

**A Socio-rhetorical Interpretation of Paul's Theology of  
Christian Suffering in 1 Corinthians**

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## ABSTRACT

### **Title: A Socio-rhetorical Interpretation of Paul's Theology of Christian Suffering in 1 Corinthians**

This dissertation is a socio-rhetorical investigation of Paul's theology of Christian suffering in 1 Corinthians. Paul's undisputed Letters offer seven lists of his suffering (see 1 Cor 4:9-13; 2 Cor 4:8-9; 6:4-5, 8-10; 11:23-29; Rom 8:35; Phil 4:12) and on numerous other occasions in his Letters he mentions that he has suffered, is suffering or anticipates suffering (e.g. 1 Cor 9:24-27; 15:31). The question arises as to how Paul understood his suffering.

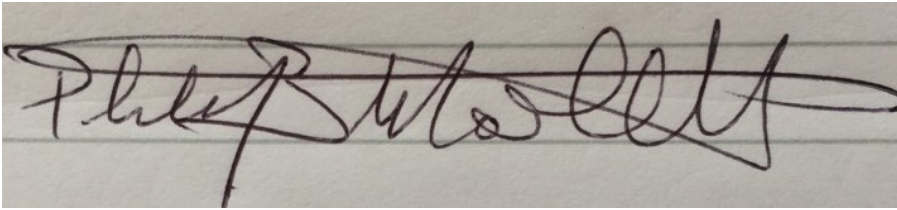
Paul's theology of suffering begins with a loving God, who is always seeking a relationship with creation. However, his people often reject it, alienating themselves from him in a sinful world. The coming of Christ is the turning point. Through Christ's sacrificial service of others (1 Cor 4:9-13, 16; 6:12-20; 9:19-27; 11:1; 15:31) humanity is offered a new relationship/union that is ontological, spousal, spiritual and participatory (1 Cor 6:12-20). By appropriating Jewish Passover remembrance theology, Paul holds that followers of Christ may enter this union through the symbolic remembrance theology and rituals of the Eucharist (1 Cor 11:17-34). This new union is a participation in Christ's life, mission, death, resurrection and exaltation. Living out this union, working towards creation's salvation (1 Cor 9:19-27) is a mission of sacrificial, suffering service: in 1 Corinthians Paul speaks of suffering always in mission-related contexts (1 Cor 4:9-13; 9:19-27; 15:31). As a 'life-giving spirit' (1 Cor 15:45-49), Paul is gifted by the Spirit for his mission (1 Cor 12:1—14:40).

Paul/each believer, in union with Christ and empowered by the Spirit, reconciles others with God: they are God's "workers," "builders," "partners," (1 Cor 3:9, 10; 9:23). Their sacrificial mission is an expression of God's love at work (1 Cor 13:8—14:1): they are sacraments of God's love. Paul and believers are continuing God's salvific mission that is guaranteed success (1 Cor 15:58). Ultimately, the believer's suffering (redefined as the selfless, sacrificial service of others in the promotion of God's Plan) has positive, salvific meaning and value: the believer participates in God's plan to "save others" (1 Cor 9:19-23).

## **Author's Declaration**

I hereby declare that this thesis represents my own work and has not been submitted, in whole or in part, by me or any other person, for the purpose of obtaining any other qualification.

Signed:

A photograph of a handwritten signature in black ink on lined paper. The signature is written in a cursive style and appears to read "Philip B. Wood".

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Date: 21 September, 2020

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## Acknowledgements

Martin Luther King Jr. reportedly said that by the time we get out of bed, dress, and have breakfast we have already depended on almost half the population of the world. Since beginning the journey to Ph D submission I feel that I have depended on the other half as well. The presentation of this Dissertation has depended on so many people that they cannot all be mentioned here. But some must be named and thanked for their contributions.

I dedicate this dissertation to my Mother who taught me the value of education and to my Father for the example of his work ethic.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

<i>AAS</i>	Acta Apostolicae Sedis
AB	Anchor Bible
AnBib	Analecta Biblica
ANTC	Abingdon New Testament Commentary
<i>BBR</i>	Bulletin for Biblical Research
BCNT	Blackwell Commentary on the New Testament
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentary
BDAG	Danker, Frederick W., Walter Bauer, William F. Arndt, and E. Wilbur Gingrich, <i>A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.
<i>BJRL</i>	Bulletin of the John Rylands Library
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentaries
BSTS	Bible Speaks Today Series
CBC	Collegeville Bible Commentaries
CBQ	Catholic Biblical Quarterly
CGT C	Cambridge Greek Testament Commentary
EQ	Evangelical Quarterly
<i>HeyJ</i>	Heythrop Journal
<i>HTR</i>	Harvard Theological Review
HTS	Harvard Theological Studies
Int	Interpretation
IBC	Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching
<i>IBS</i>	Irish Biblical Studies
ITQ	Irish Theological Quarterly

JB	Jerusalem Bible
JBC	Jerome Biblical Commentary
<i>JBL</i>	Journal of Biblical Literature
<i>JBPL</i>	Journal of Biblical Perspectives in Leadership
<i>JBT</i>	Journal of Bible Theology
<i>JETS</i>	Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society
<i>JSNT</i>	Journal for the Study of the New Testament
<i>JSNTS</i>	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement
<i>JSPL</i>	Journal for the Study of Paul and his Letters
LXX	Septuagint
NCBC	New Collegeville Bible Commentary
<i>Neot</i>	Neotestamentica
NIBC	New International Bible Commentary
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
NJBC	The New Jerome Biblical Commentary
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NJBC	New Jerome Biblical Commentary
NOVTSup	Novum Testamentum Supplements
NT	New Testament
NTL	New Testament Library
NTT	New Testament Theology
OT	Old Testament
PCNT	Paideia Commentary on the New Testament
<i>PIBA</i>	Periodical of the Irish Biblical Association
RFP	Reformed Faith and Practice
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
<i>SJT</i>	Scottish Journal of Theology

SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SP	Sacra Pagina
<i>TRu</i>	Theologische Rundschau
<i>Tyn Bul</i>	Tyndale Bulletin
<i>TD</i>	Theology Digest
<i>VetE</i>	Verbum et Ecclesia
WCC	World Council of Churches
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
<i>WTJ</i>	Westminster Theological Journal



## INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is a socio-rhetorical investigation of Paul's theology of Christian suffering in 1 Corinthians. In his undisputed Letters, Paul presents seven lists of his suffering or 'tribulation' (see 1 Cor 4:9-13; 2 Cor 4:8-9; 6:4-5, 8-10; 11:23-29; Rom 8:35; Phil 4:12).<sup>1</sup> As well as listing his suffering in 1 Cor 4:9-13, on a number of other occasions in 1 Corinthians he states that he has suffered, is suffering or expects to suffer (e.g., 1 Cor 9:24-27; 15:30-32; 16:8). Moreover, he asserts in 1 Cor 9:19-27 that his efforts at converting Jews and Gentiles, which cause him suffering, are salvific. This dissertation investigates that claim.<sup>2</sup> At the outset of this investigation, what Paul means by 'Christian suffering' needs to be introduced. In 1 Cor 4:9-13 he itemises hunger, thirst, poor clothing, rough treatment, homelessness, manual work, ridicule, persecution and slander as all, on occasion, causing him suffering. This suffering seems to be inflicted by others (for example, ridicule or persecution), or by circumstances of an itinerant preacher (such as homelessness). In 1 Cor 9:19-27 he discusses a different kind of suffering. There, he is speaking of the suffering involved in maximising his interactions with potential or actual followers, namely, the self-discipline and training involved in preparing, conducting, and following up on such interactions/evangelisations. This participation in building the faith-community (both internally and externally) causes him effort and suffering (1 Cor 5:1-7; 6:1-11; 11:17-34). A third cause of suffering for Paul involves his personal experience of conforming to 'Christ,' of taking on the 'mind of Christ' (1 Cor 2:16), of conforming his thinking

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<sup>1</sup> Raymond F. Collins, *First Corinthians*, SP (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1999), 183.

<sup>2</sup> In the last century alone, those studying Paul's suffering include the following; C. F. Georg Heinrici (1908), Adolf Bultmann (1910), Hans Windisch (1924), Anton Fridrichsen (1928-1929), Jacques Dupont (1952), Karl Prumm (1960-1967), Dieter Georgi (1964), Hans Dieter Betz (1972), Wolfgang Schrage (1974), A. T. Hodgson (1983), Karl T. Kleinknecht (1984), Karl A. Plank (1987), John T. Fitzgerald (1988) and M. Schiefer Ferrari (1991), James D. G. Dunn (1998), and Anthony C. Thiselton (2000, 2009).

and behaviour to Christ's (1 Cor 6:12-20). It is important to note that Paul always speaks of Christian suffering in the context of his mission of reconciling creation with its Creator.<sup>3</sup> In other words, all forms of suffering mentioned by Paul in 1 Corinthians are directly or indirectly related to his missionary work: his theology of suffering is not an abstract theology but an experiential and contextual theology.<sup>4</sup> In 1 Corinthians, then, Paul's working definition of suffering is the experience of physical, psychological, economic, spiritual, and/or social stress, pain, distress or loss occasioned in preaching and/or embodying the gospel of Christ.

Paul believes that his vocation, as a Christian, is to bring the gospel to 'the nations' regardless of the personal effort or suffering required of him (1 Cor 1:1). This is particularly striking when one considers that Paul lives in a culture that usually understands sufferers as individuals punished by God for their sins.<sup>5</sup> That view is the dominant view of Paul's time and is expressed in 1 Cor 5:1-7; 10:1-13; 11:29-32. Another view, also expressed in 1 Corinthians, suggests that suffering is visited upon the individual or nation as a method of discipline or purification, often called character building or education (1 Cor 4:1-5; 5:1-7). Also, some commentators find in 1 Corinthians the view that Christ suffers for others in an act of vicarious atonement (e.g., 1 Cor 5:7; 11:24; 15:3, 31; and possibly indirectly in 4:13) and, also, that Paul considers his suffering to be vicarious and salvific (1 Cor 4:13; 9:19-27).<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission – Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll NY: Orbis Books, 1993), 177; J. Christiaan Beker, *Paul's Apocalyptic Gospel: The Coming Triumph of God* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 41.

<sup>4</sup> The only 'suffering' Paul discusses in 1 Corinthians is 'ministry-related,' 'kingdom-related.' This is not to say that he doesn't recognise other forms of suffering (e.g. illness, earthquakes) but just that he doesn't discuss them in 1 Corinthians.

<sup>5</sup> Edward P. Sanders, *Judaism, Practice and Belief 63 BCE-66 CE* (London: SCM, 1977), 415-17.

<sup>6</sup> In the view of some commentators Paul also mentions vicarious atonement in Gal 6:17; 2 Cor 5:21; Rom 8:3; and Phil 2:17 (see Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "The Letter to the Romans," in *NJBC* (London: Burns and Oates, 1990), 840-841; Fitzmyer, "Paul's Christological Soteriology," in *NJBC*, 1399. Dunn (*The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 212) says that "one of the most powerful images used by Paul to explicate the significance of Christ's death is that of the cutic sacrifice, or more precisely, the 'sin-offering' which could be offered up by individuals or groups in the Jerusalem temple (Lev 4) and the Annual Atonement



The question arises, consequently, as to how Paul understands his own suffering. He is adamant that his suffering is not a punishment for his sins but is an inevitable part of being a Christian minister preaching and embodying a counter-cultural gospel. Indeed, it somehow guarantees his identification with Christ, especially with Christ's suffering, death and resurrection. And Paul claims that, living with Christ's life and mission, his own suffering (1 Cor 9:19-27), and indeed his whole life (1 Cor 6:12-20), is salvific.

When it comes to discussing Paul's understanding of suffering in his undisputed Letters, commentators depend almost exclusively on 2 Corinthians, Romans and/or Philippians.<sup>7</sup> 1 Corinthians tends to be used only to source examples of God visiting suffering on individuals or the nation for their sinful behaviour (such as 1 Cor 5:1-8; 11:27-34). For example, Anthony E. Harvey, states that in 1 Corinthians Paul shares the general view of his contemporaries that "suffering is a purely negative experience:"<sup>8</sup> and James D. G. Dunn agrees with that view.<sup>9</sup> Harvey asserts that, in between writing 1 and 2 Corinthians (a period of possibly only a few months),<sup>10</sup> Paul had an experience that "fundamentally affected his understanding of suffering, of his relationship with Christ, and of the help he could give to others when they found themselves in situations of comparable hardship."<sup>11</sup> In Harvey's view the social and religious implications of

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Day sacrifices (Lev 16). Dunn then interprets 1 Cor 5:7; 15:3 saying that "there the language is unavoidably sacrificial and signifies atonement" (Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 217 and Jeremias, *Eucharistic Words*, 222-226).

<sup>7</sup> For example, see the work of Collins, *First Corinthians*; James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids, 1998); Anthony E. Harvey, *Renewal through Suffering* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996); Jan Lambrecht, "Paul and Suffering," in *God and Human Suffering*, ed. Jan Lambrecht and Raymond F. Collins (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990/1992); N. T. Wright, *Philippians*, (Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 2009) and *The Day the Revolution Began*, (San Francisco: Harper One, 2016), 254-258. It may be noted that this dissertation presumes the unity of 2 Corinthians (as, among others, R. F. Collins, *Second Corinthians*, 10-12, M. Pascuzzi, *First and Second Corinthians*, 98-100).

<sup>8</sup> Harvey, *Renewal Through Suffering*, 31. Harvey's view is questioned in this dissertation.

<sup>9</sup> Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 482.

<sup>10</sup> Harvey, *Renewal Through Suffering*, 31.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

this experience must have been “profound.”<sup>12</sup> Paul’s account of this event is in 2 Cor 1:8-10:

We do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction that came to us in the province of Asia; we were utterly weighed down beyond our strength, so that we despaired even of life. Indeed, we had accepted within ourselves the sentence of death that we might trust not in ourselves but in God who raises the dead.

It is Harvey’s contention, with which Dunn agrees, that this life-threatening event changes Paul’s understanding of suffering from a purely negative experience, that is, that suffering is a God-sent punishment for sin to an experience of innocent suffering vested with positive value and meaning in itself.<sup>13</sup> 2 Corinthians is, in Harvey’s view, the first time in the Pauline corpus, and “possibly the first time in the entire philosophical and religious literature of the West,” that Paul’s understanding of suffering receives its first positive, theological expression.<sup>14</sup> In contrast to Harvey and Dunn, this dissertation investigates whether 1 Corinthians, and not 2 Corinthians, is the first extant New Testament document to provide suffering with a comprehensive and positive meaning in itself, namely, that it is re-creating the world in accordance with God’s salvific plan.<sup>15</sup>

The aim of this dissertation, then, is to investigate Paul’s understanding of Christian suffering as portrayed in 1 Corinthians, particularly its salvific value and its place in the fulfilment of God’s covenant with his People. In order to do so, it will need to answer a number of questions regarding Paul’s understanding of his suffering, specifically, (1) Did Paul believe that his suffering was salvific? If so, how is his suffering salvific? (2) Did Paul relate his suffering to that of Christ? If so, how? And, (3) was his suffering in any way related to God’s covenant with his people? If so, how?

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<sup>12</sup> Harvey, *Renewal Through Suffering*, 9.

<sup>13</sup> Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 482-487. Also, Harvey, 31.

<sup>14</sup> Harvey, *Renewal Through Suffering*, 31.

<sup>15</sup> 1 Thessalonians does speak of suffering for the faith and it is in the context of Paul’s ministry – supporting two contentions of this dissertation. The focus of this investigation is 1 Corinthians.

If these questions can be answered in the affirmative, it would mean that 1 Corinthians – and not 2 Corinthians – is the first time in the Pauline corpus that Paul’s new, positive and comprehensive understanding of suffering (i.e. that it re-creates creation in accordance with God’s salvific plan) receives theological expression.<sup>16</sup>

### 0.1 Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation

The chosen interpretative analytic for this investigation is a socio-rhetorical analytic. This Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation is specifically designed to investigate “values, convictions and beliefs”<sup>17</sup> and brings the rich resources of modern rhetorical analysis, anthropology and sociology to textual interpretation.<sup>18</sup> This socio-rhetorical framework, developed by Vernon K. Robbins over a 30+ year period beginning in the mid-1970s, uses five central approaches or lenses, which Robbins calls ‘textures’ (the word ‘texture’ is drawn from the art of tapestry weaving as the image is created using a range of interwoven and differently-coloured threads). In his 1992 book *Jesus the Teacher* Robbins names the five textures as (a) Inner Texture, (b) Social and Cultural Texture, (c) Ideological Texture, (d) Intertexture, and (e) Sacred Texture.<sup>19</sup> The primary focus of this socio-rhetorical interpretation is on these five textures. This multi-layered approach aims to uncover a ‘deeper’ appreciation of 1 Corinthians.

The first texture, Inner Texture, refers to the various ways the text employs language and other literary techniques in presenting one’s argument, including the use of linguistic patterns, structural elements, and the manner in which the text sets out to

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<sup>16</sup> In contrast to Harvey, *Renewal Through Suffering*, 31, who states that it was 2 Corinthians.

<sup>17</sup> Vernon K. Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1996), 1.

<sup>18</sup> David Brion Davies, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution 1770-1823* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1975), 14.

<sup>19</sup> Vernon K. Robbins, *Jesus the Teacher: A Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation of Mark* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1992).

persuade, or to provoke feelings or aesthetic evocations.<sup>20</sup> The second texture, Social and Cultural Texture, examines the text as a mirror or product of a society or culture by identifying the different ways it views the world, including information about social roles, codes, etc.<sup>21</sup> The third texture, Ideological Texture, is concerned with the opinions and prejudices, the suppositions and predispositions of both the writer and the reader, and their affiliation to specific groups.<sup>22</sup> The fourth texture, Intertexture, investigates a text's representation of, reference to, or use of written sources in the world outside the text. It can take many forms, such as oral, scribal, cultural, social or historical forms.<sup>23</sup> The fifth texture, Sacred Texture, investigates texts in order to discover their religious nature. It includes aspects concerning deity, holy persons, ethics, and salvation. It particularly refers to the manner in which a text communicates insights into the relationship between the human and the divine.<sup>24</sup>

In 2009 Robbins published *The Invention of Christian Discourse*, achieving another milestone in the development of socio-rhetorical interpretation with the introduction of 'rhetorolects' (an elision of 'rhetorical dialects').<sup>25</sup> This provides another tool for the socio-rhetorical interpreter. Rhetorolects are forms of discourse, each one distinguishable from the others by its own distinctive style, grammar, vocabulary, images, topics, reasonings, approaches, and concerns, all of which hint at political assumptions implicit in the text and interests of its author.<sup>26</sup> Robbins identifies

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<sup>20</sup> Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation: Dictionary of Socio-Rhetorical Terms: accessed on the internet. [www.religion.emory.edu/faculty/robbins/SRI/defns/s\\_defns.cfm](http://www.religion.emory.edu/faculty/robbins/SRI/defns/s_defns.cfm). For example, 1 Cor 4:9-13 where the layering of disadvantages creates the image of cumulative disadvantage.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. For example, 1 Cor 9:14 says "In the same way, the Lord ordered that those who preach the gospel should live by the gospel."

<sup>22</sup> An example is 1 Cor 1:10-4:21 on the confrontation between the wisdom of 'this' age versus the wisdom of the 'new' age.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. See Paul's use of traditional written sources in 1 Cor 11:23-26; 15:3-5.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid. As an example see Paul's use of the *Shema* in 1 Cor 8: 6.

<sup>25</sup> For a fuller discussion of rhetorolects, see Vernon K. Robbins, *The Invention of Christian Discourse* (London: Bloomsbury, 2012).

<sup>26</sup> Stephen L. Harris, *Understanding the Bible*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2007), 232; Etienne Charpentier, *How to Read the Old Testament*, trans. John Bowden (London: SCM, 1982), 84f.; Roland E.

six different rhetorolects, namely, Apocalyptic, Miracle, Pre-creation, Priestly, Prophetic and Wisdom.<sup>27</sup> It is necessary to note that there is evidence of all six rhetorolects in 1 Corinthians. However, the Apocalyptic and the Priestly Rhetorolects are the ones given greater prominence by Paul in 1 Corinthians. They are particularly important for this study as the Apocalyptic Rhetorolect underpins the urgency of Paul's mission (see 1 Cor 15:23-28) and the Priestly Rhetorolect undergirds the worship nature of creation's status (see 1 Cor 8:1—11:1; 11:2—14:40).

The importance of the interpretative approach for this dissertation necessitates that a full chapter be devoted to the socio-rhetorical interpretation, in which this framework is discussed in greater depth.

## **0.2 Presuppositions**

There are various assumptions in this study of Paul's suffering in 1 Corinthians. These relate to the authorship and dating of 1 Corinthians, the occasion, unity and structure of the letter, Paul's textual sources, the chronological positioning of the letter in the Pauline corpus, and the overall theology of 1 Corinthians.

### **0.2.1 Authorship and Dating of 1 Corinthians**

The unanimous opinion among scholars today is that Paul is the author of the following seven letters: Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians and Philemon. In the majority view, the order in which the undisputed letters were written (with approximate dates in brackets) is as follows: 1 Thessalonians

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Murphy, "Introduction to the Pentateuch," in *NJBC*, ed. Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, and Roland E. Murphy (London: Burns&Oates, 1968), 4.

<sup>27</sup> The rhetorolects are defined in Robbins et al., *Foundations for Sociorhetorical Exploration*, xv-xxv.

(49 C.E., or even 41-44 C.E.),<sup>28</sup> Galatians (50-55 C.E.),<sup>29</sup> Philippians (Letter 55-57 C.E.),<sup>30</sup> 1 Corinthians (53-55 C.E.),<sup>31</sup> 2 Corinthians (55-57 C.E.),<sup>32</sup> Romans (56-58 C.E.),<sup>33</sup> and Philemon (57-63 C.E.).<sup>34</sup> In this scheme 1 Thessalonians, Galatians and Philippians (Letter A) are all written before 1 Corinthians, and 2 Corinthians, Romans, Philippians (Letters B and C), and Philemon are written after 1 Corinthians. This is the working principle in this dissertation. The Pauline authorship of the other letters commonly placed in the Pauline corpus (2 Thessalonians, Colossians, Ephesians, 1 and 2 Timothy, and Titus) is disputed.

The dating of the Pauline letters is important for this dissertation. Some commentators, such as Harvey and Dunn, maintain that Paul's theology, specifically his theology of suffering, underwent critical development in the period between the writing of 1 and 2 Corinthians.<sup>35</sup> While this dissertation accepts, as Harvey and Dunn do, that Paul wrote 1 Corinthians before 2 Corinthians, it will question whether the critical development happens in the period between Paul's writing of 1 and 2 Corinthians, or, whether it happened before Paul wrote 1 Corinthians.

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<sup>28</sup> Vincent M. Smiles, *First Thessalonians, Philippians, Second Thessalonians, Colossians, Ephesians*, NCBC (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2005), 5; *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>29</sup> Robert J. Karris, *Galatians and Romans*, NCBC (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2005), 8; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "Galatians," in Brown et al., *NJBC*, 781; Ben Witherington III, *Grace in Galatia: A Commentary on St Paul's Letter to the Galatians* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 12; Anthony C. Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 31.

<sup>30</sup> Smiles, *First Thessalonians, Philippians, Second Thessalonians, Colossians, Ephesians*, 32. Smiles assumes that Philippians should be 'read as a unity,' even though there are many who maintain that it "comprises one or more letters written from prison in Ephesus in the mid-fifties and perhaps from Corinth a year or so later" (Smiles, *First Thessalonians, Philippians, Second Thessalonians, Colossians, Ephesians*, 32).

<sup>31</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 10, tells us that "The oldest more or less complete copy of this letter available to us is preserved on a number of papyrus sheets" in the Chester Beatty Library (Dublin). Only three verses of the letter (1 Cor 9:3; 14:15; 15:16) are missing. This dates from "around 200 A. D" (*Ibid.*). This is remarkable as the oldest copy of a gospel dates from the fourth century.

<sup>32</sup> Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, "First Corinthians," in Brown et al., *NJBC*, 799. I have accepted Pascuzzi's view on 2 Corinthians that "so far the answers have not been compelling enough to warrant abandoning attempts to understand this letter as a coherent whole" (Pascuzzi, *First and Second Corinthians*, 99). Also, R. F. Collins (*Second Corinthians*, Grand Rapids MI: Baker Academic, 2013), ps 11-12 suggests the same resolution.

<sup>33</sup> Michael J. Gorman, *Apostle of the Crucified Lord* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 340.

<sup>34</sup> Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Philemon*, in Brown et al., *NJBC* (London: Burns&Oates, 1968), 870. "It was written most probably in 56-57 AD."

<sup>35</sup> Harvey, *Renewal Through Suffering*, 482; Dunn, *The Theology of Paul Apostle*, 482.

## 0.2.2 Occasion of 1 Corinthians

Commentators generally accept that Paul lived and preached in Corinth for an eighteen month period in 50-52 C.E.<sup>36</sup> In subsequent years, Paul, based at Ephesus, remains in contact with his Corinthian followers. For example, 1 Cor 1:11 tells us that “Chloe’s people” report to Paul on the rise of factionalism in the Corinthian church. The case of incest (1 Cor 5:1-8) is also reported to him, as are the divisions about the Lord’s Supper (1 Cor 11:18). 1 Cor 7:1 and 16:17 mention a letter written to Paul by Corinthian church members. It is also thought that Paul would have had opportunities of discussing matters relevant to the Corinthian church with occasional delegates or couriers.<sup>37</sup> The “laundry list” of problems mentioned in 1 Corinthians disturbed Paul both at a pastoral and theological level.<sup>38</sup> 1 Corinthians is written in response to the above-mentioned correspondence. In responding to these problems Paul discusses and discloses his theology of suffering.

Another feature of the occasion of 1 Corinthians is whether it is written before or after the celebration of Passover. Martin Stringer suggests the letter is written and delivered after Passover,<sup>39</sup> while Raymond F. Collins seems undecided on the matter.<sup>40</sup> However, one could argue strongly from the text of the letter that Passover is yet to be celebrated: this is the view of this dissertation.<sup>41</sup> The Passover context (including its

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<sup>36</sup> Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 29.

<sup>37</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 16-17; Maria Pascuzzi, *First and Second Corinthians* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2005), 11-13; Murphy-O’Connor, *First Corinthians*, 799; Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 29-36.

<sup>38</sup> Gorman, *Apostle of the Crucified Lord*, 227.

<sup>39</sup> Martin Stringer, *Rethinking the Origins of the Eucharist* (London: SCM, 2011), 38.

<sup>40</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 208.

<sup>41</sup> Firstly, in 1 Cor 5:8, Paul pleads with the Corinthian church members to resolve the issue of the incestuous man and says: “let us celebrate the feast not with the old yeast, not with the yeast of evil and immorality, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” Secondly, the tense of the verb ‘celebrate’ ἑορτάζωμεν is present active subjunctive, indicating that the feast has not yet happened (literally, ‘so that we may/might celebrate the feast’, i.e. we have not yet celebrated the feast). Paul is quite clear that the feast will not be celebrated ‘with sincerity and truth’ until the banishing of the incestuous man happens first. Thirdly, Paul’s entire argument to clear out the ‘old yeast of sin’ loses its force if Passover is in the past – the next Passover to be celebrated would be almost a year in the future.

dating) will be central to the interpretation of a number of key texts on suffering in 1 Corinthians.<sup>42</sup>

### 0.2.3 Unity and Structural Outline of 1 Corinthians

The unity of 1 Corinthians has been questioned occasionally. Though some have questioned its unity the vast majority accept it.<sup>43</sup> Raymond F. Collins, arguing for the unity of the letter, asserts that “no manuscript evidence exists to suggest that 1 Corinthians once existed in a form other than that in which it exists today.”<sup>44</sup> Moreover, those advocating the ‘many letters suggestion’ cannot agree on the divisions or component parts, and many even changed their views over the years.<sup>45</sup> Collins concludes that the letter “must be viewed as a single composition, even if it was composed over a somewhat extended period of time,”<sup>46</sup> or written “with some interruptions.”<sup>47</sup> This view of Collins, the one held by a large majority of scholars today, is the one accepted in this dissertation.

The unity of 1 Corinthians also emerges through its structural outline. After the customary introduction in 1 Cor 1:1-9, the letter is subdivided into six major ‘arguments’: (1) arguments for unity in 1 Cor 1:10 – 4:21, (2) arguments regarding morality in 1 Cor 5:1 – 6:20, (3) arguments concerning marriage and sexual relations in

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Fourthly, there is no suggestion in the text or context to indicate that we should read it otherwise. See also Gorman, *Apostle of the Crucified Lord*, 227f.

<sup>42</sup> The Passover dating is emphasised as the Passover context is important to the understanding of the Last Supper (as discussed in chapter 6 of this dissertation) and, therefore, of the Lord’s Supper.

<sup>43</sup> It was first questioned in the nineteenth century by H. Hage (1876), C. Clement (1894), and in the twentieth century by Johann Weiss (1910), Walter Schmithals (1956), Gunther Bornkamm (1971) and others. Some ‘partitionists’ (e.g. Johannes Weiss) maintain that 1 Corinthians is a composite of at least two letters (1 Cor 1-9 and 1 Cor 10-13). Others (e.g. Rudolph Pesch) argue that they can detect four letters, or even six letters (e.g. Khio-Khng Yeo) in the text of 1 Corinthians. For greater detail see Collins, *First Corinthians*, 13f.

<sup>44</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 13.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.* Also, the case in favour of the unity of 1 Corinthians has been argued forcefully by J. C. Hurd (1983), H. Merklein and D. Luhrmann (1984), G. Fee (1987), M. Mitchell (1989, 1991), F. Lang (1994), and Murphy-O’Connor (1995).

<sup>46</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 14.

<sup>47</sup> Martinus C. de Boer, “The Composition of 1 Corinthians,” *NTS* 40 (1994): 229-245. See also Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 38 accepts the conclusion of M. de Boer.



1 Cor 7:1-40, (4) arguments concerning the eating of food already sacrificed to idols in 1 Cor 8:1 – 11:1, (5) arguments on aspects of community worship in 1 Cor 11:2 – 14:40, and (6) arguments for the resurrection in 1 Cor 15:1- 58. Paul concludes the Letter in 1 Cor 16:1-24, mentioning a collection for the poor at Jerusalem, his future travel plans, and further greetings and blessings.<sup>48</sup>

1 Corinthians is considered by the majority of commentators to have been structured along the lines of a deliberative speech in which Paul is attempting to persuade the Corinthian church members to put aside their many misunderstandings – and the resulting disagreements – and to reach a greater degree of unity (1 Cor 1:10). In short, he is asking them to put on the ‘mind of Christ’ (1 Cor 2:16).<sup>49</sup> As part of this, he asks them to identify with Christ – especially with Christ’s suffering, death and resurrection.

It is also generally accepted that Paul has regular contact with his convert church in Corinth and, in that light, 1 Corinthians needs to be seen as one contribution in a continuing dialogue (individual and delegation reports, visits, letters, and observations) that extends over possibly five years between Paul’s first visit to Corinth and the writing of this Letter.<sup>50</sup>

#### 0.2.4 Paul’s Textual Sources for 1 Corinthians

In 1 Corinthians, Paul draws on various textual sources. Sometimes he draws on a number of them in a single phrase, sentence, pericope or unit. Paul quotes the canonical books of Isaiah (x6), Psalms (x4), Genesis (x2), Deuteronomy (x2), Exodus (x1), Job (x1), Sirach (x1), Jeremiah (x1), and Hosea (x1) and refers to at least thirty

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<sup>48</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 29-31; Pascuzzi, *First and Second Corinthians*, 15-16 and other commentators all agree with the above schema.

<sup>49</sup> Pascuzzi, *First and Second Corinthians*, 12.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

four Old Testament books in 1 Corinthians.<sup>51</sup> Paul was also familiar with and referred to many apocryphal or deuterocanonical books (such as Baruch, 1 and 4 Esdra, 1-4 Maccabees, Tobit, and Wisdom of Solomon).<sup>52</sup> 1 Corinthians also draws on many Intertestamental books, such as Jubilees, The Apocalypse of Moses, 1 Enoch and 2 Enoch. 1 Enoch.<sup>53</sup> Furthermore, Paul shows a familiarity with secular writers of his own time and before it (e.g. Menander, Philo, Seneca, and Livy), and refers to them at the appropriate moment.<sup>54</sup> Additionally, Paul is aware of, values and hands on several pre-Pauline Christian traditions, among them the Institution Narrative, the sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist, and the resurrection appearances.<sup>55</sup> In 1 Corinthians he also quotes or refers to Galatians and 1 Thessalonians – letters he had written before 1 Corinthians.<sup>56</sup>

Paul uses the above-mentioned sources in different ways (sometimes to assist in explaining a point he is anxious to make, at other times to give authority to his statements/re-statements, or to actually help him think out a difficulty or a response to a problem). For the purposes of this dissertation, Paul's use of Genesis, Exodus, Isaiah,

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<sup>51</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 94. For example, Paul quotes Isaiah 40:13 in 1 Cor 2:16. Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 1396-1401.

<sup>52</sup> Part of Paul's farewell (1 Cor 16:13) "be brave" – though *hapax* in the New Testament – occurs in Mattathias' farewell in 1 Macc 2:64.

<sup>53</sup> Jubilees 49:15 warns that those who celebrate the Passover unworthily will be punished in that year and later. This reference could very well have been in Paul's mind as he wrote 1 Cor 11:27-32. Also, the Apoc. of Moses, (10:3 and 12:2) is alluded to in 1 Cor 11:7. Paul mentions in 1 Cor 10:4 that "the rock was Christ." The Talmud (Sanhedrin 38a) in discussing Deuteronomy 32:15 ("and scoffed at the Rock of his salvation") understood the Rock as the Messiah.

<sup>54</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 560 and 582 respectively. Menander, a comic dramatist who died in 292 B. C., is quoted by Paul in 1 Cor 15:33, specifically his play *Thais*. Also, Philo's *Creation* 134-169; *Questions on Genesis* 1.51 is possibly alluded to in 1 Cor 15:56.

<sup>55</sup> The Institution Narrative is recorded in 1 Cor 11:23-26 in this manner: "For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus, on the night he was handed over, took bread, and after he had given thanks, broke it and said." 1 Cor 15:3-4 is also a pre-Pauline tradition treasured by Paul and handed on as such.

<sup>56</sup> Some commentators find an allusion to expiatory scapegoats in 1 Cor 4:13. If that were so, then Paul's thought would be similar to what he expresses in Gal 6:17; 1 Cor 5:7; 15:31; 2 Cor 4:10-11; Phil 2:17. See Collins, *First Corinthians*, 191; Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 364-365; Pitre et al., *Paul a New Covenant Jew*, chs. 2 and 3. See also this dissertation ps. 105-111.

Jeremiah, and 4 Maccabees will be of particular importance for his theology of suffering.

#### 0.2.5 Overview of the Theology of 1 Corinthians

1 Corinthians is a pastoral letter. It focuses on the behaviour of the church members or, rather, their misbehaviour. Though the letter may have “the appearance of a laundry list of problems . . . , these were the presenting symptoms of a more significant disease... [including] a divisiveness based on social and spiritual status.”<sup>57</sup> For Paul, this divisiveness is, in turn, an indication of a far more basic problem in the church, namely, a failure to understand the nature of the gospel he had preached to them some years earlier. As a result, Paul writes a deeply theological letter to his converts addressing this fundamental problem.

Paul’s gospel, as set out in 1 Corinthians, has at least six main theological pillars around which he constructed his life. Firstly, it focuses on the centrality of Christ in the life of the Christian. Christ is the Messiah, the One promised in the Old Testament, who becomes incarnate in order to reveal God, God’s plan, and how humanity should live. He is the living fulfilment of the covenant, who “became for us wisdom from God, as well as righteousness, sanctification, and redemption” (1 Cor 1:30). Secondly, Christ came on earth to establish a New Covenant with God into which the Corinthians (and all others) are being invited: 1 Cor 1:9 states that God calls the Corinthians “into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.” Thirdly, now that the believer is “in Christ” and is “joined to the Lord, becomes one Spirit with him” (1 Cor 6:17), one is to act accordingly, namely, to act as a sanctified, re-created, and saved person. Therefore, he is to ‘flee idolatry and immorality’ (1 Cor 6:18) as one could not maintain a

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<sup>57</sup> Gorman, *Apostle of the Crucified Lord*, 227.

relationship with ‘this’ God and, at the same time, have a relationship with other gods (1 Cor 6:15-20). Fourthly, the believer’s new life is to be one of love, embodied in selfless service of others (1 Cor 9:19-23; 13:1-13), in imitation of Paul (1 Cor 4:16) and both are in imitation of Christ (1 Cor 11:1). This union with Christ is social as well as individual and is to show itself in solidarity with and in selfless service of others, especially the poor and marginalised. Fifthly, the new task is to build up creation, the Body of Christ, as instructed in the Genesis story of creation and in the Psalms (especially Pss. 2; 8; 110), now re-interpreted by Paul (1 Cor 12:1-14: 40). Lastly, ‘in Christ’ the believer would find ‘sanctification, justification, salvation’ (1 Cor 1:30), provided they remain steadfast (1 Cor 15:58). Paul expects all Christians not only to believe the gospel, but to become the gospel (that is, to conform their thinking and living ever more closely to Christ’s), and to be living models of the gospel, preaching it with their lives.<sup>58</sup> For Paul, becoming living models of Christ includes identifying with Christ – especially with Christ’s life, mission, suffering, death and resurrection.<sup>59</sup>

### 0.3 Outline of Chapters

This dissertation may be divided into three sub-sections. The first sub-section introduces the topic, reviews relevant literature, and outlines the Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation model to be used. The second sub-section presents a detailed exegesis of the significant primary and supporting texts for Paul’s theology of suffering in 1 Corinthians. The third sub-section concludes the dissertation by summarising the

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<sup>58</sup> Michael J. Gorman, *Cruciformity: Paul’s Narrative Spirituality of the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 7.

<sup>59</sup> It is also notable that 1 Corinthians contains the first New Testament declaration of the pre-existence of Christ. In 1 Cor 8:6 Christ is called the “one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things are and through whom we exist.” This is a very strong affirmation of the Lordship of Christ (where ‘Lordship’ is to be read as a prerogative of ‘Yahweh’) and his role in creation. At the same time, throughout 1 Corinthians there is a very firm acknowledgement of the humanity of Christ, the suffering, crucified Messiah.

findings of the previous chapters, discussing present-day applications of the findings, and suggesting areas for further research.

The first sub-section consists of the Introduction, Chapter 1 and Chapter 2. The Introduction outlines the topic of the dissertation along with an outline of the chosen interpretive framework (a socio-rhetorical interpretation), and some presuppositions guiding this investigation. It is followed by Chapter 1, which presents an overview of current scholarship on the topic. This enables a clear expression of the aims of the dissertation, its distinctiveness and, therefore, its contribution to the field of Pauline scholarship to emerge. Chapter 2 discusses the interpretative framework used in this dissertation, namely, a Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation. This chapter will include an explanation of the textures, rhetorolects, and the necessary extensions to the textures and rhetorolects which make it an original approach. The distinct advantages of this approach in studying the dissertation's topic will also be identified.

The second sub-section (Chapters 3—6 inclusive) presents the core exegetical analysis of the principal suffering-related pericopae in 1 Corinthians. Each of these chapters offers a textured exegesis using the chosen socio-rhetorical interpretive textures (i.e., Inner Texture, Social and Cultural Texture, Ideological Texture, Intertexture, and Sacred Texture). An analysis of the Apocalyptic and Priestly Rhetorolects employed in the principal suffering-related pericopae provides additional depth to the investigation. Each exegetical chapter concludes by offering a theological synthesis of its findings. Chapter 3 is the first exegetical chapter and it addresses the reality, causes and purposes of Paul's suffering. The principal suffering-related pericope in this chapter is 1 Cor 4:9-13. It will show that Paul's suffering is real and biographical, that it is an inevitable consequence of preaching and embodying the

gospel, and that he implies that his suffering is salvific.<sup>60</sup> Chapter 4 addresses the central question of the dissertation, namely, did Paul understand his suffering as salvific for himself and/or for others, and if so, how could he reason to that conclusion? 1 Cor 9:19-27 is the key pericope for that chapter. It will demonstrate that Paul explicitly and repeatedly claims that his suffering is salvific. Chapter 5, which is centred on the pericope 1 Cor 6:12-20, examines a number of key questions, including whether Paul's suffering was related to the suffering of Christ and, if so, how? The key lens for this chapter is Paul's participatory theology. It will show that the believer's union with Christ is ontological, spousal and spiritual.<sup>61</sup> Consequently, Paul claims that a believer lives with Christ's salvific life and mission, and that, therefore, his/her suffering is Christ's suffering. The final chapter of exegesis, Chapter 6, investigates the relationship of Paul's suffering to the New Covenant. 1 Cor 11:17-34 is a particularly important pericope for that chapter. It suggests that Paul's re-interpretation of the Jewish 'remembrance' theology offers the believer an entry-point through which, empowered by the Spirit (1 Cor 6:12-20), they become one with Christ in his life and mission and fulfil the New Covenant to re-create the world according to God's salvific plan.

The third sub-section concludes the dissertation by gathering and ordering all the findings of the previous chapters and synthesises Paul's theology of suffering. It details how Paul, as a result of years of preaching and theologising, understands the suffering in his life and how he presents that theology in the text of 1 Corinthians. Furthermore,

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<sup>60</sup> Paul does not use the words 'scapegoat' or 'sin-offering' but Kugelman ("First Corinthians," *NJBC*, 261), Dunn (*The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 212), and other commentators understand that the words used in 1 Cor 4:13 for 'rubbish' and 'dregs' are the same words that are translated in Proverbs 21:18 and Tobit 5:19 as 'scapegoat' and 'sin-offering.' Paul does use the word 'ransom' (1 Cor 6:20 and 7:23) and 'redemption' (1 Cor 1:30). Hooker maintains that there are "clear echoes of Isaiah's atonement theory" in Rom 4:25 (and this dissertation holds that there are clear references to atonement in other Pauline letters, e.g. 1 Cor 5:7-8; 8:11; 11:23-26; 15:3). 1 Cor 15:3-5 does state that "Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures." See, also, Wright, *The Day the Revolution Began*, 333; Baker and Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, Chapters 2 and 3.

<sup>61</sup> Paul discusses this union in/with Christ also in 1 Cor 15: 35-49 (ontological/real), 6:15-17 (the Gen2;24 reference stresses the spousal nature of the union, and 15:42-49 (spiritual). See dissertation ps. 204ff.

it indicates how he locates this comprehensive, experiential and contextual theology of suffering essentially and centrally in the story of salvation; in other words, in God's covenant relationship with his people. The study concludes by suggesting how Paul's theology of suffering might contribute to contemporary society and by indicating some avenues for further research on this topic.

The distinctiveness and originality of this dissertation emerges in various ways. As stated earlier, when it comes to discussing Paul's theology of suffering in his undisputed letters commentators depend almost exclusively on 2 Corinthians and Romans. In contrast, this dissertation investigates Paul's theology of suffering in 1 Corinthians in critical depth. This research shows that 1 Corinthians, written 53-55 C.E., before 2 Corinthians (55-57 C.E.) and before Romans (56-58 C.E.), is the first extant New Testament document to provide a comprehensive Pauline theology of suffering. Moreover, it demonstrates that suffering has a positive meaning and value in itself. The interpretive approach is also distinctive and original. This socio-rhetorical framework, first developed by V. K. Robbins, is extended for this dissertation. Therefore, by applying this extended framework to the topic of Paul's theology of suffering in 1 Corinthians, it deems this dissertation to be original and distinctive. Furthermore, this dissertation, by drawing upon its methodological framework, will suggest that suffering in Paul's letters, and particularly in 1 Corinthians, should be categorised as a rhetorlect.

## CHAPTER 1

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Suffering as a topic, particularly as a personal experience, has perplexed humanity for millennia.<sup>62</sup> It occupies a significant place in Paul's theologising and in his argumentation in his first letter to the Corinthians. To do justice to Paul's theology of suffering as portrayed in 1 Corinthians, there is a need to undertake a literature review, using representative examples, that identifies, evaluates and synthesises the relevant literature for a study of Paul's theology of suffering in 1 Corinthians. This literature review will not include methodological works as the next chapter offers a comprehensive discussion of the method adopted in this dissertation.

