguing for a *physical* embodiment of Christ in the bread. Ernst Käsemann also argues for an embodiment of Christ in the bread but maintains that it is a *spiritual* embodiment. In the second section below, we attempt to read these verses in the light of what we have already considered concerning the absence and mediated presence of Christ.

##### **4.1 Christ’s Embodied Presence**

*Physical Embodiment.* Jerome Murphy-O’Connor isolates the meaning of the repeated word κοινωνία as the key to unlocking Paul’s argument in 10:16.<sup>140</sup> He suggests that Paul’s earlier use of the word in 1:9 where he describes believers as called into κοινωνίαν τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν indicates that the word means more than simply ‘fellowship’. Rather, the saving call of God ‘brings the believer into a new mode of existence whose dominant characteristic is the sharing of common life in an organic unity’.<sup>141</sup> Thus, he argues, we can presume that κοινωνία in 10:16 also connotes ‘*real* participation on the

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<sup>140</sup> Murphy-O’Connor, ‘Eucharist and Community in First Corinthians,’ 58-59.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*: 59.

level of being' i.e. 'a *real* participation in the body and blood of Christ'.<sup>142</sup> Murphy-O'Connor rejects the 'concept of spiritual communion' since it 'was unknown to the Jews' and given that 'a share in the sacrifice was possible only through physical consumption of the flesh of the victim'.<sup>143</sup> For him, real participation in Christ is possible 'only if the bread and wine are in fact the body and blood of Christ'.<sup>144</sup> Thus, Christ is *in some sense* physically embodied in the bread. Murphy-O'Connor's argument obviously stands in the broad stream of Roman Catholic interpretation concerning this verse. This tradition, despite the best efforts of Protestant caricaturing, is not a simplistic idea of miraculous transformation of bread into the physical body of Christ.<sup>145</sup> Nevertheless, there is a *significant* sense in which the bread is *substantially, materially and physically* identified with the body of Christ. There is '*real* participation on the level of being' i.e. 'a *real* participation in the body and blood of Christ'.<sup>146</sup>

One serious problem with this reading of 1 Corinthians 10:16 is that to determine Paul's use of κοινωνία in 10:16, Murphy-O'Connor only looks back to 1:9 to conclude that the participation in view is 'ontological'. He overlooks two important uses in the immediate context where Paul discusses Jewish and Gentile understandings of κοινωνία (vv.19-21). So, in verse 18 Paul describes the Israelites eating sacrifices. Those who do so (οἱ ἐσθίοντες τὰς θυσίας) are 'participants' in the altar (κοινωνοὶ τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου).<sup>147</sup> It is hard to understand how Paul could mean that the worshippers ontologically share in the nature of the altar. Presumably he simply means that those who eat together *the sacrifices* on the altar, associate with each other and with the altar as a symbol of the Lord's presence.<sup>148</sup> In other words, though the consumption is *physical*, the κοινωνία is relational and spiritual.

Perhaps, though, a clearer parallel with 10:16 comes when Paul considers the case of gentile worship. He rules out the existence of the gods represented by the idols (v.19). When pagans sacrifice, they are sacrificing to *demons*. Accordingly, the Corinthians cannot have anything to do with these sacrifices, since they would then be κοινωνοὺς τῶν

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<sup>142</sup> Ibid. Emphasis added.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

<sup>145</sup> Obviously even a superficial sketch of Roman Catholic teaching on 'transubstantiation' is impossible here. See, for example, *ST IIIa*, Q.75, A.1, ad.3 who speaks about the bodily presence of Christ being in '*speciali modo, qui est proprius huic sacramento*'.

<sup>146</sup> Murphy-O'Connor, 'Eucharist and Community in First Corinthians,' 59. Emphasis added.

<sup>147</sup> Despite Gressmann's influential study [Hugo Gressman, 'H KOINONIA TON ΔΑΙΜΟΝΙΩΝ,' *ZNW* 20 (1921): 224-230], there is no reason to understand θυσιαστήριον as referring to the 'God of the altar'. See W. L. Willis, *Idol Meat in Corinth: The Pauline Argument in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10* (SBLDS 68, Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985), 185-186.

<sup>148</sup> Willis, *Idol Meat in Corinth*, 187.