In Paul's time there were two principal philosophical/theological views on the problem of suffering: the Greco-Roman view and the Jewish view. This Chapter begins with an outline of the prevailing Greco-Roman and Jewish attitudes to suffering during Paul's lifetime in order to understand how they might have influenced his approach and to see how similar or dissimilar his view may be from the prevailing views. Although many recent commentators have attempted to understand Paul's theology of suffering in the Pauline corpus through the lens of 2 Corinthians, or Romans, or Philippians, or Colossians, it is striking that there is no monograph investigating through the lens of 1 Corinthians.<sup>63</sup> In this section of the Chapter it will be particularly important to investigate whether Paul's theology of suffering was developed before, during, or after 1 Corinthians (c. 55 C.E.) and to identify any aspects of his theology of suffering

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<sup>62</sup> Brian J. Tabb, *Suffering in Ancient Worldview* (London: T&T Clark, 2017), 1.

<sup>63</sup> Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* and *Jesus and the Spirit* (London: SPCK, 1975); and Siu Fung Wu, *Suffering in Romans* (Eugene OR: Pickwick, 2015), focus on Romans; Hamm on Philippians, Dennis Hamm, "The Sharing of his Suffering," in *Suffering and the Christian Life*, ed. Richard W. Miller (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2013), 19-48, and Hafemann on 2 Corinthians, Scott J. Hafemann, *Suffering and Ministry in the Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990).



peculiar to that Letter. Lastly, many scholars have examined individual aspects of Paul's theology treated in 1 Corinthians that are related to his theology of suffering, for example, his conception of being 'in Christ'. It is necessary to detail some of the works of those scholars in order to understand Paul's theology of suffering.<sup>64</sup> The key questions permeating this chapter, and the entire dissertation, are whether Paul's claim (as in 1 Cor 9:19-23) that his suffering is salvific can be substantiated in 1 Corinthians and whether his suffering has a place in Christ's mission of reconciliation and re-creation.

### 1.1 Greco-Roman Attitudes to Suffering in Paul's Time

The Greco-Roman attitude to suffering may be represented by Seneca the Younger (4 B.C.E—65 C.E.), Rome's "leading intellectual figure in the mid-first century," the quintessential Stoic,<sup>65</sup> who "shaped the understanding of Stoic thought for later generations."<sup>66</sup> He paid particular attention to the problem of suffering, possibly because of his own experiences of ill-health, economic upset and political failure.<sup>67</sup>

Seneca maintained that suffering had been sent by god (Jupiter). He thought that it was one's response to it that mattered, that is, one should take the opportunity of God-given suffering to "exhibit virtues such as bravery, long-suffering, and steadfastness."<sup>68</sup> It could then serve "to test, harden, and fit the good person for divine

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<sup>64</sup> In particular, there will be a focus on the work of Adolf Deissmann, Michael J. Gorman, and Constantine R. Campbell.

<sup>65</sup> Donald R. Dudley, "Runar M. Thorsteinsson, Roman Christianity and Roman Stoicism: A Comparative Study of Ancient Morality," in *Encyclopedia Britannica* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 20.

<sup>66</sup> Tabb, *Suffering in Ancient Worldview*, 24.

<sup>67</sup> Seneca is quoted as saying: "I am ill; but that is only a part of my lot. My slaves have fallen sick, my income has gone off, and my house is rickety. I have been assailed by losses, accidents, toil, and fear; this is a common thing." Seneca, *Moral Epistles*, 96; quoted in Tabb, *Suffering in Ancient Worldview*, 24.

<sup>68</sup> Seneca, *Naturales Quaestiones*, 2.45.1.

service,” because true happiness “consist[ed] in living according to Nature, ...pursuing virtue, becoming wise and thereby joining the company of god.”<sup>69</sup>

Seneca is basically a monotheist,<sup>70</sup> but called that deity “many names according to its various powers” (among them Nature, Fortune, Fate, Providence, god, and Jupiter).<sup>71</sup> God is “the first cause of all, the one on which all the other causes depend.”<sup>72</sup> The human soul or mind “originates from God and is endowed with reason, a divine trait, though ... chained in this life to the frail, uncooperative body.”<sup>73</sup> Not only is the body ‘uncooperative,’ but, for the Stoic, it is ruled by the passions, whereas God-given reason has in it “the power of living even the noblest of lives.”<sup>74</sup>

For Stoics, “a fixed, eternal, and necessary chain of causes ... provides order and structure to the world.”<sup>75</sup> Therefore, pain, misfortune, and suffering come ultimately from Jupiter, the Supreme God, and have a divine purpose. In the Greco-Roman worldview it was thought that disasters and suffering generally were sent by god as punishment when humans disobeyed god’s directives: this view was prevalent also beyond the Greco-Roman world.<sup>76</sup> However, for Seneca, suffering, an integral part of everyone’s life, is provided for a good reason, namely, to afford humanity the opportunity of growing in virtue: its divine purpose, then, is educational in nature. Like a good father and teacher Jupiter/god knows that the sufferer can benefit.<sup>77</sup>

Seneca experiences significant suffering (such as exile, war, and ill-health). He teaches that suffering brings out the best in humanity. Brian J. Tabb, paraphrasing Seneca, states that one is shown to be wise “not while looking on as a spectator, but

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<sup>69</sup> Seneca, *Naturales Quaestiones*, 2.45.1.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> This saying was attributed by Diogenes Laertius to Zeno (*Lives*, 7.147, Loeb Classical Library).

<sup>72</sup> Seneca, *De Beneficiis*, 4.7.2.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Fitzgerald, *Cracks in an Earthen Vessel* (Atlanta GA: Scholars Press, 1988), 54.

<sup>75</sup> Tabb, *Suffering in Ancient Worldview*, 53.

<sup>76</sup> Wu, *Suffering in Romans*, 44.

<sup>77</sup> Tabb, *Suffering in Ancient Worldview*, 33.

when thrust into the match against Fortune's assaults, for those who wish to truly know themselves must undergo testing."<sup>78</sup> He also taught that hardship and suffering may, on occasion, be a sign, "not of God's hostility or negligence, but of his *love* for the sage."<sup>79</sup> In Stoic eyes, humanity's best response to suffering is to accept it and to grow through it. For Seneca, suffering is not desirable in itself, but it is a necessary means of achieving virtue: "Fire tests gold, misfortune [tests] brave men."<sup>80</sup>

Seneca says that the worthy person views suffering as a token of god's love and accepts it as being given in his/her own best interest.<sup>81</sup> In overcoming difficulties one gains true knowledge of self and shows one's true worth.<sup>82</sup> By reason or philosophy adversity can be turned to one's advantage and, eventually, one hopes to become impervious to adversity's assaults.<sup>83</sup>

There is another reason why the good man or good woman experiences suffering: so that others might see their response to suffering and follow their example. "Those called to suffer should consider themselves 'worthy instruments' of the divine purpose."<sup>84</sup> They were born to be exemplars or patterns for others, to teach others how to respond to suffering and, thus, how to live virtuous lives.<sup>85</sup> In this way, it is believed that the worthy person actually played a part in God's plan for humanity. Growing through considerable suffering, the good person "exhibits what human nature is capable of enduring and becomes thereby a great exemplar."<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Fitzgerald, *Cracks in an Earthen Vessel*, 76-77.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid. Italics in the original.

<sup>80</sup> Seneca, *On Providence*, 5.10. He explained that Fortune tested "Mucius by fire, Fabricius by poverty, Rutilius by exile, Regulus by torture, Socrates by poison, Cato by death." Elisabeth Asmis says that "Seneca's heroes do not merely conquer misfortune: they assert their superiority by embracing the harm inflicted by it" (Elisabeth Asmis, "Seneca on Fortune and the Kingdom of God," in *Seneca and the Self*, ed. Shadi Bartsch and David Wray (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 114-15.

<sup>81</sup> Fitzgerald, *Cracks in an Earthen Vessel*, 78.

<sup>82</sup> Seneca, *On Providence*, 4.1.

<sup>83</sup> Fitzgerald, *Cracks in an Earthen Vessel*, 55, paraphrasing Seneca and Epictetus.

<sup>84</sup> Tabb, paraphrasing Seneca, *On Providence*, 4.2, 4.5. in Tabb, *Suffering in Ancient Worldview*, 31.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Seneca, *On Providence*, 4.8.

Additionally, Greco-Roman literature (especially in the fields of drama and philosophy) is littered with examples of individuals voluntarily offering themselves to the god(s) “as sacrifices for the benefit of others, and such sacrifices afforded salvation for those for whom they died in that their deaths achieved the mercy of the gods.”<sup>87</sup> As early as Euripides (480—406 B.C.E.) there are examples of people sacrificing themselves for others in the belief that such sacrifices would achieve the mercy of the gods for the people.<sup>88</sup> “In Euripides’ dramatic tragedy *Alcestis* he asserts that a human’s sacrificial death for others could benefit those for whom the death was offered.”<sup>89</sup> In Jarvis J. Williams’ view, this statement reveals sacrificial and soteriological language in three ways: he suggests that humans voluntarily die, that their deaths are ‘for others,’ and that their deaths provide salvation for those for whom they died because their deaths bring victory to the Greeks in battle.<sup>90</sup> Livy, the Roman historian (60 B.C.E.—17 C.E.), and writer of a monumental history of Rome, records the Roman practice of *devotio* (the voluntary offering of one’s life for another, the city, or empire).<sup>91</sup> In his *De Beneficiis* Seneca says that “our aim is to live according to nature and to follow the example of the gods.” In that way humanity/the wise man becomes “god’s pupil, his imitator, and true offspring.”<sup>92</sup> This brings one ultimately “to the gods,” to “equality with the gods.”<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Jarvis J. Williams, *Maccabean Martyr Theology in Paul’s Theology of Atonement* (Eugene OR: Wipf and Stock, 2010), 34.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 34. Both Socrates (470-399 B.C.E.) and Plato (428-348 B.C.E.) praise the soldiers who gave their lives (who “accepted death in exchange for the salvation of the living”) in battle for Athens.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>91</sup> Jan Willem van Henten and Friedrich Avemarie, *Martyrdom and Noble Death* (London: Routledge, 2002), 19-20. For example, the death of Publius Decius Mus (ca. 340 B.C.E.) was presented by Livy as an atoning sacrifice and a saving event for Rome (i.e. it provided victory in battle and appeased the wrath of the gods): mentioned in Williams, *Maccabean Martyr Theology*, 36-37.

<sup>92</sup> Seneca, *On Providence*, 1.5.

<sup>93</sup> N. Clayton Croy, *Endurance in Suffering: Hebrews 12:1-13 in its Rhetorical, Religious and Philosophical Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 157. N. Clayton Croy, in summarising the Greco-Roman perspective on suffering, says “suffering is a ‘given’ in human affairs, and its potential for benefitting the sufferer was axiomatic for several Greco-Roman authors. Stoics of a later

In brief, Seneca holds that suffering is god-sent with a divine purpose. That purpose is to provide humans with opportunities of developing virtues: in other words, to grow through their suffering. The virtuous person would then be a good exemplar for others encouraging them to imitation. The ‘wise person’ might, on occasion, consider offering his life as a sacrifice for another or for others, a praiseworthy and celebrated offering. The ultimate purpose of living virtuously is, at death, to join the company of god. Seneca also maintains that those who give their lives for others could be effective, namely, that they could earn victory in battle for Rome. He also argues that suffering could be an indication of god’s love for his follower. Paul (5 C.E.—66 C.E.) is a contemporary of Seneca (4 B.C.E—65 C.E.) and has much common-ground with the Stoics, such as understanding suffering as god-sent with a divine purpose, as an opportunity to develop virtues and grow, and to be an exemplar for others. These themes will be unpacked in greater detail in 1 Corinthians.

### **1.2 Jewish Attitudes to Suffering in Paul’s time**

There are three Jewish attitudes to suffering in the Old Testament that are particularly important for Paul’s theology of suffering. They are not mutually exclusive: suffering experienced by the individual and/or the nation as a God-imposed punishment for sin, suffering experienced as a God-sent education or purification opportunity, and God-sent suffering experienced by an innocent righteous person in atonement for the sins of individuals and/or the nation. These religious and cultural approaches to suffering are considered here because they influenced the individual and the national attitude and behaviour to suffering as will be evident in the pericopae discussed in this dissertation.

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period (most notably Seneca) saw in suffering the means by which the gods exercised, tested and trained persons.”

The first view understands suffering experienced by the individual and/or the nation as a God-imposed punishment for sin. Since the Exile, Israel has “portrayed its whole history as one of sin and punishment.”<sup>94</sup> This interpretation is projected back into the past or earlier history and leads to a radicalisation of “the notion of solidarity in sin and the interconnection of sin and punishment.”<sup>95</sup> This view appears in historical texts (Deut 28:15; Lam 5:7), prophetic sayings (Jer 31:29), and the Psalms (109). Possibly the overarching statement of this approach is to be found in Exodus 20:5: “I, Yahweh your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation.” In the Old Testament the Israelites often lapse into idolatry and immorality (mentioned in 1 Cor 10:1-13) and “time and time again [are] punished by lengthy years of oppression at the hands of the Moabites, Canaanites, Midianites, Ammonites and Philistines (Jud 2:10—3: 6, 3:7ff, 4:1ff, 6:1ff, 10:6ff, 13:1ff).”<sup>96</sup>

This view that suffering is brought on by one’s sins remains the dominant conviction in the proto- and deuterocanonical works such as Esther, Judith, Tobit, 1 and 2 Maccabees and Sirach. Sirach says, for example, that “each receives his reward according to his deeds” (Sir 16:14b).<sup>97</sup> Paul, as a Pharisee, would have accepted this view and would have believed that suffering was a God-given sign of judgement or punishment.<sup>98</sup> He seems to accept this view in 1 Cor 11:29-32 when he states that

anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body, eats and drinks judgement on himself. That is why many among you are ill and infirm, and a considerable number are dying.

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<sup>94</sup> Jos Luyten, “Perspectives on Human Suffering in the Old Testament,” in *God and Human Suffering*, ed. Jan Lambrecht and Raymond F. Collins (Louvain: Peeters, 1990), 1-30, 5.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 7-9.

<sup>97</sup> Moreover, both Job and his friends agree that no human can be just before God (Job 4: 17, 14: 4, 15: 14, 25: 4; cf. 1 Kgs 8: 46, Jer 17: 9, Psalm 51: 7, 130: 3, 143: 2, Prov 20: 9, Ecc 7: 29). See also Luyten, “Perspectives on Human Suffering in the Old Testament,” 12.

<sup>98</sup> Sanders, *Practice and Belief*, 415-417.

However, despite the above, Paul is adamant that this is not why he suffers: he is an innocent righteous sufferer (see, for example, 1 Cor 4:1-5).

The second view of suffering sees it as a purificatory or educational opportunity. Luyten calls this “an instrument in the hands of Yahweh for the purpose of purifying and educating his people.”<sup>99</sup> There are many examples of this dynamic in the Old Testament, such as the time of slavery in Egypt and the subsequent desert wanderings (e.g. Deut 4:20, 8; 1 Kings 8:51; Jer 11:4).<sup>100</sup> Ezekiel 22:17-22 depicts God gathering the house of Israel and placing it in the smelter to purify it. In Isaiah 48:9-10 God speaks of purifying or testing his people “in the furnace of adversity;” and Psalm 66:10-12 has God testing Israel, “like silver is tried,” putting them “through fire” to bring them to “a spacious place.” The Book of Lamentations, written at a time of tremendous suffering for God’s chosen people, considers that suffering is caused by infidelity and that the responsibility is on the sinners to realise their status and to return to the Lord: “Let us test and examine our ways, and return to the Lord” (Lam 3:40). Similarly, Eliphaz counsels Job: “Blessed is the man whom God corrects: so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty” (Job 5:17). Elihu concurs with this view and almost categorises or systematises it in stages, though the stages may not always be in the same order, namely, illness, confession, divine/angelic mediation, healing, and thanksgiving (Job 33:14-33; also, Job 36:8-15).<sup>101</sup> One possible interpretation of 1 Cor 5:1-8 is that Paul expected the Corinthian church members to expel the incestuous man in the hope

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<sup>99</sup> Luyten, “Perspectives on Human Suffering in the Old Testament,” 20. No individual Israelite sinner escaped the wrath of God either, not even kings. For example, Asah suffered a foot disease (2 Chr 16:12), Uzziah’s punishment was leprosy (2 Chr 26:16-21), Amaziah was the victim of a conspiracy (2 Chr 25:20, 27), and Josiah was slain in battle (2 Chr 35:20-23).

<sup>100</sup> Sanders, *Practice and Belief*, 20.

<sup>101</sup> Luyten, “Perspectives on Human Suffering in the Old Testament,” 21. Luyten, discussing Job’s position, says “Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar appeal to their own experience (Job 15:17), to tradition (Job 8:8-10, 15:18-19), and even to special illumination (Job 4:12-16) in order to postulate their foremost thesis: ‘Those who plough evil and sow trouble reap the same... The misery and suffering of Job clearly prove that God is accusing and punishing him, not because of his piety but because of his boundless guilt (15:4-6, 22:4-11).’” See Luyten, “Perspectives on Human Suffering in the Old Testament,” 10.

that he would “come to his senses and repent.”<sup>102</sup> This is not, however, why Paul suffers: he is an innocent, righteous sufferer (e.g., 1 Cor 4:1-5).

The third view considers suffering as God-sent to his innocent, righteous servant in atonement for the sins of individuals and/or the nation. The Book of Wisdom says that the Lord tests the upright through suffering in order that they might be found worthy. Jubilees (17:17) recalls the testing of Abraham in Genesis 22 and the Psalms of Solomon state that, “in the process of God’s testing, the righteous are required to endure so that they may be shown mercy (Ps. Sol. 16:14-15).<sup>103</sup> 2 and 4 Maccabees provide detailed accounts of the martyrdom of Eleazer, the mother and her seven sons, and others.<sup>104</sup>

The example *par excellence* of an innocent sufferer for others in the Old Testament is, of course, the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 52:13—53:12. Significantly, the Book of Isaiah is quoted six times in 1 Corinthians and referenced over fifty times.<sup>105</sup> The fourth Servant Song begins with God’s guarantee of exaltation for his Servant (Isa 52:13) and this guarantee is repeated at the end of the Song/Poem (Isa 53:12). In between, the Servant’s life is one of suffering and humiliation: “so marred was his appearance (Isa 52:14), he was despised and rejected by others; a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity” (Isa 53:3). Nevertheless, this Servant took upon himself the punishment of others; he was wounded, crushed and bruised for the

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<sup>102</sup> Pascuzzi, *First and Second Corinthians*, 38.

<sup>103</sup> Wu, *Suffering in Romans*, 43. Luyten, “Perspectives on Human Suffering in the Old Testament,” 22, footnote 47. Sirach paints a picture, similar to that of Jubilees, of Abraham remaining faithful despite suffering (Sir 44—50) and both Judith (8:26) and 1 Maccabees (2:52) cite fidelity in spite of suffering as admirable. One could also mention Sir 49:9 and Tob 2:12 Vg where the trial of Tobit is explicitly compared with the testing undergone by ‘Job the saint.’

<sup>104</sup> 4 Maccabees has been dated between 30-130 C.E. and, therefore, may have been written after Paul’s death. However, regardless of an early or late dating, 4 Maccabees is tangible evidence of a ‘Martyr Theology’ before, during (and after) Paul’s lifetime. Jarvis J. Williams lists the following works of a martyr theology tradition: the Epistle of Jeremiah (ca. 317-306 B.C.E.), Wisdom of Solomon (ca. 200 B.C.E.-100 C.E.), Daniel (ca. 165 B.C.E.), 2 Maccabees (165 B.C.E.), LXX additions to Daniel (ca. 100 B.C.E.), possibly IQS (ca. 100 B.C.E.), the Assumption of Moses (ca. 168 B.C.E.-100 C.E.), and concludes that 4 Maccabees is “further developing an already existing Martyr Theology that preceded Paul.” Williams, *Maccabean Martyr Theology in Paul’s Theology of Atonement*, 32.

<sup>105</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 622-623,



transgressions of others. Importantly, “by his bruises we are healed” (Isa 53:4). Brueggemann interprets this as stating that the Servant is not only effective on a one-to-one basis, but brings about the new beginning for the entire community.<sup>106</sup> He contends that this Servant, a rejected ‘nobody,’ breaks the cycle of death and hurt “precisely by a life of vulnerability, goes into the violence, and ends its tyranny.”<sup>107</sup> As he was innocent the Servant’s betrayal was “a perversion of justice” (Isa 53:8). As mentioned at the beginning of the Poem, God delivers on his promise and the Servant who gave all receives all (Isa 53:12). It is generally agreed that the Isaian understanding of martyrdom continued to influence later accounts through Old Testament times and into Christian times.<sup>108</sup>

There is considerable evidence in 1 Corinthians for all the above views of suffering: suffering as God’s punishment for one’s sin (1 Cor 10:1-13; 11:29-32), suffering as a God-sent purification and/or educational opportunity (1 Cor 5:1-8), and suffering as vicarious atonement for the sins of individuals and/or the nation (1 Cor 4:13; 5:7; 11:23-34; 15:3-5).<sup>109</sup> This indicates that Paul was aware of all three understandings of suffering, that he considered them as possibly operative in his time, and influenced by them, he formed his own particular understanding of suffering in 1 Corinthians. In particular, this dissertation will show that Old Testament martyr theology, and especially the Isaian Suffering Servant, greatly influenced Paul in his understanding of Jesus’ life, mission, death and resurrection. It also influenced Paul’s conception and practice of his own life and mission. The exegetical Chapters will show how these Jewish views of suffering help to understand Paul’s theology of suffering in 1 Corinthians.

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<sup>106</sup> Walter Brueggemann, *Isaiah 40—66* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998), 146.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 147.

<sup>108</sup> Williams, *Maccabean Martyr Theology*, 27-64, 64-84.

<sup>109</sup> The allusions many commentators see in this verse (1 Cor 4:13) are treated in detail in the dissertation at ps. 107-120.

### 1.3 Suffering and the Pauline Corpus

A comprehensive monograph on Paul's theology of suffering in 1 Corinthians is a *lacuna* in the Pauline literature. In contrast, there have been some important writings on Paul's theology of suffering as portrayed in his other undisputed letters, namely, 1 Thessalonians, Galatians, 2 Corinthians, Romans, Philippians, and Philemon. Reviewing representative samples of those works sets the scene for a detailed investigation of Paul's theology of suffering as portrayed in 1 Corinthians. The studies of James D. G. Dunn, Scott J. Hafemann, Robert C. Tannehill, Tom Wright, and Siu Fung Wu are discussed here as they are internationally acclaimed works and are representative of the considerable number of studies of Paul's theology of suffering.<sup>110</sup> They also have the added benefit of being inclusive of many different Christian denominations.<sup>111</sup>

#### 1.3.1 James D.G. Dunn

James D. G. Dunn is an Emeritus Professor of New Testament Studies in Durham University (England). His works offer some perceptive theological insights that aid the investigation of Paul's theology of suffering in 1 Corinthians. In particular, he addresses the problem of suffering in his books *Jesus and the Spirit* and *The*

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<sup>110</sup> Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 482, James G. Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975); Scott J. Hafemann, "The Role of Suffering in the Mission of Paul," in *The Mission of the Early Church to Jews and Gentiles*, ed. Jostein Adna and Hans Kvalbein (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), Scott J. Hafemann, *Suffering and Ministry in the Spirit: Paul's Defence of His Ministry in 1 Cor 2:14—3:3*, Paternoster Biblical Monographs (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2006); Robert C. Tannehill, *Dying and Rising with Christ: A Study in Pauline Theology* (1967; repr., Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2006); John Paul II, *Salvifici Doloris*, Apostolic Letter, (Rome, February 1984); *Christ's Redemptive Love*, General Audience Address, (Rome, 8<sup>th</sup> September 1982); General Audience Address, (Rome: November 9<sup>th</sup> 1988); Siu Fung Wu, *Suffering in Romans*,.

<sup>111</sup> Anthony E. Harvey's work, *Renewal Through Suffering*, will not be dealt with here as it was discussed in the Introduction of this dissertation.

*Theology of Paul the Apostle*, and in his Article *A New Perspective on the New Perspective on Paul*.<sup>112</sup>

Dunn is considered by many to be a leading proponent of the New Perspective(s) on Paul movement: it was he coined the phrase. The New Perspective called for a “revision in the traditional attitude to and view of Judaism.”<sup>113</sup> He accepted Sanders’ view that “a fundamental dimension of Jewish religion and soteriology had been largely lost to sight,”<sup>114</sup> namely, that the Jewish religion was “based on the covenant which God had originally made with Abraham and the other patriarchs. This covenant was “a divine initiative,” “a promise and an oath given by God, on which Israel’s whole sense of identity as a people specially chosen by God rested.”<sup>115</sup> The Sinaitic covenant “both ratified the earlier divine initiatives and spelled out what Israel’s response should be, what it must mean to live as the people of God,”<sup>116</sup> namely, the practice of ‘righteousness,’ “the conduct which meets the obligations laid upon the individual by the (covenantal) relationship of which he/she is part.”<sup>117</sup> Dunn says that Judaism “has always been first and foremost a religion of grace, with human obedience as response to that grace.”<sup>118</sup> In other words, humanity has been gifted salvation and, as a result, should live accordingly. In Dunn’s view, Paul’s process of salvation, or re-creation, emerges out of this truly Jewish background and centres on “the death and resurrection of Christ, the last Adam, whose obedience has undone the disobedience of

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<sup>112</sup> Dunn, “A New Perspective on the New Perspective on Paul,” in *Early Christianity 4*, (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 157-182.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 159.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 162.

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

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 163.

<sup>118</sup> Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 338.

the first Adam:”<sup>119</sup> the death and resurrection of Christ is “the centre of gravity of Paul’s theology,”<sup>120</sup> “the saving event of the cross and resurrection.”<sup>121</sup>

Dunn maintains that Paul understands Christ’s death as a “sacrifice for sins” (1 Cor 15:3), “a sin offering” as outlined in Leviticus 4 and 16, an “expiation.”<sup>122</sup> In his interpretation of 1 Cor 5:7 he links Paul’s mention of Christ as a “sacrifice” explicitly with the Passover and Atonement in Ezekiel 45:18-22 and says that “the language is unavoidably sacrificial and signifies atonement.”<sup>123</sup> He holds “that Jesus died as representative of Adamic humankind,” “a sacrifice for the sins of humankind:” it was the only way God could deal with the power of sin and death.”<sup>124</sup> He concludes that “Christ’s sharing their [humankind’s] death makes it possible for them to share his death” and resurrection.<sup>125</sup>

For the individual Christian, the Christ-event “is a *continuing* experience not only of life, but also of death.”<sup>126</sup> Christians,

as members of the first Adam, they belong to this age, they are dying: as members of the last Adam, they belong to the age to come, they experience the life-giving Spirit. They are rising.<sup>127</sup>

In the ‘already-not-yet’ time they are dying to sin and rising to grace. In 2 Cor 4:11-17 Paul states that he sees his followers’ ‘outer [material] nature’ “wasting away” while their ‘inner [spiritual] nature’ is being renewed daily.<sup>128</sup> For Paul, it is a time of great hope as humanity is progressing from ‘this age’ to ‘the age to come.’ The re-creation of humanity has begun and Paul and believers are being conformed to Christ, the heavenly One (1 Cor 15:45-49): they are leaving their slavery to sin and are

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<sup>119</sup> Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 493. See also *Ibid.*, 207-233.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 208.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 209. “There is no thought of a salvific moment which is prior to the cross” (*Ibid.*, 210).

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 212. Dunn specifically mentions Leviticus 4 and 16.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, 217. He also refers his reader to 2 Cor 5:21; Isa 53:4-6; 4 Macc 17.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 223.

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

<sup>126</sup> Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 482, 493; Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*, 327f.

<sup>127</sup> Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 482

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

returning to freedom in Christ.<sup>129</sup> This is an everyday battle, part of the great cosmic battle which rages in creation and in every individual Christian, in which much suffering is incurred. Indeed, as Dunn points out, Paul rejoices in this suffering “because he sees in [it] the expression of [new Spirit-led] life ... It is part of the saving process itself.”<sup>130</sup>

The “tension, suffering, death and life experienced by Paul he experienced as the outworking of Christ’s death and risen life.”<sup>131</sup> In other words, Paul’s suffering is related to Christ’s mission on earth and Paul is an active participant. Christ’s mission is not being achieved without opposition, ridicule, slander, and a myriad of other suffering. The point Paul emphasises, in Dunn’s view, is that the believer, in returning to God in Christ, is participating in God’s plan for creation. Dunn envisages Paul advising his followers that it is only by living out one’s role as a participant in God’s work of salvation in Christ empowered by the Spirit “that the process of decay which makes manifest the life of the Spirit can go forward.”<sup>132</sup>

Importantly, Dunn states in *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* that the union ‘in Christ’ is such that “both the death and the life to be experienced by the believer are Christ’s.”<sup>133</sup> Discussing the same topic in *Jesus and the Spirit*, he explains that for Paul, “not only is the power which he experiences the risen life of Christ, but the suffering which he undergoes is somehow the suffering of Christ given over to death.”<sup>134</sup> Referencing 1 Thess 1:6; Gal 2:19-20, 6:14; and Rom 6:5, Dunn says, the theme “that in

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<sup>129</sup> See John A. Fitzmyer, “The Letter to the Romans,” in *JBC*, ed. Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer and Roland E. Murphy (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1968), 309-310; Robert J. Karris, *Galatians and Romans* (Collegeville, MI: Liturgical Press, 2005), 34.

<sup>130</sup> Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*, 327.

<sup>131</sup> Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 484.

<sup>132</sup> Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*, 328. In this regard he references Gal 2:20; Rom 8:4f., 13 and Rom 5:2f.

<sup>133</sup> Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 484.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 484., 329. In fact, Dunn has a whole section on this point, see pages 326-338.

his own suffering the believer is somehow sharing in Christ's suffering, runs consistently through Paul's letters."<sup>135</sup>

In Dunn's opinion, Paul believes that suffering has a creative role.<sup>136</sup> For Dunn, the clearest example of this creative role is in Gal 4:19: "My children, for whom I am again in labour until Christ be formed in you". "The basic thought is that suffering is the necessary complement to life – Christ comes to birth out of Paul's suffering."<sup>137</sup> He maintains that Paul believes that he has died with Christ but is not yet fully risen with him and won't be until the Parousia. In the 'already-not-yet' time, Paul is both dying and rising. He is dying to sin but rising to the Spirit, dying to his mortality (the result of humanity's sin and sinfulness) but rising to his immortality (the result of Christ's salvation). This dying and rising is, in Dunn's view, "quite explicit" in Rom 8:17: Christians are "heirs of God and heirs together with Christ, provided that we suffer with him in order that we might also be glorified with him."<sup>138</sup> Dunn finds these points echoed in 2 Cor 4:10: "Wherever we go we carry about in our body the death/dying of Jesus, in order that in this body also the life of Jesus may be revealed." Both death and life are at work in Paul.

To summarise this short presentation of Dunn's view of Pauline suffering, Paul believes that Christ's death and resurrection are the beginning of God's re-creation and that this re-creation is an incomplete and continuing experience of death (to sin) and resurrection (to glory). The more he witnesses his suffering as Christ's death and resurrection in himself and in his followers, the more Paul is filled with joy and hope because he can see the signs of re-creation, that is, salvation through suffering, all around him in the conversion of Corinthians. Importantly, not only is his suffering the

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<sup>135</sup> Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*, 329. See also Gal 6:17; 2 Cor 1:5, 4:10-11; Rom 6:5; 8:36.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 328.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 329.

<sup>138</sup> Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 485.

outworking of Christ's death and resurrection in Paul and others, his suffering is, in fact, a participation in Christ's suffering. In this way, Paul's suffering/dying is in fulfilment of his mission to re-create, to return creation to its Creator. Significantly, Dunn's understanding of Paul's theology of suffering is based principally on Romans with some support from Galatians, 2 Corinthians and Colossians. Even more significant is the fact that there is no mention of 1 Corinthians. Furthermore, Dunn connects the apostle's (and the believers') suffering very clearly with the death and resurrection of Christ and not with their role in the *life* of Christ. Neither does he seem to address the question as to *how* Paul's suffering is connected with Christ's. This dissertation's investigation will explore these topics to see whether they emerge in Paul's theology of suffering in 1 Corinthians.

### 1.3.2 Scott J. Hafemann

Scott J. Hafemann is a former Senior Lecturer in New Testament at St. Andrew's University (Scotland) and now lectures at Gordon-Cornwell Theological Seminary in Boston (USA). He is a prolific exegete, speaker and writer on Pauline matters and has some significant theological insights to offer this investigation.<sup>139</sup> In particular, Hafemann agrees with C. K. Barrett that "Paul's apostolic ministry of missionary suffering and his gospel theology of the crucified Christ were an inseparable unity."<sup>140</sup> For Hafemann, Paul's theology of suffering is a missionary theology.

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<sup>139</sup> Hafemann, "The Role of Suffering in the Mission of Paul;" Hafemann, *Suffering and Ministry in the Spirit*; Scott J. Hafemann, *Paul's Message and Ministry in Covenant Perspective* (Eugene OR: Cascade, 2015); and Scott J. Hafemann, *Paul, the Apostle: Servant of the New Covenant*, (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2019).

<sup>140</sup> Hafemann, "The Role of Suffering," 165; C. K. Barret, "Christianity at Corinth," *BJRL* 46, (1964), 269-297.

Hafemann begins his investigation of Pauline suffering in Paul's Letter to the Galatians, written a few years before 1 Corinthians.<sup>141</sup> Paul's opponents, accepting the dominant Jewish understanding of suffering as a sign of God punishing the sinner, are maintaining that his suffering proves that he is being punished or cursed by God and should not be followed and should be rejected.<sup>142</sup> Additionally, he is known in Galatia as a persecutor of Christians (Gal 1: 23-24).<sup>143</sup> In reply, not only is Paul now preaching the gospel of the suffering servant, Christ, but he considers himself as one ordained by God to be an embodiment of that gospel (as Gal 1:16 says, "called to reveal his Son *in me*").<sup>144</sup> He argues that, just as suffering was an inevitable and necessary part of the life and mission of Jesus, it is also an essential part of Paul's life and mission. In 1 Cor 4:9-13 (and later in 2 Cor 2:14) Paul says that he is like one led out as a captured slave in the Roman Triumphal Procession. God is the one leading him to 'death,' "a metonymy for suffering."<sup>145</sup> Paul also uses a similar metaphor of his 'sick body' in Gal 4:14 and 2 Cor 4:11. In brief, Paul is adamantly maintaining that his suffering "*grounds his preaching,*" validates his embodiment of the suffering Christ, "whereas persecution is its consequence."<sup>146</sup>

Despite the above, the Galatians did not look on Paul's suffering as a sign that God's judgement had struck him down in punishment, rather they welcomed him as "an angel of God" (Gal 4:14). In Hafemann's interpretation, they saw the "essential link" between Paul's suffering and his message and they accepted Paul's life and mission as

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<sup>141</sup> Ben Witherington III, in his commentary on Galatians, dates the letter between 49 and 53 C.E., while Karris dates it between 50 and 55 C.E. Both agree that it was written before 1 Corinthians.

<sup>142</sup> Deuteronomy 21:23 reads, "Cursed is he who hangs upon a tree."

<sup>143</sup> Paul, "who was once persecuting us," is now preaching the gospel of Christ, "the faith he was once trying to destroy" (Gal 1:23-24).

<sup>144</sup> Hafemann, *Suffering and Ministry in the Spirit*, 16. Italics in the original.

<sup>145</sup> Hafemann, "The Role of Suffering," 175. The use of the present active tense participle indicates that the action is continuous, that is, he is being led out *daily* to suffer for Christ's sake as mentioned in 1 Cor 15:31.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, 170. Italics in the original.



embodying Christ's gospel, as if "he were Christ himself!"<sup>147</sup> Hafemann summarises this particular point as follows: for Christ, his suffering was "the centre of his calling as the messianic Son of God who was sent to atone for the sins of God's people (Gal 1:4; 2:21; cf. Rom 3:21-26)."<sup>148</sup> Suffering was, for Paul, also "the centre of his calling as an apostle," and the means through which he "mediated the gospel of Christ to the Gentiles."<sup>149</sup>

Hafemann refers to a number of metaphors, such as the Triumphal Procession's defeated prisoner (1 Cor 4:9; 2 Cor 2:14) and the 'jar/body of clay' (2 Cor 4:11) to show "Paul's call as an apostle to share the sufferings of Christ."<sup>150</sup> The Triumphal Procession is, in Hafemann's opinion, a particularly important metaphor.<sup>151</sup> The point of leading the vanquished in the Triumphal Procession is "to provide an *a fortiori* argument for the military strength of the conqueror," that is, the stronger the vanquished the stronger still the victor. Paul is actually rejoicing because God, as the victorious general, is leading him "as a slave to his death."<sup>152</sup> And, as a suffering slave for Christ, Paul is witnessing the victory of God in Galatia. Paul can see salvation being brought to the Galatians through his own efforts (that is, suffering). Therefore, Hafemann sees God leading the suffering Paul throughout the Roman Empire and, through his suffering, "revealing the knowledge of Himself in every place" (2 Cor 2:14).<sup>153</sup>

Hafemann maintains that God is "always" (2 Cor 2:14) leading Paul "to death" and that this "underscores that this revelation is something to be identified with his very

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<sup>147</sup> Hafemann, "The Role of Suffering," 171-174. Indeed, in reference to Gal 1:16 and Gal 3:1, Hafemann says that "Paul's suffering was the instrument by which he 'publicly portrayed' the crucified Christ before the Galatians," 174.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid., 172.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> Adna and Kvalbein, *The Mission of the Early Church to the Jews and Gentiles*, 9.

<sup>151</sup> Hafemann, *Suffering and the Ministry of the Spirit*, 19-34.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

being and continual experience *as an apostle*.<sup>154</sup> What Paul accomplishes is an outworking of the grace of God on his behalf (Phil 3:10).<sup>155</sup> Paul, like Christ, is suffering for others “in order that the ‘treasure’ that is the gift of life in Christ” can be shared with his followers.<sup>156</sup> Paul carries the ‘treasure’ of the gospel in a frail and ailing body “in order that the all-surpassing power might be [seen to be] from God and not from us.”<sup>157</sup> Hafemann then quotes Timothy B. Savage,

if we take the verb ‘to be’ seriously, then Paul’s point is even more striking: ‘it is only in weakness that the power may *be* of God, that (Paul’s) weakness in some sense actually serves as the *grounds* for divine power.’<sup>158</sup>

Paul’s acceptance of his apostolic suffering is also a rejection of the ‘wisdom of this age’ and is testifying to the power and wisdom of God expressed in the cross.<sup>159</sup> Importantly, in Hafemann’s view, the power and wisdom of God is expressed not only in Paul’s apostolic preaching but also in “the apostle’s own ‘sentence of death’” (that is, his suffering).<sup>160</sup> This means that the knowledge of God, and thus salvation, is mediated to the world through Paul’s weakness and suffering. Paul’s suffering as an apostle is an essential part of God’s plan, functioning to affirm the cross and reveal God’s glory. Therefore, rather than calling into question his legitimacy as an apostle, Paul’s suffering is itself evidence of his authenticity.<sup>161</sup>

In his summary of his understanding of Paul’s suffering, Hafemann states that, in the imagery of the Triumphal Procession (2 Cor 2:14), Paul is God’s captive slave

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<sup>154</sup> Hafemann, *Suffering and the Ministry of the Spirit*, 45. Italics added. His interpretation of “always” in 2 Cor 2:14 is further strengthened in 2 Cor 4:10, leading him to say that ‘carrying in (his) body the death of Jesus’ “is something which constantly characterises his life as an apostle ... this process of carrying in his body the death of Jesus goes on ‘always.’”

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>156</sup> Adna and Kvalbein, *The Mission of the Early Church to the Jews and Gentiles*, 9.

<sup>157</sup> Hafemann, “The Role of Suffering,” 176.

<sup>158</sup> Timothy B. Savage, *Power through Weakness: Paul’s Understanding of the Christian Ministry in 2 Corinthians*, SNTSMS 86 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 166. Italics in original.

<sup>159</sup> Pascuzzi, *First and Second Corinthians*, 24.

<sup>160</sup> Hafemann, *Suffering and Ministry in the Spirit*, 59.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, 83.

who is constantly being led to death.<sup>162</sup> Using ‘death’ as a metonym for ‘suffering,’ Paul “graphically portrays that it is through his daily experience of death=suffering that the glory and power of God are being revealed,” that is, Galatians are being saved.<sup>163</sup> While Hafemann offers some valuable theological insights in his work, there are some *lacunae* in his treatment of Paul’s theology of suffering. Hafemann speaks repeatedly of Paul “as an apostle,” linking his suffering with his apostolic role.<sup>164</sup> It seems also that he does not consider Paul’s suffering to be the suffering of Christ, nor does he mention Paul’s daily suffering as being salvific: Paul is a carrier of a message of salvation. This is emphasised in his own statement that

this identification of the suffering Paul with Christ is best explained in view of the *missiological* (not ontological) identity between Paul’s own suffering as an apostle and the cross of Christ that made up an essential aspect of Paul’s early preaching among the Galatians.<sup>165</sup>

In other words, Paul’s suffering is following the *example* of Christ, but is not in any real way to be *identified as the suffering of Christ: neither is the suffering of the ‘non-apostle’ believer identified with the suffering of Christ.*<sup>166</sup> Furthermore, Hafemann makes some mention of 1 Corinthians, specifically to compare and contrast Paul’s use of the Triumphal Procession in 1 Cor 4:9 and 2 Cor 2:14, but makes no attempt to develop a theology of suffering as portrayed in 1 Corinthians. The following investigation will address these *lacunae*.

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<sup>162</sup> Hafemann, *Suffering and Ministry in the Spirit*, 83.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, 226.

<sup>164</sup> Hafemann, “The Role of Suffering,” 166, 167, 168, 171; Hafemann, *Suffering and Ministry in the Spirit*, 45.

<sup>165</sup> Hafemann, “The Role of Suffering,” 174.

<sup>166</sup> John B. Webster, whose view is close to Hafemann’s on this matter, says: Perhaps one of the terms we might deploy to try and catch this precise arrangement of conformity and imitation is that of ‘correspondence’ or ‘analogy’. The actions of man in Christ correspond to Christ’s own acts. This is not, of course, to underplay the ontological distinction between Christ and the Christian; it is not to suggest some sort of community of being between Christ and his people so that Christ’s acts are reduplicated through them. In this sense, at least, we may not propose any *analogia entis* lest we jettison both the uniqueness of Christ and the substantiality of man as moral agent. What we may perhaps say is that, because of their gracious participation in God through Christ, Christians are enabled to act in such a way that their acts correspond to the acts of the Saviour. John B. Webster, “The Imitation of Christ,” *TynBul* 37 (1986): 95-120, 115.

### 1.3.3 Robert C. Tannehill

Robert C. Tannehill is an Emeritus Professor of New Testament at the Methodist Theological College in Ohio (USA). Among his many works, he has authored the book *Dying and Rising with Christ: A Study in Pauline Theology* and written an essay, titled “Participation in Christ: A Central Theme in Pauline Soteriology,” for a self-edited collection.<sup>167</sup>

In his work *Dying and Rising with Christ*, Tannehill provides his readers with an excellent exegetical study of Rom 6, 7:1-6; Gal 2:19-20; 5:24-25; 6:14-15; 2 Cor 5:14-17 and the related pericopae in Colossians and Ephesians. In considering the concept of dying and rising with Christ he sees it as related to ethical action, to suffering, and to ‘transformation.’ In particular, his study focuses on the relationship of being ‘in Christ’ with the ‘dying and rising of Christ.’ Tannehill’s exegesis argues that Paul’s eschatology provides the key to understanding “the relation between dying with Christ as a past event and as a present experience of the Christian believer.”<sup>168</sup> In discussing his view on this relationship of the ‘dying and rising’ of Christ to the everyday experience of the believer, he feels that “it is when Paul wishes to bring out the participation of the believer in Christ’s ‘death’ that this motif has a special function in his thought.”<sup>169</sup> Tannehill makes a significant contribution to the ‘in Christ’ discussion by arguing that “the believer *partakes* in the events of Christ’s death and resurrection rather than simply benefitting from them.”<sup>170</sup> He clarifies this statement by saying that “he [the individual believer] continues to participate in Christ’s death and resurrection

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<sup>167</sup> Robert C. Tannehill, *Dying and Rising with Christ: A Study in Pauline Theology* (Eugene OR: Wipf and Stock, 2006), and R. C. Tannehill, “Participation in Christ: A Central Theme in Pauline Soteriology,” in *The Shape of the Gospel: New Testament Essays*. Edited by Robert C. Tannehill (Eugene OR: Cascade, 2007), 223.

<sup>168</sup> Tannehill, *Dying and Rising with Christ*, 130.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, 131.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

in his daily life, especially through suffering.”<sup>171</sup> Thus, for Paul, “dying with Christ is a present experience.”<sup>172</sup> In Tannehill’s view Paul envisages ‘dying with Christ’ and ‘rising with Christ’ as inextricably interwoven in each other:

Dying with Christ is without meaning unless God is now exercising his power for life in the midst of this dying and unless God manifests this power for life fully through the resurrection of the dead.”<sup>173</sup>

In his interpretation of Gal 2:19-20, Tannehill says that

here Christ’s death is proclaimed as a freeing and transforming event that is effective *because Paul is pulled into it and shares in it*, resulting in a continuing participation in Christ, who is the new life-power in Paul.<sup>174</sup>

In that way, it “informs the current and future experience of the believer.”<sup>175</sup>

In summary, Tannehill bases his exegesis on Rom 6, 7:1-6; Gal 2:19-20, 5:24-25, 6:14-15; 2 Cor 15:14-17. Among his important contributions to the present discussion are the following. He argues that “the believer *partakes* in the events of Christ’s death and resurrection rather than simply benefitting from them.”<sup>176</sup> Moreover, the individual believer “continues to participate in Christ’s death and resurrection in his daily life, especially through suffering.”<sup>177</sup> Sharing in Christ’s death and resurrection results in a continuing participation in Christ, “the new life-power in Paul.”<sup>178</sup> Regrettably, he finds no place for 1 Corinthians in his exegesis. Neither does he seem to see the union with Christ, as well as being a union in his death and resurrection, as a union in his life and mission (however, he does believe that Paul and the believer ontologically and actively participate in the ‘life-power’ of Christ). This dissertation will address these *lacunae*.

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<sup>171</sup> Tannehill, *Dying and Rising with Christ*, 1.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

<sup>173</sup> Tannehill, quoted in R. Constance Campbell, *Paul and Union with Christ* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 131.

<sup>174</sup> Tannehill, “Participation in Christ,” 229-230. Italics in the original.

<sup>175</sup> Tannehill, quoted in Campbell, *Paul and Union with Christ*, 49.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid., 1.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid.

<sup>178</sup> Tannehill, “Participation in Christ,” 229-230. Italics in the original.

#### 1.3.4 Nicholas Thomas Wright

Nicholas Thomas Wright is the retired Bishop of Durham, now a Research Professor at St. Andrew's University in Scotland. A prolific writer (over 70 books) and conference speaker he has written many books on Paul, including "What St Paul Really Said" (1997), "Paul in Fresh Perspectives," (2005), "Pauline Perspectives: Essays on Paul" (2013), "Paul and the Faithfulness of God" (2013), "Paul and His Recent Interpreters" (2014), "The Day the Revolution Began" (2016). Wright is recognised widely as a leading light of the New Perspective on Paul.

Paul, in Wright's view, constantly turns to Genesis, Deuteronomy, the Psalms and Isaiah "not to find proof-texts for abstract ideas, but in order to re-ground his [Paul's] controlling narrative."<sup>179</sup> According to this controlling narrative God is offering humanity a covenant relationship. This covenant, Sanders argues (and Wright agrees), is "the hidden presupposition of Jewish literature even when the word hardly occurs."<sup>180</sup> However, humanity often prefers other 'gods' and alienates itself from the One, True, God and, as a result, "something is deeply amiss with creation, and within that with humankind itself."<sup>181</sup>

The answer, for Wright, involves the renewal of that God-initiated covenant which requires a new creation which can only be achieved by the Creator God.<sup>182</sup> In his view, the importance of Isaiah 53, understood in the larger picture of Isaiah 40-55, cannot be ignored.

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<sup>179</sup> Wright, *Paul: Fresh Perspectives*, 25.

<sup>180</sup> Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, " 81-107, 236-238, 420f.; Wright *The Day the Revolution Began*, 73-77.

<sup>181</sup> Wright, *Paul: Fresh Perspectives*, 24. "The human problem is not so much 'sin' seen as the breaking of moral codes... but rather idolatry and the distortion of genuine humanness it produces"<sup>181</sup> (Wright, *The Day the Revolution Began*, 74): in short, a rejection of their God-gifted covenant.

<sup>182</sup> Wright, *Paul: Fresh Perspectives*, 24. Wright grounds this renewal on his exegesis of Colossians 1:15-20; 1 Corinthians 15; Romans 1-11 and many other scriptures (Wright, *Paul in Perspectives*, 21-39).

He maintains that

this passage of Isaiah [Isaiah 53], *seen in its full and proper context of the coming of the Kingdom, the return of YHWH, and the renewal of both covenant and creation*, was at the very heart of Jesus' understanding of how his vocation would be fulfilled. He would go ahead of his people and take upon himself the suffering that would otherwise fall upon them."<sup>183</sup>

Wright states that "Jesus made Isaiah 52:7-12 thematic for his Kingdom announcement. He lived within the controlling story according to which Israel's long and tangled relationship with her God, and with the Gentile world, would reach a great climax through which exile would be undone so that Israel's sins would be forgiven at last and the whole world would see the glory of God, in and through the work of the Servant of Yahweh."<sup>184</sup>

This, in Wright's view, is the bigger picture into which Paul fits his theology of suffering. He argues that Paul also places significant importance on the classic suffering psalms, e.g., Ps 22, and, especially, on the Servant Songs of Isaiah.<sup>185</sup> In the generally accepted Jewish view of Paul's time (which Wright also accepts), the required renewal of the covenant and of creation, that is salvation, would be preceded by a time of 'woes' "a time of intense suffering, either for the people as a whole or for a particular group within the people" but not for the Messiah himself.<sup>186</sup>

Wright maintains that, "within Israel's scriptures it is only in Isaiah 53 that the intense suffering is the *means*, and not simply the *context*, of the expected deliverance, of the forgiveness of sins," that the "intense suffering and persecution" would be "not only something through which God's people might pass to deliverance, but as something because of which that deliverance would come about."<sup>187</sup> This is "all the

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<sup>183</sup> Wright, *The Day the Revolution Began*, 189. This view is repeated in Wright, "The Servant and Jesus," in *Jesus and the Suffering Servant*, 281-297.

<sup>184</sup> Wright, "The Servant and Jesus," in *Jesus and the Suffering Servant*, 293-294.

<sup>185</sup> Wright, *The Day the Revolution Began*, 123f.

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

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*, 125-126, 131.

more important when we consider the striking ways in which Isaiah 53, above all other passages, is used in the New Testament as the scriptural clue to the meaning of Christ's death."<sup>188</sup>

God's covenantal faithfulness is revealed, "through the faithfulness of the Messiah, for the benefit of all who believe, Jew and Gentile alike."<sup>189</sup> "And as soon as we ask what this faithfulness, this obedience, consisted in," Philippians 2 and Romans 1—8 "give the answer: it was the Messiah's death,"<sup>190</sup> and for Paul, Jesus himself was the true and ultimate 'servant of YHWH' spoken of in Isaiah 40-55."<sup>191</sup> "His death, ....., has made the atonement through which all nations are redeemed," renewing both the covenant and creation.<sup>192</sup> So, "Jesus' death accomplishes God's kingdom, because he is giving his life in the place of sinners, as 'ransom for many.'<sup>193</sup> "'The Messiah died for our sins in accordance with the Bible' and its own great narrative."<sup>194</sup>

Wright believes that a survey of the entire Bible shows that "God's plan to deal with sin, and so to break the power of idols and bring new creation to his world, is focused on the people of Israel," and on the "Messiah [who] stands in for Israel and so fulfils the divine plan to rescue creation itself," God's new Passover or liberation.<sup>195</sup> "The reason this new Passover can be seen as the defeat of the powers however .. is that the same event, Jesus' death, was to be seen as the inauguration of Jeremiah's new covenant, the covenant in which sins would be forgiven and thus, of course, exile would be undone at last"<sup>196</sup>

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<sup>188</sup> Wright, *The Day the Revolution Began*, 125.

<sup>189</sup> Wright, *Paul: Fresh Perspectives*, 119.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*, 120.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*, 161.

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

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*, 221-222 and 1 Cor 6:20; 7:23; 2 Cor 10:42-45.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, 349.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*, 68.

<sup>196</sup> Wright, *Paul: Fresh Perspectives*, 192.



Wright is adamant

that this passage of Isaiah [Isaiah 53], *seen in its full and proper context of the coming of the kingdom, the return of YHWH, and the renewal of both covenant and creation*, is at the very heart of Jesus' understanding of how his vocation would be fulfilled<sup>197</sup>

He [Wright] considers that “in Isaiah – and, we might add, Deuteronomy, the Psalms, and many other places – the rescue is accomplished by Israel’s God himself. It is his initiative, his accomplishment. It is his love.”<sup>198</sup> Wright keeps reminding his readers that “the biblical promises of redemption have to do with God himself acting because of his unchanging, unshakeable love for his people, .. which runs like a scarlet thread through the scriptures, going back at least to Deuteronomy” (Deut 7:6-9; 4:37; 10:14-15, 21; Isaiah 43:1-4; 63:8-9; Jer 31:3; Lam 3:22-23; Hos 11:1).<sup>199</sup> It is out of this context of God’s “unchanging, unshakeable love for his people” “that there emerges a new promise: the covenant love that YHWH has for Israel is to be extended to the nations.”<sup>200</sup> It is not only “the divine love *for* Israel, but the divine love *through* Israel” for the nations: a “light to the nations” (Isa 42:6-7; 55:1-3; 49:13-16; 51:3).<sup>201</sup> “God’s solution to the plight of the world,” which had begun with the call of Abraham” and the vocation of the Jewish people to be not only beneficiaries of salvation but to be the “*bearers* of salvation to the rest of the world, is now in place.”<sup>202</sup> Wright points to Romans 3:1-9, noting that Israel is cast, “within God’s cosmic drama, as the messenger through whose faithful work the Creator would bring the news of his power and love to the whole world.”<sup>203</sup> And God will keep to his plan, to save the world through Israel.<sup>204</sup>

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<sup>197</sup> Wright, *Paul: Fresh Perspectives*, 189. Italics in the original.

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.*, 137.

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.*, 132.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*, 135.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>202</sup> Wright, *The Faithfulness of God*, xvi-xvii.

<sup>203</sup> Wright, *Paul: Fresh Perspectives*, 119.

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

The point of human beings being called by the gospel to turn from idolatry and sin to worship the true and living God, whatever the suffering that demands, is “*both* that they might themselves be rescued *and* that through their rescue and the new community which they then form, God’s purposes to rescue the whole world might be advanced.”<sup>205</sup> Wright also notes that this “bearing” of salvation to the rest of the world “lies at the heart of his [Paul’s] own vocation, issuing in his own characteristic praxis.”<sup>206</sup>

“When we see the victory of Jesus in relation to the biblical Passover tradition, reshaped through the Jewish longing for the ‘forgiveness of sins’ as the liberating event within history, we see the early Christian movement ... as a complete new way of being human in the world and for the world.”<sup>207</sup>

Wright maintains that, like many theological terms ‘atonement’ is shorthand.

In the Bible it extends to, as in Romans 8 or the whole Letter to the Hebrews, the work of Jesus the Messiah not only in his crucifixion, but also in his resurrection and particularly in his ascension, where (we are told) he continually offers intercession to the Father on behalf of his people. And if ‘atonement’ can thus be, as it were, extended forward, it can also be extended backward. The Book of Revelation speaks mysteriously of the Lamb ‘slain from the foundation of the world’ (13:8 KJV). Whatever that means, the four gospels certainly present Jesus throughout his public career and as far back as the prophecies given before his birth as the one who would ‘save his people from their sins.’<sup>208</sup>

The victory Christ achieved on the cross is

the victory of a strange new power, the power of covenant love, a covenant love winning its victory not *over* suffering, but *through* suffering. This meant, inevitably, that the victory would have to be implemented in the same way, proceeding by the slow road of love rather than the quick road of sudden conquest.<sup>209</sup>

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<sup>205</sup> Wright, *Paul: Fresh Perspectives*, 122.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*, 161-162. Wright states that “Paul did indeed believe that he was called to implement the work of Jesus by himself following a servant-ministry on some aspects at least of the pattern outlined in the Servant Songs... He understood his sufferings, not as the fulfilment of Isaiah 53 per se, but as part of the servant-programme outlined in the earlier Songs.”

<sup>207</sup> Wright, *The Day the Revolution Began*, 362.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

<sup>209</sup> *Ibid.*, 374.

He follows this statement of principle by instancing Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who died in a German concentration camp, the killing of leading Christians in Lyons, the violent persecution under Emperor Diocletian and the killings of Christians on North African beaches.<sup>210</sup> Presumably, the suffering Wright was speaking of was that of martyrdom as these are the only examples mentioned.<sup>211</sup> This is further supported when, quoting Tertullian (“the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church”), Wright states that “suffering or dying for the faith is not simply a necessary evil, .....Suffering and dying is *the way by which the world is changed*.”<sup>212</sup> His exegesis of 2 Cor 6:4-10 tells him that “the suffering of Jesus’ followers – of the whole Body of Christ, now in one member, now in another – brings the victory of the cross into fresh reality, so that fresh outflowings of that victory may emerge.”<sup>213</sup> Wright seems to be writing of the unusual suffering (e.g. persecution, martyrdom) of Christians rather than the suffering involved in living the everyday Christian life.

Wright’s own summary of his reading of salvation history constantly brings the readers back to Gal 1:4 (that Jesus “gave himself for our sins, to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of God our Father”).<sup>214</sup>

The loving purpose of God, working through the sin-forgiving death of Jesus, frees us from the power of the ‘present evil age,’ so that we may be part of God’s new age, his new creation, launched already when Jesus rose from the dead, awaiting its final completion when he returns, but active now through the work of the rescued rescuers, the redeemed human beings called to bring redeeming love into the world, the justified justice-bringers, the reconciled reconcilers, the Passover people.<sup>215</sup>

There are many admirable elements in Wright’s understanding of Paul as portrayed in his many books and articles. However, there are a number of *lacunae*

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<sup>210</sup> Wright, *The Day the Revolution Began*, 373-377.

<sup>211</sup> *Ibid.*, 368, 373-377

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*, 368.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*, 369.

<sup>214</sup> He could also have referred to 1 Cor 5:7-8; 8:11; 11:23-26; 15:3.

<sup>215</sup> Wright, *The Day the Revolution Began*, 365.

related to this particular dissertation's investigation: Firstly, Wright borrows concepts and texts from across Paul's Letters, the Gospels, Hebrews and Revelation, not just from 1 Corinthians (the focus of this dissertation). It follows, then, that some of the points he makes may not be drawn from Paul's Letters and certainly not from 1 Corinthians or those Letters that preceded it. Secondly, Wright extols the suffering of martyrs (both in the past and the present) as the suffering which "we cannot tell what effect their witness will have in the days to come, but history suggests it will be powerful."<sup>216</sup> But, he doesn't seem to consider the everyday, life-wide and life-long suffering (as in selfless, sacrificial service of others) of the Christian as having a similar effect. Thirdly, he bases humanity's 'image-bearing vocation' on Acts 12, 16, 27, 28 and on 2 Cor 6:4-10 but not on 1 Thessalonians, Galatians or 1 Corinthians.

#### 1.3.5. Siu Fung Wu

Siu Fung Wu is currently Honorary Postdoctoral Associate at the University of Divinity, Australia and Adjunct Lecturer at Whitley College (near Melbourne, Australia). He is a Baptist, and has written a recent monograph, a slightly revised version of his Ph D dissertation, on suffering in Romans.<sup>217</sup> The aim of Wu's study is to determine a theology of suffering in Rom 5:1—8:39 "from the perspective of an [implied] audience familiar with suffering in first-century Rome."<sup>218</sup> His knowledge of Jewish and Greco-Roman literature suggests to him that suffering may have punitive or educative purposes but he points out that there are also writers who mention the suffering of the innocent.<sup>219</sup> Wu feels that the Roman church members' suffering, provided it is experienced in the course of their apostolic or missionary endeavours, is

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<sup>216</sup> Wright, *The Day the Revolution Began*, 365, 377.

<sup>217</sup> Siu Fung Wu, *Suffering in Romans*.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

rightly categorised as the suffering of the innocent.<sup>220</sup> He cites evidence of this approach from the Psalter, Wisdom Literature, Isaiah, Daniel and 2 Maccabees.<sup>221</sup>

Wu holds that in Rom 5—8 Paul expresses the view that humanity’s deliverance “from the powers of sin and death [has been achieved] through the death and resurrection of Christ.”<sup>222</sup> As a result, a new humanity is being formed or transformed in hope. In fact, “Paul’s message of reconciliation and God’s triumph over evil powers provide an alternative narrative that offers true peace and hope in suffering.”<sup>223</sup> In Wu’s view, that hope is also found in the Jewish martyrologies of those faithful servants who persevered “in their present suffering under the oppression of the socio-political powers, in anticipation of God’s deliverance in the age to come.”<sup>224</sup>

Wu believes that, for Paul, “suffering is an integral and essential part of God’s purpose of transforming his cosmos,” and especially humanity.<sup>225</sup> His exegesis of Rom 8:14-17 “underlines the audience’s vocation to participate in Christ’s suffering” (by ‘audience’ he means the readers/hearers of his Letter to the Romans and all Christians).<sup>226</sup> Moreover, their suffering is not punitive but educative – “like that of the suffering righteous,” with whom Wu identifies the Roman Christians.<sup>227</sup> Wu’s interpretation of Psalm 44:22, alluded to in Rom 8:36, “functions as an authoritative text that places believer’s affliction squarely in the category of the suffering of the righteous.”<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>220</sup> Wu., 45-47, 224.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid., 45-47.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid., 78.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid., 79.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid., 78.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid., 177.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid., 129.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid., 224.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid., 222.

When believers identify with “Christ’s suffering and glory, the children of God also participate in his triumph.”<sup>229</sup> Suffering, therefore, is part of God’s plan and has a positive purpose. “As believers suffer, they are being transformed so that they may bear Christ’s image and display God’s glory.”<sup>230</sup> Wu continues by saying that

there is a merging of identities and life patterns between the Son and the children of God. Just as the Son identified with humanity, suffered, died, and was glorified, so do the children of God identify with Christ, suffer with him, and will be glorified with him. Their stories intertwine – and we may say that they effectively reverse the story of Adamic humanity.<sup>231</sup>

In Wu’s view, Paul’s theology of innocent suffering is Christological. By that he means that “believers suffer with Christ and they will be glorified with him.”<sup>232</sup> Ultimately, they will be glorified as “God’s vice-regents, reigning over the cosmos.”<sup>233</sup> Their suffering is “bound up inextricably in Christ’s suffering and guarantees a share in Christ’s vindication.”<sup>234</sup> Christian suffering has “the widest scope and the most profound meaning, for their affliction and pain are part and parcel of *God’s* triumph over evil.... [and] the Scriptures bear witness to this theology.”<sup>235</sup>

Reflecting on Wu’s book one is left with a number of unanswered questions. On several occasions he states that “suffering is an integral and necessary part of God’s purpose of transforming his cosmos.”<sup>236</sup> However, he never explains *how* participating in suffering effects this restoration of the cosmos. Wu’s assertion that “God’s people are to persevere faithfully in their present suffering under the oppression of the socio-political powers, in anticipation of God’s deliverance in the age to come,” is open to passive or negative interpretations not intended, one would suggest, by Paul. Wu also

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<sup>229</sup> Wu, *Suffering in Romans*, 224.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid., 129.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid., 130.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid., 224.

<sup>234</sup> Wesley Thomas Davey, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, North Carolina USA, in a review of Wu’s *Suffering in Romans*, accessed on the internet.

<sup>235</sup> Wu, *Suffering in Romans*, 224.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid., 177 (twice), 162.

seems to feel that ‘non-apostolic’ suffering experienced by Christians may indeed be punitive.<sup>237</sup> Despite the above criticisms, Wu’s book offers some perceptive insights that will be drawn upon in the exegetical analysis of 1 Corinthians.

#### **1.4 Paul’s Theology of Suffering and Being ‘in Christ’**

The commentators discussed in the previous section (Dunn, Hafemann, Tannehill, John Paul II and Wu) have a basic common purpose in that they are all attempting a comprehensive investigation of Paul’s theology of his own suffering and its relationship to the suffering of Christ. Other commentators, while not attempting a sustained investigation of Paul’s theology of suffering, have nevertheless examined important elements of that theology of suffering. In particular, Paul’s understanding of his ‘in Christ’ concept is an essential component of Paul’s theology of suffering.<sup>238</sup> This central element allows Paul to call his suffering Christ’s and, therefore, claim that it is salvific. This section will comment on the work of Adolf Deissmann, Michael J. Gorman and Constantine R. Campbell as broadly representative of this contribution to the topic over the last hundred or so years. Once again, these scholars represent the views of a number of Christian denominations.<sup>239</sup>

##### **1.4.1 Adolf Deissmann**

Adolf Deissman, who was a Protestant professor of theology at the Universities of Heidelberg and later at Berlin, is considered to be the first to highlight Paul’s ‘in Christ’ concept. He regards this union with Christ as a “mystical initiation arising from

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<sup>237</sup> Wu, *Suffering in Romans*, 45-47.

<sup>238</sup> For example, Campbell et al., *Union in Christ in Paul*; J. Hubing, *Crucifixion and New Creation* (London: T&T Clark, 2015) has studied ‘persecution’ in Galatians. John Murray, *Redemption – Accomplished and Applied* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1955), 201. says that “union with Christ is the central truth of the whole doctrine of salvation.”

<sup>239</sup> The views of a number of other scholars are contained in an Appendix to this dissertation.

a divine initiative,<sup>240</sup> that is, Paul's mystical meeting with Christ which happened near Damascus. As a result of this Damascus Road initiation, Paul lives 'in Christ.'

Deissmann continues his explanation by saying that this 'in Christ' means "'in' the living and present spiritual Christ, who is about him on all sides, who fills him, who speaks to him, and speaks in and through him."<sup>241</sup> It is a union which is organic, ontological, vital, personal, transforming, mediated by the Spirit and, importantly, implies reciprocal action.<sup>242</sup>

Deissmann also maintains that Paul is heavily influenced by the Hellenistic mystical religions. However, Paul's mysticism is not an 'ego-centric mysticism,' that is, a unity with the deity in which one loses one's human personality and merges with the divine. Rather, it involves 'a theo-centric mysticism,' "a communion rather than a union with God, the sanctification of the personality, conformation of the human towards the divine, ethical enthusiasm and personality."<sup>243</sup> Importantly, the believers maintain their personality. In brief, Deissmann stressed that the believer's union with Christ is an organic, ontological, personal, and transforming union.<sup>244</sup>

#### 1.4.2 Michael J. Gorman

Michael J. Gorman, a Baptist layman and a lecturer at St Mary's Seminary and at the University in Maryland (USA), is probably the most prolific American writer on Paul over the last twenty years.<sup>245</sup> He presents his considerations on 'being in Christ'

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<sup>240</sup> Adolf Deissmann, *Paul: A Study in Social and Religious History*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., trans. William E. Wilson (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1926), 130-131.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid., 134-135, quoted in Campbell, *Union in Christ in Paul*, 32.

<sup>242</sup> Ibid., 134-135, 135-138. Explaining Paul's 'union with Christ,' Deissmann uses the analogy of air, saying, "Just as the air of life, which we breathe, is 'in' us and fills us, and yet we at the same time live in this air and breathe it, so it is also with the Christ-intimacy of the Apostle Paul: Christ in him, he in Christ" Ibid., 140.

<sup>243</sup> Deissmann, *Paul*, 150-151.

<sup>244</sup> Campbell, *Union in Christ in Paul*, 33.

<sup>245</sup> Michael J. Gorman's books include: *Cruciformity: Paul's Narrative Spirituality of the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001); *Inhabiting the Cruciform God: Kenosis, Justification and Theosis in Paul's*



around four foundational themes: the centrality of the cross, the cruciform nature of the Christian lifestyle, incorporation into Christ's death and resurrection, and being 'in Christ' as embodying the gospel in the church, the community, and the world.<sup>246</sup> These four themes are detailed across his quadrilogy of books: *Cruciformity*, *Inhabiting the Cruciform God*, *Becoming the Gospel*, and *Participating in Christ*.

Regarding the centrality of the Cross, to be 'in' Christ is to be 'in' the crucified Christ, and he sees it as a fundamental reality in Paul's theology and spirituality. The Cross is the revelation of who Christ really is.<sup>247</sup> Actually, it is the revelation of who God is. Gorman holds that "to be in Christ is to be in God. At the very least, this means that for Paul cruciformity – conformity to the crucified Christ – is really theoformity, or *theosis*."<sup>248</sup> It is important to note that "*theosis* means that humans become *like* God," not that they become God.<sup>249</sup> It follows then that the Cross does not only reveal who Christ is (it is not merely a Christophany), but it also reveals who God is (it is a Theophany).<sup>250</sup>

The cruciform nature of the Christian lifestyle follows logically from the centrality of the Cross because humanity was created to 'image' God.<sup>251</sup> In other words, in becoming human, Christ became the "true human," the model or exemplar: "the kind of human that humans were meant to be."<sup>252</sup> Imaging God or *theosis*, is the "transformative participation in the kenotic, cruciform character of God through Spirit-

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*Narrative Soteriology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009); *Becoming the Gospel: Paul, Participation and Mission* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015); *Participating in Christ: Explorations in Paul's Theology and Spirituality* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2019) – based on a meticulous exegesis of the Pauline corpus, have inspired a new generation of Pauline students.

<sup>246</sup> Gorman, *Participating in Christ*, 7-28. These four central points may, at times, overlap with one another.

<sup>247</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>248</sup> Gorman, *Inhabiting the Cruciform God*, 4.

<sup>249</sup> *Ibid.*, 4-5; italics in the original.

<sup>250</sup> Gorman, *Participating in Christ*, 8.

<sup>251</sup> This concept of 'imaging God' is treated in Chapter 6 of this dissertation.

<sup>252</sup> Gorman, *Becoming the Gospel*, 10.

enabled conformity to the incarnate, crucified, and resurrected/glorified Christ.”<sup>253</sup> This means that the individual human, is “inherently a Cross-shaped” individual, an individual who “incarnates the self-emptying, self-giving Messiah,” who in turn is the “incarnation of the kenotic [self-emptying] God.”<sup>254</sup> For Gorman, this *theosis* is “the centre of Paul’s theology.”<sup>255</sup> As to the features of this *theosis*, it is primarily cruciformity, “mirroring God’s self-giving love” – as in Paul’s “master story” (Phil 2: 6-11).<sup>256</sup> He describes the vocation of the Christian as an ever-increasing “transformation into the image of the kenotic, cruciform God revealed in the faithful and loving Cross of Christ.”<sup>257</sup>

As regards incorporation into Christ’s death and resurrection, Gorman is quite adamant. The believer enters into Christ in faith through baptism and in that way enters into a participatory event of dying (to sin) and rising (to new life) with Christ. Caught up in Christ’s story, the believer shares “in his death, which means sharing in his covenantal faithfulness to God and his covenantal love towards others.”<sup>258</sup> In his book *Cruciformity: Paul’s Narrative Spirituality of the Cross*, he grounds this participation in the death of Christ: “Paul conceives of identification with and participation in the death of Jesus as the believer’s fundamental experience of Christ.”<sup>259</sup> Furthermore, since cruciformity is the essential attribute of God, the “Spirit-enabled transformative participation in the life and character of God [is] revealed in the crucified and resurrected Messiah Jesus.”<sup>260</sup> The death of Christ “reveals a missional God, .... and

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<sup>253</sup> Gorman, *Inhabiting the Cruciform God*, 7.

<sup>254</sup> Gorman, *Becoming the Gospel*, 9-11.

<sup>255</sup> Gorman, *Inhabiting the Cruciform God*, 171.

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid.*, 171.

<sup>257</sup> *Ibid.*, 161.

<sup>258</sup> Gorman, *Participating in Christ*, 21.

<sup>259</sup> Gorman, *Cruciformity*, 32.

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.*, 297.

creates a missional, justified, justice-making people,” mandating “a missional form of existence, an instantiation of and witness to the Gospel.”<sup>261</sup>

Embodying the gospel in the church, the community, and the world, is not a matter of merely imitating Christ but of “transformative participation” in Christ, the mutual Messiah/Spirit indwelling. Gorman asserts that sharing God’s covenantal love for and with others is creative, life-giving: “His self-giving love is what gives life to the *ekklesia* and, through the *ekklesia*, to the world.”<sup>262</sup> In Gorman’s understanding the individual Christian is called to embody the master story of Christ found in Philippians 2:6-11, and thus to be Christ’s ambassadors, to be “a living exegesis of the gospel,” and to be participants in the *Missio Dei* even at the risk of experiencing suffering and death.<sup>263</sup>

Addressing the key questions of this dissertation, Gorman asserts that the believer enters into a spiritual union, a “transformative participation” with Christ grounded in the death of Jesus rather than in his life and mission. This participatory union is creative, [eternal] life-giving and is entered into through Baptism: there is no mention of the Lord’s Supper or Eucharist. Additionally, it follows that the believer is an active participant in the *Missio Dei*. However, there are a number of *lacunae* in Gorman’s presentation. In outlining Paul’s ‘in Christ’ theology he uses all of Paul’s letters taking Philippians 2:6-11 as his ‘master story’ or ‘lens.’ In taking Philippians 2:6-11 as the lens through which he interprets Paul’s other letters, he risks reading Philippians 2:6-11 back into earlier Pauline texts. He also seems to presume that there is no development in thought or expression over the ten to fifteen years of Paul’s Letter

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<sup>261</sup> Gorman, *Becoming the Gospel*, 300.

<sup>262</sup> Gorman, *Participating in Christ*, 26.

<sup>263</sup> *Ibid.*, 300-302.

writing.<sup>264</sup> Moreover, and very significantly, he does not see 1 Corinthians as in any way central to this presentation, even though 1 Corinthians is a letter pleading for reconciliation in the broken relationship between God and humanity. Christ became incarnate in order to effect that reconciliation and he achieved that reconciliation through his kenotic (self-emptying) love effected on the cross. This dissertation will investigate these *lacunae* in its exegetical chapters.

#### 1.4.3 Constantine R. Campbell

Constantine R. Campbell is an Evangelical Associate Professor of New Testament in Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Illinois (USA). He has collated a unique and excellent survey of the ‘in Christ’ or ‘union with Christ’ concept in Paul’s letters.<sup>265</sup> Campbell defines the believer’s relationship with Christ as involving:

Union, participation, identification, incorporation – terms that together do justice to the widespread variety and nuance of Paul’s language, theology, and ethical thought about our relatedness to Christ.<sup>266</sup>

Campbell unpacks the megatheme (‘the believer’s relationship with Christ’ or ‘in Christ’) as follows: by ‘union’ he means a faith-based, mutual indwelling of Christ and the believer, with trinitarian characteristics.<sup>267</sup> ‘Participation’ refers to the believer’s personal involvement in the Christ event.<sup>268</sup> ‘Identification’ “encapsulates [the] believer’s location in the realm of Christ and their allegiance to his lordship” (as in 1 Cor 3:18-23) and

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<sup>264</sup> 1 Thessalonians was written in 49 C.E. (or as early as 41-44 C.E.) according to Smiles, *1 Thessalonians, Philippians, 2 Thessalonians, Colossians, Ephesians*, 9 and Romans/Philemon, probably written in 56-57 C.E. according to Harris, *Understanding the Bible*, 486.

<sup>265</sup> Constantine R. Campbell, *Paul and Union with Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012, 31. He also contributed to Campbell, Constantine R., Michael J. Tate, and Kevin J. Vanhoozer, eds. *In Christ in Paul: Explorations in Paul’s Theology of Union and Participation*. WUNT 384. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014.

<sup>266</sup> *Ibid.*, 421.

<sup>267</sup> *Ibid.*, 409.

<sup>268</sup> *Ibid.*, 408

‘incorporation’ includes the corporate dimensions of membership of the body of Christ (especially 1 Cor 12:12-31).<sup>269</sup>

Campbell’s work is praiseworthy and ground-breaking. His work provides an excellent definition of the Pauline ‘in Christ’ concept: it is his definition that will be operative in this dissertation. He also believes that his union with Christ relates to all the believer’s actions, characteristics, and status.<sup>270</sup> Additionally, he agrees with Alfred Wikenhauser<sup>271</sup> that being ‘in Christ’ involves an “identification with the Crucified Lord,”<sup>272</sup> which is “ontological ... a share in Christ’s being.”<sup>273</sup>

Despite its importance for this dissertation, there are a few *lacunae* in Campbell’s work. Firstly, he considers all authentic Pauline and Deutero-Pauline Letters in his survey (Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and 1 Thessalonians)<sup>274</sup> and treats the letters as if all were written by the same author at the same time. In other words, he does not allow for any (possible) development over time in the author’s understanding of the concepts surveyed. Secondly, while he does identify some passages in 1 Corinthians (1 Cor 1:30; 6:15-16; 8:6; 10:16-17; 15:22) as explaining certain aspects of the ‘in Christ’ theme, he makes no attempt to relate this theme to the suffering of Christ in 1 Corinthians. Furthermore, he identifies ‘in Christ’ as in the death and resurrection of Christ’ and does not include Christ’s life and mission. This dissertation accepts some of Campbell’s excellent conclusions, for example, the ontological nature of the believer’s union with Christ and

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<sup>269</sup> Campbell, *Paul and Union with Christ*, 420.

<sup>270</sup> *Ibid.*, 387.

<sup>271</sup> Alfred Wikenhauser, *Pauline Mysticism: Christ in the Mystical Teaching of St. Paul*, trans. Joseph Cunningham (Freiburg: Herder and Herder, 1960), 13-14.

<sup>272</sup> Hooker, *From Adam to Christ: Essays on Paul*, (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2008), 55; quoted in Campbell, *Paul and Union with Christ*, 387.

<sup>273</sup> Wikenhauser, *Pauline Mysticism*, 32.

<sup>274</sup> In Smiles’ view Colossians (written “perhaps while Paul was in prison in Rome or shortly after his death) and Ephesians (written some decades after Paul’s death) contain some concepts that are not common to the undisputed letters, Smiles, *First Thessalonians, Philippians, Second Thessalonians, Colossians, Ephesians*, 69-70, 91-92.

the consequent impact of this on his entire being and lifestyle. In contrast to Campbell though, it will consider the ‘in Christ’ concept from the perspective of 1 Corinthians (including Letters written before 1 Corinthians) and will relate both the ‘in Christ’ concept and ‘suffering’ in 1 Corinthians to each other.

## **1.5 A Study of Paul’s Theology of Suffering in 1 Corinthians:**

### **A *Lacuna* and A Proposition**

As mentioned at the outset of this chapter, a monographic investigation of Paul’s theology of suffering as portrayed in 1 Corinthians is not yet available: this dissertation hopes to contribute towards filling that void. This chapter has provided an overview of the Greco-Roman and Jewish views of suffering as these formed the dominant religious-cultural milieu in which Paul lived. This was followed by a presentation of Paul’s theology of suffering as revealed in his other undisputed Letters. Then, there was a review of his ‘in Christ’ concept as it is through this that Paul claims that his suffering is Christ’s and therefore, salvific.

Although commentators touch upon Paul’s theology of suffering in their commentaries of 1 Corinthians, the significance has not been unpacked fully in any monograph to date.<sup>275</sup> The fact that to date no author has presented an in-depth investigation of Paul’s theology of suffering in 1 Corinthians might suggest that Paul does not express it in that Letter. This dissertation aims at investigating if Paul expresses his theology of suffering in 1 Corinthians and, if so, whether he holds that his

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<sup>275</sup> Charles K. Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Harper’s New Testament Commentaries (New York: Harper, 1968); Collins, *First Corinthians*; Dunn, *1 Corinthians*; Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICNT, (*Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987*); Richard B. Hays, *First Corinthians*, Interpretation (Louisville: John Knox, 1997); Richard A. Horsley, *1 Corinthians*, ANTC (Nashville: Abingdon, 1998); Dan Mitchell, *The Book of First Corinthians* (Chattanooga TN: AMG, 2004); Phoebe Perkins, *First Corinthians*. PCNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012); Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*; Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth*; Wright, *Paul for Everyone: 1 Corinthians*.

suffering is salvific. If the answer is in the affirmative, the question arises as to *how* his suffering is salvific. If the answer is through union with Christ, is this a union in Christ's death and resurrection or in the total Christ-event? How is this union effected? Lastly, if Paul's suffering is salvific, is it integral to Christ's new covenant work of salvation and, if so, how? Prior to investigating these questions in detail, the next chapter will outline the methodology to be adopted for this investigation.

## CHAPTER 2

### A SOCIO-RHETORICAL INTERPRETATION OF SUFFERING IN 1 CORINTHIANS

A Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation is being chosen as the theoretical framework to investigate Paul's theology of suffering as portrayed in 1 Corinthians. As the name suggests, this approach combines both sociological and rhetorical approaches. First designed by Vernon K. Robbins, this framework is being used because it facilitates the interpretation of 1 Corinthians as a rhetorical document and helps recognise that 1 Corinthians is written by a historically and culturally grounded individual, for a historically and culturally grounded audience.<sup>276</sup> Robbins' Socio-Rhetorical Interpretive approach is a supra-methodology as it includes literary criticism, social-scientific criticism, rhetorical criticism, post-modern criticism and theological criticism.<sup>277</sup> It carries within its ambit the strengths of each of these criticisms and recognises that they interact with one another.

The chosen Socio-Rhetorical Interpretive, designed by Robbins, enables the interpreter to bring multiple textures of the text into view.<sup>278</sup> Firstly, from an *Inner Texture* approach, this analytic critiques 1 Corinthians using both literary and rhetorical techniques together to analyse aspects of words and meanings in texts. Secondly, scripture is a product of an intricate *Social and Cultural* milieu that must be recognised and appreciated in order to reach a holistic interpretation. Thirdly, the "biases, opinions, preferences and stereotypes of a particular writer and a particular reader" must also be understood and appreciated in order to more fully understand the text: Robbins

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<sup>276</sup> This methodology was developed over a twenty-year period from mid-seventies to mid-nineties. Vernon K. Robbins is an eminent New Testament and Early Christianity scholar and university professor (USA and S. Africa).

<sup>277</sup> Vernon K.. Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts* (Harrisburg PA: Trinity Press International, 1996c), 1-2.

<sup>278</sup> *Ibid.*, 3



refers to this as the *Ideological Texture*.<sup>279</sup> Fourthly, although Paul uses the Septuagint (LXX Bible) as his principal source of *Intertexture* reference, he also uses other sources (e.g. the intertestamental texts, Jewish writings and secular texts). Paul also uses a number of forms of *Intertexture* (e.g. quotations, allusions, echoes, and narrative), which this study is selecting and interpreting. Fifthly, Paul's texts reveal his beliefs and insights into God, the relationship between God and humanity, God's plan for creation, ethics, and other divino-religious aspects: Robbins calls this the *Sacred Texture*. These aspects may be embedded deeply in the Inner Texture, Social and Cultural Texture, Ideological Texture, Intertexture and/or Sacred texture of a text. It is to be expected that this interpretive analytic may reveal "the rich complexity of a sacred text."<sup>280</sup> Furthermore, in 1 Corinthians Paul is, at times, writing in specific Rhetorical dialects (or rhetorolects), for example, Apocalyptic, Miracle, Pre-creation, Priestly, Prophetic, and Wisdom. These modes of discourse, identifiable on the basis of "distinctive configurations of themes, images, topics, reasonings and argumentations," need to be recognised and appropriately interpreted.<sup>281</sup> This dissertation examines both the Apocalyptic and Priestly Rhetorolects in its analysis as these are most prominent in 1 Corinthians.

This chapter begins with an outline of the socio-rhetorical interpretation as developed by Robbins. The central part of the chapter offers a discussion of the five textures (Inner Texture, Social and Culture Texture, Ideological Texture, Intertexture, and Sacred Texture) and the two assisting rhetorolects (Apocalyptic and Priestly). It is important to note that a number of amendments (or extensions) are also introduced that refine and tailor the approach of this dissertation – particularly extensions to the Inner

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<sup>279</sup> Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 95.

<sup>280</sup> *Ibid.*, 130.

<sup>281</sup> Vernon K. Robbins, Robert H. von Thaden Jr. and Bart B. Bruehler, eds., *Foundations for Socio-rhetorical Explorations: A Rhetoric of Religious Antiquity Reader* (Atlanta: SBL, 2016), xxii.

Texture and Intertexture textures. The chapter continues by discussing the rhetorolects, particularly the Apocalyptic and Priestly Rhetorolects.<sup>282</sup> The resulting approach, while within the Socio-Rhetorical Interpretive range, is a unique analytic. The chapter then proceeds to explore some benefits and criticisms of the socio-rhetorical approach and concludes by offering a summary of the socio-rhetorical interpretative framework chosen for this exploration of suffering in 1 Corinthians.

## 2.1 Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation

The arrival of new methods in New Testament studies in recent years leads, in Robbins' view, to a concentration on how methodologies differ from one another rather than on what they have in common.<sup>283</sup> Perturbed by this fragmentation, he takes upon himself the task of integrating the older and newer approaches by focusing on Inner Texture, Social and Cultural Texture, Ideological Texture, Intertexture and Sacred Texture aspects of texts.<sup>284</sup> The common denominator between many of the different approaches is an awareness of texts as “performances of language, and language is a part of the inner fabric of society, culture, ideology and religion.”<sup>285</sup> This is foundational for the social-rhetorical methodology.

Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation receives its name from the publication of Robbins' ground-breaking contribution to Markan studies: *Jesus the Teacher: A Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation of Mark*.<sup>286</sup> His innovative approach combines insights from the Gospel of Mark's Jewish background, its Greco-Roman setting, its literary nature, and the perspective of the reader. David Aune praises it for “its incisive critique of

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<sup>282</sup> It is necessary to record that the Priestly Rhetorolect is mentioned only in Chapter 3 and Chapter 5.

<sup>283</sup> Vernon K. Robbins, *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse* (London: Routledge, 2002), 1.

<sup>284</sup> *Ibid.*, 1. He would later add a fifth texture – Sacred/Theological Texture – detailed in Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 120-132.

<sup>285</sup> Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 1.

<sup>286</sup> Robbins, *Jesus the Teacher: A Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation of Mark* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1992).

some of the self-imposed limitations of contemporary New Testament research”<sup>287</sup> and its demonstrable ability to lead to genuinely new insights. The socio-rhetorical approach is now one of the more prominent analytics used in analysing biblical texts.<sup>288</sup> Robbins remains a major contributor to its development as a recognised methodology within New Testament studies. His books are widely recognised as textbooks in the field.<sup>289</sup> Following Robbins, many others are making significant contributions to the development of Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation in New Testament studies.<sup>290</sup>

As an approach to literature, the Socio-Rhetorical Interpretative analytic focuses on the values, opinions and beliefs of both the writer and the reader. “It integrates the ways people use language with the ways they live in the world”<sup>291</sup> in an attempt to offer insights into how a given person, in a given context, makes sense of a given event, happening, saying, or, why a particular comment, instruction or opinion was expressed in the way in which it was expressed. Basing its exegesis on both oral and literary dynamics within social, cultural, ideological, and religious contexts of interaction,<sup>292</sup> it

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<sup>287</sup> David E. Aune, *The Blackwell Companion to the New Testament* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 192. Among others, Jouette M. Bassler in the *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 2009 and Daniel J. Harrington in the *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* also praised it highly.

<sup>288</sup> Ernest Van Eck, “Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation: Theoretical Points of Departure,” *HTS* 57 (2001): 594.

<sup>289</sup> In particular Robbins, *Jesus the Teacher*, *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse*, and *Exploring the Texture of Texts*.