δαίμονίων (v.20). Here we have κοινωνία associated (as with Christ in 10:16) with spiritual beings. What is the nature of this κοινωνία? There seem to be three possibilities of meaning here:<sup>149</sup> (1) In eating the sacrifices offered to idols, the worshipper actually consumes the demons (the sacramental view); (2) at the sacrifice the worshipper becomes an associate of demons who are eating there too (the communal view); (3) the worshipper is associating himself with the cult of demons (the social view).

The first, sacramental, view is obviously the closest parallel to Murphy-O'Connor's view –that those who partake of the cup and the bread are actually consuming the body and blood of Christ. However, crucially there is little or no evidence from pagan cult meals that participants understood themselves to be consuming their gods.<sup>150</sup> So, it is hard to imagine that either Paul or the Corinthians would have understood these κοινωνουὺς τῶν δαίμονίων to be ingesting the demons themselves. Thus, it seems that Paul either understood the worshippers to be associating with the demons themselves or with the cult of demons. Perhaps the latter is more likely given that it is 'not fear of demons which Paul has foremost in his mind, but that being involved in these cult meals involves one with a tacit recognition of supernatural powers opposed to God'.<sup>151</sup>

This suggests that when Paul refers to κοινωνία in the body of Christ, it seems very unlikely that he is referring to any kind of *physical* ingestion of Christ through the bread. There is nothing to indicate that Paul himself understood Christ to be *physically* embodied in the bread. Rather, the general trend in recent scholarship is surely right to see that this 'participation' is not in the body and blood of Christ considered as 'quasi-physical' elements. Rather 'body' (symbolised by the broken bread)<sup>152</sup> and 'blood'<sup>153</sup> here point to the *death* of Christ.<sup>154</sup> As the Lord's Supper is received in faith there is a *real participation* – a participation of the greatest significance. The believer is participating in the benefits of the death of Christ. The thought, then, is similar to Romans 6:3 where the believer who is baptised εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν is baptised εἰς τὸν θάνατον αὐτοῦ.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> Ibid., 190-192.

<sup>150</sup> This is the major conclusion of part 1 of Willis' study.

<sup>151</sup> Willis, *Idol Meat in Corinth*, 191-192.

<sup>152</sup> Wolff, *Der erste Brief des Paulus an die Korinther: Auslegung der Kapitel 8-16*, 53.

<sup>153</sup> Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 171 n.4.

<sup>154</sup> Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 766.

<sup>155</sup> This verse also answers Murphy-O'Connor's argument that 'a share in the sacrifice was possible only through physical consumption of the flesh of the victim' (Murphy-O'Connor, 'Eucharist and Community in First Corinthians,' 59). Benefiting from Christ's death is possible without having to physically *consume* a sacrifice.

As well as reflecting more closely the contextual meaning of *κοινωνία* in this passage, my criticism of Murphy-O'Connor also corresponds more closely with the locational understanding of Christ which I have been arguing for. Christ's absence as a bodily absence would seem to preclude any kind of *physical* presence in the bread. Certainly there are readings of Paul's sacramental theology which attempt to hold both the bodily absence of Christ in heaven and his bodily presence in the bread.<sup>156</sup> However, often these readings seem to rest a metaphysical load on the Pauline text which it was never intended to bear. Christ's bodily absence and his presence through the Spirit need to be held together and not collapsed into the Eucharistic bread.

*Spiritual Embodiment.* Others have argued that while Christ is not *physically* embodied in the bread, he is embodied *spiritually*. We saw in chapter 1 that Käsemann argued precisely this way.<sup>157</sup> Key to Käsemann's argument is Paul's reference to the 'fathers' eating the same spiritual food (τὸ αὐτὸ πνευματικὸν βρῶμα [10:3]) and drinking the same spiritual drink (τὸ αὐτὸ πνευματικὸν πόμα [10:4]). Käsemann argues that

Denn βρῶμα and πόμα πνευματικόν heißt zweifellos Speise und Trank, die πνεῦμα übereignen. Nur deshalb wird alsbald darauf verwiesen, daß der nachfolgende Felsen pneumatisch, nämlich Christus selbst gewesen sei, der auch 2. Kor. 3, 17 mit dem πνεῦμα identifiziert wird. Die Gabe hat den Charakter des Gebers, und in der Gabe erhält man Anteil am Geber selbst.<sup>158</sup>

Käsemann here then closely identifies Spirit, bread and Christ. We have already addressed the problem with equating the Spirit and Christ (and 2 Cor 3:17 in particular). Further, this is certainly not the only way to understand the adjective 'spiritual' (πνευματικός).<sup>159</sup> On balance, in fact, it is more likely that Paul's description of the food and drink as 'spiritual' here pertains to the nature of their provision rather than their 'substance'. Not only is this

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<sup>156</sup> A recent example is found in Farrow, *Ascension Theology*, 64-87.

<sup>157</sup> The food and drink have an 'einzig pneumatischen Charakter' and so 'mit Leib und Blut des Herrn identisch werden' (Käsemann, 'Anliegen und Eigenart der paulinischen Abendmahlslehre', 23-24). It is the 'praesentia des Herrn, der sich dieser Mittel zu seiner Epiphanie bedient' (24). Whatever objections we may have in applying the idea of the 'Real Presence' to the Sacrament, it does express exactly what Paul wants to say (28) It is precisely the 'Leiblichkeit des Auferstandenen' which makes it possible for him to give himself in the sacrament (33).

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, 15. Cf. Horn, *Das Angeld des Geistes*, 169: 'Es kann schwerlich bestritten werden, daß Pl hierbei ein realistisches Sakramentsverständnis bekundet, daß also der Geist substanzhaft mit der Speise übereignet wird'. Also Klauck, *Herrenmahl und hellenistischer Kult: eine religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zum ersten Korintherbrief*, 252-258.

<sup>159</sup> Summarised in A. J. M. Wedderburn, *Baptism and Resurrection: Studies in Pauline Theology Against its Graeco-Roman Background* (WUNT 44, Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1987), 241-242 who lists commentators arguing for: they were given by the Spirit; they mediated the Spirit to their recipients; or they pointed to higher, spiritual things.

supported by the usual function of -ικός endings,<sup>160</sup> it also fits the context of the original Exodus contexts from which Paul is drawing. The manna and water that were provided in the desert were *natural* food and drink provided in a supernatural way.<sup>161</sup>

#### 4.2 Christ's Mediated Presence

As we have said, both Murphy-O'Connor and Käsemann argue for an embodiment of Christ *in* or *as* the bread. As such, the absence of Christ is effectively eroded. However, we have been arguing that the presence of Christ should be understood as a *mediated* presence - that Christ is present through the Spirit. Certainly we have seen in 1 Corinthians 11 that the Lord is present at the Lord's Supper. Not, however, because Christ is somehow embodied *in* the bread, but because the Lord's Supper is a particular mode of Christian *assembly* (cf. 1 Cor 5:3-5) in which Christ is present by the Spirit. The bread and wine then are not the localisation or embodiment of Christ's presence. As the focus of the assembly they are the focus of Christ's presence. In the present context Paul anticipates chapter 11 when he warns those who try and share in both the table of the Lord and the table of demons (10:21). He asks them, 'Shall we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?' The spectre of the Lord being present in judgment at the Lord's Supper is, as we have seen, expanded upon in 11:29-34.

Perhaps in the history of exegesis it is Calvin who has most consistently maintained the balance between the significance of the Lord's Supper and the absence of Christ. His approach was to work from Christ's absence to the Eucharist rather than the other way round.<sup>162</sup> Given Christ's bodily absence he was insistent that

we must establish such a presence of Christ in the Supper as may neither fasten him to the element of bread, nor enclose [*includat*] him in bread, nor circumscribe him in any way (all which things, it is clear, detract from his heavenly glory); finally, such as may not take from him his own stature [*nec mensuram illi suam auferat*], or parcel him out to many places at once, or invest him with boundless magnitude to be diffused [*diffundatur*] through heaven and earth. For these things are plainly in

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<sup>160</sup> Rabens, *The Holy Spirit and Ethics in Paul*, 95-96.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, 117. Rabens also notes that an attributive adjective (like πνευματικός in 10:3-4) functions to describe the noun it modifies, and not the other way round. Hence, 'food' and 'drink' do not give definition to πνεῦμα in that the latter would be affected in its substance by the material nature of the manna and the water. He is here following N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (Christian Origins and the Question of God 3, London: SPCK, 2003), 351-352.