<sup>290</sup> See, for example, David E. Aune, *The Westminster Dictionary of New Testament and Early Christian Literature and Rhetoric* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003); Gregory Bloomquist, “Paul’s Inclusive Language: The Ideological Texture of Romans 1,” in *Fabrics of Discourse*, ed. Robbins et al., (Harrisburg PA: Trinity Press International, 2003), 333; Combrink, H. J. Bernard, *The Challenge of Making and Redrawing Boundaries: A Perspective on Socio-Rhetorical Criticism*, in *Nederduitse Gereformeerde Teologiese Tydskrif* (40) (1999): 18-30 (The University of Stellenbosch, South Africa); Margaret Dean, “A Sound Map of the Sermon on the Mount,” in *Treasures Old and New*, ed. David R. Bauer and Mark Allan Powell, SBL Symposium Series 1 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996); Anders Eriksson, Thomas Olbricht and Waller Ubelacker, eds., *Rhetorical Argumentation in Biblical Texts*, Emory Studies in Early Christianity (Harrisburg PA: Trinity Press International, 2002); David Gowler, “Socio-rhetorical Interpretation: Textures of a Text and Its Reception,” *JSNT* 33 (2010): 191-206; Stanley E. Porter and Thomas H. Olbricht, eds., *Rhetorical Criticism and the Bible: Essays from the 1998 Florence Conference*, *JSNT Supp* 195 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2002); Bernard Brandon Scott, in Bauer and Powell, *Treasures Old and New*; ‘Why We Need Socio-rhetorical Commentary,’ in *Rhetorical Criticism and the Bible – Essays from the 1998 Florence Conference*, Stanley E. Porter and Dennis L. Stamps, eds, *JSNT Supp. Series 195* (London: Sheffield Academic, 2002).

<sup>291</sup> Van Eck, “Socio-rhetorical Interpretation,” 594.

<sup>292</sup> Robbins, *The Invention of Christian Discourse*, 3.

acknowledges that a particular text is the product of a particular writer at a particular time for a particular audience. As Richard Horsley says, the text is “inextricable from its particular historical circumstances.”<sup>293</sup> For example, it is difficult to understand fully 1 Cor 8:1 – 11:1 without understanding the place of cultic banquets in first-century Corinth. It follows that the better one understands the milieu, the better one understands what the writer means to convey to readers. Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation, in appropriating the approaches, methods and insights of sociology and anthropology, harnesses these resources in its attempt to understand the milieu or extratext of the writer.<sup>294</sup>

Recent years have also seen significant advances in understanding first century communication in all its complexities, including its rhetoric. One could instance the new writings on Aristotle and the classic manual on rhetoric of Quintillian (a near-contemporary of Paul) setting out the three kinds of rhetoric (forensic, demonstrative and deliberative). As Robbins says, socio-rhetorical criticism brings “literary criticism, social-scientific criticism, rhetorical criticism, postmodern criticism and theological criticism *together* into an integrated approach to interpretation.”<sup>295</sup> While this methodology is sometimes given different names (e.g. social scientific, sociological, or more commonly, socio-rhetorical methodology), in this dissertation it is referred to as the Socio-Rhetorical Interpretative analytic.

## 2.2 The Five Textures

A written text expresses, consciously or unconsciously, the writer’s experiences, opinions, beliefs, and/or values. These give us explicit or implicit insights into the world of the writer, the reasons for writing, and the hoped-for outcomes from the

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<sup>293</sup> Richard Horsley, *Paul and Politics* (Harrisburg PA: Trinity Press International, 2000), 82-83.

<sup>294</sup> Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 1.

<sup>295</sup> *Ibid.*, 1, 2. The bold is in the original.

correspondence. The reader, similarly, approaches the written text with their own experiences, opinions, beliefs and/or values. The reader may, for example, view the text from a number of different angles or perspectives (e.g. literary, cultural or theological). Robbins refers to the different perspectives as ‘textures’ – a metaphor taken from viewing the interwoven fabrics of a tapestry which contain complex patterns or images.<sup>296</sup> When seen from different perspectives or textures the text conveys different insights or meanings. There is a complex correlation between a text and the milieu in which it is written and/or read.<sup>297</sup> In Robbins’ socio-rhetorical analytic there are five *central* textures through which one views a text, namely, Inner Texture, Social and Culture Texture, Ideological Texture, Intertexture, and Sacred Texture.<sup>298</sup> The primary focus of this Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation is on the five textures. Implementing this multi-layered approach may help to uncover a ‘deeper’ appreciation of 1 Corinthians.

### 2.2.1 Inner Texture

Just as in an intricately woven tapestry, a text contains complex patterns and images. The text may be seen from a number of different angles, the most foundational of which is the literary angle, which considers characteristics like “the repetition of words, the creation of beginnings and endings, alternation of speech and storytelling, particular structures in which the words present arguments, and the particular ‘feel’ of the text.”<sup>299</sup> Robbins calls this literary approach ‘Inner Texture.’ It “refers to the various ways the text employs language to communicate” (e.g. structural elements, how

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<sup>296</sup> Robbins, *The Invention of Christian Discourse*, 11-13.

<sup>297</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>298</sup> *Ibid.*, 3. Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, “Challenging The Rhetorical Half-Turn: Feminist and Rhetorical Biblical Criticism,” in *Rhetoric, Scripture and Theology: Essays from the 1994 Pretoria Conference*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Thomas H. Olbricht (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996), 28-53, argued that there were other ‘central textures,’ e.g. feminist, liberation theology, etc., which later received Robbins’ approval as ‘other’ or ‘non-central’ textures.

<sup>299</sup> Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 3.

it sets out to persuade or to evoke feelings).<sup>300</sup> In his book *Exploring the Texture of Texts* Robbins identifies six ‘sub-textures’ of Inner Texture that may help analyse a given text: (1) repetition, (2) progression (including *gradatio*), (3) narrational patterns, (4) opening-middle-closing, (5) argumentative, and (6) sensory-aesthetic.<sup>301</sup>

For instance, the repetition sub-texture is to the fore in Chapter 1 of First Corinthians where Jesus is called Christ (Messiah) on at least sixteen occasions: this repetition is a clear indication that Paul considers Christ as a central character in the Letter. The progression sub-texture is evident through the ‘*gradatio*’ in 1 Cor 5:9-13 where Paul lists a catalogue of vices on a number of occasions. For example, four vices are mentioned in verse 5:10 (immoral, greedy, robbers, and idolaters), two further vices (“immoral, greedy, an idolater, a *slanderer*, a *drunkard* or a robber”) are added to those four in 5:11, and then to these six a further six are added (“the *unjust*, *fornicators*, idolaters, *adulterers*, *boy prostitutes*, *sodomites*, nor *thieves*, *greedy*, drunkards, slanderers nor robbers”) to the list of those who “will not inherit the kingdom of God” in 6:9-10 as Paul’s way of repeating and emphasising the heinousness of those sins. The narrational sub-texture is apparent in 1 Cor 1:18-31 where Paul begins by stating the paradoxical nature of the ‘message of the Cross (1 Cor 1:18),’ and then continues to detail that paradox (1 Cor 1:19-25), before applying it to the Corinthians (1 Cor 1:26-31). The opening-middle-closing sub-texture is revealed in 1 Cor 5:1-13. Paul opens with a problem, namely the Corinthian church’s failure to judge and expel an incestuous member (1 Cor 5:1-2), he then middles explaining how this failure is affecting the church (that is, they are now unable to celebrate Passover “in sincerity and truth” (1 Cor 5:2-8), and closes the discussion appealing to them to “purge the evil person from your midst” (1 Cor 5:13).

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<sup>300</sup> Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation: Dictionary of Socio-Rhetorical Terms, [www.religion.emory.edu/faculty/robbins/SRI/defns/s\\_defns.cfm](http://www.religion.emory.edu/faculty/robbins/SRI/defns/s_defns.cfm) accessed on 27-10-2016.

<sup>301</sup> Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 7.

In this dissertation particular attention is paid to the argumentative sub-texture, “the reasoning that occurs inside a text,” stressing a logical development (thesis, rationale, analogy, example, demolition of contrary view, and conclusion), that is so evident throughout 1 Corinthians.<sup>302</sup> Chapter 15 is a particularly good example. In 1 Cor 15:1-11 Paul outlines his thesis. He addresses three arguments to those who deny the bodily resurrection in verses 12 – 34. Using analogies and examples he explains that the resurrected body will be “a transformed spiritual body.”<sup>303</sup> Finally, in apocalyptic language and imagery he details *how* the resurrection will happen. Another example of Paul’s use of the argumentative sub-texture is his concentric pattern (A-B-A<sup>1</sup>), involving a general statement or statements (A), followed by a ‘seeming’ digression (B), before returning to the main topic (A<sup>1</sup>) and providing specific solutions to the matter under discussion. This structure may be found also in 1 Cor 5–7, where he begins by rebuking the Corinthian church members for their failure to judge their incestuous church member (1 Cor 5), then he ‘digresses’ to another example of their abdication of responsibility (1 Cor 6:1-11), before returning to the initial problem and correcting their erroneous thinking (1 Cor 6:12–20).<sup>304</sup> These concentric patterns are an important part of the Inner Texture of 1 Corinthians.

Through his use of these literary techniques, in the framework of a deliberative rhetorical letter, Paul skilfully constructs, pursues, and finalises his chosen arguments as will be seen in this analysis of Paul’s theology of suffering.

### 2.2.2 Social and Cultural Texture

The Social and Cultural Texture recognises that a text will frequently betray aspects of the writer’s social and cultural situation because a text is a mirror of society

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<sup>302</sup> Robbins et al., *Foundations for Socio-Rhetorical Exploration*, xv.

<sup>303</sup> Pascuzzi, *First and Second Corinthians*, 88.

<sup>304</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 14f.

and culture by the different ways it views the world. Robbins subdivides the Social and Cultural Texture into three distinct aspects or sub-textures: (1) specific social topics (these topics reveal the writer's and/or the reader's responses to the world), (2) common social and cultural topics (these unpack the writer's or reader's status, rights, the codes by which they live), and (3) final cultural categories (those topics identify the writer's and/or reader's cultural location, for example, within the dominant culture, subculture, counterculture, contraculture or limited culture rhetoric).<sup>305</sup> The interweaving of different combinations of the above-mentioned sub-textures creates a culture that is specific to a particular area and people. These give "meaning, values, traditions, convictions, rituals, beliefs, and actions to people."<sup>306</sup>

First, in detailing the specific social topics sub-texture, Robbins adopts and adapts Bryan Wilson's seven types of sects,<sup>307</sup> and arrives at the following seven responses of religious discourse to the world: (a) conversionist, (b) revolutionist, (c) introversionist, (d) gnostic manipulationist, (e) thaumaturgic, (f) reformist, and (g) utopian.<sup>308</sup> Robbins defines the different social topics sub-textures as follows: (a) conversionist ("if people can be changed then the world will be changed"), (b) revolutionist ("rid the world of the present social order" and install a totally new social order), (c) introversionist ("retire from the world to enjoy the security granted by personal holiness"), (d) gnostic manipulationist ("proclaim a more spiritual and ethereal view of the cultural ends of society", but it does not reject these ends), (e) thaumaturgic ("encourages the seeking of personal messages from spirits, obtaining cures, effecting transformations and performing miracles"), (f) reformist (actively supporting those

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<sup>305</sup> Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 72, 75, 86.

<http://www.religion.emory.edu/faculty/robbins/SRI/index.cf> accessed 29-11-2016.

<sup>306</sup> Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 72.

<sup>307</sup> Robbins, *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse*, 147, drawing on Bryan Wilson, quoted in James A. Wilde, *The Social World of Mark's Gospel: A Word about Method*, SBL Seminar Papers 2 (1978), 47-67.

<sup>308</sup> Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 72-74.



institutions that “can serve good, rather than oppressive ends”), and (g) utopian (advocates and “inaugurates a new social system free from evil and corruption to run the world”).<sup>309</sup> Identifying the specific social topics sub-textures expressed by a New Testament writer helps us understand the culture he accepts and/or promotes. This dissertation will be particularly interested in the conversionist (which is evident, for example, in 1 Cor 2:2 where Paul “resolves to know nothing ... except Jesus Christ, and him crucified” and proceeds through 1 Cor 3:1—4:21 to explain his counter-cultural ministry), reformist (apparent in 1 Cor 4:1-21 where he calls upon the church members to accept God’s wisdom, their own gifted salvation, and to live accordingly) and utopian sub-textures (for example, in 1 Cor 15:20-28 Paul appeals to his followers to join Christ in the battle against evil and assures them of ultimate victory) portrayed in 1 Corinthians.

Second, living in a specific area at a specific time necessarily immerses the individual in a common social topics sub-texture. The individual, in their thinking, speech, writing, and behaviour lives out of this social and cultural milieu. The common social and cultural topics sub-texture, researched by numerous authors and adopted by Robbins, includes a wide-ranging list: (a) honour, guilt and rights culture: In 1 Cor 11:17-34 there is an example of the honour, guilt and rights sub-texture. Paul is shocked that the church members have brought the common social status ratings with them into the Lord’s Supper. No longer the sacrament of equality and unity, it is no longer the Lord’s Supper. He, therefore, upbraids them, explains their misunderstanding and pleads with them to change their ways. (b) dyadic and individualist personalities: (c) dyadic and legal contracts and agreements, (d) The

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<sup>309</sup> Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 72-74.

challenge-response sub-texture is evident in 1 Cor 4:9-13.<sup>310</sup> In this challenge-response sub-texture Paul is preaching and embodying a counter-cultural gospel and this provokes opposition, persecution, even death-threats. (e) agriculturally-based, industrial, and technological economic exchange systems, (f) peasants, labourers craftspeople, and entrepreneurs, (g) limited, insufficient and overabundant goods, and (h) purity codes.<sup>311</sup> In order to avoid anachronistic ethnocentric conclusions, the commentator or interpreter must know, understand and appreciate the social and cultural topics in a text and the value they held for the writer or reader of the time. Paul skilfully intermingles many of these common social and cultural topics, especially the honour, guilt and rights, and the challenge-response sub-textures, in his argumentation. In this analysis particular attention will be paid to (a) the honour and rights, and (d) the challenge-response sub-textures.

Third, the final cultural categories sub-texture identifies one's (a) cultural location (i.e. how one presents one's opinions, reasons and arguments privately and publicly),<sup>312</sup> (b) the relationship of the sub-cultures to the dominant culture (e.g. an ethnic group might prefer to preserve their 'home' practices) whether sharing in its attitudes, values, and dispositions at some level (dominant and sub-cultural rhetoric) or by rejecting these attitudes, values, and dispositions (counterculture, contra-culture, and luminal culture rhetoric). Robbins has identified five sub-textures: (a) dominant culture rhetoric, (b) subculture rhetoric, (c) counterculture or alternative culture rhetoric, (d) contraculture or oppositional culture rhetoric, (e) limited culture rhetoric.<sup>313</sup>

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<sup>310</sup> Robbins defines a 'dyadic personality' as "one who needs another person continually in order to know who he or she really is" (Robbins, *Exploring the Textures of Texts*, 77) and a 'dyadic contract' as "an implicit agreement informally binding pairs of contractants rather than groups" (Robbins, *Exploring the Textures of Texts*, 79).

<sup>311</sup> Robbins, *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse*, 159.

<sup>312</sup> Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 86.

<sup>313</sup> *Ibid.*, 86-88.

There are numerous texts in 1 Corinthians which indicate Paul's counterculture rhetoric: it is probably the most evident rhetoric in the Letter and will, therefore, be investigated in detail later. 1 Cor 4:9-13 is probably the Letter's most famous passage in which Paul outlines the countercultural nature of his ministry. He feels that the followers of the dominant culture are treating him and his followers as "the scum of the earth," "the world's rubbish." However, in God's eyes Paul knows that he and his followers are cumulatively advantaged. In a second example, Paul, in demanding that his Corinthian converts do not participate in temple banquets, is pursuing a very definite counterculture sub-texture rhetorical agenda (see 1 Cor 8– 10).<sup>314</sup>

The interweaving of different combinations of the above-mentioned sub-textures creates a culture that is specific to a particular area and people. These give "meaning, values, traditions, convictions, rituals, beliefs, and actions to people."<sup>315</sup> These will emerge in Paul's theology of suffering in 1 Corinthians where he skilfully intermingles many of the above-mentioned sub-textures in pursuance of his overall argumentative objectives.

### 2.2.3 Ideological Texture

Ideological Texture is concerned with the personal opinions, prejudices and preferences of the writer and/or the reader situated in a particular place and time – especially as these relate to their views of the world, society and humanity.<sup>316</sup> This

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<sup>314</sup> See Keith A. Roberts, "Toward a Generic Concept of Counter-Culture," in *Sociological Focus* 11 (2012):111-126.

<sup>315</sup> Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 72.

<sup>316</sup> Ernst van Eck, "Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation: Theoretical Points of Departure," *HTS* 57 (2001), 598. Van Eck's definition is as follows: "Ideology is an integrated system of beliefs, assumptions and values (in terms of the symbolic universe), a network of themes and ideas (in terms of text), representing an interpretation of the social reality (the macrosocial world of the text), intended to have meaning within a particular context (the microsocal world of the text). Ideology/ideological perspective thus has a pragmatic intention: its intended effect is either the legitimation or the radical restructuring of the contextual world of its intended addressees. As such the narrative text is not only seen as both the product and the vehicle of ongoing social interaction, but it is also studied in terms of its communication, that is

texture also has a particular interest in whether and, if so, how these views may be shared with groups, and how they might be expressed and/or interpreted.<sup>317</sup> The four sub-textures of ideological texture are (1) the individual locations of writers and readers (i.e. their presuppositions, dispositions, and values), (2) the relation to groups (membership of which influences readers and writers), (3) the modes of intellectual discourse (which is the particular perspective a reader subscribes to, which sets boundaries around readings), and (4) the spheres of ideology (which concerns the ideology inscribed in the text and how one may analyse it).<sup>318</sup>

There is an example of (1) individual location in 1 Cor 2:1-5 as Paul presents his basic approach to preaching in Corinth. He maintains that true understanding of God's wisdom cannot come through grandiose rhetorical speeches but through the agency of the Spirit; "a demonstration of Spirit and power, so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God" (1 Cor 2:5).<sup>319</sup> (2) One could refer to 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 as an example of the relation to groups sub-texture. Robbins says that it deals with "a certain power dynamic both in Paul's culture and in the history of the early church – the relationship between men and women."<sup>320</sup> Furthermore, in tackling the status-related misbehaviour of (at least some of) the Corinthian church members at the Lord's Supper (1 Cor 11:17-34), Paul is entering into an ideological discussion on social status. (3) Accepting Eagleton's assertion that "each intellectual mode of interaction and exchange has a relation to an ideological field," 1 Cor 1:18-2:5

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its intended social effect." David Brion Davies defines ideology as "an integrated system of beliefs, assumptions and values" that reflects "the needs and interests of a group or class at a particular time in history" in his *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution 1770-1823* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975), 14.

<sup>317</sup> John H. Elliott, *A Home for the Homeless: A Social-scientific Criticism of 1 Peter, its Situation and Strategy* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1990), 268, quoted in Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 96.

<sup>318</sup> Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 96f.

<sup>319</sup> Pascuzzi, *First and Second Corinthians*, 26.

<sup>320</sup> Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 118.

provides a good example of modes of intellectual discourse.<sup>321</sup> In that pericope there is a clear underlying conflict between the ideology of ‘this age’ and that of Paul and his followers that ends with Christ’s crucifixion. (4) As an example of spheres of ideology one may suggest the divisions among the church members as portrayed in 1 Cor 1:10—4:21 and in 1 Cor 8:1—11:1. It seems that some church members had major difficulties in resolving the ideological contradictions between their former understanding of Greco-Roman ‘wisdom’ and that of their new-found faith, and between their former Greco-Roman practices of participation in temple banquets and their Christian prohibition of such practices. As Eagleton says; these spheres “represent the points where power impacts upon certain utterances and inscribes itself tacitly within them.”<sup>322</sup>

#### 2.2.4 Intertexture

There are many famous examples of Intertexture: Ernest Hemingway borrows the title *For Whom the Bell Tolls* from John Donne’s poem *Meditation XVII*, C. S. Lewis borrows the theme of Christ’s crucifixion from the New Testament for his book *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, Tom Stoppard’s *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* is heavily influenced by William Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, and *Ulysses* is a retelling of Homer’s *Odyssey*.<sup>323</sup> Julie Kristeva, in 1969, first introduced the term ‘Intertexture’ into secular literary discussion: twenty years later Willem S. Vorster and David Hays introduce the term to biblical studies. Vorster and Hays recognise that a particular scriptural text can relate “through a network of references to other texts

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<sup>321</sup> Terence Eagleton, *Ideology: An Introduction* (London: Verso Press, 1991), 17.

<sup>322</sup> *Ibid.*, 223.

<sup>323</sup> Steve Moyise, “Intertextuality and Biblical Studies: A Review,” *Verbum et Ecclesia* 23 (2002): 418. Richard Bauman defines intertextuality as the relational orientation of a text to other texts.

(intertexts),”and that intertexture draws “attention to the process of production” and “gives new prominence to the reader.”<sup>324</sup>

Intertexture is defined as “a text’s representation of, reference to, or use of phenomena in the ‘world’ outside the text being interpreted.”<sup>325</sup> It may also be described as the process of embedding elements (phrases, storylines, contexts, themes, even ideologies) of an earlier text within a later one in order to carry over some of the meanings, emotions, or realities of the former text.<sup>326</sup>

The sub-textures of Intertexture are as follows: (1) Oral-Scribal Intertexture is using or copying the text of another author with or without reference. For example, in 1 Cor 3:19, Paul recites a passage from Eliphaz’s speech in Job 5:13. In 1 Cor 10:4 he provides another example as he identifies Christ with the ‘following rock,’ and he reconfigures the Shema to include Christ as Lord to express his cosmological and soteriological roles in 1 Cor 8:6.

(2) Cultural Intertexture is referring to, alluding to or echoing a text that relates to values, codes, systems and myths known only to particular cultural ‘insiders’ is also evident in 1 Corinthians. For example, the Christian beliefs or traditions of Baptism and the Eucharist are also evident in 1 Cor 10:1-5 and Paul’s recalling of the Last Supper tradition (1 Cor 11:23-26) in order to explain how far the Corinthian church members have strayed from the ideal are instances of Cultural Intertexture as they would be known to those within a Christian culture. (3) Social Intertexture is the social knowledge commonly held by all people of a region. Paul’s quotation of Menander’s

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<sup>324</sup> Willem Vorster, “The Function of the Old Testament in Mark,” *Neot* 24 (1980): 215-228; David Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), passim. Vorster and Hays recognise that a particular scriptural text can relate “through a network of references to other texts (intertexts),”and that intertextuality draws “attention to the process of production” and “gives new prominence to the reader.”

<sup>325</sup> Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 40.

<sup>326</sup> Mikhail Bakhtin, C. Emerson and M. Holquist, eds., *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986).

*Thais* in 1 Cor 15:33 (“Bad company corrupts good morals”) is an example of Social Intertexture as it was information available widely in the society of his time. (4)

Historical Intertexture is the reference to “events that have occurred at specific times in specific locations.”<sup>327</sup> Paul’s statement in 1 Cor 2:1 (“when I came to you, brothers, I did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God in lofty words or wisdom; for I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified”) is an example of Historical Intertexture.

Paul is a master of Intertexture. Sometimes he quotes or alludes to an earlier text (called the ‘pre-text’) to give his argument extra authority, at other times he does so to help explain or develop an argument, or, finally, he may do so to provide an innovative application of a principle to a particular pastoral problem. All these Intertexture elements emerge in 1 Corinthians generally and in his presentation of his theology of suffering.

#### 2.2.5 Sacred Texture

Sacred Texture is not among the four central textures in Robbins’ 1992 book *Jesus the Teacher* nor in his 1996a book *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse*. However, it is added in his 1996b book *Exploring the Texture of Texts*. Sacred Texture refers to the manner in which a text expresses insights into the divine and its relationship with humanity.<sup>328</sup> This texture includes aspects or sub-textures concerning (1) deity, (2) holy persons, (3) spirit beings, (4) divine history, (5) human redemption, (6) human commitment, (7) religious community, and (8) ethics.<sup>329</sup>

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<sup>327</sup> Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 63.

<sup>328</sup> Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation: Dictionary of Socio-Rhetorical Terms, [www.religion.emory.edu/faculty/robbins/SRI/defns/s\\_defns.cfm](http://www.religion.emory.edu/faculty/robbins/SRI/defns/s_defns.cfm); accessed on 27-10-2016.

<sup>329</sup> For a fuller discussion, see Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 120-131.

One could suggest the following examples of the above-mentioned sub-textures:

(1) Deity; 1 Cor 8:6 gives evidence of Paul’s new-found understanding of Christ’s place in relation to God, specifically his pre-existence and his role in creation. (2) Holy Persons; Jesus is addressed as Christ/Messiah on sixteen occasions in the first chapter of 1 Corinthians indicating his central position in the Letter. The word ‘Christ’ identifies Jesus as God’s appointed Messiah designated by God to bring his people into a salvific relationship. (3) Spirit Beings: 1 Cor 5:5 mentions Satan. (4) An example of the Divine History Sub-Texture is available in 1 Cor 11:17-34 and 1 Cor 15:58. There Paul emphasises that “God’s plan for humans works itself out through a complicated but ever-ongoing process that moves slowly toward God’s goals.”<sup>330</sup> (5) Human Redemption: 1 Cor 15:3 and 22 indicate that ‘Christ died for our sins,’ and that ‘in Christ all shall be brought to (eternal) life.’ Another example of the Human Redemption Sub-Texture is to be found in 1 Cor 6:12-20 where it is established that the believer’s God-gifted union with Christ is ontological, spousal and spiritual.<sup>331</sup> (6) An example of the Human Commitment Sub-Texture is available in 1 Cor 9:19-27 where Paul explains that outworking one’s union with Christ necessitates living a life of selfless, sacrificial service of others. In this way, the revelation of the believer’s true nature (united with Christ) emphasises how each believer should live. Also, Paul frequently asks, and expects, the church members to commit to the gospel values, for example, 1 Cor 5:8. (7) Religious Community: In 1 Cor 5:1-8 Paul makes reference to

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<sup>330</sup> Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 123-124.

<sup>331</sup> In 1 Cor 6:15-17 Paul establishes that the believer is “One spirit with the Lord”). In 1 Cor 15:35-45 he says that ‘what is corruptible becomes incorruptible; natural becomes spiritual.’ This is a change in the believer’s being, an ontological change. The relationship/union is ‘spousal’ because, as stated in 1 Cor 6:15-17 it is incompatible with any other (immoral) union – that is the reason for the Gen 2:24 quotation. It is ‘participatory’ in that the believer now lives with the life of Christ (see Gal 2:20; 1:16; 4:19-20). This view of the union is supported by 1 Cor 12:1-31 where Paul speaks of the union as the ‘body of Christ’ (1 Cor 12:27). Furthermore, in commenting on 1 Cor 15:45-49 Pascuzzi tells us that this “spiritual life [is] inherited through Christ,” and Alfred Wikenhauser states that “Christ is the vital principle of Christians;” Grassi says that the Christian is a “Sacrament of Christ” (Grassi, “The Letter to the Ephesians,” *JBC*, 349).



the Corinthian church as “unleavened” (sinless) and of the need to protect and develop its sinlessness or purity. (8) Ethics: There are many passages in 1 Corinthians where Paul is detailing the ethical behaviour expected of his church member, such as 1 Cor 6:8-11. There he is outlining who will and who will not inherit the kingdom of God. In short, the believer’s life is meant to be a living out of Christ’s life and mission. Understandably, then, immorality is to be avoided (1 Cor 6:18).

It is worth noting that Robbins considers the Sacred Texture to be the only overarching texture.<sup>332</sup> In observing a Sacred Texture analysis by Jacqueline Faulhaber on 1 Peter, Robbins says that the Sacred Texture is to be analysed in the context of the other four textures rather than a stand-alone texture analysis:<sup>333</sup> this dissertation is following that guideline. In brief, a close study of the Sacred Texture of 1 Corinthians will avail of all the above-detailed Sub-Textures in order to unveil Paul’s understanding of God’s plan for humanity and humanity’s role in that plan. Only then will one understand his theology of suffering.

#### 2.2.6 Interacting Textures in 1 Corinthians

While Robbins considers the Sacred Texture to be the only overarching texture, one could argue that all five textures are overarching or interweaving textures. While the textures can be separated notionally for the purposes of explanation and analysis, they are all inextricably inter-linked or enmeshed with one another. It is important to note that the *interacting* feature of these textures is what is new and different about Robbins’ socio-rhetorical analysis and is essential to the methodology of this dissertation. This point does not seem to be recognised or argued by any commentator. To ignore it would be to lose the support role of one texture for another. Furthermore,

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<sup>332</sup> Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 130.

<sup>333</sup> See Jacqueline Faulhaber, “The Role of Tribulation and Virtue in Creativity: A Sacred Text Analysis of 1 Peter,” *JBL* 1 (2007): 135-147.

the textures are not seen as separate in the first century. They are like the different strands that make up a rope: take away a single strand and the rope is weakened, or add a strand and it is strengthened.<sup>334</sup> Consequently, this study considers each texture to be an overarching and interweaving texture, depending on one's perspective at a particular time.

## 2.3 Extending the Textures

While the above methodology of the five textures forms the framework for the exegetical sections of this dissertation, there is a need to extend two textures, namely Inner Texture and Intertexture. Firstly, as 1 Corinthians, by almost unanimous agreement among commentators, is written as a deliberative rhetorical document, it is necessary to critique it in that light.<sup>335</sup> Therefore, an introduction to that genre is necessary here. Secondly, as commentators differ in their approaches to intertexture references, specifically regarding the sources and/or forms of Intertexture, it is necessary to set out clearly the remit of this dissertation in that regard. Both of these extensions help to refine and tailor the methodology of this dissertation.

### 2.3.1 Inner Texture Extension

Inner Texture “refers to the various ways the text employs language to communicate” (such as structural elements, and how it sets out to persuade or to evoke feelings).<sup>336</sup> Robbins’ treatment of Inner Texture is conceived and developed with “narrative discourse in the New Testament” in mind, that is, “discourse that tells a

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<sup>334</sup> For example, 1 Cor 15: 20-28 is a passage in which all five textures (inner, inter, social/cultural, ideological and sacred) are present and are interacting with each other.

<sup>335</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 1-40; Anthony C. Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 40-54.

<sup>336</sup> Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation: Dictionary of Socio-Rhetorical Terms, [www.religion.emory.edu/faculty/robbins/SRI/defs/s\\_defns.cfm](http://www.religion.emory.edu/faculty/robbins/SRI/defs/s_defns.cfm) accessed on 27-10-2016.

story.”<sup>337</sup> It is generally recognised that 1 Corinthians is not *primarily* a narrational document. Rather, 1 Corinthians is written as a deliberative, rhetorical document; more specifically as a unity-seeking or *homonoia/concordia* letter or speech.<sup>338</sup> Nonetheless, Robbins’ textural approaches (Inner Texture, Social and Cultural Texture, Ideological Texture, Intertexture and Sacred Texture) may be extended or applied across a wide range of literary genres (including biographical works, essays, memoirs, speeches, and, indeed letter-writing). This dissertation is an attempt to apply Robbins’ textural approaches to a deliberative document of the *homonoia/concordia* genre. It is necessary to offer some details about this particular literary genre that Paul employs in 1 Corinthians before proceeding to apply it in the exegetical chapters.

Margaret Mitchell, Raymond Collins and others identify 1 Corinthians as similar in many respects to a Greco-Roman concord speech (*homonoia* is the Greek word equivalent to the Latin *concordia*).<sup>339</sup> The *concordia* (or *homonoia*) speech or letter is a recognised sub-section of the deliberative speech or letter and it is designed and delivered to “challenge a divided people, typically the people of a polis, to set aside their differences and become united once again.”<sup>340</sup> This is certainly the case in 1 Corinthians, where Paul attempts to persuade the Corinthians towards reconciliation and unity (e.g. the Letter’s programmatic statement in 1 Cor 1:10), specifically appealing to them to adopt the ‘mind of Christ’ (1 Cor 2:16).

In Paul’s time, letter writing, taught as “a rhetorical art in schools of rhetoric,”<sup>341</sup> is sub-divided into forensic/judicial (to move the audience to a judgement as in a courtroom), demonstrative (to offer praise or blame as at a celebration), and deliberative

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<sup>337</sup> Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 7.

<sup>338</sup> Ibid.

<sup>339</sup> Margaret M. Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1991), 60-64; Collins, *First Corinthians*, 17-20.

<sup>340</sup> Joseph H. Hellermann, *The Ancient Church as Family* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 2001), 19.

<sup>341</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 18.

(to persuade the audience to make a decision).<sup>342</sup> The specific literary genre of 1 Corinthians is deliberative rhetoric: it attempts to persuade its audience to make a decision or decisions.<sup>343</sup> Persuasion ultimately depends on three factors:

the moral character of the speaker (or proof based on *ethos*); the ability to evoke the proper emotional response from the audience (or proof based on *pathos*); and finally logical arguments (or proof based on *logos*).<sup>344</sup>

In 1 Corinthians Paul is using his considerable literary skill to persuade the Corinthian church members to recognise their wayward ways, repent of same, and to re-commit to their covenantal promise, thus bringing about a unity increasingly approaching the ‘mind of Christ’ (1 Cor 2:16).

There is general agreement among commentators that 1 Corinthians is a good example of the deliberative rhetoric of its time.<sup>345</sup> According to these guidelines an individual deliberative rhetorical speech or letter is composed of different parts. The *exordium* is the beginning of the written or spoken work and is aimed at helping the audience to be open and well-disposed towards what follows. The *narratio* then explains the nature of the disputed matter. The *partitio* or *propositio* is where the essential propositions of the speaker and perhaps also of the opponent are laid out. The *probatio* brings in arguments to support the speaker’s case. In the *refutatio*, which is often included in the *probatio*, the opponent’s arguments are disproved or weakened. Finally, the *peroratio* recapitulates the main points of the *probatio*, attempting to arouse the audience’s emotions in favour of the speaker’s viewpoint by amplifying what has

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<sup>342</sup> Vernon Robbins, “Beginnings and Developments in Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation,” in *Rhetorical Criticism and the Bible: Essays from the 1998 Florence Conference*, ed. Stanley Porter and Dennis Stamps, LNTS 195 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 19.

<sup>343</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 17-20.

<sup>344</sup> Pascuzzi, *First and Second Corinthians*, 10. The objective of the deliberative orator, in Quintillian’s view, “is advantage or harm. To exhort is to urge as being more advantageous. To deter is to dissuade as being more harmful.” See also Collins, *First Corinthians*, 19.

<sup>345</sup> See, for example, Collins, *First Corinthians*, 19; Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 365ff.; Collins, *First Corinthians*, 17f.; Pascuzzi, *First and Second Corinthians*, 9-10; Witherington III, *Conflict and Community in Corinth*, 39; Horsley, *1 Corinthians*, 22f.; James D. G. Dunn, *1 Corinthians*, T&T Clark Study Guides (London: T&T Clark, 2003), 23f.; Mitchell *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 20-64.

been said before.<sup>346</sup> In short, a speaker or writer hopes to first establish an *ethos* or credibility, then the more logical approach (or proof based on *logos*) takes over as the act of actual persuasion or argumentation would come into play and, finally, the speech or letter attempts to arouse *pathos* (the emotion the speaker/writer hopes to arouse in the listener/reader).<sup>347</sup>

It is noted also that, for Paul, the most important consideration is that the subject matter always takes priority over the form, construction or delivery of the letter and the theological message always takes precedence over how the message is expressed. In Paul's time, deliberative rhetoric is "an address to the whole person: reason, emotions, desires, attitude, will and action"<sup>348</sup> and the writer's aim is to bring about a change in the understanding and behaviour of readers/listeners, that is, a complete transformation of the individual. His ultimate objective is to persuade them to imitate him (Paul) as he imitates Christ (1 Cor 4: 16, 11: 1).<sup>349</sup>

Many commentators on 1 Corinthians maintain that Paul is well-trained in rhetoric and uses its tools and techniques expertly to assist him in arguing his 'case.'<sup>350</sup> Rhetorical criticism attempts to understand the author's intended message, how they construct and intend their texts to function, and how the hearers/readers are likely to perceive and respond to the texts. Consequently, it is entirely appropriate to recognise the first-century rhetorical nature of 1 Corinthians and to analyse it in that light. As

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<sup>346</sup> Witherington, *Conflict in Corinth*, 44ff.

<sup>347</sup> Ibid.

<sup>348</sup> Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 41.

<sup>349</sup> Ibid., 45. According to Thiselton, Paul saw his apostleship "not as an instrument of power but as a call to become a transparent agency through whom the crucified and raised Christ becomes portrayed through lifestyle, thought and utterance." Some commentators maintain that, during the first century, deliberative and epideictic rhetoric had declined and a form of rhetoric concentrating on display and ornamentation (e.g. figures of speech, exclamations, apostrophes, wordplay and epigrams) had come to the fore. Rather than being the art of persuasion, rhetoric had become the art of speaking well (i.e. there was an undue stress on form rather than content). And, Quintillian advised his students: "I would have the orator, while careful in his choice of words, be even more concerned about his subject matter." This may well, in part, explain Paul's apparent mistrust of the form of rhetoric practised in his day.

<sup>350</sup> See, for example, Witherington, *Conflict in Corinth*, 39; Pascuzzi, *First and Second Corinthians*, 9-10; Collins, *First Corinthians*, 17ff. Also, Horsley, *1 Corinthians*, 22; Dunn, *1 Corinthians*, 23ff.

such, it is legitimate to extend Robbins' approach to include a deliberative, rhetorical document such as 1 Corinthians.

### 2.3.2 Intertexture Extension

There is general agreement among commentators that both the written Hebrew Bible and the Septuagint (LXX), in their entirety and in their individual books, are the end-product of an Intertexture process that re-interprets itself again and again over many centuries. This same process also happens during the [earlier] centuries of oral transmission. In that way, as Richard Hays says, "the voice of Scripture, regarded as authoritative in one way or another, continues to speak in and through later texts that both depend on and transform the earlier (texts)."<sup>351</sup> Paul stands firmly in this tradition, relentlessly proclaiming the word of God as his predecessors (such as the prophets) had done for centuries. He "insistently sought to show that his proclamation of the gospel was grounded in the witness of Israel's sacred texts."<sup>352</sup> Paul cites, alludes to, and/or echoes the LXX, Jewish and secular sources to give his remarks authority, as a reminder of an Old Testament pericope and lesson, or as a new application or explanation of an old concept or idea.

Paul's quotations, allusions and echoes most often follow the Septuagint (LXX), a Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible compiled in the second or third century B.C.E, which was in common use in Hellenistic synagogues during Paul's lifetime.<sup>353</sup> Not recognising this would make it difficult to understand Paul's Intertexture references. In his ground-breaking book on Intertexture *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, Hays set out to read Paul's letters in the context of 'inner-biblical exegesis.' In his

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<sup>351</sup> Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, 14.

<sup>352</sup> *Ibid.*, 2. There are numerous examples of this in 1 Corinthians: 1 Cor 4:1-21; 5:1-8; 10:1-13; 11:17-34; 15:3-5, etc.

<sup>353</sup> *Ibid.*, xi, says that, "Rarely do Paul's quotations agree with the Masoretic text (MT) against the LXX."

view, Paul sees himself as the apostle to the Gentiles, proclaiming God's word as Israel's prophets had previously done.<sup>354</sup> At this point it is necessary to state that, while the LXX is the only source Hays treats, it is by no means Paul's only source. Robbins is also anxious to recognise sources beyond the Old Testament and, therefore, he includes the Greco-Roman sources also (but not the Jewish ones).<sup>355</sup>

This dissertation holds that it is necessary to extend the sources of Paul's Intertexture references further still and attempt to include all sources that influenced him in his writing of 1 Corinthians. Therefore, Paul's most frequent intertexts include the Canonical Books, the Deutero-canonical books, Jewish Intertestamental Writings, Pre-Pauline Judaeo-Christian texts, Paul's own earlier Letters, and other religious or secular texts.<sup>356</sup> The reference to Intertexture is to be extended to also include social attitudes and religious practices of the time, for example, Triumphal Processions (mentioned in 1 Cor 4), baptism (mentioned in 1 Cor 10) and the Eucharist (mentioned in 1 Cor 10:16-17; 11:17-34).

While the Intertexture *sources*, as has been noted, are many and varied; the *forms* of Intertexture are similarly broad-based. Again, it is necessary to state that many commentators limit the forms of Intertexture they recognise and with which they work. In this dissertation the following forms are discussed and used: (1) Intertexture References, (2) Narrative Intertexture, (3) Exegetical Intertexture, and (4) Diachronic Intertexture.<sup>357</sup> Regarding *Intertexture References*, Hays<sup>358</sup> includes quotations,

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<sup>354</sup> Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, 14.

<sup>355</sup> Combrink, *The Challenge of Making and Redrawing Boundaries*. An English translation is available on the Internet.

<sup>356</sup> In one pericope, for example, 1 Cor 10:1-13, Paul quotes or alludes to Gen 5, Exod 13, 16, 17 and 32, Lev 4, Numbers 14, 20 and 25, Deut 7, 2 Kings 1, Psalms 78, 105, 106 and 144, Hosea 7, 9, 11 and 13, Wisdom 19, Philo and 1 Thessalonians. The Christian beliefs or traditions of Baptism and the Eucharist are also evident in this pericope. This goes some way to highlighting Paul as a master craftsman.

<sup>357</sup> As this dissertation is attempting to discover *Paul's* mindset as he wrote various passages in 1 Corinthians, and not the reader's/readers', this dissertation will not focus on postmodern intertextuality. Also, it would be using a form of intertextuality unknown to Paul, and, therefore, outside his conscious skill-set.

allusions or echoes,<sup>359</sup> as when Exodus 32:6 is quoted in 1 Corinthians 10:7 or when Ps 24 is alluded to or echoed in 1 Cor 10:6-22. Sylvia Keesmaat,<sup>360</sup> in discussing Romans, says that sometimes Paul relies on his audience's "familiarity [with] the Exodus story to frame his particular arguments:"<sup>361</sup> this form of *Narrative Intertexture* is also found in 1 Cor 10:1-13, where the Exodus story is written between the lines. Paul presumes that the Exodus story is known to his readers – it is, in fact, the sub-structural storyline of this particular pericope and of 1 Corinthians in its entirety. Timothy Berkley, in his monograph *From a Broken Covenant to Circumcision of the Heart*, thinks the key to understanding Paul's argument is sometimes his exegesis of particular passages of scripture.<sup>362</sup> These are not explicitly quoted or shown in the text, but lie beneath the surface, passages which indicate detailed exegetical activity. This activity, which he calls *Exegetical Intertexture*, must be assumed in order to make sense of Paul's argument. For example, in 1 Cor 10:1-13, Paul's own exegesis of Deuteronomy, Numbers and Leviticus is introduced – or, rather, the conclusions of his exegesis are given. Within that pericope, in 1 Cor 10:4, Paul tells us that the Israelites "drank from the rock that went with them, and that rock was Christ himself."<sup>363</sup> However, Paul does not explain how he comes to those exegetical conclusions. The 'following' rock is not mentioned in the Old Testament. Actually, it is found in Philo's writings and in Sanhedrin document 38;<sup>364</sup> that it 'followed' the Israelites must have been very commonly held in his time for Paul to accept it and teach it as 'fact'. *Diachronic*

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<sup>358</sup> In discussing each form of intertextuality, the name of the author most often credited with investigating that form is mentioned.

<sup>359</sup> For example, Psalm 24:1 is quoted in 1 Corinthians 10:26 and Deut 13:5 and 17:7 are quoted in 1 Cor 5: 13. The Book of Numbers (chapters 11, 16, 25), the Book of Deuteronomy (chapter 32), Leviticus (chapter 7) are all alluded to in 1 Cor 10:6-22.

<sup>360</sup> Sylvia Keesmaat, *Paul and his Story: (Re)Interpreting the Exodus Tradition*, JSNTSup 181 (1999).

<sup>361</sup> *Ibid.*, 48-49.

<sup>362</sup> Timothy Berkley, *From a Broken Covenant to Circumcision of the Heart: Pauline intertextual exegesis in Romans 2:17-29* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2000).

<sup>363</sup> *The Good News Bible – Catholic Edition* (Glasgow: The Bible Society, 1994), 213.