<sup>162</sup> Farrow, *Ascension and Ecclesia*, 177.

conflict [*non obscure repugnant*] with a truly human nature [*naturae humanae veritati*].<sup>163</sup>

However, Calvin was equally insistent that ‘it would be extreme madness to recognize no communion of believers with the flesh and blood of the Lord’<sup>164</sup> in the Lord’s Supper. His solution is to argue that it is believers and not Christ who are ‘eucharistically relocated’.<sup>165</sup>

So, the

participation in the body of Christ, which, I affirm, is presented to us in the Supper, does not require a local presence, nor the descent of Christ, nor infinite extension, nor anything of that nature [*nec localem praesentiam, nec Christi descensum, nec infinitam extensionem, nec aliud quidquam tale flagitat*], for the Supper being a heavenly action, there is no absurdity in saying, that Christ, while remaining in heaven, is received by us [*Christum in coelo manentem a nobis recipi*]. For as to his communicating himself to us, that is effected through the secret virtue of his Holy Spirit, which can not merely bring together, but join in one, things that are separated by distance of place, and far remote. But, in order that we may be capable of this participation, we must rise heavenward. Here, therefore, faith must be our resource, when all the bodily senses have failed.<sup>166</sup>

Calvin’s interpretation is not without its problems,<sup>167</sup> but importantly his basic point fits with what we have seen in Paul. The absence of Christ is a function of the exalted Christ’s humanity and possession of a discrete, localisable body. His presence is significant but it is a mediated presence. If we do understand the *κοινωνία* in 10:16 to be a participation in Christ himself (and we have raised serious questions about that), we need to understand it as a mediated and not direct participation.

The absent Christ is not embodied in the bread but he is present by the Spirit. In the Lord’s Supper as in the Christian assembly more generally, the Spirit is not merely the replacement for Christ but the way that he is present to us and we are present to him. Participation in him is more than metaphorical but less than physical. His presence is real but not unqualified. It is not absolute but mediated.

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<sup>163</sup> English slightly adjusted from J Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, 2 vols., Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960 [1559]), 4:17:19. Latin from CO 30:520.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>165</sup> To adopt Farrow’s terminology (Farrow, *Ascension and Ecclesia*, 177).

<sup>166</sup> English from Calvin, *Commentary on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, 11:24. Latin from CO 77:488.

<sup>167</sup> See the criticisms in Farrow, *Ascension and Ecclesia*, 178–180.

## 5. Summary and Conclusion

The somatic presence of Christ is the Spirit mediated presence of an absent Christ to the corporate and individual bodies of Christ. The variety of body images that Paul employs do not suggest an *embodiment* of Christ in the body of the believer, the ecclesial body or the Eucharistic bread. Rather, Christ's somatic presence is a form of his dynamic presence mediated by the personal agency of his Spirit. The Spirit is the Spirit *of Christ* but acts as a discrete agent. In other words it is not that Christ is experienced as the Spirit. There is distinction as well as unity between the Spirit and Christ. The presence and activity of the former serve as a substitute for the absence of the latter. This was particularly clear in Romans 8 where Paul most explicitly combines the personalistic description of the Spirit with the absence of Christ (Romans 8:34). In 1 Corinthians 12 we also saw that the dominant agent in the body of *Christ* is not Christ himself but the Spirit. Christ then is not materially present through the Spirit and the experience of the Spirit and the experience of Christ cannot be collapsed into one another. Rather, 'the presence of Christ is not *as* but *through* the Spirit who is the mediator of both Christ's presence and his (eschatological) otherness'.<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>168</sup> Gunton, "“Until He Comes”: Towards an Eschatology of Church Membership,' 197.

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

James Dunn has suggested that ‘few NT scholars seem to ask how Paul and the other first Christians actually conceptualized the exalted Christ’.<sup>1</sup> It is hoped that this thesis has gone some way to meeting the relative lacuna that Dunn has perceived in NT studies.