<sup>364</sup> This researcher found this reference through an internet search (Santala, Sanhedrin Document 38).



*Intertexture* is defined as “of, or relating to, the changes in a linguistic system between successive points in time.”<sup>365</sup> For example, in Romans 10:16, Paul ascribes a speech of Isaiah (Isa 53; 1f) to the apostles in Paul’s own time. 1 Corinthians 15, Psalms 8 and 110 are good examples also, as Paul is applying to Christ and/or to humanity statements earlier applied to another individual or humanity.<sup>366</sup> In short, Paul uses a number of forms of Intertexture in 1 Corinthians. It is necessary, therefore, to clearly identify these different forms and to interpret them appropriately.

In summary, the Intertexture frameworks of some commentators are too restrictive thereby missing out on many additional, explanatory features. To achieve a fuller appreciation of 1 Corinthians it is argued that the Intertexture frameworks need to be extended to be more fully appreciated. For example, in writing 1 Corinthians Paul is influenced in his theologising by the Septuagint, some Intertestamental Books, popular Jewish and secular writings, customs and behaviours (both Jewish and Christian). In particular, Paul’s understanding of suffering is grounded in the Old Testament books of Isaiah, Job and Jeremiah. However, he also refers to the Intertestamental Books of 2 and 4 Maccabees and Jubilees and some secular writings (e.g. Menander in 1 Cor 15:33).<sup>367</sup> He, furthermore, uses a number of traditions (as in 1 Cor 11:23-26; 15:3-5) and also mentions the sacraments of baptism and Eucharist (e.g. 1 Cor 1:13-17; 10:16-17; 11:23-26; 15:29). This dissertation aims to bring out the richness of this Intertexture for Paul’s understanding of suffering in 1 Corinthians.

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<sup>365</sup> M. W. Bates, “Beyond Hays’s Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul: A Proposed Diachronic Intertextuality with Romans 10: 16 as a Test Case,” in *Paul and Scripture: Extending the Conversation*, ed. C. D. Stanley (Atlanta: SBL, 2012), 263-292.

<sup>366</sup> 1Cor 1:26-31 (and its pre-text Jeremiah 9:23-24) and 1 Cor 15:20-28 are other examples.

<sup>367</sup> Pascuzzi, *First and Second Corinthians*, 87.

## 2.4 The Rhetorolects

In the late 1990s and early 2000s Robbins, became increasingly aware, not just of the different classical or secular modes of rhetoric (e.g. judicial, deliberative and epideictic) in early Christian writings, but also of the Old Testament and/or Christian “modes of rhetoric or discourse”<sup>368</sup> in those writings. Robbins identifies different modes of discourse in early Christian literature.<sup>369</sup> Following a suggestion by the sociolinguist, Benjamin H. Hary, Robbins proposes the term ‘rhetorolect’ for these modes of discourse (‘rhetorolect’ is an elision of ‘rhetorical dialects’) found in New Testament discourse.<sup>370</sup> Robbins defines a rhetorolect as “a form of language variety or discourse identifiable on the basis of a distinctive configuration of themes, topics, reasonings and argumentations.”<sup>371</sup> He identifies six major rhetorolects: Apocalyptic, Miracle, Pre-creation, Priestly, Prophetic and Wisdom. Those forms of discourse grow out of the belief systems and/or contexts in which the chosen people of God develop over the previous millennia, and are best understood and interpreted in that background.

As the Apocalyptic and Priestly Rhetorolects are the most prominent ones in 1 Corinthians, the discussion will continue by outlining what those rhetorolects entail.

### 2.4.1 Apocalyptic

While the Apocalyptic Rhetorolect is evident in the Old Testament in Ezekiel 38–39 (6<sup>th</sup> cent. B.C.E.) and in Zechariah 9–14 (5<sup>th</sup> cent. B.C.E.), it flourished in the Intertestamental period, especially in the Books of Enoch (2<sup>nd</sup> cent. B.C.E.), Jubilees (2<sup>nd</sup> cent. B.C.E.), 2 Baruch (1<sup>st</sup> cent. B.C.E.), 4 Ezra (1<sup>st</sup> cent. C.E.), The Assumption of

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<sup>368</sup> Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 353.

<sup>369</sup> Ibid.

<sup>370</sup> Ibid.

<sup>371</sup> Ibid.

Moses (late 1<sup>st</sup> cent. C.E.), and The Sybilline Oracles (probably 2<sup>nd</sup> cent. C.E.).<sup>372</sup>

Significant themes of the Apocalyptic Rhetorolect include: God is never indifferent to his world or to intervening in it, that he intervenes at critical moments, that evil does not control the lives of God's chosen ones indefinitely, and that martyrdom is not in vain. God's followers must trust him, be devoted to his kingdom and its realisation in the world, that the battle between good and evil is still raging (in the individual and in the outside world), and that the Last Judgement will see all justly rewarded. Lastly, the apocalypticists believe in the resurrection of the just because God is everlastingly faithful to his promises.<sup>373</sup> "Apocalyptic redemption, therefore, means the presence of all of God's holy beings in a realm where God's holiness and righteousness are completely and eternally present."<sup>374</sup> In relation to Paul, 1 Cor 15:20-28 is a highly charged apocalyptic passage, predicting and guaranteeing that Christ – at the head of God's army – will eventually crush all principalities and powers and inaugurate an eternity of peace. The Apocalyptic Rhetorolect and its themes will be an important part of the analysis of Paul's theology of suffering in 1 Corinthians.

#### 2.4.2 Priestly

The Priestly Rhetorolect, inherited from the Old Testament, pictures Israel principally as a religious community, and only secondarily as a political power. Israel is understood as "a priestly community whose focus on Jerusalem and the temple must be geared towards true worship and a careful observance of all the proper rites and ceremonies that give reverence and honour to the God who is holy."<sup>375</sup> As a result, it is understandable that a principal focus was on God's presence in the midst of his people

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<sup>372</sup> Boadt, *Reading the Old Testament* (New York: Paulist, 1984), 511-515.

<sup>373</sup> *Ibid.*, 515.

<sup>374</sup> Robbins, *Early Christian Belief Systems/Rhetorolects*, 2008, 1, accessed on [religion.emory.edu/faculty/robbins/belief\\_systems/rhetorolects](http://religion.emory.edu/faculty/robbins/belief_systems/rhetorolects), 2008.

<sup>375</sup> Boadt, *Reading the Old Testament*, 401.

in the temple, as it had been on the Ark of the Covenant and the tent-shrine in earlier times. God's loyalty to his people, in spite of their repeated disloyalties, is always to be relied upon. The stories of Creation and of the Exodus carry the assurance that God was, is, and will be, in control of all.<sup>376</sup> However, the loyalty of God's people to their God is not always guaranteed. "Reasoning in priestly belief presupposes that ritual actions benefit God in a manner that activates divine benefits for humans on earth."<sup>377</sup> In other words, God intervenes in creation by offering it benefits (e.g. redemption), and humans relate in ways that recognise God's initiative (worship). In 1 Corinthians the Priestly Rhetorolect emerges in 1 Cor 8:1–11:1 and 11:2–14:40, passages in which God and humanity communicate ritually. It also emerges in 1 Cor 10:1-13 where Paul exhorts the Corinthians to 'flee from idolatry and immorality' and to learn from their ancestors in the desert. It will also form a significant role in the analysis of Paul's theology of suffering in 1 Corinthians.

#### 2.4.3 Analysing the Rhetorolects in 1 Corinthians

Understanding the mode of discourse (i.e. which rhetorolect the author is writing in) is very helpful in interpreting a given passage. Just as a poem is interpreted differently to a paragraph of prose, an apocalyptic statement may need to be interpreted differently to a priestly statement. Speaking of the rhetorolects in general, it should be noted that the New Testament writers may work in the area of one rhetorolect or may blend more than one rhetorolect in the same pericope, unit, or letter. Robbins' ground-breaking work on Mark, though it has the prophetic rhetorolect as the basic one, also

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<sup>376</sup> Nicholas T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (London: SPCK, 1992), 209-212; Boadt, *Reading the Old Testament*, 398-403.

<sup>377</sup> Robbins, *Early Christian Belief Systems/Rhetorolects*, 2008, 1, accessed on religion.emory.edu/faculty/robbins/belief systems/rhetorolects, 2008.

has interwoven all the other rhetorolects within it.<sup>378</sup> Identifying and then untangling the rhetorolects is necessary in order to offer a comprehensive interpretation of the text.

In this present investigation, the Apocalyptic and Priestly Rhetorolects are considered. This is not to say that the other four rhetorolects are not present in 1 Corinthians (they are); it is rather to say that the Apocalyptic and Priestly rhetorolects are the most important rhetorolects in this study of our topic.

As well as the six major rhetorolects mentioned above, it is possible, indeed probable, that there are other rhetorolects embedded in Paul's text and as yet unnoticed or undefined by commentators. One wonders, specifically, whether Paul's theology of suffering fulfils the above-mentioned requirements for categorisation as a rhetorolect? In his treatment of suffering, Paul and other New Testament writers resort to a recurring cluster of 'themes, topics, reasonings and argumentations.' For example, (1) Christian suffering as apostolic or evangelical, endured in imitation of Christ's own suffering, and actually thought to be Christ's suffering, (2) in suffering the Christian becomes an example to others. (3) It is the power of Christ and the Spirit that enables the Christian to endure suffering, and (4) there is joy because doing God's work is an inevitable consequence or reward of suffering. The above clustering is evident in 1 Corinthians, and also in Acts 5:17-41; 14:22; 2 Timothy 3:10-12; Colossians 1:24; and Philippians 3:7-11. The possibility of understanding Paul's theology of suffering in 1 Corinthians as a specific rhetorolect will be investigated in a fuller way in the exegetical chapters and in the conclusion of this dissertation.

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<sup>378</sup>J. H. Bernard Combrink, "The Intertexture of Apocalyptic Discourse in the Gospel of Mark," in *The Intertexture of Apocalyptic Discourse in the New Testament* ed. D. F. Watson (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2002): 113f.

## 2.5 Benefits of a Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation

The majority of commentators agree that Paul is familiar with first century rhetoric and that he draws upon it consciously in writing his letters.<sup>379</sup> Consequently, it is justified to use a rhetorical methodology to analyse 1 Corinthians. A rhetorical analytic provides excellent tools and techniques for investigating the literary nuances of a first-century written work, including how the author composed the text and the various influences on its composition.<sup>380</sup>

One may do even greater justice to Paul and understand his theologising better by expanding the insights of the rhetorical analytic to include those of a socio-rhetorical framework. Robert C. Tannehill points out that ancient texts can be read with understanding “only if the reader has access to the ‘extratext’ – a complex body of knowledge consisting, inter alia, of language codes, literary conventions, social codes and conventions, and cultural ‘scripts.’”<sup>381</sup> This suggests the benefit of extending the method to include a social (or ‘socio’) dimension. Using a multi-textured methodology in this dissertation may facilitate a richer interpretation of 1 Corinthians.<sup>382</sup>

Socio-rhetorical criticism offers the exegete the opportunity of approaching the chosen text from a number of additional angles or perspectives (more than a single-method approach, such as rhetorical criticism, would) and, even, of observing how these different approaches interact with one another. A socio-rhetorical investigation aids the

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<sup>379</sup> For example, see Witherington, *Conflict in Corinth*, 39, Pascuzzi, *First and Second Corinthians*, 9-10, Collins, *First Corinthians*, 17f., Horsley, *1 Corinthians*, 22f., Dunn, *1 Corinthians*, 23 and 169.

<sup>380</sup> For example, his literary divisions *introductio/exordium*, *narratio*, *propositio*, *probatio*, *refutatio*, and *peroratio*, or how he used *ethos*, *pathos* and *logos* to win the reader to his viewpoint.

<sup>381</sup> Robert C. Tannehill, “Cornelius and Tabitha Encounter Luke’s Jesus,” *Int* 48 (1994): 347-356; quoted in Ernest van Eck, “Socio-rhetorical Interpretation Theoretical Points of Departure,” *HTS* 57 (2001): 594. This is a view with which Darr also agrees. Ancient texts were socially and culturally conditioned, and, in Darr’s view, “a methodology such as social scientific criticism of the first-century Mediterranean society could help readers to understand this ‘extratext’” in John A. Darr, *On Character Building* (Louisville KY: Westminster John Knox, 1992), 21-22.

<sup>382</sup> For example, as well as investigating 1 Cor 11:23-26 from a literary perspective, considering it also from the viewpoint of a first-century Jew (with an understanding of Old Testament sacrificial texts) enriches one’s understanding immeasurably.

exegete to appreciate the social milieu of both the writer and the reader; it helps to fill out the social and cultural background in which the first-century writer and reader lived, wrote and read. Therefore, as the analytic accepts, even more, seeks out insights from several different methods of investigation, it is far more likely to enable a more rounded and detailed overview of the text. Duane Watson says that it may even be possible for the interpreter, on occasions, to

glimpse the dynamics that created the text through analysis of the type of rhetoric, arguments, and strategies selected, especially as these are informed by other studies of the social, cultural, and ideological milieu of the first-century Mediterranean world.<sup>383</sup>

Combining both the sociological and the rhetorical methodologies into a single, multi-textured approach helps the interpreter reach a deeper (or, in Robbins' vocabulary, 'thicker') understanding of the text and its likely impact on the reader.<sup>384</sup> Using a socio-rhetorical analytic offers the opportunity of reaching a better understanding and interpretation of the inter-relation of literary, theological and sociological aspects and dimensions of composition.<sup>385</sup> It helps the interpreter to see the writer's perception of how people lived, their values, and their understanding of religious and secular matters. One's interpretation may, therefore, be more insightful, understanding and richer.<sup>386</sup> By situating the text in its original milieu, anachronistic interpretations are more likely to be avoided. Robbins pursues the point further and argues that

each method has its own strengths, but when interpreters use only one of them the result is too limited. When an interpreter uses them (the different textures)

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<sup>383</sup> Duane Watson, *Miracle Discourse in the New Testament* (Atlanta: SBL, 2012), 169. Also, 1 Corinthians 4:9-13 is a good example of Watson's argument in that it creates an interaction of innertextual technique (e.g. the build up of cumulative disadvantage) and a social and cultural event (e.g. the triumphal procession) to assist Paul's main argument (that the Christian minister is, in the eyes of the world, a cumulatively disadvantaged non-entity – but that it not God's, or Paul's, conclusion).

<sup>384</sup> van Eck, *Socio-rhetorical Interpretation: Theoretical Points of Departure*, 606, mentions that both Petersen and Elliott "argue that a combination of a literary and socio-rhetorical/social scientific approach, methodologically speaking, is needed to read (biblical) texts in terms of the communication between author and reader in the specific context of the text produced."

<sup>385</sup> *Ibid.*, 600.

<sup>386</sup> *Ibid.*, 602.

interactively a rich and responsible approach is available for dealing with belief, action and life in the world today.<sup>387</sup>

John H. Elliott argues that all ideas, concepts and knowledge are essentially socially determined.<sup>388</sup> Tannehill agrees and points out that as texts are socio-historically and socio-culturally conditioned it follows that a socio-rhetorical methodology of the first-century Mediterranean society could help readers to understand this ‘extratext.’<sup>389</sup> What is needed, consequently, is a methodology that assists in investigating

the interrelationship of ideas and communal behaviour, belief systems and cultural systems and ideologies as a whole, and the relationship of such cultural systems to a natural and social environment, economic organisation, social structures and political power.<sup>390</sup>

The extended socio-rhetorical analytic being proposed for this dissertation seems to meet the required needs.

## 2.6 Criticisms of a Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation

There are some criticisms levelled at the socio-rhetorical methodology as an approach for interpreting the biblical text. Clare Rotschild, in an essay on historical criticism, cautions that “our information about the early Christians is still too limited to make effective use of sociological models.”<sup>391</sup> Admittedly, one might reply, the present knowledge of early Christian times is limited and, therefore, it is unwise to make categorical declarations about the social settings that gave rise to the New Testament. Still, one can make suggestions on the basis of present knowledge while committing oneself to further increasing that knowledge. Additional knowledge (e.g. if provided by

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<sup>387</sup> Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 2.

<sup>388</sup> Elliott, *A Home for the Homeless*, 4.

<sup>389</sup> Tannehill, “Cornelius and Tabitha Encounter Luke’s Jesus,” 347-356, quoted in Ernest van Eck, *Socio-rhetorical Interpretation: Theoretical Points of Departure*, 594

<sup>390</sup> Darr, *On Character Building*, 21-22.

<sup>391</sup> Clare K. Rotschild, “Historical Criticism,” in *Methods in Biblical Interpretation – Methods for Luke*. Edited by Joel Green (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010): 9-41, 25.



archaeological, documentary, or other discoveries) in the future will verify these suppositions – or not.

Other commentators, such as Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza,<sup>392</sup> criticise the originators of socio-rhetorical methodology for not giving fuller recognition to some other ‘textures’ (for example, feminist or liberationist textures). Robbins recognises this *lacuna* by calling (in 1992) for a fuller recognition of “feminist, ethnic, geographical, racial, economic, and social arenas of disputation, dialogue and commentary.”<sup>393</sup> He adds these to his list of ‘textures,’ naming Innertexture, Social and Cultural Texture, Ideological Texture, Intertexture, and Sacred Texture, as ‘central’ and the others (e.g. feminist, liberationist) as ‘additional.’<sup>394</sup>

Some commentators point out that there is a difficulty in attempting to identify Paul’s Intertexture References; in other words, how can one be assured that what one may think was an earlier and influencing scriptural text was actually in Paul’s mind at the time of writing the later text? Hays suggests seven ‘validity tests’: (1) *Availability*: Is the proposed source of the reverberation/echo available to Paul? (2) *Volume*: The volume of an echo is determined primarily by the degree of explicit repetition of words or syntactical patterns, (3) *Recurrence*: This refers to the frequency with which Paul quotes or alludes to a particular scriptural book or passage, (4) *Thematic Coherence*: This feature asks the question whether the specific meaning of the original text is similar across a number of references in the later text. In this way, it moves beyond locating allusions or echoes on to the problem of how to interpret them, (5) *Historical Plausibility*: Does Paul, as a first century Jew, mean to say what the reader thinks he is saying? Were the ideas current at that time? (6) *History of Interpretation*: Do other

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<sup>392</sup> Schussler Fiorenza, “Challenging the Rhetorical Half-Turn” 29.

<sup>393</sup> Robbins, “The Rhetorical Full-Turn in Biblical Interpretation: Reconfiguring Rhetorical Biblical Analysis,” 48-59.

<sup>394</sup> *Ibid.*

readers recognise the same references? The readings of our predecessors can check our perception of scriptural references in a Pauline text, and (7) *Satisfaction*: Does the proposed reading make literary sense, does it clarify, illustrate, or explain the surrounding text? In other words, does it present a satisfying account of the effect of the intertexture relation?<sup>395</sup>

A cautionary note needs to be stressed regarding the above-mentioned ‘validity tests,’ and a possible eighth ‘validity test’ – *Identical Meaning* – may need to be considered. Namely, if a particular word or phrase has a particular meaning in an author’s later text, it is no guarantee that the same word has the same meaning in an earlier work of that same author: other corroborating evidence is required.<sup>396</sup> If Paul uses a particular theme, allusion or concept in one of his later Letters (e.g. Romans), it does not mean that we can presume that he meant exactly the same if he used it in an earlier Letter (e.g. Paul’s use of the word ‘slave’ hasn’t quite the same connotations when used ‘a slave of Christ’ and/or ‘a slave of an employer’). As Paul continues to read, pray and theologise as he ages, he may well be deepening his understanding of different aspects of his faith.

## **2.7 A Way Forward: A Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation of Paul’s Theology of**

### **Christian**

#### **Suffering in 1 Corinthians**

This chapter has outlined the socio-rhetorical interpretative approach as developed by Robbins (and others). While it is considered to be the most appropriate and effective approach to use in this study, some extending additions are needed to

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<sup>395</sup> For a fuller discussion of Hays ‘validity tests,’ see Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, 30-31.

<sup>396</sup> For example, Paul uses the ‘Triumphal Procession’ image in 1 Cor 4 and in 2 Cor 4. It is conceivable that his understanding of the Triumphal Procession might have developed or changed in the time between writing 1 Cor and 2 Cor.

strengthen the chosen approach, specifically regarding the Inner Texture and Intertexture. Moreover, as the First Letter to the Corinthians is a predominantly deliberative rhetorical work (and not a forensic or demonstrative rhetorical work), the chosen analytic needs to be extended to recognise this and to include an understanding of that genre and its various elements (for example, the epistolary features and the *homonoia* or unity-seeking strategies). While the Intertexture nature of 1 Corinthians has long been recognised, the variety of sources and forms used by many interpreters, in the view of this study, is often too narrow for the task selected. This necessitates the inclusion of further sources (for instance, pre-Pauline Christian traditions and more forms of Intertexture, as in Exegetical Intertexture). Also, Paul is aware of and used a number of early Christian rhetorolects which require attention in this dissertation (particularly, the Apocalyptic and the Priestly). The resulting interpretative analytic, outlined in the above discussion, is a unique creation designed specifically for this project. It is applied in subsequent chapters to facilitate an investigation of Paul's theology of suffering as portrayed in 1 Corinthians.

**CHAPTER 3**  
**THE REALITY, CAUSES AND PURPOSES OF PAUL’S SUFFERING**  
**(1 Cor 4:9–13)**

1 Corinthians presents the Corinthian church as disunited and, in some respects, in disarray, disagreeing about a number of quite important matters. In particular, there is division about the place of suffering in Paul’s life and ministry. In an effort to bring about greater unity, the overall purpose of 1 Corinthians, Paul structures his argument on ministry and suffering very carefully (1 Cor 3:5—4:21). His aim is to help the Corinthian church members to understand the theological reasoning underpinning his beliefs and actions.

In this pericope, Paul uses a number of Inner Texture sub-textures: Irony in 1 Cor 4:9, Progression (or cumulative listing) in 1 Cor 4:10-12, Comparison and Contrast in 1 Cor 4:9-13. All these sub-textures are interwoven in a well-crafted Argumentative presentation. In his view, greater unity would not be achieved without suffering. With this in mind, the present chapter investigates the reality, causes and purposes of Paul’s suffering. It also asks the further question: is there any mention in 1 Cor 4:9-13 of Paul’s willingness to suffer for others?

This chapter begins by contextualising 1 Cor 4:9-13 and offering a brief overview of the text. It then investigates that text using the chosen texture and rhetorolect framework. The chapter concludes by providing a theological synthesis of the reality, causes and purposes of Paul’s suffering. Overall, it shows that Paul’s suffering is very real (i.e., biographical) and that it is an inevitable consequence of his preaching and embodiment of a counter-cultural gospel. Crucially, it draws attention to significant, evidence suggesting that Paul understands his suffering to be on others’ behalf, even salvific, thereby giving his suffering an additional and positive purpose.

### 3.1 Contextualising 1 Cor 4:9-13

While 1 Cor 4:9-13 is the central pericope in this Chapter of the dissertation, it needs to be carefully set in its literary and theological contexts, namely, as part of the first argument in 1 Corinthians (1 Cor 1:10—4:21). In that first argument (1 Cor 1:10—4:21), Paul recognises that the Corinthians are disagreeing with one another on several issues: inter-group rivalries, beliefs that the *eschaton* has already arrived, differing arguments about the paradox of the Cross, and, most relevantly, misunderstandings about Paul's ministry (1 Cor 3:5—4:21) and the place of suffering in his life (1 Cor 4:9-13). These disagreements are causing division and disunity within the Corinthian church community.<sup>397</sup> It is important to note that Paul, in his reply, does not address these issues on a disciplinary level, but from a theological perspective, with a particular emphasis on the nature of the gospel (1 Cor 1:10—3:4) and the nature of ministry (1 Cor 3:5—4:21).

For Paul, the gospel is God's Wisdom revealed in Jesus Christ (1 Cor 1:30). Paul preaches 'Christ crucified' (1 Cor 1:23; 2:2), who redeems creation through God's wisdom and power (1 Cor 1:25; 2:6). This gospel is being gifted to humanity in faith (1 Cor 2:8) through Christ, the revelation of God's wisdom (1 Cor 1:18-31; 2:6-16). Paul is attempting to persuade the Corinthians to reject the false wisdom of the worldly wise and to accept and be united around the revelation of God's wisdom (1 Cor 1:30), the mind of Christ (1 Cor 2:16), and the Spirit of God (1 Cor 2:12).

As regards the nature of ministry, which is particularly important for the purposes of the current chapter of the dissertation, Paul addresses this matter in 1 Cor 3:5—4:21. For him, the nature of ministry is loving, selfless, self-sacrificing, and faithful service, even to death. Personal cults around Apollos, Paul, Cephas and/or

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<sup>397</sup> Pascuzzi, *First and Second Corinthians*, 11-13.

Christ (1 Cor 1:12-16) are apparently developing among the Corinthians. In response, Paul states quite categorically that all ministers are equal, as all are God's fellow-workers (1 Cor 3:9). More importantly, the minister/servant may indeed sow the seed or water the plant, but God alone "causes the growth" (stated in 1 Cor 3:6 and repeated in 1 Cor 3:7). All ministers are building on the same foundation, that is, Christ (1 Cor 3:11). All ministers are held accountable on 'the Day' (of Judgement) and, depending on the quality of each one's work (1 Cor 3:13), each would be rewarded (1 Cor 3:14). Paul is also adamant that the 'wisdom' of this world is deceptive and leads nowhere; the only real wisdom is God's wisdom (1 Cor 3:18-23). The really 'wise' response for the Corinthians would be "to live in faithful obedience to God and to answer to God, not Paul or Apollos or Cephas, but God who holds all together and judges all according to the wisdom made manifest in the cross."<sup>398</sup>

### 3.2 Text of 1 Cor 4:9-13

Paul's first extended list of suffering in 1 Corinthians occurs in 1 Cor 4:9-13:

<sup>9</sup> For as I see it, God has exhibited us apostles as the last of all, as though sentenced to death, because we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels and mortals. <sup>10</sup> We are fools for the sake of Christ, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You are held in honour, but we in disrepute. <sup>11</sup> To the present hour we are hungry and thirsty, we are poorly clothed and beaten and homeless, <sup>12</sup> and we grow weary from the work of our own hands. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure, <sup>13</sup> when slandered, we respond kindly. We have become like the rubbish of the world, the dregs of all things, to this very day.<sup>399</sup>

In the verse immediately prior to 1 Cor 4:9-13 (1 Cor 4:8) Paul is concerned that some Corinthian Christians think that the *eschaton* has already come and that, as promised in Daniel 7, they are now "already satisfied; ... already grown rich; ... [and]

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<sup>398</sup> Pascuzzi, *First and Second Corinthians*, 31.

<sup>399</sup> All New Testament quotations are taken from the NRSV translation, unless otherwise stated.

have become kings!” (1 Cor 4:8). Paul wishes that this were so, but knows that the *eschaton* has not yet come. He retorts that he and his followers are, as itinerant preachers, often hungry, thirsty, poorly clad, roughly treated and homeless (1 Cor 4:11). Furthermore, in the eyes of the worldly wise, they are thought to be ‘foolish, weak and disreputable’ (1 Cor 4:10). Finally, using the image of the Triumphal Procession, he asserts that they, “as apostles,” are treated as the conquered enemy (“a spectacle to the world”), and already ‘sentenced to death’ (1 Cor 4:9). In other words, not only are they, as Christians, not advantaged (as some church members seem to think; see, for example, 1 Cor 4:8), they are in reality cumulatively disadvantaged and are treated as unimportant, even disposable, like the world’s rubbish (1 Cor 4:13). However, in Paul’s understanding, God views the ministers very differently (1 Cor 4:9): this is suggested by Paul in his ironic use of *δοκω* in 4:9 to indicate that all is not as it might seem. In the previous Chapter of 1 Corinthians he indicates the advantaged position of the ministers in their commissioning as God’s ‘fellow-workers’ (1 Cor 3:9), and in Chapter 4 he calls them ‘stewards of the mysteries of God’ (1 Cor 4:1). He suggests that they should recognise their cumulatively advantaged position and live accordingly.

The current investigation, rather than providing a verse-by-verse interpretation of 1 Cor 4:9-13, proceeds by analysing 1 Cor 4:9-13 using the five-textured approach first developed by Vernon K. Robbins.

### **3.3 Textured Exegesis of 1 Cor 4:9-13**

The main part of this Chapter applies a socio-rhetorical methodology to 1 Cor 4:9-13. This methodology combines both sociological and rhetorical approaches. It is chosen because it facilitates the interpretation of 1 Corinthians as a rhetorical document and helps recognise that 1 Corinthians is written by a historically and culturally

grounded individual, for a similarly grounded audience. Robbins' socio-rhetorical methodology (as has been detailed in the previous chapter) is a supra-methodology as it includes literary criticism, social-scientific criticism, rhetorical criticism, post-modern criticism and theological criticism.<sup>400</sup> It carries within its ambit the strengths of each of those criticisms and also encourages those criticisms to interact with one another to support or challenge the insights of each texture. The five central textures to be employed in the exegesis of 1 Cor 4:9-13 are Inner Texture, Social and Cultural Texture, Ideological Texture, Intertexture, and Sacred Texture.

### 3.3.1 Inner Texture

Inner Texture refers to the literary skills Paul uses in presenting his argument. It investigates the various ways in which a text uses language to communicate, such as how it builds an argument, sets out to persuade, or to evoke feelings.<sup>401</sup> The Inner Texture may be further sub-divided into six 'sub-textures:' (1) repetition, (2) progression (including *gradatio*), (3) narrational patterns, (4) opening-middle-closing, (5) argumentative, and (6) sensory-aesthetic.<sup>402</sup> For example, (1) repetition: Paul's listing of suffering after suffering emphasises the extensive, intensive and pervasive nature of suffering in his apostolic life (1 Cor 4:11-13). Each suffering mentioned is like yet another blow falling on Paul, building the image of cumulative disadvantage. (5) Paul structures his argument in his customary chiasmic pattern: 1 Cor 4:10 is the A element; 1 Cor 4:11-12a is the B element; and 1 Cor 4:12b-13a is the A<sup>1</sup> element. He

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<sup>400</sup> Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 1-2.

<sup>401</sup> See Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation: Dictionary of Socio-Rhetorical Terms, [www.religion.emory.edu/faculty/robbins/SRI/defns/s\\_defns.cfm](http://www.religion.emory.edu/faculty/robbins/SRI/defns/s_defns.cfm), accessed on 27-10-2016.

<sup>402</sup> Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 7.



also uses irony as an ingredient in his argumentative strategy, giving his readers his judgement and moving the argument forward.<sup>403</sup>

An Inner Texture analysis of 1 Cor 4:9-13 assists in understanding the reasoning or argumentative pattern (5 above) which underpins Paul's theology of suffering. In this particular task, an Inner Texture analysis of how he builds his argument using a tribulation list to persuade his audience is especially important. The provision of a list of tribulations was a normal literary technique in Hellenistic literature before, during, and after Paul's time; it is also recognised by Robbins' taxonomy. It exhibits a keen understanding of the progression sub-texture on his part. The repetition (1 above) of suffering, albeit using different words (1 Cor 4:12-13 - "ridiculed... persecuted... slandered"), builds the image of a cumulatively disadvantaged minister. There are examples of such lists in the writings of many of his near contemporaries.<sup>404</sup> More importantly, such lists are also to be found in Jewish apocalypses, including in the writings of Josephus, in the Mishnah and in many of the Intertestamental books (e.g., Jubilees, The Sibylline Oracles, and the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs).<sup>405</sup> These lists of tribulations show how the 'wise man' manages to cope with adversity, especially adversity that is beyond his control. In the view of some commentators, their literary function is usually "paraenetic rather than biographical."<sup>406</sup>

In Paul's undisputed Letters there are a number of examples of tribulation lists (see 1 Cor 4:9-13; 2 Cor 4:8-9; 6:4b-5, 8-10; 11:23-29).<sup>407</sup> Collins offers various reasons why these Pauline lists are, in his opinion, purely a literary device rather than a

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<sup>403</sup> Ida Lucia Machido, "Irony as a Communicative and Argumentative Strategy," in *Bakhtiniana* 9 (2014): 118-137.

<sup>404</sup> For example, see the work of Horace (65 B.C.E.—8 B.C.E.), Seneca (4 B.C.E.—65 C.E.), Musonius Rufus (25 C.E.—95 C.E.), Plutarch (46 C.E.—120 C.E.), Epictetus (50 C.E.—135 C.E.), and some Greek biographers and historians (particularly in the Stoic-Cynic-Sophist traditions).

<sup>405</sup> Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 365 and 183.

<sup>406</sup> See for example, Collins, *First Corinthians*, 183.

<sup>407</sup> Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 365 – 368.

biographical account.<sup>408</sup> Concentrating on 1 Cor 4:9-13, he argues that many words in that list appear only in that list, that is, they are *hapax legomena* in Paul's letters (e.g. 'being thirsty/διψῶμεν,' 'being naked/γυμνιτεύομεν,' 'being homeless/ἄστατοῦμεν'). These types of hardship are not supported with evidence in the other extant Pauline Letters.

Collins also notes that the wise men of Paul's day "used hardship lists to demonstrate their inner tranquillity in the face of adversity."<sup>409</sup> They accept suffering as coming from God and as a sign of God at work in creation. Paul also uses these lists "to portray human weakness, despite which the gospel of God is able to achieve its effect."<sup>410</sup> Collins concludes that the tribulation list for Paul is merely a literary device influenced heavily by Sophist-Hellenistic literature.

On the other hand, one could argue very strongly that Paul's tribulation lists are far more than mere literary devices. Every time Paul mentions suffering it is in a very real setting. For example, in 1 Cor 5:1-8 Paul discusses real situations of individual and communal sin. He pleads with the church members to expel the incestuous man immediately so that they may celebrate the Passover worthily: he clearly considers that their inaction would make them unworthy to celebrate the Passover. Furthermore, his hope is that the incestuous man would "be saved on the day of the Lord" (1 Cor 5:5).

In an example of Inner Texture argumentative sub-texture (5 above) Paul structures his demonstration in a chiasmic pattern, (A-B-A<sup>1</sup>). In 1 Cor 4: 9 Paul introduces the imagery of the Triumphal Procession, portraying himself as the slave captured by God and being "sentenced to death," or led to death. In 1 Cor 4:10 he compares and contrasts his position with that of the Corinthian 'wise' church members,

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<sup>408</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 183.

<sup>409</sup> *Ibid.*, 183-184.

<sup>410</sup> *Ibid.*, 184.

thus highlighting the rhetorical power of his list.<sup>411</sup> 1 Cor 4:11-12a is his portrayal of a life of suffering, one of cumulative disadvantage. His mention of ‘sentenced to death’ signifies a continuing experience of suffering for Paul. In 1 Cor 4:9-13; 9:19-27; 1 Cor 15:31 he states that he is daily being led to suffer and that it is through his daily experience of death (that is, suffering) that the glory and power of God are being revealed. In his own words, it is through his suffering that “he wins over/saves others,” a claim he repeats five times in four verses in 1 Cor 9:19-23. It is unlikely that Paul would make such statements about a matter as serious as the Corinthians’ salvation if he did not believe that his suffering really brought about their salvation: this interpretation is proposed by the majority of commentators.<sup>412</sup>

Continuing his use of the argumentative sub-texture (5 above) in 1 Cor 4:15 Paul states that he is their “father in Jesus Christ,” that is, he has *birthed* (γὰρ Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ διὰ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου ἐγὼ ὑμᾶς ἐγέννησα) them in the faith of Jesus Christ: he already used this reasoning and phraseology in Gal 4:19 (“My children, for whom I am again in labour until Christ is formed in you”). In the very next verse in 1 Cor 4:16 he appeals to his followers to be “imitators of me.” In other words, he is asking them to be self-sacrificing in birthing others in the faith of Christ. Later, in 1 Cor 10:33 he appeals to his followers to selflessly sacrifice themselves in bringing the faith to others (“that they may be saved”) and, again, he calls on his followers to imitate his example so that he and they can imitate Christ’s example of bearing suffering in selfless, self-sacrificing love for others (1 Cor 4:16; 11:1) *in the knowledge that their suffering is salvific*. These requests occur in passages where Paul is discussing suffering and/or his voluntary sacrificing of his rights for others’ salvation (1 Cor 4:6-17; 7:12-16; 9:19-27; 10:23-

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<sup>411</sup> For an extended treatment of this list in 1 Cor 4: 9-13, see Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 365-368.

<sup>412</sup> For example, Hafemann, *Suffering and Ministry in the Spirit*, 53; Nils Alstrup Dahl, *Paul and the Church at Corinth According to 1 Corinthians 1:10—4:21* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 320-321.

33).<sup>413</sup> As Brueggemann states, this “humiliated one [has become] the exalted one by the intention of Yahweh”; this exaltation is “the inscrutable resolve of Yahweh to *do something new . . . through suffering*.”<sup>414</sup> The ‘gospel’ of the Old Testament attests that God works in the world through suffering. This is “the power of God at work through human weakness to bring to fruition God’s intention for the world.”<sup>415</sup> Paul sees the salvation of others as his and creation’s primary goal. In 1 Cor 11:27-32 Paul warns the Corinthians that their unworthy behaviour at the Lord’s Supper is causing illness, infirmity and death. In these and other examples in 1 Corinthians Paul is speaking of real people, real sins, real consequences, real suffering, and real resolutions. Lastly, Paul’s list of suffering would not have been persuasive to his reader/hearer if not recognisable as real.

Moreover, throughout 1 Corinthians, Paul focuses attention on the suffering of Christ as central to his redemptive work (1 Cor 2:1-5) and on the need of his followers to accept their suffering as assisting their own conformation to Christ (1 Cor 15:45-49). For Paul, his own suffering is as real as Christ’s. Therefore, as the vast majority of commentators maintain, Paul considers his hardship as central to his theologising, and to be real or historically true.<sup>416</sup> Thus, Paul concludes his argumentative pattern asking the Corinthian church members to imitate his selfless, suffering service of others (1 Cor 4:16).

In 1 Cor 4:9-13 Paul uses other forms of Inner Texture progression subtexture (2 above), such as cumulative layering, in presenting his argument that the Christian ministers are cumulatively disadvantaged in the eyes of the ‘worldly wise.’ The

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<sup>413</sup> It is to be noted also, that Paul uses Psalms 2, 8, 110 as sub-structural storylines in 1 Corinthians.

<sup>414</sup> Brueggemann, *Isaiah 40 - 66*, 143 – 144.

<sup>415</sup> *Ibid.*, 144.

<sup>416</sup> Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 365-68, names many commentators who have made a specialised study of Paul’s tribulation lists (Schrage, Hodgson, Kleinknecht, Plank, Fitzgerald, Ferrari, and others) and accept the historical and biographical nature of Paul’s suffering.

minister is ‘last/least of all,’ ‘sentenced to death,’ ‘foolish,’ ‘weak,’ ‘held in disrepute,’ ‘hungry,’ ‘thirsty,’ ‘poorly clad,’ ‘roughly treated,’ ‘homeless,’ ‘toiling,’ ‘ridiculed,’ ‘persecuted,’ ‘slandered,’ ‘the world’s rubbish’ and ‘the scum of all’ (1 Cor 4:9-13). Each affliction, layered on top of the previous ones, adds to the image of the Christian minister as cumulatively disadvantaged. However, Paul’s underlying argument is that, in God’s eyes, Christian ministers are actually cumulatively advantaged.

Another aspect of Paul’s argumentative sub-texture (5 above) is his use of irony. Through its use he is saying that appearances can be deceptive and he conveys this particularly through his use of the ironic  $\delta\omicron\kappa\omega$  in 1 Cor 4:9. The BDAG Lexicon states that  $\delta\omicron\kappa\omega$  is “used parenthetically,” that it is a word that “explains or qualifies” (Cambridge English Dictionary).<sup>417</sup> Most commentators stress that Paul’s use of  $\delta\omicron\kappa\omega$  is “ironic,” “bitterly ironic,” or “made with biting irony.”<sup>418</sup> One notes here the use of the Irony Sub-Texture. For example, Thiselton asserts that  $\delta\omicron\kappa\omega$  has “its frequent sense here of **it seems to me** when the speaker wishes to express what an appearance may seem to suggest as against some deeper, underlying reality or truth.”<sup>419</sup> It is as if he was saying to the worldly wise of Corinth, while they may well feel that God’s kingdom has already come in its completeness, reality assures Paul that this is not so; rather, they are still labouring in the ‘between’ time. Paul’s sarcastic irony and his use of comparison and contrast indicate that things are not as they might seem to be to the Corinthian ‘wise’ men.<sup>420</sup>

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<sup>417</sup> Frederick W. Danker, Walter Bauer, William F. Arndt, and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), (BDAG), 254 1e.

<sup>418</sup> See Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 359; Kugelman, “The First Letter to the Corinthians,” in Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer and Roland E. Murphy, *JBC*, (London: Chapman, 1968): 254-274, 260; Pascuzzi, *First and Second Corinthians*, 34; Collins, *First Corinthians*, 188, C. S. C. Williams, “First Corinthians,” in Black and Rowley, *Peake’s Commentary on the Bible*, 956; Wright, *Paul for Everyone: 1 Corinthians*, 50.

<sup>419</sup> Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 359.

<sup>420</sup> Ibid.

Paul then proceeds in 1 Cor 4:10-11 to compare and contrast his position with that of his Corinthian adversaries: comparison-contrast is another aspect of his argumentative sub-texture. He is foolish, weak and disreputable while they are wise, strong and honourable. It would *seem* that they were the more favoured: for Paul, the reality is different. Furthermore, 1 Cor 4:11-13 gives a perceptive insight into Paul's life – often hungry, thirsty, poorly clad, homeless, roughly treated, ridiculed, persecuted, and slandered. These circumstances identify him very closely with the weak and poor in Corinth. Paul now reaches the climax of his 'argument,' namely, although battered and bruised by God-imposed suffering "for Christ's sake" (1 Cor 4:10), he remains faithful to the gospel (1 Cor 4:12-13) and he expects the Corinthians to do likewise. Not only is this the climax of the first argument (1 Cor 1:10—4:21) but it also encapsulates the thrust of the entire Letter: this is how he saves others (1 Cor 9:19-27). This pericope displays many features of Paul's argumentative pattern sub-texture as he attempts to explain his understanding to the church members in an effort at reconciling them with the general church body.

In summary, this Inner Texture argumentative analysis of 1 Cor 4:9-13 emphasises that the suffering of Paul's 'tribulation list' in 1 Cor 4:9-13 is indeed real or biographical. The repetitive nature of the suffering accentuates Paul's disadvantaged position in the eyes of the 'wise,' which is further emphasised by the comparison and contrast expressed in 1 Cor 4:10. The bitter irony functions as an additional vehicle of his argumentative strategy (1 Cor 4:9). It stresses that he and his followers are cumulatively advantaged by being chosen by God as his ministers and are to joyfully accept their suffering, following Christ's example. The entire argument highlights that Paul sees suffering as an inevitable consequence of preaching and embodying a counter-

cultural gospel. The implicit message is that, in experiencing and overcoming this suffering, they save others (1 Cor 4:13).

Importantly, 1 Cor 4:9-13 is the first of Paul's 'tribulation lists' and it establishes clearly that he associates his suffering with the exercise of his preaching and embodying of Christ's gospel. In fact, he re-defines 'suffering' as 'any initiative that progresses the kingdom of God.'

### 3.3.2 Social and Cultural Texture

The Social and Cultural Texture investigates texts as a mirror or product of a society or culture, and may frequently betray aspects of the writer's social and cultural situation by the different ways it views the world.<sup>421</sup> It investigates "the type of social and cultural world the language evokes or creates."<sup>422</sup> The Social and Cultural Texture sub-textures include the following: (1) specific social topics (those topics that reveal the writer's/reader's responses to the world, (2) common social and cultural topics (these reveal the writer's or reader's status, rights), and (3) final cultural categories (these identify the writer's or reader's orientation to the existing culture). Each sub-texture is further sub-sectioned as follows: The specific social topics sub-texture (1 above) includes the following sub-sections: the conversionist ("if people can be changed then the world will be changed"), the reformist (actively supporting those institutions that

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<sup>421</sup> For a fuller discussion see Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 71 – 94.