In chapter 1 we sought to provide an entry point by examining how the location and agency of the exalted Christ function in the Pauline theologies of two of the 20<sup>th</sup> century’s most significant interpreters – Albert Schweitzer and Ernst Käsemann. Not only does the exalted Christ lie at the very heart of their respective readings of Paul but they give us two radically different conceptions of the exalted Christ in Paul. For Schweitzer, Christ is exclusively located in heaven. There is no sense that he is on earth – in believers, in the church or in the elements of the Lord’s Supper. For Käsemann, Christ is unquestionably not restricted to heaven. He is present in the believer, in the church and in the world – through the medium of the Spirit. For Schweitzer, the exalted Christ does not act as a personal agent with respect to believers. Rather, he is the ‘bearer’ of resurrection power which he transmits to believers through his extended corporeity. In contrast, Käsemann sees Christ continuing to exert his Lordship directly through the Spirit, particularly in the Lord’s Supper. Schweitzer and Käsemann thus provided an entry point into our question since both specifically ground their conceptuality of Christ in Pauline texts. However, we saw also that neither directly considers the question of the absence and presence of Christ and this pointed to the need to engage in a more focussed exegetical study of the texts where Paul discusses the exalted Christ.

In chapter 2 we consider a number of texts where Christ is viewed as absent. Paul expresses his own experience of the Christian life in terms of Christ’s absence when he states his strong desire to depart this life so that he can be with Christ (Phil 1:23) and considers the Parousia of Christ as the time when believers will be *with* Christ (1 Thess 4:15-17). We proceeded by arguing that these expressions of Christ’s absence are best explained by the fact that he remains a human being and retains a distinct and distinguishable human body. We examined three texts where Paul understands Christ to remain a human being (1 Cor 15) with a discrete (Rom 8:29) and located (Rom 8:34) human body. In the final section of this chapter we examined two texts where Paul specifically combines the idea of Christ’s possession of a distinct body with his absence (2 Cor 5:6-8; Phil 3:20-21) i.e. where he conceives of Christ’s absence as a *bodily* absence.

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<sup>1</sup> Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 408-409.



In chapters 3 and 4 we turned to consider the presence of Christ and examined this in the light of his bodily absence. We saw that for Paul his presence actually takes a number of different forms: epiphanic, dynamic and bodily. In chapter 3 we examined Christ's epiphanic presence and his dynamic presence. The former is Christ's mediated presence to the senses of believers. In 2 Corinthians (2:14-4:12) Paul repeatedly employs epiphanic language (e.g. φανέρωσις) and imagery (e.g. the apostles are the 'aroma' of Christ; believers behold the 'face' of Christ). In this mode of Christ's presence, we see that though the eschatological significance of encountering Christ in this way could not be greater (e.g. salvation or destruction; glorious transformation), Christ himself is portrayed in essentially passive terms. He is *made* present through the person of Paul and through the Spirit carried preaching of his gospel. He is the object rather than the subject of his presence. The different entities involved in the mediation of Christ's presence point to the complexity involved in this mode of his presence. The gospel and the apostle provide the external canvas upon which Christ is displayed. As the gospel is heard, Christ's glory and 'face' are 'seen' (3:18; 4:4-6). As the apostle is heard preaching and seen suffering, the aroma of Christ is smelt (2:14-17) and the 'life of Jesus' encountered (4:7-12). But it is the Spirit who provides the ontological 'depth' to this mode of Christ's presence. Believers do not simply encounter Christ at a 'linguistic' level. Rather, the Spirit, who shares Christ's divine status as 'Lord', enables the epiphanic presence of Christ to penetrate to the depth of the recipient's being (3:18; 4:10-11; cf. 4:2). In contrast to his epiphanic presence, Christ's dynamic presence is seen in texts where he acts as the subject and agent of his presence (e.g. Rom 15:18-19; 2 Cor 13:1-4; 1 Cor 11:27-34). As with his epiphanic presence, though, this is still a mediated presence. Christ is not encountered immediately or directly in the world. However, with this mode of his presence we see the mediation involved becoming increasingly transparent. As Christ works through and speaks through his apostle, Christ himself is acting. It is not simply that Paul represents or serves as a substitute for an absent Christ. Rather, Christ himself is the active agent – the *subject* of his presence. In 1 Corinthians 11, the risen Christ acts dramatically and concretely in the congregation, disciplining them to preserve them from the condemnation to come. However, even here where the presence of Christ has such dramatic, tangible effects, the *absence* of Christ means that this activity is still achieved through *mediation* in the form of sickness and death.