<sup>422</sup> Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 71. The Social and Cultural Texture sub-textures include the following: (a) specific social topics (those topics that reveal the writer's/reader's responses to the world, (b) common social and cultural topics (these reveal the writer's or reader's status, rights), and (c) final cultural categories (these identify the writer's or reader's orientation to the existing culture). Each sub-texture is further sub-sectioned as follows: The specific social topics sub-texture includes the following sub-sections: the conversionist ("if people can be changed then the world will be changed"), the reformist (actively supporting those institutions that "can serve good, rather than oppressive ends"), and the utopian (advocates and "inaugurates a new social system free from evil and corruption to run the world") understandings and strategies: these are sub-sections of the specific social topics. The common social and cultural topics sub-texture contains some sub-sections with significantly relevant importance for this dissertation, e.g. the honour, guilt and rights culture, and the challenge-response subsections. The final cultural categories sub-texture encompasses such sub-sections as dominant culture, subculture, counterculture, and contraculture

“can serve good, rather than oppressive ends”), and the utopian (advocates and “inaugurates a new social system free from evil and corruption to run the world”)<sup>1</sup> understandings and strategies: these are sub-sections of the specific social topics. The common social and cultural topics sub-texture (2 above) contains some sub-sections with significantly relevant importance for this dissertation, e.g. the honour, guilt and rights culture, and the challenge-response subsections. The final cultural categories sub-texture (3 above) encompasses such sub-sections as dominant culture, subculture, counterculture, and contraculture. These sub-sections are all apparent in 1 Cor 4:9-13.

1 Cor 4:9-13 recalls the custom that epitomises Rome before and during Paul’s time – the Triumphal Procession, an excellent example of the final cultural category (dominant culture sub-texture).<sup>423</sup> H. S. Versnel summarises the significance of the Triumphal Procession as follows: “the entire history of Rome has thus been marked by a ceremony [the Triumphal Procession] which testified to the power of Rome, its mission of conquest and domination, and to the courage of its soldiers.”<sup>424</sup> After a significant victory in war the Roman general is often accorded a Triumphal Procession through the city of Rome or other cities. In this procession the beaten army is also paraded in chains on its way to the amphitheatre to be mocked, spat upon, and ridiculed by onlookers. Josephus, in his account of the defeat at Jerusalem (70 C.E.), gives an interesting insight into the fate of one such defeated army: after countless soldiers were killed in the battle itself, the victorious general “selected the tallest and most handsome of the youth and reserved them for the Triumph [in Rome].”<sup>425</sup> These soldiers, exhibiting the strength of those conquered, would be brought to Rome, paraded in the Triumphal Procession, and then forced to fight ‘to the death’ against the gladiators in

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<sup>423</sup> There is also mention of the Triumphal Procession in 2 Corinthians 2:14-16 and there may be mention of the Triumphal Procession in Colossians 2:15.

<sup>424</sup> Henk S. Versnel, *Triumphus: An Inquiry into the Origin, Development and Meaning of the Roman Triumph* (Leiden: Brill, 1970), 1.

<sup>425</sup> Josephus, *Wars*, 417, quoted in Hafemann, *Suffering and Ministry in the Spirit*, 28.



the amphitheatre. This custom was an “*a fortiori* argument for the military strength of the victor: the greater the stature of those conquered, the greater still the stature of the conqueror.”<sup>426</sup> As Beard states: “for the most powerful, newsworthy, or dangerous of the captives, the procession might culminate in execution rather than feasting,” “their only escape, death.”<sup>427</sup>

Paul’s use of the Triumphal Procession imagery in 1 Cor 4:9-13 heightens the ignominious and inimical position of the Christian minister in the eyes of the Greco-Roman ‘worldly wise:’ an honour sub-texture of the common social topics categorisation. The Christian minister is presented as “the last of all,” “sentenced to death,” “a spectacle to the world, to angels and human beings alike,” “fools,” “weak,” and “held in disrepute” (1 Cor 4:9-10). In short, they are characterised in terms of the defeated enemy. Needless to say, when expressed in (2) common and social terms, they have no honour or social standing in society. To say that Paul and his followers are seen by the wise of their day as cumulatively disadvantaged would be an understatement. However, under this surface understanding of 1 Cor 4:9-13, through his use of irony, Paul is communicating a deeper reality. Paul believes firmly that the gods of Rome are false gods or non-entities (1 Cor 8:4; 10: 7-9, 19, 20), whereas his God is the one True God (1 Cor 8:6). His God created the world and humanity, has been rejected by his people but is once again reconciling humanity to himself, this time in a final and victorious manner (1 Cor 15: 20-28). This conquest is being brought to fulfilment by the courage, loyalty and suffering of Paul and his followers. Thus, Paul turns the metaphor of the Triumphal Procession upside down with his use of the ironic

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<sup>426</sup> Hafemann, *Suffering and Ministry in the Spirit*, 31. Hafemann continues by pointing out, “And, ... this illustration often, *even normally* culminated, as did the procession as a whole, with the execution of these prisoners (or a representative selection of them);” Ibid.

<sup>427</sup> Mary Beard, *The Roman Triumph*, (Cambridge USA/London UK: Harvard University Press), 2007, 14, 110, 114, 118.

δοκῶ in 1 Cor 4:9. In Paul's reality, the suffering of the Christian minister testifies to the power of God, the courage of his people, and the strength of those suffering. The Christian minister is cumulatively advantaged due to being chosen by God, gifted with salvation, commissioned to save others, and, through Christ's redemption, is already victorious (detailed in 1 Cor 15, especially verses 20-28, 45-49, 58). In terms of the (3) final cultural categories, the counterculture will defeat the dominant culture.

Hafemann's conclusion is very much in line with this summation.<sup>428</sup> In Hafemann's view the suffering of Christ, his death and resurrection are an exposition of the wisdom of God, God's plan for the salvation of creation. That salvation is now available to all. Called to preach and imitate Christ, Paul's life is one of suffering acceptance of his own vocation and of the suffering it brings. Following in a long line of suffering innocents, Paul is personifying Christ's gospel of salvation. Paul was convinced that "he presented men with Christ crucified both in the gospel he preached and in his own life."<sup>429</sup> In Hafemann's paraphrasing of Kleinknecht's words, "Paul's suffering in 1 Cor 1—4 is therefore both a confirmation (1 Cor 2:1-5) and a display (1 Cor 4:9) of the meaning of the cross," God's wisdom.<sup>430</sup>

In summary, this Social and Cultural Texture analysis draws attention to the Triumphal Procession as an expression of the Greco-Roman culture. In that worldview the Triumphal Procession testifies to the "power of Rome and its mission of conquest and domination."<sup>431</sup> Through his use of irony (1 Cor 4:9) he up-ends the Greco-Roman (false) view. This analysis of the Social and Cultural sub-textures also exposes Paul's countercultural orientation (a sub-section of the final cultural category) and the orientation he wishes his followers to adopt. In his conversionist-reformist-utopian

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<sup>428</sup> For a more detailed presentation of Hafemann's view, please see this dissertation's Chapter 1, section 1.3.2.

<sup>429</sup> Hafemann, *Suffering and Ministry in the Spirit*, 59.

<sup>430</sup> Ibid.

<sup>431</sup> Versnel, 'Triumphus,' 1, quoted in Hafemann, *Suffering and Ministry in the Spirit*, 28.

approach (sub-sections of the specific social topics sub-texture), he strikingly details the countercultural nature of his belief. He believes that his courageous suffering is destroying the ungodly ‘powers and dominations,’ and is thereby reconciling creation with its Creator, through the power of the One, True God. And, he invites all to adopt God’s wisdom and to act accordingly. God’s plan is the only plan that will bring success (1 Cor 4:9-13, 15:58).

### 3.3.3 Ideological Texture

The Ideological Texture is concerned with the personal opinions, prejudices and preferences of the writer and/or the reader situated in a particular setting, especially as these relate to their views of the world, society and humanity.<sup>432</sup> This texture also has a particular interest in whether and, if so, how these views may be shared with groups, and how they might be expressed and/or interpreted.<sup>433</sup> The four sub-textures of ideological texture are (1) the individual locations of writers and readers (i.e. their individual presuppositions, dispositions, and values). For example, Paul is convinced that his view of the world is the only true view because it is revealed by the One, True God. (2) The relation to groups (to which they belong and which influence writer and/or reader). Paul belongs to a Christian group that perceives its vision as authentic and the Greco-Roman vision as false. (3) The modes of intellectual discourse (that is, the particular perspective a reader subscribes to, which sets boundaries around

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<sup>432</sup> van Eck, “Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation: Theoretical Points of Departure,” 598. Van Eck’s definition is as follows: “Ideology is an integrated system of beliefs, assumptions and values (in terms of the symbolic universe), a network of themes and ideas (in terms of text), representing an interpretation of the social reality (the macrosocial world of the text), intended to have meaning within a particular context (the microsocial world of the text). Ideology/ideological perspective thus has a pragmatic intention: its intended effect is either the legitimation or the radical restructuring of the contextual world of its intended addressees. As such the narrative text is not only seen as both the product and the vehicle of ongoing social interaction, but it is also studied in terms of its communication, that is its intended social effect.” David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution 1770-1823* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975), 14 defines ideology as “an integrated system of beliefs, assumptions and values” that reflects “the needs and interests of a group or class at a particular time in history.”

<sup>433</sup> Elliott, *A Home for the Homeless*, 268.

readings), and (4) the spheres of ideology (which concern the ideology inscribed in the text and how one may analyze it).<sup>434</sup> In 1 Cor 4:9-13 two ideologies are referenced and contrasted: the ideology of the Greco-Roman world as expressed in the Triumphal Procession and Paul's Christian ideology expressed as an unwanted, alien, even treasonous countercultural opponent. This investigation will examine both the (1) individual location and the (2) relation-to-groups sub-textures.

The Triumphal Procession, described above from a social and cultural perspective, also expresses a particular religious ideology: that religious ideology is the focus of this chapter. Since the time of Caesar Augustus' reign as Emperor (27 B.C.E.—14 C.E.) the Roman world enjoyed a prolonged period of peace, often referred to as *Pax Romana*. This, they believed, was achieved with the approval and power of the gods.<sup>435</sup> In fact, Rome "legitimised its rule and the entire hierarchical social system by claiming that the gods were on the Emperor's side."<sup>436</sup> This ideology was exemplified through the Triumphal Procession, which climaxed in a religious ceremony offering sacrifices of thanks to the pagan Roman gods of war for yet another Roman victory and the establishment of a period of peace across the world. There was a sense in which the victorious general was elevated temporarily to the "rank of the gods," and that Jupiter himself, "incarnated in the *triumphator*, made a solemn entry into Rome."<sup>437</sup> In other words, the Triumphal Procession honoured the greatness of the victorious general and the god 'who gave the victory.'

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<sup>434</sup> Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 96f.

<sup>435</sup> Wu, *Suffering in Romans*, 76.

<sup>436</sup> *Ibid.*, 77.

<sup>437</sup> Hafemann, *Suffering and Ministry in the Spirit*, 21. Italics in the original. The full text is as follows: "Primarily, however, the triumph characterised the greatness of Rome as being due, on the one hand, to the excellence of the victorious general, and, on the other hand, to the favour of the supreme god, who, *optimus maximus*, ensured the continuance and the prosperity of the Roman empire. *In no other Roman ceremony do god and man approach each other as closely as they do in the triumph.* Not only is the Triumphal Procession directed towards the Capitolium, where the triumphator presents a solemn offering to Jupiter O.M., but the triumphator himself has the status which appears to raise him to the rank of the gods..... It seems as if Jupiter himself, incarnated in the triumphator, makes his solemn entry into Rome."

Like the victorious Roman army, the 'wise' Corinthian church members 'know' that they are victorious; they are 'satisfied,' 'grown rich,' and 'have become kings' (1 Cor 4:8), as prophesied in Dan 7, while Paul and his followers are hungry, thirsty, poorly clothed, roughly treated, and homeless (1 Cor 4:11). In the eyes of his adversaries he is the least of all and deserving of death in the amphitheatre along with the other enemy soldiers (1 Cor 4:9). Against this ideological background, Paul advocates a totally different religious ideology, a Christian God (1 Cor 8:6 - The One, True God), whose victory over all enemies and evil is guaranteed (1 Cor 15:20-28, 58), for a redeemed people who live accordingly. Preaching and living a countercultural religious ideology makes him an enemy of the dominant religious ideology. Skillfully Paul turns the tables on his opponents. He is listening to a different wisdom, God's wisdom, which tells him that he is living as one should (in selfless, service of others) and that he is cumulatively advantaged and guaranteed success (1 Cor 4:9; 15:58).

In this 'alien-to-Rome' religion, the Christian minister, preaching a countercultural religious ideology, expects that many 'Romanised' listeners would find the Christian ideology unwelcome, unacceptable, even treasonous. 1 Corinthians is not the first Pauline Letter to mention opposition to the Christian ideology as involving suffering for his followers. Paul's First Letter to the Thessalonians (written 5-10 years before 1 Corinthians) refers to such opposition, for example, 1 Thessalonians 1:6 ("and you became imitators of us and of the Lord, receiving the word in great affliction") and 1 Thessalonians 3:3-7 ("so that no one be disturbed in these afflictions. For you yourselves know that we are destined for this") give some indication of the opposition he and his fellow "apostles" experience in Thessalonica, which forces them to leave the

area.<sup>438</sup> According to Luke's account in the Acts of the Apostles, Paul later meets with considerable opposition from Jews in the synagogue in Corinth that forces him to stop preaching in the synagogue and to move his centre of preaching to the home of Titus Justus (Acts 18:5-8).<sup>439</sup> Most likely Paul had come to expect hardship, oppression, suffering, even death (like Christ) in his faithfulness to God. That was certainly his experience (1 Cor 4:9-13; 15:31), and the experience of Christ who was crucified in his faithfulness to the will of God (1 Cor 5:7).

In short, using the Triumphal Procession imagery, Paul shows that his Christian ideology is opposed to the prevailing Greco-Roman pagan ideology (as exemplified in the sacrifices to the gods of war at the climax of the Triumphal Procession of 1 Cor 4:9f). The Greco-Roman world accepted a plethora of gods whereas Paul accepts the One, True God (1 Cor 8:6). He is 'commissioned' by God to live a life of daily death, that is, a life of selfless, sacrificial, suffering service of others. Paul, using the texture sub-sections known as 'individual location' and 'relation to groups' outlines exactly where he stands and where he appeals to his followers to also stand, namely, to imitate his example of selfless, sacrificial, suffering service to others (1 Cor 4:16).

### 3.3.4 Intertexture

Intertexture is the process of embedding elements (phrases, storylines, contexts, themes, even ideologies) of an earlier written text within a later one in order to carry over some of the meanings, emotions, or realities of the former text. This includes other written texts, cultures, social roles, institutions, codes, relationships and historical

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<sup>438</sup> Smiles, *First Thessalonians, Philipians, Second Thessalonians, Colossians, Ephesians*, 5-7, writes that Paul and the other 'apostles' probably had to leave because of local opposition.

<sup>439</sup> Pascuzzi, *First and Second Corinthians*, 7. The opposition Paul experienced in the synagogue of Corinth was because of differing ideologies within Judaism, namely, the Messiahship of Christ. See also Luke Timothy Johnson, *Acts of the Apostles*, 323.

events or places.<sup>440</sup> The sub-textures of Intertexture are (1) oral-scribal Intertexture, (2) cultural Intertexture, (3) social Intertexture, and (4) historical Intertexture. There is considerable overlap among the different Intertexture sub-textures. It must be readily appreciated that many of the oral-scribal intertexture references, may, over the centuries, have also entered the ‘insider’ or cultural intertexture arena (such as, the Atonement Day ceremonies), and many may have found expression in the ordinary, everyday behaviour social intertexture of the local society (for example, fasting and/or other dietary practices). Robbins accepts that this ‘overlapping’ happens. He suggests, for example, that “social (which includes political and economic) and cultural phenomena are integral to historical events. ‘Interpreting’ a historical event requires knowledge of social, cultural, and ideological phenomena operative in it.” The same phenomenon, for example, Atonement Day or The Last Supper may be being analysed from different perspectives. Accepting this caution the investigation proceeds.

There are a number of Intertexture references and influences underpinning elements of 1 Cor 4:6-13: (1) the ‘royal’ power of 1 Cor 4:8 alludes to the ‘royal’ power of Daniel 7:18, 21 and 27; the mention of scapegoat or ransom in 1 Cor 4:13 refers to similar themes in Proverbs 21:18, Tobit 5:19, Leviticus 16; and there are numerous allusions to Isaiah, especially Isa 52:13—53:12. It is also important to discuss Paul’s use of familial language. These will be investigated for their relevance to Paul’s argument in 1 Cor 4:9-13.<sup>441</sup>

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<sup>440</sup> Bakhtin maintains that “any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another.” For a fuller discussion, see Mikhail Bakhtin, *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays* and *The Dialogic Imagination*, ed. M. Holmquist, translated by C. Emerson and M. Holmquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 37.

<sup>441</sup> There may also be allusions to some pseudepigraphal books in 1 Cor 4:9-13, especially to Bel and the Dragon 31 (“sentenced/doomed to death”) and to 4 Maccabees 17:14 (“The tyrant was the opponent and the world and the human race were the spectators”). ἐπιθανατίους (‘sentenced/doomed to death’) in 1 Cor 4:9 is the only time that word is used in the New Testament: it is also used in the LXX version of Bel and the Dragon 31 where it is given the same meaning, namely, that ‘condemnation to death’ signifies that it is a *public or cosmic spectacle*. This interpretation is supported in 1 Cor 4:9 (“For as I see it, God has exhibited us apostles as the last of all, like people sentenced to death, since we have become a

The first oral-scribal Intertexture reference concerns 1 Cor 4:6-8 and Daniel 7:18, 21, 27. In 1 Cor 4:6-8 there is mention of some Corinthians who claim that the end-time had come and that they had already been crowned ‘kings,’ ‘saints,’ or ‘holy ones.’<sup>442</sup> Most commentators accept that this is a reference to Daniel’s vision (see Dan 7:18, 21, and 27), where the “power and greatness of all the kingdoms on earth will be given to the people of the Supreme God.”<sup>443</sup> “Their royal power will never end and all rulers on earth will serve and obey them” (Dan 7:27). According to Daniel’s vision the people of God would, individually, be given this royal power at the end-time and not just the king. This helps to explain why the Corinthians mentioned in 1 Cor 4:8 are behaving as if the age to come had already arrived, as if the saints had already taken over the kingdom (Dan 7:18); for them there was no ‘not yet’ to qualify the ‘already’ of realised eschatology.<sup>444</sup> Paul replies by saying that the end-time has not yet come, that the battle between good and evil is still raging, and that suffering is still a reality of life for him and his followers. This same vision is also recalled by Paul in 1 Cor 6:1-13 where he states that the chosen people of God will judge angels and humans (judgement was considered to be a prerogative of ‘kings’). For Paul, 1 Cor 4:8 is “a clear signal of over-realised eschatology” on the part of some Corinthians.<sup>445</sup> He holds that, while

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spectacle to the world, to angels and human beings alike”) alludes to 4 Macc 17:14 (“the world and the human race were the spectators”). “Schrage relates the ‘death’ here to sharing with Christ as the crucified one, and the public spectacle as underlining its cosmic significances before the world and angels:” this may indeed be Paul’s understanding. The common words and themes (‘doomed to die,’ ‘spectacle,’ ‘in the eyes of the world, of angels and of humanity’) add validity to the references. Here, Paul is referring again to the Triumphal Procession, or rather, to its grand finale in the amphitheatre where the defeated army’s prisoners (symbolised by Paul and other Christians) are forced to face the gladiators in a battle to the death to provide spectacular entertainment for the Corinthian crowd. Paul is saying that the struggle of the apostles against the gladiators is, in the view of the Romans, doomed to failure. However, that is not how God or Paul sees it, as indicated by Paul’s use of *dokw* in 1 Cor 4:9. If this reference is valid then Paul would seem to be saying that God’s view and that of the Greco-Roman society are diametrically opposed to each other and he is pleading with the Corinthians to accept his (Christian) view.

<sup>442</sup> The plural of ‘kings’ is favoured in NAB; ‘saints’ in KJV, NAS, NIB, and NIV; and ‘holy ones’ is favoured in NJB and NRSV translations: but, all use the plural noun.

<sup>443</sup> Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 358; Barrett, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 109; Deluz, *Companion to 1 Corinthians*, 46-47.

<sup>444</sup> Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 358.

<sup>445</sup> *Ibid.*



Christ has been raised from the dead (1 Cor 15:3-5), and righteousness, redemption and sanctification are available to all (1 Cor 1:30), and must be preached and embodied by all, the end-time has not yet come in its fullness.

The second Intertexture reference, a cultural Intertexture reference, concerns 1 Cor 4:13 and its probable allusions to Prov 21:18, Tobit 5:19. 1 Cor 4:13bc reads: ὡς περικαθάρματα τοῦ κόσμου ἐγενήθημεν, πάντων περίψημα ἕως ἄρτι. The words περικαθάρματα τοῦ κόσμου and πάντων περίψημα are frequently translated as “the scum or rubbish of the world” and “everyone’s scrapings”. Both phrases are taken to mean “what is removed as a result of scouring around a utensil” or “the unwanted dirt.”<sup>446</sup> With these phrases, Paul states that apostles are seen by the dominant Greco-Roman culture as the ‘lowest of the low,’ the ‘leftovers,’ and the ‘last’ in the sense of ‘least’ of all people (see also 1 Cor 15:19).<sup>447</sup> Many commentators, such as BAGD, Barrett, Collins and Lietzmann, note that this is the only use of the word περικαθάρμα in the New Testament. The word does occur in Prov 21:18 where its meaning is ‘ransom.’<sup>448</sup> This Intertexture reference raises a question of the utmost significance for this investigation, namely, whether there is any evidence in 1 Corinthians for considering that Paul believed his suffering to be on behalf of others; in other words, whether he is a ransom for others. The term ‘vicarious’ refers to that which “takes or supplies the place of another thing or person,” namely, becomes a substitute or atoner for another.<sup>449</sup> In Christian terms, “this is generally interpreted in terms of Christ suffering in the place of sinners.”<sup>450</sup> Kugelman draws attention to another important point in this regard: “since

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<sup>446</sup> Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 364.

<sup>447</sup> Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 180; Hans Conzelmann, *A Commentary of the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1988), 90.

<sup>448</sup> Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 364. This meaning is preferred by BAGD, Barrett, Lietzmann, Collins and others as mentioned in Thiselton.

<sup>449</sup> *Oxford English Dictionary*, John Simpson, ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

<sup>450</sup> Morna D. Hooker, “Did the Use of Isaiah 53 to Interpret His Mission Begin with Jesus?” in *Jesus and the Suffering Servant* ed. William Bellinger and William Farmer (Eugene OR: Trinity Press, 1998), 96.

the removal of the ‘offscourings’ is a purification, the word (περικάθαρμα) can refer to an expiatory offering or a ransom.”<sup>451</sup> This is the sense in which it is used in Prov 21:18. Nestle-Aland and other commentators also draw attention to this allusion.<sup>452</sup>

<p><b><u>Proverbs 21:18</u></b></p> <p>περικάθαρμα δὲ δικαίου ἄνομος</p>	<p><b><u>Proverbs 21:18</u></b></p> <p>The wicked is a ransom for the righteous, and the faithless for the upright.</p>
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1 Cor 4:13 may, then, be more appropriately translated as ‘the scapegoats of the world’ rather than the ‘scum of the world.’ The word περίψημα in the same phrase also means ‘scapegoat,’ “one who is sacrificed as an atonement for others, a scapegoat, and, since worthless fellows were reserved for this fate, φαρμακός became a general name of reproach.”<sup>453</sup> This is also its meaning in Tobit 5:19.<sup>454</sup>

<p><b><u>Tobit 5:19</u></b></p> <p>ἀργύριον τῷ ἀργυρίῳ μὴ φθάσαι ἀλλὰ περίψημα τοῦ παιδίου ἡμῶν γένοιτο</p>	<p><b><u>Tobit 5:19</u></b></p> <p>Do not heap money upon money, but let it be a ransom for our child.</p>
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Kugelman states that the φαρμακός was a person with a disability who was often sacrificed in order to free a city from an infection or plague. The φαρμακός was

<sup>451</sup> Kugelman, “The First Letter to the Corinthians,” 260.

<sup>452</sup> Nestle, Eberhard & Erwin Aland, B. & K. Karavidopoulos, J, Martini, C. M. Metzger, B. M. (eds.), *Novum Testamentum Graece* 28<sup>th</sup> Revised Edition (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012), 524.

<sup>453</sup> Liddel-Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993), 43817 φαρμακός . N.T. II. *one who is sacrificed as an atonement for others, a scapegoat*, and, since worthless fellows were reserved for this fate, φαρμακός became a general name of reproach.

<sup>454</sup> Nestle-Aland and other commentators mention the allusion.

deemed to have taken upon himself the city's malady or infection, in other words, to have become a scapegoat.<sup>455</sup>

In attempting to validate the alleged meaning that Paul intends the reader to understand 1 Cor 4:13 as atoning, one may make an argument by drawing upon Richard Hays' criteria as outlined in his *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*.<sup>456</sup> (i) Both Proverbs and Tobit were available to Paul (in the sense that both had been written before his time). (ii) Both words, *περικάθαρμα* and *περίψημα*, are otherwise *hapax legomena* in Paul and in the New Testament. They are encountered in the Old Testament once in Prov 21:18 and once in Tobit 5:19.<sup>457</sup> In both cases the word is used with a meaning of 'ransom,' 'scapegoating,' or 'atoning.' (iii) Paul refers to both books on a number of occasions during 1 Corinthians.<sup>458</sup> (iv) The themes cohere. (v) Paul could certainly have intended the expiatory or atonement meaning as he explicitly

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<sup>455</sup> Kugelmann, "The First Letter to the Corinthians," 260. Williams, "1 and 2 Corinthians," 956 agrees with Kugelmann and both locate Paul's *φαρμακός* in Greek tradition. A far stronger case may be made that the 'scapegoat' concept and ceremony are taken by Paul, who was highly skilled in the Jewish Scriptures of his day, from the Book of Leviticus (particularly chapter 16). Paul quotes, alludes to or echoes Leviticus on possibly 42+ occasions in 1 Corinthians, which suggests his familiarity with the book. One who is familiar with Leviticus cannot but be familiar with the annual Atonement Day ceremonies of chapter 16, which are "the climax of the first part of Leviticus" (Boadt, *Reading the Old Testament*, 189). Erhard Gerstenberger explains that as the centre of the Atonement Day's ceremonies was the annual expiation of the sins of the people which were ceremonially placed upon the head of a goat and he was then dispatched into the desert to die as 'a scapegoat.' (Gerstenberger, *Leviticus*, 222). It is important to note that, as Ed Sanders verifies, the ceremonies of the Day of Atonement in Paul's time were as recorded in Leviticus 16. The ceremonies concluded with the reading of Leviticus 16 (which detailed the Day's sin-offerings), Leviticus 23:26-32 (which decreed the Day's fasting), and Numbers 29:7-11 (which outlined the Day's sacrifices), and the recital of various prayers (Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief*, 141-145). Consequently, one would think it most probably that Paul had Leviticus in mind while writing 1 Cor 4:13.

<sup>456</sup> Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, 29-32. Hays' seven validation criteria for testing claims about the presence and meaning of scriptural allusions in Paul include: (i) *Availability* (was the earlier document historically available to Paul?), (ii) *Volume* (such as the explicit repetition of words, or syntactical patterns), (iii) *Recurrence* (how often does Paul allude to this passage in the letter under investigation?), (iv) *Thematic Coherence* (do the images and ideas of the proposed precursor text illuminate or illustrate Paul's argument?), (v) *Historical Plausibility* (could Paul have intended the alleged meaning effect?), (vi) *History of Interpretation* (have other commentators over the centuries taken the same meaning?), and (vii) *Satisfaction* (does the meaning proposed make sense?).

<sup>457</sup> Bibleworks 7; Nestlé-Aland. This is not mentioned in any of the popular commentaries (e.g. Collins).

<sup>458</sup> Collins (*First Corinthians*, 626, 627) finds Proverbs referred to, alluded to or echoed almost 20 times and Tobit at least twice throughout 1 Corinthians. Thiselton (*First Corinthians*, 1399, 1401) mentions 25 references to Leviticus in 1 Corinthians and 3 references to Tobit.

mentions it in Gal 6:17; 1 Cor 15:31; 2 Cor 4:10-11; 5:21; Rom 8:3; Phil 2:17.<sup>459</sup> (vi) Other commentators have claimed these meanings also (Witherington regarding Gal 6:17; Kugelman regarding 1 Cor 15:31; Collins regarding 2 Cor 4:10-11; 5:21; Karris regarding Romans 8:3; and, Smiles regarding Philippians 2:17).<sup>460</sup> (vii) The proposed meaning (atonement) is certainly consistent with Paul's statements elsewhere in 1 Corinthians (see, for example, 1 Cor 5:7; 11:17-34; 15:3). It is, therefore, highly probable that Paul had the identified texts of Proverbs and Tobit in mind while writing 1 Corinthians 4:13.

Furthermore, the above comments must be taken in conjunction with some other 1 Corinthian texts that suggest atonement, such as 1 Cor 5:7; 8:11; 11:24; 15:3, all of which are open to an atoning interpretation. For example, in 1 Cor 5:1-7 Paul is explaining to the church members that "Christ, our paschal lamb, has been sacrificed" (1 Cor 5:7), and, as a result, the Corinthian church members are "righteous, sanctified, redeemed" (1 Cor 1:30) and "called to be holy" (1 Cor 1:2). He wants them to "clear out the old leaven" (the incestuous man) so that they might then celebrate the upcoming Passover "with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (1 Cor 5:8). In 1 Cor 11:17-34 Paul is handing on a tradition he has received "from the Lord" (1 Cor 11:23), namely, the words and actions of institution spoken by the Lord at the Last Supper. Jesus proclaims his forthcoming death to be "given for you" (1 Cor 11:24) and "in the

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<sup>459</sup> Witherington, in his Commentary on Galatians (*Grace in Galatia*, 454), says that "Paul is surely referring to the fact that he is indeed being crucified to the world in the sense that he is suffering for his message of the cross, and it may well be that he is referring literally to his wounds and scars incurred when he was persecuted for his preaching (2 Cor 11:23-27; cf. Rom 8:17; 2 Cor 1:5; 4:8-10; Phil 3:10; Col 1:24). Commenting on 1 Cor 15:32 Pascuzzi (in *First and Second Corinthians*, 87) states of Paul that "he continuously puts his own life in jeopardy and suffers for the sake of the gospel (see, e.g. 2 Cor 4:8-11; 6:3-10; Acts 18:23-40. In commenting on 2 Cor 1:6 Pascuzzi says that "as co-participants in Christ's sufferings, Paul and the community are bound to each other. Although Paul's share in Christ's suffering is 'overflowing' (v.5), he accepts this in view of its positive benefit for other Christians who must also endure suffering" (Pascuzzi, *First and Second Corinthians*, 104).

<sup>460</sup> Witherington, *Grace in Galatia*, 453-454; Kugelman, "The First Letter to the Corinthians," 273-274; Collins, *First Corinthians*; Karris, *Galatians and Romans*, 67-68; Smiles, *First Thessalonians, Philippians, Second Thessalonians, Colossians, Ephesians*, 44.

same way also the cup” (1 Cor 11:25). As Pascuzzi says of these verses: “The community gathers in the present to observe the Lord’s last supper, to recall the past historical event of Jesus’ betrayal and self-sacrificing love symbolised in the bread and cup, and to proclaim this death until his future coming.”<sup>461</sup> That Paul is thinking of vicarious atonement is not surprising as it would mean that his thought here would be similar to what he expresses in Letters written before (Gal 6:17), during (1 Cor 15:31), and after 1 Corinthians (2 Cor 4:10-11; 5:21, Rom 8:3; Phil 2:17).<sup>462</sup>

Kugelman makes the following suggestion: “if these terms [περικαθήματα and περίψημα] have a cultic meaning in this verse, the passage would suggest an association of [Paul’s] apostolic suffering with the suffering of Christ ‘for his body, which is the church.’”<sup>463</sup> Sanders states that “It is well known that Paul inherited the view that Christ died for trespass. The general Christian view was presumably that by his death he achieved atonement for the trespasses of others, so that they would not be reckoned to those who accepted his death as being for them. This is a view which Paul repeats without hesitation.”<sup>464</sup> 1 Corinthians 5:7-8; 8:11; 11:23-26; 15:3 can be read in such a way as to suggest atonement. Sanders then continues to say that there are also references to Christ’s death that “are not primarily that it is expiatory.”<sup>465</sup>

There is, then, a consistent case for interpreting 1 Cor 4:13 as saying that Paul believes that Christ suffered “for you”/“for your sake” (e.g. 1 Cor 11:24), for “our sins” (1 Cor 15:3) and was raised “for our justification” (1 Cor 1:30: see also 1 Cor 5:7; 10:16; 11:23-26). Therefore, it may be argued that Paul understands Christ’s death and

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<sup>461</sup> Pascuzzi, *First and Second Corinthians*, 67.

<sup>462</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 191. Kugelman, “The First Letter to the Corinthians, *NJBC*, 260 also sees vicarious and atoning references in these verses – as do Lietzmann, BAGD, Barrett and Hanson (all mentioned in Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 364.

<sup>463</sup> Kugelman, “The First Letter to the Corinthians,” *NJBC*, 260. “Since the removal of the ‘offscourings’ is a purification, the word ‘perikatharma’ can refer to an expiatory offering or a ransom (Prov 21:18); so perhaps here the ‘scapegoats of the world.’ peri,yhma can also mean ‘scapegoat (Tobit 5:19).”

<sup>464</sup> Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 463.

<sup>465</sup> *Ibid.*, 464.

resurrection to be vicarious and atoning, and that it achieves justification and salvation (1 Cor 1:30). Furthermore, Kugelman also sees this interpretation as consistent with Paul's later writings (e.g. 2 Corinthians 6:4-10; Colossians 1:24-29).<sup>466</sup> Therefore, one can hold with reasonable confidence that Paul understood Jesus' death and resurrection to be vicarious and atoning, and that it achieved justification and salvation. This assertion is further strengthened by the clear echoes of Isaiah, especially Isa 42; 52:13—53:12 in 1 Corinthians.<sup>467</sup>

The third Intertexture reference, a social Intertexture reference, is to Isaiah.<sup>468</sup> Isaiah is the book “most often cited in Paul's correspondence, as it is in 1 Corinthians.”<sup>469</sup> On six separate occasions Paul quotes Isaiah in 1 Corinthians (Isa 24:1 in 1 Cor 10:26; Isa 29:14 in 1 Cor 1:19; Isa 40:13 in 1 Cor 2:16; Isa 28:11-12 in 1 Cor 14:21; Isa 45:14 in 1 Cor 14:25; Isa 22:13 in 1 Cor 15:32). Moreover, some commentators find up to seventy allusions to Isaiah in 1 Corinthians.<sup>470</sup> A careful study of 1 Corinthians provides numerous expressions of the same language, themes and, especially, the same meaning and storyline as Isaiah 53. The language similarities include *παῖς*/servant (Isa 52:13; 1 Cor 4:1), *ἐδούλωσα*/to enslave (Isa 53:11; 1 Cor 9:19),

<sup>466</sup> Kugelman, “The First Letter to the Corinthians,” 260.

<sup>467</sup> Collins (*First Corinthians*, 191); he does see the vicarious and atoning references in these verses – as do many other commentators (e.g. Kugelman, “The First Letter to the Corinthians,” *NJBC*, 260) and Lietzmann, BAGD, Barrett, Hanson (all mentioned by Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 364) Sanders states that “It is well known that Paul inherited the view that Christ died for trespass. The general Christian view was presumably that by his death he achieved atonement for the trespasses of others, so that they would not be reckoned to those who accepted his death as being for them. This is a view which Paul repeats without hesitation” (Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 463). 1 Corinthians 5:7-8; 8:11; 11:23-26; 15:3 can be read in such a way as to suggest atonement. Sanders then continues to say that there are also references to Christ's death that “are not primarily that it is expiatory” (ibid. 464). And ps. 463-466 explain Sanders' view in detail.

<sup>468</sup> Kugelman (*New Jerome Biblical Commentary*), Wright (*The Day the Revolution Began*, also, *Paul: Fresh Perspectives*, and his article in *Jesus and the Suffering Servant*, etc), Farmer, Betz, Sapp and others (*Jesus and the Suffering Servant*), Dunn (*The Theology of Paul the Apostle*), and possibly some others (R. F. Collins, John J. Collins, Thiselton) all identify the Suffering Servant with Jesus (as The Suffering Servant) and Paul (as a suffering servant). Personally, I am particularly struck by Wright's view. Many of these commentators (e.g. Wright, *The Day the Revolution Began*, 122-142) recognise the need to situate Isaiah 53 in the overall context of Isaiah 41-55): Dunn (*The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 207-233).

<sup>469</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 94-95.

<sup>470</sup> Collins finds approximately thirty allusions to Isaiah in 1 Corinthians (*First Corinthians*, 94-95, 622-623), whereas Thiselton (*First Corinthians*, 1399-1400) finds possibly as many as seventy.

κλητὸς/to call (Isa 55:5, 6; 1 Cor 1:2, 9, 24), δεδικαίωμαι/to justify (Isa 53:11; 1 Cor 4:4-5), and παρέδωκα/to hand on (Isa 53:11, 12; 1 Cor 5:5; 11:23; 13:3). The thematic coherences are even more numerous. In 1 Cor 4:9-13 Paul paints a picture of himself as one who was “the last/least of all” (1 Cor 4:9), “sentenced to (a shameful) death” (1 Cor 4:9), “a spectacle to the world” (1 Cor 4:9), “we are held in disrepute” (1 Cor 4:11), “ridiculed” (1 Cor 4:12), “slandered” (1 Cor 4:12), “rejected” (1 Cor 4:13).

Significantly, the phrase ‘last/least of all’ is repeated in 1 Cor 15:8. The underlying concepts of Isaiah 53:3-6 and 1 Cor 4:9-13 are very similar: Isa 53:3-6 reads, “He was despised and rejected by others; a man of suffering/sorrows and acquainted with infirmity... he was despised, and we held him of no account,” while 1 Cor 4:12-13 says “ridiculed .... persecuted ... slandered... We have become like the world’s rubbish, the scum of all, to this very moment.” In short, 1 Corinthians and Isaiah 53 share a language similarity and thematic coherence regarding Isaiah’s and Paul’s suffering.

Moreover, the borrowing of the narrative or storyline of the Suffering Servant (as a prefiguring of Christ) is particularly strong in 1 Corinthians (e.g. 1 Cor 4:1).<sup>471</sup> God is the principal actor, the one who reaches out and calls his Servant (Isa 52:13; 1 Cor 1:2, 9, 24), and God is the one who sanctifies, justifies and redeems (1 Cor 1:30; 3:6-7). Christ is the Suffering Servant as prophesied in Isaiah. By imitating Christ, Paul and the believers are called to be suffering servants. The servants are called to be ‘holy’ (1 Cor 1:2) and commissioned to bring God’s word to the nations/Gentiles (Isa 42:1; 1 Cor 1:1; 9:1-2). God calls them to be a light to the Gentiles (Isa 42:1; 1 Cor 1:1). In bringing that gospel to the nations the servants are also to witness, live, and embody that gospel. The servants are rejected, not valued, and disfigured (Isa 52:14; 53: 1: 1 Cor 2:3; 4:9-13). Though innocent (Isa 53:9; 1 Cor 4:4), they lead lives of humiliation

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<sup>471</sup> These ‘borrowings’ are also strong in 2 Corinthians 4.

and suffering (Isa 53:3-5; 1 Cor 4:9-13; 9:24-27), they are wounded for others' transgressions and crushed for others' iniquities (Isa 53:5; 1 Cor 5:7). They are ridiculed, persecuted, and handed over (Isa 53:5; 1 Cor 4:12-13). "Upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed" (Isa 53:5; 1 Cor 15:3-5). They will complete God's work of salvation "through his own obedient suffering, ultimately through his own humble, shameful, and even sacrificial death" (Isa 53:11; 1 Cor 5:7; 8:11; 11:23-26; 15:3) achieving "atonement and forgiveness."<sup>472</sup> Vindicated, victorious, and raised from the dead (Isa 52; 13; 1 Cor 15: 3-5), they will sit exalted at God's right hand (καὶ ὑψωθήσεται καὶ δοξασθήσεται σφόδρα Isa 52:13; 1 Cor 15:28).

Hooker has studied the similarity in language, thought and meaning between, on the one hand, Isaiah 53:5b ("He was wounded because of our transgressions; and with his bruises we are healed") and Isaiah 53:11 ("the righteous one, my Servant, shall make many righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities"), and, on the other hand, Romans 4:25 ("he was delivered up because of our trespasses; he was raised for our justification"). She argues that Romans 4:25 is the "one clear echo of Isaiah 53 in Paul."<sup>473</sup> The previous few paragraphs indicate that 1 Corinthians (and not Romans) is the first Pauline Letter to assert clearly that the sins of the people are *causative* of the suffering of the Servant, and that the suffering of the Servant is also *causative* of the salvation of the people, which was Hooker's claim for Romans 4:25.<sup>474</sup>

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<sup>472</sup> Wright, *Simply Jesus*, 151 – 2. One could also argue that the Book of Daniel and that of Zechariah highlight the same message (Ibid., 155 – 162).

<sup>473</sup> Hooker, "Did the Use of Isaiah 53 to Interpret His Mission Begin with Jesus?" 101. While accepting Hooker's assertion that Romans 4:25 is a "clear echo of Isaiah 53," one would find reason to disagree with her assertion that Romans 4:25 is the "*one* clear echo of Isaiah 53 in Paul." 1 Corinthians echoes Isaian 53, too.

<sup>474</sup> In Hooker's view, this is the "most natural meaning" of both the Hebrew and LXX texts, "Did the Use of Isaiah 53 to Interpret His Mission Begin with Jesus?" 96: "It is no longer simply that the sins of others have caused the Servant to suffer: now his sufferings lead in turn to their restoration and forgiveness" (98).



It is clear, then, that Paul understands Christ's suffering and death to be vicarious and atoning, and that it achieves justification and salvation. Brueggemann, in commenting on Isaiah 52:13—53:12, says that it is “the inscrutable resolve of Yahweh to do something new. . . . through suffering.”<sup>475</sup> In the view of Brueggemann, as stated earlier, the ‘gospel’ of the Old Testament attests that ‘God worked, and still works, re-creation through suffering.’ This is “the power of God at work through human weakness to bring to fruition God’s intention for the world.”<sup>476</sup> The contention of this dissertation is that this was also Paul’s understanding.

It is important to note Paul’s use of familial and intimate language in 1 Corinthians. He addresses his followers as “beloved” (1 Cor 10:14), “brothers” (1 Cor 3:1), “beloved brothers and sisters” (1 Cor 15:58), and he sends his “love to all of you in Christ Jesus” (1 Cor 16:24). In Gal 4:19 Paul had called his followers “my children, for whom I am again in labour until Christ be formed in you” (1 Gal 4:19) and in 1 Cor 4:15 he states that “I begot you in Christ Jesus.” In other words, remembering the place of the father in Jewish society and his responsibilities, he asserts that he is their “father in Jesus Christ” (1 Cor 4:15), that is, he has birthed them in the faith of Jesus Christ: γὰρ Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ διὰ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου ἐγὼ ὑμᾶς ἐγέννησά. He has brought them to their new life “in Jesus Christ.” Kugelman says that Paul “is their father, having begotten them in Christ.”<sup>477</sup> Importantly, in the very next verse (1 Cor 4:16) he appeals to his followers to be “imitators of me.” In other words, in a passage dealing with suffering (1 Cor 4:1-13) he asks his followers to “imitate me” (1 Cor 4:16), that is, to be self-sacrificing in birthing others in the faith of Christ. Later, in 1 Cor 10:33 he appeals to his followers to selflessly sacrifice themselves in bringing the faith to others (“that they

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<sup>475</sup> Brueggemann, *Isaiah 40 - 66*, 143 – 144.

<sup>476</sup> *Ibid.*, 144.

<sup>477</sup> Kugelman, “The First Letter to the Corinthians,” 260; Murphy-O’Connor, “The First Letter to the Corinthians,” 803.

may be saved”) and, again, he calls on his followers to imitate his example so that he and they can imitate Christ’s example of bearing suffering in selfless, self-sacrificing love for others (1 Cor 4:16; 11:1) in the knowledge that their suffering is salvific. These requests occur in passages where Paul is discussing suffering and/or his voluntary sacrificing of his rights for others’ salvation (1 Cor 4:6-17; 7:12-16; 9:19-27; 10:23-33).<sup>478</sup>

In summary, the Intertexture coherence of both language and themes between 1 Corinthians 4:6-8 and Dan 7:18, 21, 27 is strong. Paul holds that, while Christ has been raised from the dead (1 Cor 15:3-5), and righteousness, salvation and sanctification are available to all (1 Cor 1:30), the end-time has not yet come in its fullness. Therefore, Christ’s followers are not yet ‘satisfied,’ ‘rich,’ or ‘kingly’ (1 Cor 4:6-8), and suffering is still a reality of life for them. Mention of purificatory off-scouring/scapegoat/ransom in 1 Cor 4:13 most probably refers to themes in Prov 21:18, Tobit 5:19. Paul’s use of language, themes and storylines from Proverbs and Tobit, is particularly clear and accepted by commentators, especially his use of the ‘ransom’ image (1 Cor 6:20; 7:23). Thiselton states: “Rather, the price brings the believer into Christ’s own possession as his or her Lord, who then takes over responsibility and care of the purchased one. The Christian belongs to Christ not to himself or to herself”<sup>479</sup> As mentioned already *περικάθαρμα* and *περίψημα* (both words used in 1 Cor 4:13) carry the probable meaning ‘scapegoat’ and suggest that Paul saw himself as a willing atonement sacrifice for others. 1 Cor 4:13 is not the only text suggesting/alluding to ‘atonement’ as it also emerges in 1 Cor 5:7 and 15:3 (it is also explicitly, in the view of many commentators, mentioned in Gal 6:17; 2 Cor 4:10-11; 5:21; Rom 8:3 and Phil 2:17).<sup>480</sup>

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<sup>478</sup> It is to be noted also, that Paul uses Psalms 2, 8, 110 as sub-structural storylines in 1 Corinthians.

<sup>479</sup> Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 561.

<sup>480</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 191 holds that Paul “may be” expressing “a willingness to be an expiatory victim, in which case Paul’s thought would be similar to what he expresses in 1 Cor 15:31; 2 Cor 4:10-11;

The particularly strong range of similarities in language and theme between 1 Corinthians and Isaiah's Suffering Servant Songs,<sup>481</sup> and Paul's use of Isaiah as a structural storyline in 1 Corinthians, are together convincing that Paul saw the sins of the people as *causative* of the suffering of Christ, and the suffering of Christ as *causative* of the salvation of his people.<sup>482</sup> Also, Paul considers himself as an Isaianic suffering servant following in Christ's footsteps. In other words, he sees, through his participatory theology, himself as an embodiment of a suffering servant,<sup>483</sup> and that his suffering (and that of his followers), has salvific power.<sup>484</sup>

The numerous Intertexture references investigated in this analysis are critical in locating, explaining, and adding the 'word of authority' to Paul's Argumentation in this pericope. It is clear throughout 1 Corinthians (1 Cor 5:7-8; 9:19-27; 11:17-34) that Paul understands Christ's suffering and death to be vicarious and atoning, and that it

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Gal 6:17; Phil 2:17." See also Murphy-O'Connor, *NJBC*, 804 ("The image is of the ransoming of a slave, 1 Cor 1:30, or of a prisoner, Gal 5:1").

<sup>481</sup> Numerous commentators see these similarities (W. H. Bellinger, W. R. Farmer, Otto Betz, M. Hooker, R. Watts, J. Ross Wagner – all in *Jesus and the Suffering Servant*) and N. T. Wright, *The Day the Revolution Began*). See also the references in this dissertation, p. 115,

<sup>482</sup> See also Hooker, "Did the Use of Isaiah 53 to Interpret His Mission begin with Jesus?" 98.

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<sup>483</sup> J. Ross Wagner, "The Heralds of Isaiah and the Mission of Paul," in *Jesus and the Suffering Servant: Isaiah 53 and Christian Origins*, ed. William Bellinger and William Farmer, (Harrisburg PA: Trinity Press International, 1998), 193-222, maintains that Paul sees a fundamental correspondence between his own message and the message of Isaiah.

<sup>484</sup> In Hooker's view, this is the "most natural meaning" of both the Hebrew and LXX texts, "Did the Use of Isaiah 53 to Interpret His Mission Begin with Jesus?" 96: "It is no longer simply that the sins of others have caused the Servant to suffer: now his sufferings lead in turn to their restoration and forgiveness" (98). Moreover, Paul calls on the Corinthian church members to imitate him (1 Cor 4:16) as he imitates Christ (1 Cor 11:1). Both of these requests occur in passages where Paul has been discussing his suffering and/or his voluntary sacrificing of his rights for others' salvation (1 Cor 4:6-17; 9:19-27; 10:23-33). Thus, he also seems to be saying that the suffering of his Corinthian followers has atoning power. This suggestion will be investigated and discussed in the next chapter of this dissertation. Also, In 1 Cor 9:22 Paul reaches the climax of a *gradatio* saying that "I have become all things to all, in order to save at least some." The Greek word he uses for 'save' here is the same word he uses on 9 other occasions in 1 Corinthians. On all 9 other occasions he is speaking of 'eternal salvation,' so it is legitimate to assume that he means 'eternal salvation' here also. The grammar/syntax is stating that Paul is the 'saver.' Theologically, he 'saves' through his union with Christ and his consequent belief that his sufferings are now Christ's. He is clear that God alone can save (1 Cor 3:6-7) and that he saves 'in Christ,' through his spiritual union with Christ. Paul believed that his suffering became Christ's and was therefore salvific.

achieves justification and salvation.<sup>485</sup> In 1 Cor 4:9-13 he is appealing to his followers to lead selfless, sacrificial lives of service to others because this saves others: this is the implicit conclusion to his argument.<sup>486</sup>

### 3.3.5 Sacred Texture

Sacred Texture refers to the manner in which a text reveals the writer's insights into the divine and its relationship with humanity.<sup>487</sup> This texture includes sub-textures such as deity, holy persons, spirit beings, divine history, human redemption, human commitment, religious community, and ethics.<sup>488</sup> In this pericope the Sacred Texture references, especially the deity, human redemption and human commitment sub-textures are very much to the fore. These reveal a God-on-a-mission working through his appointed apostles whose missionary work is achieved through suffering: but, it is God's work and, therefore, the reconciliation God seeks will be achieved.

In 1 Cor 4:9-13, the (1) deity sub-texture emerges in Paul's contrasting of the wisdom of the 'worldly wise' with the wisdom of God. Asserting that the wisdom of God is the only true wisdom, Paul turns the 'inflated'/'false' wisdom of 'this world' on its head. Despite all appearances to the contrary, he proclaims that the Greco-Roman Triumphal Procession does not portray the true reality. God's plan envisages a totally different and deeper relationship with humanity.

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<sup>485</sup> See Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 463-466. See also Wright, *The Day the Revolution Began*, 122-142; Betz, *Jesus and the Suffering Servant*, 70-87; Sapp, *Jesus and the Suffering Servant*, 182.

<sup>486</sup> In 1 Cor 9:22 Paul reaches the climax of a *gradatio* saying that "I have become all things to all, in order to save at least some." The Greek word he uses for 'save' here is the same word he uses on 9 other occasions in 1 Corinthians. On all 9 other occasions he is speaking of winning people from the 'evil age' to the 'age to come,' i.e. to eternal salvation,' so it is legitimate to assume that he means 'eternal salvation' here also. The grammar/syntax is stating that Paul is the 'saver.' Theologically, he 'saves' through his union with Christ and his consequent belief that his sufferings are now Christ's. He is clear that God alone can save (1 Cor 3:6-7) and that he saves 'in Christ,' through his spiritual union with Christ. Paul believed that his suffering became Christ's and was therefore salvific.

<sup>487</sup> Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation: Dictionary of Socio-Rhetorical Terms, [www.religion.emory.edu/faculty/robbins/SRI/defs/s\\_defs.cfm](http://www.religion.emory.edu/faculty/robbins/SRI/defs/s_defs.cfm) accessed on 27-10-2016.

<sup>488</sup> For a fuller discussion, see Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 120-131.

Some Corinthian church members thought that Daniel's vision of the *eschaton* had arrived and that they were "already satisfied, already grown rich,..... already become kings" (1 Cor 4:8-10) in fulfilment of Daniel's prophecy (Daniel 10—12). In the eyes of these 'worldly wise,' Paul and his converts are 'foolish,' 'weak,' and 'dishonourable' (1 Cor 4:10), and are held to be alien, even inimical in the Greco-Roman world. In the climactic statement of 1 Cor 4:13 the Christian minister is seen as one sentenced to death at the Triumphal Procession, "the world's rubbish, the scum of all" (1 Cor 4:13). In contrast, Paul's ironic statement in 1 Cor 4:9 affirms that he believes that God turns the 'inflated' wisdom of 'this world' on its head. Paul says of his followers in 1 Cor 1:26-31 that 'not many of you are wise by human standards, not many are powerful, not many are of noble birth.' God chooses the foolish in the eyes of 'this world' to shame the 'wise,' and God chooses the weak of 'this world' to shame the strong, and God chooses the lowly and despised of 'this world,' "those who count for nothing, to reduce to nothing those who are something" (1 Cor 1:26-28). God's wisdom, in Paul's view, "which none of the rulers of 'this world' knew" (1 Cor 2:8; 3:18-23),<sup>489</sup> is the true wisdom that conquers the false wisdom of his opponents.

In his wisdom God calls Paul, Apollos and their followers, and that is the reality that matters. To the Corinthian 'rich'/'wise' Paul and his followers are 'the least of all' (1 Cor 4:13), experiencing hunger, thirst, poor clothing, rough treatment, homelessness, manual labour, ridicule, persecution, slander, with a sentence of death hanging over them (1 Cor 4:9-13). Moreover, in 1 Cor 15:31-32 ("Every day I face death") Paul states that this suffering is an everyday experience of his followers: "the words appear to signify a state which remains continuous and unabated."<sup>490</sup> Nevertheless, Paul believes that in God's eyes his followers are "enriched in every way, with all discourse

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<sup>489</sup> Pascuzzi, *First and Second Corinthians*, 23.

<sup>490</sup> Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 362.

and all knowledge, as the testimony to Christ was confirmed among you, so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor 1:5-7). As God’s ministers they are “stewards of the mysteries of God” (1 Cor 4:1-2).

In brief, Paul understands that, through the Christ-event, God is working towards humanity’s reconciliation (the divine history of salvation sub-texture), the ultimate victory (1 Cor 15:28). Paul, as revealed in the human commitment sub-texture, is commissioned to preach that gospel to the Corinthian church members who must, in their turn, become ministers of reconciliation or unity (1 Cor 1:10). The message of 1 Cor 4:9-13 is that this ministry of reconciliation will mean hardship and suffering for everyone who follows and embodies the crucified Lord. Every struggle against evil is Christ’s battle against evil in miniature: Paul has made this very point earlier in 1 Cor 1:18-25. As Pascuzzi points out:

The gospel Paul preaches is Christ crucified, God’s wisdom and power. God’s cross-revealed wisdom defies human wisdom and divides humanity into two groups: the perishing, who reject this message as foolishness, and those being saved, for whom it is the power of God.<sup>491</sup>

Paul is adamant that this is the wisdom of God and therefore in accordance with humanity’s true nature. They are commissioned to follow Christ’s example of selfless, sacrificial service of others. As followers of Christ, the Corinthian church members are stewards of God’s creation (1 Cor 4:1). It is critically important that they understand their role as reconcilers and re-creators of the world, and that they live it, even though it will bring suffering. Lastly, the Sacred Texture References, especially the deity, human redemption and human commitment sub-textures are very much to the fore in this pericope. These sub-textures are the essential vehicles of Paul’s argument, supported by the numerous references to Isaiah’s language, themes and storylines in 1 Corinthians.

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<sup>491</sup> Pascuzzi, *First and Second Corinthians*, 23.

### 3.4 Rhetorolect Analysis of 1 Cor 4:9-13

Robbins, who formulated his six main rhetorolects subsequent to publishing *The Exploration of the Texture of Texts* (1996), defined a rhetorolect as “a form of language variety or discourse identifiable on the basis of a distinctive configuration of themes, topics, reasonings and argumentations.”<sup>492</sup> He identified six rhetorolects: Apocalyptic, Miracle, Prophetic, Priestly, and Pre-creation. It is important to note that not every biblical text expresses itself in all six rhetorolects. In the pericope under discussion in this chapter (1 Cor 4:9-13), the focus will be on the Priestly and the Apocalyptic Rhetorolects.

The Priestly Rhetorolect is “a dialect of broader Mediterranean discourse involving religious ritual and the benefits that accrue to the practitioner (or beneficiary) of such ritual action.”<sup>493</sup> It is focused primarily on the beneficial exchange between God and humanity, and it reasons that ritual actions benefit God (or the gods) in a manner that activates divine benefits for humans on earth and that people make sacrifices to a God (or gods) in order to obtain or retain favour.<sup>494</sup> The aim is to create people who are willing to sacrifice “because these sacrifices are perceived to benefit God as well as humans.”<sup>495</sup> This ritual discourse has its own language with frequent mention of God, sacrifice, priests, worship, reconciliation between God and humanity: all are sub-themes of the Priestly Rhetorolect and all are evident, implicitly or explicitly in this pericope (1 Cor 4:9-13). In particular, the Priestly Rhetorolect, emerges in the Triumphal Procession’s religious thanksgiving sacrifice (1 Cor 4:9f.) and in the implicit allusion to Paul’s expiatory sacrifice (1 Cor 4:13) and is further supported or strengthened by numerous references to priestly discourse throughout 1 Corinthians

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<sup>492</sup> See [www.religion.emory.edu/faculty/robbins/SRI/defns/a\\_defns.cfm](http://www.religion.emory.edu/faculty/robbins/SRI/defns/a_defns.cfm)

<sup>493</sup> von Thaden, “A Cognitive Turn,” 325.

<sup>494</sup> Vernon K. Robbins, “Conceptual Blending and Early Christian Imagination,” 341. See also [www.religion.emory.edu/faculty/robbins/SRI/defns/a\\_defns.cfm](http://www.religion.emory.edu/faculty/robbins/SRI/defns/a_defns.cfm)

<sup>495</sup> Ibid.

(such as 1 Cor 4:9-13; 5:7-8; 8:11; 11:23-26; 15:3-5).<sup>496</sup> Furthermore, the allusions to Proverbs, Tobit, Leviticus and Isaiah are convincing support for the thesis that Paul, through his suffering ‘in Christ,’ is saving others.

In 1 Cor 4:6-13 Paul uses the image of the Triumphal Procession, a social and cultural institution of the time, which concluded with a ceremony of sacrificial thanksgiving to the Roman gods of war for victory in battle. As mentioned earlier, “the Triumph[al Procession] characterised the greatness of Rome as being due ..... to the favour of the supreme god” (Jupiter), to whom “a solemn offering”<sup>497</sup> of thanksgiving is presented. Livy (c. 60 B.C.E.—c.15 C.E.), writing shortly before Paul’s birth, comments that the Triumphal Procession “was intended to honour the gods as well as the valour of the victor[ious general] ...It seems as if Jupiter himself, incarnated in the *triumphator* makes his solemn entry into Rome.”<sup>498</sup> Through these ceremonial sacrifices of thanksgiving and praise, the general populace recognise the gods, acknowledge their control over the world, gratefully thank them for their successes and humbly beg their favour into the future.

In this pericope (1 Cor 4:9-13), Paul likens himself and his fellow-workers to defeated soldiers, ‘foolish,’ ‘weak,’ and ‘in disrepute’ – in the eyes of the ‘worldly wise’ (1 Cor 4:10) - taken prisoner in battle and marched in chains through Rome in a Triumphal Procession to die in the amphitheatre as a spectacle for the masses (1 Cor 4:9). However, in God’s eyes, and Paul is convinced of this, they have the potential to be wise, strong and honourable if only they put on “the mind of Christ” (1 Cor 2:16). This includes realising that: (i) through Christ’s Cross, God’s kingdom has come but not completely (1 Cor 2:4; 4:20), (ii) they are gifted with the charisms of the Spirit (1 Cor

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<sup>496</sup> I am not suggesting that there is any direct reference to expiatory sacrifice in 1 Cor 4:13. All I’m saying is that some commentators do see allusions to Proverbs and Tobit in this verse.

<sup>497</sup> Hafemann, *Suffering and Ministry in the Spirit*, 21, quoting Versnel, “Triumphus,” 1.

<sup>498</sup> Livy, 45.39.10.



1:5; 12:1—14:40),<sup>499</sup> (iii) they are now ministers of reconciliation (1 Cor 4:1-5), (iv) in accepting apostolic suffering Christians are identifying with Christ in his life and mission, (v) they are participating in Christ’s battle with evil (1 Cor 15:23-28), (vi) God’s power and glory are to be found “in the midst of the suffering of this world,”<sup>500</sup> and (vii) Christ (and Christians ‘in him’) will be victorious (1 Cor 15:23-28). Some commentators (such as Schrage and Thiselton) relate the “sentenced to death” of 1 Cor 4:9 “to sharing with Christ as the crucified one, and the public spectacle as underlining its cosmic significance before the world and angels.”<sup>501</sup> In other words, Paul is relating the (false) ideology of the Greco-Roman Triumphal Procession’s sacrificial offering to the (true) Christian ideology or theology of the cross and recognising that suffering is a ‘birthing pain’ of salvation. This is the Christian’s true vocation in life, the appropriate way to live out one’s Christian life, glorifying God (1 Cor 6:20). For Paul, their acceptance of suffering is not just part of God’s plan, it is progressing God’s plan.<sup>502</sup> Identifying with the suffering Christ, Paul and his followers are now offering their suffering, their sacrificial lifestyles, indeed themselves ‘in Christ’ to God. As such, suffering becomes ‘ritualised’ for Paul and his followers.

This conclusion (that Paul and his followers are offering their sacrificial and saving lives ‘in Christ’ to God) is further strengthened by the allusions, accepted by many commentators, to Proverbs, Tobit, and Isaiah.<sup>503</sup> As expressed earlier, in 1 Cor 4:13 there are allusions to Proverbs 21:18 (where the context is that of an expiatory offering) and Tobit 5:19 (where the context is one of the Day of Atonement’s scapegoat

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<sup>499</sup> Wright, *Paul for Everyone: 1 Corinthians*, 50.

<sup>500</sup> Hafemann, *Suffering and Ministry in the Spirit*, 56.

<sup>501</sup> Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 360; Schrage, *Der erste Brief*, 339-340.

<sup>502</sup> Hafemann, *Suffering and Ministry in the Spirit*, 57.

<sup>503</sup> Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 364; Fee, *First Corinthians*, 180. Thiselton also mentions BADG, Barrett, Lietzmann, Collins and others as agreeing with this interpretation.

offering) with its echoes of and Isaiah 53.<sup>504</sup> On the strength of these allusions it is suggested that Paul may see himself as a willing expiatory sacrifice. If so, it would fit with other similar thoughts expressed (such as sufferings and endangerment) by Paul in 1 Corinthians, and in earlier (Galatians) and later Letters (2 Corinthians, Philippians). For example, in Gal 6:17 Paul states, “From now on, let no one make troubles for me; for I bear the marks of Jesus on my body.” In 1 Cor 15:30-31 Paul says: “Moreover, why are we endangering ourselves all the time? Every day I face death; I swear it by the pride in you that I have in Christ Jesus our Lord.” In 2 Cor 4:10-11 Paul maintains that he has been marked (presumably, beaten) for Jesus and that he is, then, “always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our body.” He claims that he is poured out as a sacrificial libation in Phil 2:17, “But, even if I am poured out as a libation upon the sacrificial service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with all of you”. Essentially these texts are claims that Paul saw himself as an expiatory sacrifice for others in imitation of Christ, his model. As mentioned frequently in 1 Corinthians (e.g. 1 Cor 1:2, 30; 5:1-8), both sub-structurally and super-structurally, the follower of Christ is focused on worshipping the true God who is holy and who, in redeeming humankind, expects them to live loyally as redeemed people (that is, as holy) in spite of suffering.<sup>505</sup>

In summary, the Priestly Rhetorolect is evident in 1 Cor 4:9-13 through the link to the Triumphal Procession’s thanksgiving ceremony and in the probable allusion to Paul’s own willingness to be an expiatory sacrifice for others. Both the Roman and the Pauline ideologies accept the ultimacy of God, his involvement in creation, and the acceptance, respect and recognition of this in the daily lives of his creation. Paul is also using the Priestly Rhetorolect in this ‘argument’ (1 Cor 1:10—4:21), as he has also done

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<sup>504</sup> This point is explained in detail in Chapter 3 of this dissertation (see Chapter 3.3.4).

<sup>505</sup> This is a major theme in 1 Corinthians and one that Paul repeats (both explicitly and implicitly) throughout the Letter.

in 1 Cor 5:1-8, to emphasise that God is holy (already mentioned by Paul in 1 Cor 3:9, 16-23), that the people of God are the temple of God, and that God dwells within them (1 Cor 3:16-17). It follows then that the life of every follower of Christ is to be focused on worship of God-who-is-holy. Their reaction to the fact of their own holiness, as a result of Christ's crucifixion, is to empower them to be holy in their lives and to remain thus disposed in spite of suffering, as their God is also a faithful God (1 Cor 1:9) who values the fidelity of his chosen people. The everyday 'ritual' of suffering for Paul and his followers will ultimately be rewarded by God (1 Cor 15:58).<sup>506</sup>

A second rhetorolect evident in 1 Cor 4:9-13 is the Apocalyptic Rhetorolect. This rhetorolect envisages God as the supreme emperor whose armies engage and conquer all 'principalities and powers,' that is, all evil on both a cosmic and an individual level in order to create a peaceful eternity for God's 'elect' or 'holy' followers.<sup>507</sup> This Apocalyptic Rhetorolect emerges in the Corinthian church members' (*false*) belief that the *eschaton* has arrived and that they are already 'satisfied,' 'rich,' and 'kings' (as outlined in 1 Cor 4:8: "You are already satisfied; you have already grown rich; you have become kings without us!") and in Paul's ironic rebuttal of this (*false*) belief.

It is debatable whether this belief among Corinthian church members was based on Diogenes or Daniel. The Stoics, following Diogenes, believed that they had attained wisdom, riches and royalty and that therefore 'all things were lawful to them' (see 1 Corinthians 6:12; 10:23). They had achieved a king-like station in life and looked down on others and totally disregarded them. More likely, other Corinthians may have seen 1

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<sup>506</sup> In 1 Cor 4:9-13 Paul lists many of the ways in which he suffered. The wider context of 1 Cor 4:9-21 fills out the picture. "However, read in context, Paul's call for imitation is similar to his own imitation of Christ [1 Cor 4:16; 11:1] and refers to the pattern of renunciation, suffering, and servant-model type of leadership that he undertakes for the sake of the gospel" (Pascuzzi, *First and Second Corinthians*, 35).

<sup>507</sup> See [www.religion.emory.edu/faculty/robbins/SRI/defns/a\\_defns.cfm](http://www.religion.emory.edu/faculty/robbins/SRI/defns/a_defns.cfm) and Robbins et al., *Foundations for Socio-rhetorical Exploration*, xv.

Cor 4:8 (“You are already satisfied; you have already grown rich; you have become kings and without us!”) as an allusion to Daniel 7:27: (“and the people of the Supreme God will receive royal power and keep it forever”), itself written in the Apocalyptic Rhetorolect. Whether based on Diogenes or Daniel, Gaston Deluz writes that, in the view of some Corinthians, “the Messianic kingdom seems to have come to Corinth and these people have been given their thrones.”<sup>508</sup> Paul, on the other hand, is emphatic that something of cosmic significance (1 Cor 4:9: “a spectacle to the world, to angels and humans alike”) has happened. God has indeed again acted in human history. For Paul, the ‘new age’ has been ushered in, but, importantly, the *eschaton* has not yet arrived.

The Apocalyptic Rhetorolect also envisages God as never indifferent to his world or to intervening in it and that he intervenes at critical moments. Paul is convinced that God has now intervened decisively and definitively in the person of Christ (who is called Messiah, another apocalyptic term, found over sixty times in the Letter). Another apocalyptic theme is that of the battle between good and evil. In 1 Corinthians Paul uses the Apocalyptic Rhetorolect to stress that the battle with the evil principalities and powers is still raging in the world and in the individual.<sup>509</sup> This theme, suggested also in Paul’s portrayal of himself as an enemy of Rome (1 Cor 4:9-13), will come to a crescendo later in the Letter (1 Cor 15:20-28). Paul is stressing that as followers of Christ they must be devoted to his kingdom and its realisation in the world and that the Last Judgement will see all justly rewarded. The apocalypticists also believed in the resurrection of the just because God is everlastingly faithful to his promises.<sup>510</sup>

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<sup>508</sup> Gaston Deluz, *A Companion to First Corinthians*, trans. Grace E. Watt (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1963), 46-47.

<sup>509</sup> See also 1 Cor 15:20-28.

<sup>510</sup> Boadt, *Reading the Old Testament*, 515.

In 1 Cor 4:9-13, Paul is stressing that followers of Christ are a counter-cultural group in Corinth. They are, therefore, alien, unwelcome, to be opposed, to be persecuted as they go about their ministry or task of building the kingdom of God.<sup>511</sup> However, they should never forget that they have the ‘mind of Christ,’ they are living in the ‘real world’ and, in spite of appearances to the contrary, it is the Greco-Roman populace who are labouring under a ‘false’ or ‘alien’ belief. Their Christian victory, that is, Christ’s victory on the cross, is the decisive and definitive victory. Each and every Christian is now engaged in a counter-cultural battle for supremacy against the ‘pagan’ forces. This is a battle in which the Christian may indeed suffer but final victory is assured: “in the Lord, your labour is not in vain” (1 Cor 15:58).

In using the Apocalyptic Rhetorolect in this pericope, Paul is emphasising that God has indeed acted again in human history through the Christ event in an action of cosmic significance. The battle with the evil ‘principalities and powers’ is still raging both in the world and in the individual. Nonetheless, Christ’s victory on the cross has been decisive and definitive. Each and every Christian is now engaged in a counter-cultural battle for supremacy against the ‘pagan’ forces. This is a battle in which the Christian may indeed suffer but the final victory is assured (1 Cor 15:58) and the Last Judgement will see all justly rewarded.

### **3.5 Theological Synthesis of the Reality, Causes and Purposes of Paul’s Suffering**

This chapter set out to analyse the reality, causes and purposes of Paul’s suffering as expressed in 1 Cor 4:9-13. In that pericope, the climax of chapters 1:10—4:21,<sup>512</sup> Paul declares that, even though he has suffered, he remains faithful to the

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<sup>511</sup> Boadt, *Reading the Old Testament*, and [www.religion.emory.edu/faculty/robbins/SRI/defs/a\\_defns.cfm](http://www.religion.emory.edu/faculty/robbins/SRI/defs/a_defns.cfm).

<sup>512</sup> Hafemann, *Suffering and Ministry in the Spirit*, 55.

gospel he preaches and embodies: he appeals to the Corinthians to do likewise. Doing so will bring its eternal rewards (1 Cor 9: 25).

Regarding the reality of Paul's suffering this chapter has shown that 1 Cor 4:9-13 details his suffering as being pervasive (it affects almost every aspect of his life, for example, being hungry, poorly clad, and homeless as in 1 Cor 4:9-13), intensive (sometimes bringing him near-death experiences as expressed in "sentenced to death" in 1 Cor 4:9 and 15:31), and cumulative (each type of suffering is layered on top of another, as in ridicule, slander, and persecution in 1 Cor 4:11-13).<sup>513</sup> In all these references Paul is speaking of real people, real situations, and real suffering. For Paul, his suffering is as real as the suffering of the beaten soldiers in the Triumphal Procession. As Paul is preaching and embodying a counter-cultural gospel and, thereby, alienating himself from the dominant Roman culture, this cannot but evoke, even provoke a strong reaction or rejection of both the gospel and the preacher or embodiment. Paul's counter-cultural gospel may well be seen as rejecting the Roman emperor and all he personified: and there is truth in that. Such treasonous behaviour would have resulted in much suffering for such a person. And, that suffering would be very real indeed! Additionally, often throughout 1 Corinthians Paul compares his suffering with Christ's (e.g. 1 Cor 11:1) in that one is as real as the other, and he is certainly maintaining the reality of Christ's suffering (in 1 Cor 10:23—11:1 he is discussing his followers attempts at imitating Christ's self-sacrificing example). This verse (1 Cor 11:1) is a part of the 1 Cor 10:23-11:1 pericope which is the climax of the Unit from 8:1—11:1. Interpreting it Pascuzzi says: "Modelled on Christ's example of selfless love, Christian freedom seeks the good of others and the glory of God .....Paul's call to the Corinthians to imitate him is ultimately a call to live Christ-like lives." See, also, 1

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<sup>513</sup> Paul also lists his suffering in 2 Cor 4:8-9; 6:4b-5, 8-10; and 11:23-29. His suffering is also recorded by Luke in his Acts of the Apostles (see Acts 9: 26-30; 13: 45, 50; 14: 19; 15: 26; 16: 19-24).

Cor 4:10 (“We are fools for Christ’s sake”).<sup>514</sup> In 1 Cor 4:9-13 Paul lists many of the ways in which he suffered. The wider context of 1 Cor 4:9-21 fills out the picture. “However, read in context, Paul’s call for imitation is similar to his own imitation of Christ [1 Cor 4:16; 11:1] and refers to the pattern of renunciation, suffering, and servant-model type of leadership that he undertakes for the sake of the gospel.”<sup>515</sup> (Pascuzzi, *First and Second Corinthians*, 35).

One may conclude from the above that Paul’s suffering, as outlined in 1 Corinthians, is real and biographical.

As regards the cause of suffering, the dominant understanding in Paul’s time is that suffering is a punishment for one’s sins.<sup>516</sup> In Sanders’ view, the Rabbis of Paul’s time hold that “if God is just and if man sins, it is not possible that no payment will be exacted for transgression.”<sup>517</sup> In God’s justice, they hold that “the righteous are punished on earth for their sins in order to enjoy uninterrupted bliss hereafter.”<sup>518</sup> However, in 1 Cor 4:1-5 Paul stoutly defends his innocence, likening himself to Job the Innocent. He also makes numerous references to Isaiah, especially Deutero-Isaiah (Isaiah 52:13—53:12), Jeremiah (Jer 31:31-34) and the Maccabean martyrs, placing himself in the long line of righteous/innocent sufferers.<sup>519</sup> He suggests that the cause of his suffering (1 Cor 4:9-13) arises out of the natural circumstances of an itinerant preacher of his time (e.g. hunger, thirst, homelessness) and his voluntary refusal to

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<sup>514</sup> Pascuzzi, *First and Second Corinthians*, 62.

<sup>515</sup> *Ibid.*, 35

<sup>516</sup> For a fuller discussion, see Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 543-56.

<sup>517</sup> Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 170. Sanders continues by saying, “Sacrifices may atone, or even a ransom paid in money, but suffering is more effective and atones for more serious sins, because it is costlier” (*Ibid.*). Thus the righteous are punished on earth for their sins in order to enjoy uninterrupted bliss hereafter.

<sup>518</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>519</sup> There are six quotations from Isaiah in 1 Corinthians (see 1 Cor 1:19, 2:16; 14:21, 25; 15:32, 54) and there are numerous allusions to themes and storylines from Isaiah in 1 Corinthians, especially Isaiah 53. Robin Darling Young, “The Woman with the Soul of Abraham – Traditions about the Mother of the Maccabean Martyrs,” in *Women Like This*, New Perspectives on Jewish Women in the Greco-Roman World, edited by Amy-Jill Levine (Atlanta GA: Scholars Press, 1991), 67-81.

accept patronage from wealthy Corinthians. At other times, the fact that he is preaching an alien, counter-cultural gospel invites opposition, slander and ridicule. Moreover, his suffering is not always caused by external or circumstantial happenings. Sometimes, his suffering is internal and intentionally chosen, that is, it is caused by his attempts to become more Christ-like in his thinking and behaviour (1 Cor 9:19-27).<sup>520</sup> In short, Paul's suffering is related always to his vocation, to his participation in the re-creation of the world, the reconciliation of creation and its Creator.

Regarding the purpose of his suffering, Paul states unambiguously in 1 Cor 15:3-5 that "Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures" (see also 1 Cor 8:11). This is the tradition he 'hands on' to the Corinthians as he himself had received it from the early church (1 Cor 5:7; 15:3): that Christ sacrifices himself for the sins of others. Paul understood that he and his followers are to follow Christ's example of suffering for others (1 Cor 4:13) and that by sharing in Christ's death, one dies to the power of sin or to 'the old age.' One transfers to the lordship of God, with the result that one then belongs to God (1 Cor 3:23). That transfer takes place by participation in Christ's death.<sup>521</sup> Paul believes that, like the righteous sufferers of the Old Testament, and like Christ himself, he is chosen by God to suffer for his own and others' benefit (1 Cor 4:13; 9:19-23). Paul is aware of a long line of innocent Israelite sufferers, indicated by his allusions to the prophets and other Israelites who offered their suffering and themselves as 'atoning sacrifices' for others (such as Job, Jeremiah, Isaiah, the Maccabean martyrs, and others unnamed).<sup>522</sup> This view had been expressed in the Old Testament (for example in Isa 52:13—53:12; 2 Macc 5:1—8:5; 4 Macc 6:28-29; 17:21-22), but is not the dominant view in Paul's time.

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<sup>520</sup> This aspect of Paul's suffering will be investigated in Chapter 4 of this dissertation.

<sup>521</sup> Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 467-468; Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 482-487.

<sup>522</sup> See sub-section 3.3.4. (this dissertation). Also, Young, "The Woman with the Soul of Abraham," 67-81.



Concerning Christ's death, there is no doubting that Paul preaches "Christ crucified" (see 1 Cor 1:30; 2:2, 6-8; 5:7; 8:11; 11:23; 15:3), often attributing a salvific purpose to his suffering, especially his death on the Cross (see also 1 Thess 5:10; Gal 6:12-15; 2 Cor 12:1-10).<sup>523</sup> Paul expresses this same atonement view some years before writing 1 Corinthians in 1 Thess 5:10 ("He died for us, so that whether we stay awake or go to sleep we should live together with him"), in 1 Cor 1:30 ("It is due to him that you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, as well as righteousness, sanctification, and redemption"), and some years after writing 1 Corinthians in Rom 14:8-9 ("Whether we live or whether we die, we belong to the Lord. That is why the Messiah died and came back to life, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living").<sup>524</sup> Similar atonement references may be found throughout the Pauline corpus. Also, most commentators find atonement or expiation themes in Christ's death as reported in 1 Corinthians (such as 1 Cor 5:7; 8:11; 11:23-26; 15:3).<sup>525</sup> Furthermore, numerous texts in Paul's other undisputed Letters are open to an atonement interpretation (such as Gal 6:17; 2 Cor 5:21, Rom 8:3). One might also mention that Paul, in 1 Corinthians, borrows the salvific suffering storylines of Isaiah, 2 Maccabees

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<sup>523</sup> For example, in 1 Cor 1:30 ("It is due to him that you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, as well as righteousness, sanctification, and redemption), 1 Cor 2:6-8 ("For if they had known it [God's wisdom], they would not have crucified the Lord of glory"), 1 Cor 5:7 ("Clear out the old yeast, so that you may become a fresh batch of dough, inasmuch as you are unleavened. For our paschal lamb, Christ, has been sacrificed"), 1 Cor 8:11 ("The weak person ... the brother for whom Christ died"), 1 Cor 11:23 ("This is my body which is for you .... This cup is the new covenant in my blood"), 15:3 ("Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures"). It is clear, then, that Paul believed that Christ achieved salvation for all *through his suffering*. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 232. Dunn argues that the suffering and death of Christ are central in Paul's gospel and "decisively [undercut] any attempt to derive an alternative scheme of salvation" from his writings. He goes so far as to state that "it may well have been Paul who thus gave the gospel its focus in the death of Jesus, who stamped the 'cross' so firmly on the 'gospel' (232). He continues: "we may speculate that it was Paul's influence which caused Mark to shape his 'gospel' (Mk 1: 1) to climax in the cross – a passion narrative with extended introduction. And since Matthew and Luke incorporated other Jesus traditions (Q) by fitting it into Mark's gospel framework, we may say that it was Paul who first shaped and determined Christianity's distinctive category of 'gospel'" (232-233).

<sup>524</sup> One might also mention Gal 1:4 and 1 Cor 1:18, 22-25; 2:6-8.

<sup>525</sup> Pascuzzi, *First and Second Corinthians*, 39; Collins, *First Corinthians*, 214; Fee, *First Corinthians*, 180; Wright, *Paul for Everyone, 1 Corinthians*, 59-62.

and 4 Maccabees.<sup>526</sup> Therefore, one can state with confidence that Paul understands Jesus' death to be vicarious, atoning and that it achieves justification, salvation, and redemption (cf. 1 Cor 1:30).

As regards his own calling, Paul believes that he is chosen by God to suffer for his own and others' salvation (implicitly in 1 Cor 4:13 and explicitly in 1 Cor 9:24-27). Paul's use of the Triumphal Procession, culminating in its sacrifice of thanksgiving to the god of war and the many possible 'atonement' allusions to Proverbs, Tobit are all indicators of this probability (1 Cor 4:13). His willingness to accept suffering "for Christ's sake" (1 Cor 4:10), and the parallelism between 1 Cor 4:9 and 13, give further support to the suggestion that Paul is willing to be an atoning or expiatory victim for others.<sup>527</sup> Furthermore, the particularly strong range of verbal and thematic similarities between 1 Corinthians and Isaiah's Suffering Servant Songs (especially Isa 52:13—53:12), and Paul's use of Isaiah as a structural storyline in 1 Corinthians, are together convincing that Paul sees himself as an Isaianic suffering servant.<sup>528</sup> He may even, through his participatory theology, have seen himself as an embodiment of the Suffering Servant,<sup>529</sup> called to live a life characterised by self-sacrificial suffering and through his

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<sup>526</sup> Brueggmann, *Isaiah 40 – 66*, 141 – 142.

<sup>527</sup> Paul was aware of the many accounts of the Old Testament prophets and the other innocent righteous people who suffered for their faith (such as in Isaiah 52:13—53:12; Jeremiah 11:18-23; 18:18-20; 20:2, and Ezekiel 1:1; 3:25-26), the 'tribulation lists' detailing the suffering of the righteous in Jewish apocalyptic sources (such as those in the Books of Daniel, Enoch, and Jubilees), and the suffering of the Maccabean martyrs as detailed in the Maccabean literature. See, also, John L. McKenzie, *Dictionary of the Bible* (London: Chapman, 1968), 694f.; Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 365; Fitzgerald, *Cracks in Earthen Vessels*, 47-114; Young, "The 'Woman with the Soul of Abraham,'" 67-81.

<sup>528</sup> The verbal similarities between Isaiah 53 and 1 Cor 11 (for example) include the following: 'handed over' (Isa 53:6 and 1 Cor 11:23x2); 'remembrance' in Isa 26:14: 43:26 and 1 Cor 11:24, 25. Other words found in both include 'covenant,' 'servant,' and 'enslavement.' Thematic similarities include: 'Innocent servant' (Isa 53:9 and 1 Cor 4:1-5); 'took on the suffering of others' (Isa 53:4-6, 8 and 10 and 1 Cor 11:24; 15:3); 'faithful to death' (Isa 53:8-9 and 1 Cor 5:7-8); 'his death saves' (Isa 53:5 and 1 Cor 1:30; 15:3). Other themes common to both texts are humiliation-exaltation, rejected saviour, suffering servant, etc. See also the articles by Betz, Hooker, Farmer, Wright and others in *Jesus and the Suffering Servant*, edited by Bellinger and Farmer.

<sup>529</sup> Wagner, "The Heralds of Isaiah and the Mission of Paul," 193-222 maintains that Paul sees a fundamental correspondence between his own message and the message of Isaiah.

suffering to save others.<sup>530</sup> If one accepts that probability then Paul's thought process in 1 Cor 4:9-13 would be similar to what he expresses in 1 Cor 15:31; 2 Cor 4:11; Gal 6:17 and Phil 2:17.<sup>531</sup>

This chapter has investigated the reality, causes and purposes of Paul's suffering. It has established that his suffering is not merely a literary technique but is real. It also establishes that the root cause of his suffering lies in the counter-cultural gospel he is preaching and embodying. Regarding the purpose of his suffering, Paul states unambiguously in 1 Cor 15:3-5 that "Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures" (see also 1 Cor 8:11). Paul understood that he (and his followers) are to follow Christ's example of suffering for others (1 Cor 4:13). In the view of some commentators, it has established a strong base for suggesting that Paul attributed salvific value to his suffering.<sup>532</sup> The next chapter of this dissertation will examine 1 Cor 9:19-27 where Paul explicitly and repeatedly claims that his suffering (in his re-definition of the word, his struggles and difficulties in conforming his life and lifestyle to Christ's) saves others.

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<sup>530</sup> Moreover, Paul calls on the Corinthian church members to imitate him (1 Cor 4:16) as he imitates Christ (1 Cor 11:1). Both of these requests occur in passages where Paul has been discussing his suffering and/or his voluntary sacrificing of his rights for others' salvation (1 Cor 4:6-17; 9:19-27; 10:23-33). Thus, he also seems to be saying that the suffering of his Corinthian converts have atoning power. This suggestion will be investigated and discussed in the next chapter of this dissertation. John T. Fitzgerald has written that God's working through suffering "takes us to the centre of Paul's understanding of God and his own self-understanding, yet anchors him in the culture and conventions of his time." Fitzgerald, *Cracks in an Earthen Vessel*, 207.

<sup>531</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 191.

<sup>532</sup> Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 591 writes, "there was a belief, hammered out not in abstract debate but in and through poverty, exile, torture and martyrdom, that Israel's sufferings might be, not merely a state *from which* she would, in Yahweh's good time, be redeemed, but paradoxically, under certain circumstances and in certain senses, be part of the means *by which* that redemption would be effected." Collins, (*First Corinthians*, 191), states that "some commentators here suggest that Paul may have been willing to be an atoner."

## CHAPTER 4

### PAUL'S EXPLICIT CLAIM THAT HIS SUFFERING SAVES OTHERS

#### (1 Cor 9:19-27)

The previous chapter, by investigating 1 Cor 4:9-13, established a strong, though implicit, base for suggesting that Paul attributes salvific value to his suffering. An implicit suggestion, however strongly supported, is not an explicit claim. The current chapter of the dissertation explores 1 Cor 9:19-27 where Paul states explicitly that he suffers in his preaching and embodiment of the gospel and that this suffering saves others. In other words, he is claiming that his suffering has salvific value. Paul does not only believe that his suffering saves others; he holds that his entire Christian *life* of selfless service saves others. This belief is investigated in 1 Cor 9:19-27. It is noted that this conviction is evidenced right across Paul's undisputed Letters. Here is but a selection of other supporting suffering-related references from 1 Thessalonians (1:2-10; 4:3, 7), Galatians (5:6; 6:15; 3:20-22; 3:7-10), 1 Corinthians (1:18, 21; 3: 15; 7:16 (x2); 8:11; 9:22; 10:33; 15:2), 2 Corinthians (1:6; 4:1-18), Romans (1:16-17; 8:18-30; 10:9-13; 11:11-12; 13:1-2), Philippians (1:27-30; 2:12-13) and Philemon (1:6, 9). This view is also maintained throughout the Deutero-Pauline Letters (See Ephesians 5:6-20; 1 Timothy 1:15-16; 2:4, 15; 4:10, 16). Thus, one can say that this is a consistent part of Paul's theology and that its message is central to his 'gospel.'

Additionally, 1 Cor 9:19-27 is not included by any commentator in the Pauline 'tribulation lists' or in any suffering-related treatment of 1 Corinthians.<sup>533</sup> Therefore, there is an original and distinctive core in the current chapter. The chapter begins by

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<sup>533</sup> The traditional Pauline 'tribulation lists' are detailed in 1 Cor 4:9-13; 2 Cor 4:8-9; 6:4-5, 8-10; 11:23-29; Rom 8:35; Phil 4:12. For example, the following commentators do not treat 1 Cor 9:19-27 in their works: Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 365-368; Collins; *First Corinthians*, 182-192; Fitzgerald, *Cracks in an Earthen Vessel*, 132, 139 and 144.

contextualising 1 Cor 9:19-27 and providing a brief overview of the text. It then investigates the chosen text by using the five texture and one rhetorolect methodology. The focus of the chapter is to investigate whether Paul claims that his suffering is salvific and, if so, how he reasons to this belief. The chapter concludes by offering a theological synthesis of Paul's explicit claim that his suffering saves others.