Finally, in chapter 4 we considered the bodily presence of Christ. Here Paul employs the concept of the body to suggest Christ's intense *presence* with his people – seemingly at both the individual (Rom 8:10) and corporate (1 Cor 12:27) levels. He also appears to equate Christ's body with the bread broken at the Lord's Supper (1 Cor 10:16). This use of body imagery to express the *presence* of Christ would seem to call into question our earlier suggestion that the *absence* of Christ is a function of Christ possessing a body. It would seem that the images in this chapter suggest that the body should be understood as a means of Christ's *presence*. However, throughout this chapter we see that the bodily presence of Christ is a *mediated* presence and not an absolute, unqualified presence. The variety of images that Paul employs, thus, does not suggest an *embodiment* of Christ in the body of the believer, the ecclesial body or the Eucharistic bread. Rather, Christ's somatic presence is a form of his dynamic presence mediated by the personal agency of his Spirit. We saw further that the Spirit is the Spirit of Christ but acts as a discrete agent. In other words it is not that Christ is simply experienced as the Spirit. There is distinction as well as unity between the Spirit and Christ. The presence and activity of the former in *some senses* serve as a substitute for the absence of the latter. This was particularly clear in Romans 8 where Paul most explicitly combines a personalistic description of the Spirit (Rom 8:26-27) with the absence of Christ (Romans 8:34). In 1 Corinthians 12 we also saw that the dominant agent in the body of Christ is not Christ himself but the Spirit. Christ then is not materially present through the Spirit and the experience of the Spirit and the experience of Christ cannot be collapsed into one another.

The complex relationship between the presence and absence of Christ highlights the uniqueness of his own exalted state. His bodily absence does not render him irrelevant or impotent in the world. The ontological effects that flow from the epiphanic presence of Christ point to the fact that in his risen state he is not statically conditioned or constrained. Though absent when made present his *very life* can flow to believers. The dynamic presence of Christ underlines the fact that though absent from believers Christ is not uninvolved in the world from which he is absent. His bodily presence cannot be absolutised so as to override or negate his bodily absence but like the other forms of his presence is a mediated presence.

Fundamental to Christ's absence and bodily locatedness is the fact that the exalted Christ remains a human being. The humanity of Christ is not infrequently discussed in Pauline christologies, usually in the context of Christ as the 'Last Adam'. However, this

discussion tends to focus on the origin of the motif and the related question of the pre-existence (or otherwise) of Christ.<sup>2</sup> What is often missing is a more theological engagement with Paul and a consideration of the significance that the exalted Christ's humanity plays in his overall Christology. With the rise of theological interpretation and the increasing recognition of the importance of the *Wirkungsgeschichte* of the Biblical text, it would seem that the humanity of the exalted Christ is one area that might merit further study.

Christ's absence does not override his presence. Christ's presence does not negate his absence. They are neither mutually exclusive nor chronologically separated. Rather they are simultaneously experienced aspects of the believer's relationship with Christ. While Christ's presence and absence both have an eschatological dimension, they are perhaps more helpfully thought of in relational terms.

There is a fundamental continuity between the 'historical' Jesus and the exalted Christ in that he remains a human being and retains his (albeit transformed) human bodily particularity. Christ is therefore localised and so is absent from believers this side of death or the Parousia. However, in particular through the Spirit, Christ can be personally present so that his presence is not merely an anticipatory experience, but one with real transformative depth which can affect the believer at the depth of his or her being. But the Apostle who speaks so frequently of the presence of Christ also speaks so longingly of his desire to 'depart and be with Christ' and 'to be at home with the Lord'. For the Apostle, even as the Christian life is lived in Christ's presence, it is also one of longing to be fully united with a person in whose presence once again 'time will ride easy, anchored on a smile'.

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<sup>2</sup> See for example James D. G. Dunn, *Christology in the Making: a New Testament Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation* (London: SCM, 1980), 98-128.

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