#### **4.1 Contextualising 1 Cor 9:19-27**

1 Cor 9:19-27 forms part of Paul's argument in 1 Cor 8:1—11:1. Chapters 8, 9 and 10 of 1 Corinthians form a single argument concerning food that has already been offered to idols. The meat sacrificed to idols in the temple is later eaten at temple-based cultic banquets (1 Cor 8:10) or is sold to local butchers who, in turn, sell it on for home consumption. The question arises as to whether Christians should participate in these temple-based banquets and/or eat this meat in their own homes (1 Cor 10:25-26) or in the homes of friends (1 Cor 10:27-31). The Corinthian church members seem to be divided on the issue. Underlying this dilemma is the Corinthians' understanding of freedom and their seeming disregard for the effects of their example on those of 'weaker conscience.' Paul offers a theological response to the matter.

Paul's response, as so often in 1 Corinthians, is to focus on the need for unity in the church body. His aim is stated clearly in the Letter's programmatic statement: "that all of you agree in what you say, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and in the same purpose" (1 Cor 1:10). Further into the Letter he identifies that 'mind' as the "mind of Christ" (1 Cor 2:16). He is also adamant that in pursuing this unity, the salvation needs of others (especially the weaker members) should take precedence over the lawful rights or entitlements of the stronger members (1 Cor 8:7-13).

In terms of literary composition, the Inner Texture argumentative sub-texture is evident in 1 Cor 8:1—11:1 in Paul’s customary chiasmic pattern (A-B-A<sup>1</sup>).<sup>534</sup> In this chiasmic pattern, Paul first offers some point(s) for consideration (A), next he details an example (B), and, lastly, he presents a conclusion to the discussion (A<sup>1</sup>). In 1 Cor 8:1-13 (A) Paul introduces the topic (eating meat sacrificed to idols) and establishes the principle that concern for others, especially the weak (“the brother for whom Christ died,” 1 Cor 8:11) takes precedence over one’s own individual rights. 1 Cor 9:1-27 (B) follows; in which he provides a practical, personal example and an explanation of his reason for renouncing his apostolic rights. For Paul and every Christian the salvation of the ‘other’ is paramount; therefore, renunciation should form a model of practice for the community.<sup>535</sup> 1 Cor 10:1—11:1 (A<sup>1</sup>) returns to the main topic as Paul pleads with the Corinthians not to court disaster (by engaging in idolatrous or immoral behaviour or by associating with those who do). They should learn from the example of the Israelites in the desert (“your ancestors/fathers” – 1 Cor 10:1). 1 Cor 10:14-22 demonstrates that eating a meal in the presence of God or participating in the Eucharist creates a solidarity with God/Christ: “Since the absolute exclusiveness of the solidarity with God in Christ precludes any other union,” the enlightened or ‘stronger’ ones have to make a choice: whether to take their place at the table of demons or the table of the Lord.<sup>536</sup> Summarising this particular argument (1 Cor 8:1—11: 1), in 1 Cor 10:23—11:1, Paul repeats that “Christian freedom seeks the good of others and the glory of God.”<sup>537</sup> He closes the argument (1 Cor 11:1) by asking the Corinthians to follow his example as he follows Christ’s example.

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<sup>534</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 14.

<sup>535</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

<sup>536</sup> Pascuzzi, *First and Second Corinthians*, 60.

<sup>537</sup> *Ibid.*, 62.

## 4.2 Text of 1 Cor 9:19-27

This chapter of the dissertation focuses on a detailed examination of 1 Cor 9:19-27:

<sup>19</sup> For though I am free with respect to all, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I might win more of them. <sup>20</sup> To the Jews I became as a Jew in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law) so that I might win those under the law. <sup>21</sup> To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law) so that I might win those outside the law. <sup>22</sup> To the weak I became weak, so that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, so that I might by all means save some. <sup>23</sup> I do it all for the sake of the gospel, so that I too may share in its blessings. <sup>24</sup> Do you not know that in a race the runners all compete, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win it. <sup>25</sup> Athletes exercise self-control in all things; they do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable one. <sup>26</sup> So I do not run aimlessly, nor do I box as though beating the air; <sup>27</sup> But I punish my body and enslave it, so that after proclaiming to others I myself should not be disqualified.

In 1 Corinthians 9, “Paul provides a model of renunciation regarding his own apostolic lifestyle and practice,” his attitudes and behaviour.<sup>538</sup> He begins by asserting his right “as an apostle” (1 Cor 9:1-2) to material recompense, for example, food and drink (1 Cor 9:4), a Christian wife (1 Cor 9:5), and not to engage in manual work (1 Cor 9:6) “as the rest of the apostles, and the brothers of the Lord” (1 Cor 9:5). However, Paul chooses to renounce all these rights. This is not a cause for boasting, as he has been obliged or commissioned by the Lord to preach and embody the gospel to the Gentiles (1 Cor 9:12). Paul doesn't want the enforcement of his apostolic rights to be a stumbling block to anyone's salvation or to endanger the salvation of the brother/sister “for whom Christ died” (1 Cor 8:11), a central theme in 1 Cor 8—10. On the contrary, he must do everything possible that builds up everyone's faith and salvation. He goes on to explain that he must stand “in solidarity with ‘the other,’ as against autonomy or

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<sup>538</sup> Pascuzzi, *First and Second Corinthians*, 55.

self-affirmation.”<sup>539</sup> This lies at the heart of his gospel: “All this I do for the sake of the gospel, so that I may share in its blessings” (1 Cor 9:23).<sup>540</sup>

Dan Mitchell, in his commentary on 1 Cor 9:19-27, says that Paul curtails his use of his apostolic rights in order “not to hinder the gospel of Christ,” which is a repeat of his advice in 1 Cor 8:7-13.<sup>541</sup> He is “compromising his immediate liberties in the present ... [because]...the emphasis in this passage is on the ultimate advantage to be gained.”<sup>542</sup> Underpinning 1 Cor 9:19-27 is Paul’s re-defining of Christian freedom as being other-centred and he is calling on the Corinthians to follow his example as he follows Christ’s (1 Cor 4:16; 11:1). He is also defining Christian ministry, that is, the ministry of each and every follower of Christ. Margaret Mitchell states that “for a Christian to compromise with others is not even a voluntary decision: it is the only way to live out that calling.”<sup>543</sup> Moreover, he is preaching as one commissioned by the Lord to do so. Therefore, there is no credit due to him on that account. However, his recompense is that he foregoes his right to support and offers the gospel to all without the obligation of support. This is exactly what he is asking the Corinthian church members to do, to forego their rights if the retention and practice of those rights becomes a stumbling block for the salvation of the “brother for whom Christ died” (1 Cor 8:11).<sup>544</sup>

With this in mind, this chapter will continue by offering a socio-rhetorical analysis of 1 Cor 9:19-2

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<sup>539</sup> Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 699.

<sup>540</sup> *Ibid.*, 699.

<sup>541</sup> Dan Mitchell, *The Book of First Corinthians*, 248.

<sup>542</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>543</sup> Margaret M. Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 133.

<sup>544</sup> Some commentators have maintained that chapter 9 of 1 Corinthians is either an interpolation or that it is an amalgamation of fragments from as many as six different Pauline letters. The matter receives detailed discussion in a number of commentaries. Margaret Mitchell stoutly defends the unity and integrity of this passage (1 Cor 8:1—11:1) on rhetorical and compositional grounds and Thiselton from thematic and theological perspectives. One may conclude that 1 Corinthians 9 is correctly treated as an essential element of Paul’s argumentation. See Collins, *First Corinthians*, 306 and Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 607-612.



### 4.3 Textured Exegesis of 1 Cor 9:19-27

This section draws upon the chosen methodology and uses five central textures (Inner Texture, Social and Cultural Texture, Ideological Texture, Intertexture and Sacred Texture) in attempting to attain a deeper understanding of 1 Cor 9:19-27.

#### 4.3.1 Inner Texture

A given text can be seen from a number of different angles, the most foundational of which is the literary angle, which Robbins calls the Inner Texture. Inner Texture explores features like the “repetition of words, the creation of beginnings and endings, alternation of speech and storytelling, particular ways in which the words present arguments, and the particular ‘feel’ or aesthetic” of the chosen text.<sup>545</sup> The overall thrust of Paul’s argument is that he is attempting to follow Christ’s example of a life of selfless service to all others because that approach saves others. He is also appealing to his followers to imitate him in that vocation.

In 1 Cor 9:19-27 the word placement feature highlights ἑλεύθερος (‘to be free’). It is placed first in 1 Cor 9:19 for emphasis and it is the focal word of 1 Cor 9:19-23.<sup>546</sup> In 1 Cor 9:19 and throughout verses 1 Cor 9:19-23 ἑλεύθερος (‘to be free’) is contrasted with δούλω (‘to enslave’). Paul contrasts ‘to be free’ (ἑλεύθερος) and ‘to be enslaved’ (δούλω) and by doing so is saying that he is giving up his own freedom and becoming “as a slave.” In other words, he puts himself and his rights in second place for the good of others. This is a deliberate choice made by Paul “in order to save at least some” (1 Cor 9:19, 20x2, 21, 22). This sets the tone of the entire passage and underpins the literary construction of the pericope.

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<sup>545</sup> Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 3. Robbins acknowledges seven ‘sub-textures’ of Inner Texture that assist in analysing a given text: (a) repetition, (b) progression (including *gradatio*), (c) narrational patterns, (d) opening-middle-closing, (e) argumentative, and (f) sensory-aesthetic.<sup>545</sup> One can add a seventh (g), namely, word placement, which features prominently in this pericope.

<sup>546</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 334; Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 700.

Paul adopts an opening-middle-closing sub-texture structure (d above) in 1 Cor 19-23. He opens with a statement that he has enslaved himself to all (1 Cor 9:19). The middle of his unit consists of seven purpose clauses leading progressively to Paul's climax, namely, "so that I might by all means save some" (1 Cor 9:22). He closes the sub-unit in 1 Cor 9:23 stating that he does all "for the sake of the gospel. Within this argument he also includes a personal example explaining how achieving this objective necessitates a re-definition of 'freedom' and the consequent placing of his own lawful entitlements in a secondary and subservient position. Perceptively he uses the repetition sub-texture of Inner Texture, including word placement and word frequency, to highlight his thesis.

Particular attention should be accorded the dominant structural argumentative sub-texture, namely, the series of seven purpose clauses, six beginning with 'in order that.'<sup>547</sup> These purpose clauses appear in the following verses: 1 Cor 9:19, 20 x2, 21, 22 x2, 23. Six times Paul repeats the phrase 'in order that I might win.' It is significant that the seventh time the construction is repeated in 1 Cor 9:22d he inserts the word 'save' instead of 'win,' indicating that the saving of all is the ultimate objective. Paul is stressing that he devotes his life to the implementation of his missional intentionality and that it saves others. From a lexical perspective, the word σωσω ('to save') is used in the New Testament (Mt 1:21; Mk 2:17; Lk 1:7; Jn 1:21). On nine separate occasions in 1 Corinthians Paul uses σωσω or a derivative, including 1 Cor 9:22.<sup>548</sup> In all its occurrences in 1 Corinthians the word denotes '(eternal) salvation' as it does on all other occasions in the Old and New Testament. Consequently, the presumption must be

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<sup>547</sup> Michael Barram, "Pauline Mission as Salvific Intentionality," in *Paul as Missionary*, ed. Trevor J. Burke and Brian S. Rosner (London: T&T Clark, 2011), 238-239.

<sup>548</sup> See 1 Cor 1: 18, 21; 3: 15; 7: 16 (x2); 8: 11; 9: 22; 10: 33; 15: 2.

that in 1 Cor 9:22 Paul is using the word in its ‘normal’ sense, *that of saving others*.<sup>549</sup>

For Paul, “appropriate Christian conduct in Corinth must be rooted in a purposive, gospel-oriented intentionality,” a missional intentionality.<sup>550</sup> Closely linked with this is Paul’s use of the word ‘all,’ as he uses it or a derivative five times in 1 Cor 9:19-23: 1 Cor 9:19 (x2), 22 (x3). Undoubtedly, this is done to emphasise his openness to all (Jews, Greeks, the weak, all – both Christians and non-Christians alike).<sup>551</sup>

Several words are repeated for effect. For example νόμος (law) is a word that resonates throughout 1 Cor 9:19-27: the word itself is used four times in 1 Cor 9:20 and compounds are used another five times in 1 Cor 9:21.<sup>552</sup>

<b><u>1 Corinthians 9:20-21</u></b>	<b><u>1 Corinthians 9:20-21</u></b>
<p><sup>20</sup> καὶ ἐγενόμην τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις ὡς Ἰουδαῖος, ἵνα Ἰουδαίους κερδήσω· τοῖς ὑπὸ νόμον ὡς ὑπὸ νόμον, μὴ ὢν αὐτὸς ὑπὸ νόμον, ἵνα τοὺς ὑπὸ νόμον κερδήσω· <sup>21</sup> τοῖς ἀνόμοις ὡς ἄνομος, μὴ ὢν ἄνομος θεῶ ἀλλ’ ἐννομος χριστῷ, ἵνα κερδήσω ἀνόμους.</p>	<p><sup>20</sup> To the Jews I became like a Jew to win over Jews; to those under the law, (though I myself am not under the law), to win over those under the law. <sup>21</sup> To those outside the law I became like one outside the law (though I am not outside God’s law but within the law of Christ), to win over those outside the law.</p>

Paul contrasts ὑπὸ νόμος (‘under the law’) and ἄνομος (‘outside the law’).<sup>553</sup> Collins suggests that Paul may be anxious to focus attention on “the notion of obligation in the context of Christian freedom and right,” as part of his response to the Corinthians’

<sup>549</sup> Another significant word is ἵνα (‘so that’ or ‘in order that’). It is used seven times in five verses (1 Cor 9:19-23) in conjunction with κερδήσω (‘gain’) so these too are important words and are an essential part of the literary construction of the passage.

<sup>550</sup> Barram, “Pauline Mission as Salvific Intentionality,” 239.

<sup>551</sup> Ibid. Barram summarises it thus: “The telic clauses in 1 Cor 9:19-23 highlight the motivation and intention (purpose) behind any action Paul may take (flexibility) with regard to anyone (scope). ... Paul’s point is that no action he may take – as adaptable as he is – will ever be taken without the gospel in mind. His behaviour is therefore inherently and consistently purposive – intentional – in every instance. In that sense, the statements of purpose in 1 Cor 9:19-23 are crucial for understanding the apostle’s mission on his own terms.”

<sup>552</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 351.

<sup>553</sup> Ibid.

“everything is lawful” (1 Cor 6:12; 10:23) because he is developing an *ethos* argument.<sup>554</sup> It is evident from 1 Cor 9:9 that Paul is here speaking of the Mosaic Law.

Though Paul is preaching and embodying the Law of Christ, he is not discarding the Law of Moses. The God Paul worshipped as a Pharisee is the same God who revealed his Son to him on the Damascus road: “the creator, the lord of history, the God who continually saved his people Israel, and who proved to be a faithful lord of the covenant despite Israel’s infidelities” (1 Cor 10:1-13).<sup>555</sup> “Paul’s basic theology did not change, but his Christology did.”<sup>556</sup> On the cross Christ was revealed as the “power and wisdom of God” (1 Cor 1:24) and the “crucified Lord of glory” (1 Cor 2:8) as his Messiah. And with the Messiah the new age, the *eschaton*, has arrived “but not yet in glory.”<sup>557</sup> As David Horrell says: the Mosaic Law “was given for a time until the time when Christ came, when God’s children now come into their true inheritance and so no longer (need to) live under the [Mosaic] law.”<sup>558</sup> However, now that the Messiah has come, Paul is stating that “the Jewish law is no longer the norm according to which they are to pattern their lives.”<sup>559</sup> It is “incapable of giving life because it was an external norm expressing only do’s and don’t’s and possessed itself no life-giving force.”<sup>560</sup> Paul still preached against idolatry and immorality and many other Mosaic commandments (1 Cor 5:1-13; 6:1-11, 12-20; 10:1-14) because Christ has come not to invalidate the law and the prophets but to bring them to their intended purpose, their fulfillment, their life-giving force.<sup>561</sup> In Gal 5:6 Paul speaks of “faith working itself out through love,” and in 1 Cor 13:1-13 he states “If I do not have love, I am a resounding gong or a clashing

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<sup>554</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 352.

<sup>555</sup> Fitzmyer, “The Theology of Paul,” 1385.

<sup>556</sup> Ibid.

<sup>557</sup> Ibid., 1385-1386.

<sup>558</sup> David G. Horrell, *An Introduction to the Study of Paul*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2000, 2006), 98.

<sup>559</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 354.

<sup>560</sup> Fitzmyer, “The Theology of Paul,” in *NJBC*1382-1416, 1404.

<sup>561</sup> Karris, *Galatians and Romans*, 18-22.

cymbal (1 Cor 13:1). So, love is to be the Christian's life-force, giving meaning to all his life-actions. The law lived out by Christ prioritises love. This Christian Law obliges him to put the 'other' first in his missional endeavours, and the living out of this Law causes him pain and suffering. As Kasemann says: "Paul is illustrating (over against the 'enthusiasts') by his personal renunciation the principle that love sets bounds to Christian freedom."<sup>562</sup> In fact, love redefines the Law and Christian freedom.<sup>563</sup>

In 1 Cor 9:19 Paul says that he enslaves himself to all, he then goes on to explain that he willingly lives "by the cultural, ethnic, and intellectual constraints of others in the service of the gospel."<sup>564</sup> He repeats the argumentative construction 'to the (Jews, Gentiles...all) I became a (Jew, Gentile...all) in order to win some' six times before stressing the climax ("in order to *save* some"). Paul's use of the literary technique *gradatio* (a series of elements building towards a climax) is very carefully and skillfully orchestrated in this pericope.

His use of *συν* in ἵνα *συνκοινωνῶς* in 1 Cor 9:23 is also significant. It is not to be understood as expressing the concept of Paul himself sharing in the benefits of the gospel. This 'self-centred' interest would do Paul a disservice as he is concerned in 1 Cor 9, and elsewhere in 1 Corinthians, with the salvation of others (Jews, Gentiles, weak, all) and not about his own salvation. Rather, Paul's voluntary renunciation of 'rights' in living out his apostolic witness to Christ is respecting the dignity, beliefs, and religious practices of those with whom he was in discussion.<sup>565</sup> In this way, Fee points out that Paul's ministry becomes a veritable, living parable of the gospel itself.<sup>566</sup>

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<sup>562</sup> Kasemann, "A Pauline Version of Amor Fati," in *New Testament Questions for Today*, edited by Ernst Kasemann, translated by W. J. Montague (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1969), 217 and 218.

<sup>563</sup> Paul's approach to the Jewish Law-Christian Law issue bears many similarities with that of Matthew's Gospel (Mt 5:17). For example, both retain significant prohibitions of the Mosaic Law (e.g. the prohibition of idolatry, immorality, injustice, care for the poor), both see Christ's gospel of love as foundational, and both speak of the Mosaic Law not being abolished but being brought to its fulfilment.

<sup>564</sup> Pascuzzi, *First and Second Corinthians*, 56.

<sup>565</sup> Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 708.

<sup>566</sup> Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 421.

Gorman uses the terms “personification” or “embodiment” of the crucified Messiah to express this:

[This] pattern refers specifically to the kind of ‘faith working through love’ (Gal 5:6) that is rooted in the cross, where the Son of God expressed his faith (faithfulness, obedience) by giving himself in love (Gal 2:19-20).<sup>567</sup>

Reginald St John Parry’s translation of 1 Cor 9:23 (“All this I do for the sake of the Gospel, to bear my part in proclaiming it”) interprets συγκαινωνός as meaning a ‘partner’ or ‘participant’ in the gospel’s *proclamation*.<sup>568</sup> Thiselton says that Paul’s use of the adjective συγκαινωνός αὐτοῦ with the genitive for that in which he has a share “denotes an intimate, organic, reproductive sharing which transcends the original commercial or business setting of being a *shareholder* in a company or a joint venture.”<sup>569</sup> On closer examination, in Hooker’s view, it seems to be “far more logical” to suggest that since the “structure of vv. 22 and 23 is parallel to the structure of the previous five statements ... that the meaning, also, is parallel.”<sup>570</sup> In other words, Paul has become the slave of all “in order to save some,” in order to be a sharer *of* the gospel, and “the logic suggests that this means sharing in its work of salvation.”<sup>571</sup> This sense fits well with Paul’s concern that anything he might do could be a stumbling block to the salvation of others (1 Cor 9:12) and with the evangelization thrust of 1 Cor 9 in its entirety. This ‘partner’ meaning would also be more aligned with Paul’s naming of himself as ‘an apostle’ (1 Cor 9:1) and as one of God’s ‘fellow-workers’ (1 Cor 3:9).

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<sup>567</sup> Gorman, *Apostle of the Crucified Lord*, 140. Thiselton (*First Corinthians*, 707) summarises this view when he says: “to stand alongside the Jew, the Gentile, the socially dependent and vulnerable, or to live and act in solidarity with every kind of person in every kind of situation is **to have a share in the nature of the gospel**, i.e. *to instantiate what the gospel is and how it operates.*” Collins (*First Corinthians*, 356f.) also agrees substantially with Thiselton’s interpretation.

<sup>568</sup> Morna Hooker, “A Partner in the Gospel: Paul’s Understanding of his Ministry,” in *Theology and Ethics in Paul and his Interpreters*, ed. Eugene H. Lovering and Jerry L Sumney (Nashville: Abingdon, 1996), 85, footnote 4 mentions this translation.

<sup>569</sup> Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 707.

<sup>570</sup> Hooker, “A Partner in the Gospel: Paul’s Understanding of his Ministry,” 86.

<sup>571</sup> *Ibid.*

In summary, in the Inner Texture analysis, the repetition of words and the positioning of words, both sub-texture features of Inner Texture, are important. Also, the frequency with which Paul uses specific words is significant, for example, the repetition of νόμος /‘law’ (seven times in 1 Cor 9:20-22), κερδήσω/‘gain’ (six times in 1 Cor 9:19-22) and also his special use of συγκοινωνός /‘partner’ (1 Cor 9:23). These all contribute to highlighting the concepts or themes in his argument. Furthermore, the use of comparison (as in his comparing of ‘freedom’ and ‘enslavement’ in 1 Cor 9:19) and his employment of a form of progression sub-texture feature, that is, the literary technique *gradatio* (1 Cor 9:19-23), are very evident in this pericope. Nonetheless, one can never forget the logical strength of the literary structure of a pericope, for example, the parallelism of 1 Cor 9:19-23. Paul uses all these literary techniques (especially repetition, positioning of key words, opening-middle-closing, and other argumentative sub-texture features) to introduce, develop and conclude his message. In imitation of Christ he redefines ‘freedom’ as selfless service of others “in order to save at least some” (1 Cor 9:19-22). His primary concern is for the salvation of the Corinthians. His own personal entitlements are secondary to this missional commitment. Living a life of missional intentionality will indeed cause him pain and suffering. But he is adamant that he is commissioned by Christ to save others.

#### 4.3.2 Social and Cultural Texture

The Social and Cultural Texture recognises that a text will frequently reveal aspects of the writer’s social and cultural situation because a text is heavily influenced by the society and culture in which the writer and reader are living.<sup>572</sup> The sub-textures of the social and cultural texture are (1) specific social topics, (2) common social and

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<sup>572</sup> For a fuller discussion, see Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 71 – 94.

cultural topics, and (3) final cultural categories. Features of all three sub-textures are apparent and their occurrences will be remarked upon in the analysis. By a process of triangulation they assist in situating Paul in his social and cultural milieu. This is achieved, for example, by an analysis of the conversionist, reformist and utopian features of the specific social topics sub-texture, the honour-guilt and the challenge-response aspects of the social and cultural topics sub-texture, and, finally, the dominant culture and countercultural features of the final cultural categories sub-texture will be addressed.

This section investigates the Social and Cultural Texture of 1 Cor 9:19-27 by examining the Stoic-Sophist sage as the first-century model of renouncing one's entitlements in the cause of a greater good. It will also explore the influence of the Jewish tradition of the suffering righteous on Paul's preaching and embodiment of Christ's gospel. These approaches to God/god, life and the individual's place in the world significantly influenced Paul and his thinking.

The specific social topics sub-texture helps us locate Paul's own responses to the world. 1 Cor 9:19-23 shows that Paul has much in common with the Corinthian Stoic-Sophist sage (for example, both are anxious to understand God's/god's plan, their roles in that plan, and the means of fulfilling that role in life) and with the suffering prophets and righteous men of the Old Testament as they struggled towards the fulfilment of their missions. In 1 Cor 9:24-27 Paul explains that his proclamation of the gospel involves hardship, pain and suffering. He concludes that salvation is to be achieved through suffering, the suffering of Christ and the suffering of those who are his followers.<sup>573</sup>

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<sup>573</sup> This is evident, as detailed in the previous chapter, from the Old Testament (e.g. Isaiah 52:13—53:12; Jeremiah 11:18-23; 18:18-20; 20:2, Ezekiel 1:1; 3:25-26).



The Stoic-Sophist sage is a well-known character in first-century Greco-Roman times, who seeks, through philosophical reasoning and the writings and example of earlier sages, to understand the nature of god, the world, and humanity's reason for being. One particular area of the sages' study is the problem of suffering. Stoic philosophy understands suffering as being sent by god or the gods to test, teach, and/or punish. In the eyes of the Stoic-Sophist sage, various suffering, such as poverty, ill-health, death, and war, are all recognised as opportunities for developing courage, determination, endurance and, ultimately, tranquillity.<sup>574</sup> The life of the sage is spent pursuing this tranquillity by the twin routes of reason and virtue, and the sage struggles or suffers in becoming the embodiment of both.<sup>575</sup> In a world which saw one's character as extremely important, one's approach to hardship or suffering validates one as having genuine worth – a true sage or philosopher (and not just one on whom Fortune/Fate smiles). By the time of Panaetius (c. 180—100 B.C.E.), Stoicism is accepting that one could categorise people as follows: (i) a wise man or *sapiens* (one who had achieved ultimate tranquillity), (ii) *proficiens* (one who is proficient but still struggling or journeying towards greater tranquillity), and (iii) the foolish or *stultus* (one who was not on the journey at all).<sup>576</sup>

The Roman Stoic philosopher Seneca (4 B.C.E—65 C.E.) held that hardship and suffering were “‘inconveniences’ that should not be feared, but overcome through endurance.”<sup>577</sup> Endurance is praiseworthy as it builds virtue.<sup>578</sup> Seneca, and many Stoic-Sophists in Corinth, believe that “‘adversity is more beneficial than good fortune.”<sup>579</sup> Indeed, “‘afflictions and sorrows are rather a species of good fortune when

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<sup>574</sup> For a fuller discussion, see Fitzgerald, *Cracks in an Earthen Vessel*, 47-116.

<sup>575</sup> *Ibid.*, 203.

<sup>576</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

<sup>577</sup> Tabb, *Suffering in Ancient Worldview*, 6.

<sup>578</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>579</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

they fall to the lot of good men. They generate good deeds.”<sup>580</sup> John T. Fitzgerald

writes that

According to Seneca, the rare individual who attains the ideal does so by winning the battle between reason and the passions. This is the battle that rages in the heart of every individual. A victory by passion leads to rampant evil whereas a victory by reason leads to good. All good and all evil in the world are thus reducible to the pre-eminence of reason and passion, to the qualities of virtue and vice.<sup>581</sup>

Paul is, in many respects, a Christian sage. Doubtless he experiences severe hardship, as attested in his ‘tribulation’ or ‘hardship’ lists (1 Cor 4:9-13; 2 Cor 4:8-9; 6:4-5, 8-10; 11:23-29; Rom 8:35; Phil 4:12).<sup>582</sup> In 1 Cor 9:24-27 he explains that his preaching of the gospel to Jews and Greeks is not without its own hardship. He likens his self-imposed suffering to the self-imposed training and contest-related suffering endured by athletes and boxers preparing for the Isthmian Games (it is likely that Paul is in Corinth during the Games of 51 C.E).<sup>583</sup> In his commentary on this section of the pericope, Thiselton maintains that “an athlete goes through anything, both in effort and abstinence, to win because he or she has an eye on the ultimate [perishable] prize.”<sup>584</sup> Paul, for his part, would go through anything, both in effort and abstinence, because he has his eyes on the ultimate imperishable prize (1 Cor 9:25).<sup>585</sup>

In common with the sage, Paul accepts the hardship and suffering of his life because they are god-sent, or, in Paul’s case, God-sent (for example, 1 Cor 1:1; 4:9; 15:30-32).<sup>586</sup> Understanding and conforming one’s life to the divine/Divine will, that is, living as a *sapiens* or a *proficiens*, is only achieved after much difficulty and suffering and it requires considerable self-discipline or *ασκεσις* (1 Cor 9:24–27; 15:45-49). In the

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<sup>580</sup> Tabb, *Suffering in Ancient Worldview*, 6.

<sup>581</sup> Fitzgerald, *Cracks in Earthen Vessels*, 57.

<sup>582</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 183.

<sup>583</sup> Jerome Murphy-O’Connor, *Saint Paul’s Corinth: Texts and Archaeology* (Wilmington, DE: M. Glazier Press, 1983), 16-17.

<sup>584</sup> Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 711.

<sup>585</sup> *Ibid.*, 712: Thiselton “uses the ‘crown’ imagery (v.25) to return to the Pauline point of renunciation, self-discipline and self-control.”

<sup>586</sup> Fitzgerald, *Cracks in Earthen Vessels*, 70-87.

case of the sage advancement is assisted by the writings and the example of earlier sages (such as Socrates, Plato, Pythagoras), whereas, in Paul's case he sees his calling as conforming to the Divine Will as outlined in both the Old Testament writings and, pre-eminently, in the example of Jesus Christ. Both Paul and the sage conquer their hardship through power: in the sage's case through the power of reason or philosophy, but, in Paul's case through the power of God, working through his (Paul's) weakness.<sup>587</sup> Whereas the sage is seeking a "perishable crown" (honour, status) awarded by men, Paul is seeking "an imperishable crown" (1 Cor 9:25) gifted to him by God.

Paul, then, could find some common ground with these Stoic-Sophist views. Understanding and conforming one's will to the divine/Divine necessarily involved much suffering for both the sage and Paul. On the other hand, Paul and the sages hold differing views regarding 'power' and 'weakness.' For example, Paul concedes certain forms of weakness or unmanliness (unthinkable for the Stoic-Sophist) in order to highlight the 'power of God' enabling his work (1 Cor 3:6-7). Paul's willingness to follow Jesus' principle of non-retaliation would be regarded as weak or unmanly in the Greco-Roman world.<sup>588</sup>

Paul grew up in a Jewish world and imbibed many of that world's cultural beliefs and practices, e.g. honour-status, guilt and rights and the challenge-response subsections. As a result, Paul has much in common with the Jewish tradition of the suffering righteous. "Becoming an adult in that environment means acquiring knowledge, consciously or unconsciously, of these social and cultural values, patterns, or codes."<sup>589</sup> Among these are counted, for example, the Jewish Scriptures, which influence the values one considers important in life. This is an example of the Common Social and Cultural Topics many of which give Paul the values, patterns and codes he

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<sup>587</sup> Fitzgerald, *Cracks in Earthen Vessels*, 203-207.

<sup>588</sup> Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 363.

<sup>589</sup> Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 75.

practices. For example, Paul's use of the 'tribulation lists' is informed by Old Testament "traditions about the afflicted righteous man and suffering prophet, and it is transformed by his fixation on the cross of Christ."<sup>590</sup> Isaiah is a classic example of the suffering righteous man: the innocent servant suffers because of the sins of others. He was one of a long line of prophets and righteous men in the Old Testament who suffer bringing God's word to his people: Isaiah 53:7 ("He was treated harshly, but endured it humbly .... like a lamb about to be slaughtered, he never said a word ... and was led off to die"); Jeremiah 11:19 ("I was like a trusting lamb taken out to be killed .... let's kill him so that no one will remember him any more"); Zechariah in 2 Chronicles 24:16-22 ("King Joash joined in the conspiracy against Zechariah, and on the king's orders the people stoned Zechariah in the temple courtyard"), and Elijah in 1 Kings 19:1-4 (there is an account of King Ahab threatening to kill Elijah).

Final Cultural Categories identify the individual's cultural location, that is, they identify where the individual stands in relation to others in the culture. For example, does the individual publicly express membership of the dominant culture rhetoric, a subculture rhetoric, a countercultural rhetoric, a contracultural rhetoric, or a limited culture rhetoric. Paul is aware that he is preaching, embodying and writing a counterculture gospel. This often means opposing or contradicting kings or religious leaders, this is a dangerous but necessary stand to take: it was inherent in the Old Testament prophet's mission. For example, Jeremiah's prophesying provokes bitter opposition and he is beaten (by order of the priests) and put in the stocks (Jer 20:2f.). Jeremiah's adversaries even conspire to kill him (Jer 1:18—2:6). In 2 Maccabees 7:1-42 the martyrdom of the mother and her seven sons is a further example of persecution visited upon those loyal to Yahweh. Daniel 9:17-19 is yet another example of righteous

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<sup>590</sup> Fitzgerald, *Cracks in Earthen Vessels*, 207.

Israelites, in the midst of their suffering, appealing to a merciful God who will not forsake his chosen people. Paul followed closely in Jeremiah's and the other prophets' footsteps.

Paul encapsulates his argument in a personal example, namely, his preaching of Christ's gospel. In 1 Cor 9:19-27 he returns to this same theme or salvation narrative and he provides his readers/listeners with a personal example of this narrative. He explains that he has become "as a Jew" (1 Cor 9:20) to the Jews, "as a Gentile" ("as one outside the law" in 1 Cor 9:21) to the Gentiles, "as weak" to the weak (1 Cor 9:22), building towards the climax of the argument in 1 Cor 9:22-23: "I have become all things to all, so that I might by all means save some. All this I do for the sake of the gospel". He is also adamant in 1 Cor 9:24-27 that this proclamation and embodiment costs him dearly. He likens himself to an athlete or boxer in training for the Isthmian Games: I "run so as to win" (1 Cor 9:24), I "exercise discipline in every way" (1 Cor 9:25), and "I drive my body and train it" (1 Cor 9:27). In imitation of Christ crucified, Paul's life is also cruciform, and in his understanding it is unavoidably so. The fact that Paul repeats this narrative in 2 Cor 2:14—3:3 indicates that it is his considered view over a period of years and is central to his theologising.

In brief, the Social and Cultural Texture shows that Paul has significant common ground with the Stoic-Sophist sage. In particular, he values their searching for a better understanding of the divine/Divine Will and their determination to act accordingly and he is willing to use this in preaching or presenting his Christian arguments. He believes that his suffering is God-sent for a reason, that is, to mediate salvation. Suffering demands acceptance and 'working with.' It is important to note that the Corinthian idea

of ‘power’ is challenged by Paul and, indeed, turned upside down.<sup>591</sup> Paul redefines ‘power’ as ‘service.’ He also has much in common with the righteous men and suffering prophets of the Old Testament, such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the Maccabees. Paul’s understanding of salvation is that it is to be achieved through selfless, sacrificial, service of others, the suffering of Christ and the suffering of those who are ‘in Christ.’

It is noted also that all three aspects of the Social and Cultural sub-texture feature in 1 Cor 9:19-27, namely, the specific social topics (Paul is portrayed as of a conversionist-reformist-utopian mind-set), the common social and cultural topics (he renounces his legal status as a freeman of Rome and enslaves himself to all), and the final cultural categories (he positions himself as an apostle of a counterculture): all assist in understanding Paul’s argumentative reasoning.

#### 4.3.3 Ideological Texture

Ideological Texture is concerned with the “integrated system of beliefs, assumptions, and values” that reflects the needs and interests of a particular individual or group at a particular time and place.<sup>592</sup> The four sub-textures of ideological texture are (1) the individual locations of writers and readers: Paul reveals his presuppositions, dispositions and values in 1 Cor 9:19-27, for example, the importance of the salvation of others. (2) The relation to groups: throughout 1 Corinthians as in this pericope, Paul is clear that he wishes all to adopt the ‘mind of Christ’ and be saved, it’s his missional intentionality. (3) The modes of intellectual discourse (that is, the particular perspective

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<sup>591</sup> Marcus Aurelius wrote that “if you are distressed by anything external, the pain is not due to the thing itself, but to your estimate of it; and this you have the power to revoke at any time.” “Stoicism in principle doesn’t call for completely demolishing emotions, but re-structuring them through Asceticism (abstinence from pleasures of the world) which eventually leads the individual to attain clearer judgement, a strong sense of inner calmness and liberation from suffering/misery. The ultimate goal of stoicism is freeing your life from suffering:” Both quotations are from Marc Pantazis, *Stoic Philosophy: Ancient Wisdom for Self-Control, Perseverance and Tranquillity of Mind*, (CreateSpace Publishing Platform, 2017), accessed on the internet, 1.

<sup>592</sup> Davies, *The Problem of Slavery*, 14.

a reader/listener subscribes to) are important here as Paul works out his missional intentionality among Jews, pagans, weak, all. (4) The spheres of ideology, which concerns the ideology inscribed in the text and how one may analyse it, is very evident in Paul's description of his evangelical work with all, and the suffering that involves.<sup>593</sup>

Regarding 1): Paul's individual ideological location is apparent in his disagreement with some Corinthian church members on their understanding of the importance of 'freedom' (1 Cor 9:19f.): he is never afraid to make public his personal understanding provided it doesn't present a 'stumbling block' to the others' salvation. His debate with the Corinthian 'freedom' group cannot be ignored if he is to offer them God's gift of salvation. He enters this 'relation to groups' discussion, another sub-texture of Ideological Texture, accepting that inescapable suffering is involved. The text of 1 Cor 9:19-27 gives a transparent and unashamedly honest insight into Paul's personal sphere of ideology.

Regarding 2) Paul's relation to groups, specifically to the 'freedom' group in the Corinthian church, is of particular note. In the opinion of his adversaries there are no limits on one's freedom whereas in Paul's view one's freedom is secondary to the other person's salvation. Paul presents his argument as follows: The particular Corinthian group at the centre of the problem seem to be reluctant to accept any limitations on their freedom, even in the cause of unity (1 Cor 8:9-13; 9:1). To them, compromise means a loss of freedom and is, therefore, unacceptable. Paul, on the other hand, is advocating an ideology that gives priority to the other person's salvation (1 Cor 9:9 – "Make sure that this liberty of yours in no way becomes a stumbling block to the weak"). As a result, Paul's (and the Christian's) lawful entitlements become secondary to this missional intentionality, which he exemplifies in 1 Cor 9:19-27. As an example, Paul

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<sup>593</sup> Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 96f.

explains in 1 Cor 9:3-18 why he renounces his apostolic right to material recompense for his work. His renunciation is based on common sense, the Mosaic Law (1 Cor 9:9) and an order of Christ (1 Cor 9:14). Furthermore, he calls on the Corinthians to follow his example as he and they follow the example of Christ (1 Cor 11:1), and these are the arguments he puts to his adversaries. Paul's concern is for those whose faith and conscience may not be mature and the subsequent fear that they may be scandalised in seeing fellow Christians participating in temple banquets or eating sacrificed meat.<sup>594</sup> Consequently, Paul redefines 'Christian freedom' as always being 'other-focused.' In Paul's view, concern for others, and especially salvific service of others, is more important than an individual's own rights. In 1 Cor 9:19-27 he clarifies, in examples taken from his own everyday apostolic work, this missional intentionality and its consequences for him (1 Cor 9:27 – "I drive my body and train it, for fear that, after having preached to others, I myself should be disqualified"). Whether he is evangelising a Jew or a Greek, his greatest concern is their salvation. He is willing to compromise or limit his own freedom in the cause of enhancing another's salvation and/or in the cause of greater unity. For Paul, "standing in solidarity with the other, as against autonomy or self-affirmation, lies at the heart of the gospel" (1 Cor 9:23).<sup>595</sup> In particular, standing in solidarity with the poor or weak of conscience, he challenges 'the strong' Corinthians to act like the 'wise' they claim to be and "to allow attentiveness to the 'weak' and to others in diverse situations of culture, religion, and status to override their own concerns for self-affirmation and freedom."<sup>596</sup> This approach requires training and exercise (1 Cor 9:24-27) on a daily basis (1 Cor 15:31) and it demands that

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<sup>594</sup> Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 130.

<sup>595</sup> Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 699.

<sup>596</sup> Clarence E. Glad, *Paul and Philodemus: Adaptability in Epicurean and Early Christian Psychagogy*, NovTSup 81 (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 43-45, 240-277; paraphrased in Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 701.



“love sets bounds to Christian freedom.”<sup>597</sup> These demands emerge, not from the need for ‘success,’ but from the nature of the gospel itself (1 Cor 9:23). As such, Paul calls on the Corinthians to follow his example as he follows the example of Christ (1 Cor 11:1).

To close his presentation Paul compares himself to an athlete and a boxer preparing for the Isthmian Games. 1 Cor 9:24-27 is the fitting culmination to Paul’s self-exemplification of the proper use of Christian freedom throughout 1 Cor 9 and in the larger ‘argument’ of 1 Cor 8:1—11:1). Often in Greek society the athlete is the paradigm of renunciation of temporary freedoms through *εγκρατεία* or self-control (especially in regard to sex and food) for the sake of the greater goal, the perishable crown of competition.<sup>598</sup> This is similar to what Paul urges the Corinthians to do. Instead of using their freedom to do whatever they want, they should make concessions to one another out of their freedom, for the sake of the “imperishable crown” (1 Cor 9:25), namely, their own salvation and that of others.<sup>599</sup> This is Christian freedom for Paul: freely choosing to place the needs of others before one’s own. In other words, Paul is exemplifying a theology of service in 1 Cor 9:19-27 that recognises God’s plan, that accepts one’s place in realising that plan, and that implements that plan through a selfless suffering service of others. Unlike the athletes who renounce their freedom temporarily, Paul is urging his followers to renounce their freedom permanently. This theology of service is “always fully devoted to the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labour is not in vain” (1 Cor 15:58), as it saves others (1 Cor 9:19-23). In the view of Jerome Murphy-O’Connor, Paul, as the “vehicle of commitment and the

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<sup>597</sup> Kasemann, “A Pauline Version of Amor Fati,” 217 and 218.

<sup>598</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 359.

<sup>599</sup> Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 138.

instrument of love....., must be trained to be more responsive to the needs of others than his own.”<sup>600</sup>

The Individual Location sub-texture was first encountered in 1 Cor 2:1-5 where Paul presented his basic approach to preaching in Corinth. It was present also in 1 Cor 4:9-13. Here in 1 Cor 9:19-27 he provides a more extensive application of that same basic approach, his missional intentionality. The Relation to Groups sub-texture is evident in the group power dynamic between Paul and his adversaries who, with significant support in contemporary philosophies, maintain that their freedom is absolute. Furthermore, it is clear that this argument is but an expression or example of the ‘battle’ between the Stoic-Cynic view of ‘(absolute) freedom’ and Paul’s view of ‘(conditional) freedom,’ a battle between the ideology of the ‘wise’ Corinthians and that of Paul and his followers: it is both a mode of intellectual discourse and an expression of a sphere of ideology.

In brief, Paul redefines Christian freedom as selfless, sacrificial suffering in the service of others. In his view, an individual believer’s entitlements are secondary to the salvation of another, even though this causes suffering for the apostle. This is Christ’s own example and Paul is anxious to follow his mentor. Paul is appealing to the Corinthians to renounce their authority or individual entitlements “for the sake of peace in one’s relations with others, for the sake of the social whole.”<sup>601</sup> This is necessary for the unity of the Corinthian followers of Christ. Moreover, this is the meaning of Christian freedom: freely choosing to serve others and giving priority to the other’s salvation. In the larger unit (1 Cor 8:1—11:1), Paul presents in 1 Cor 9:19-27 a personal example of his missional intentionality, and of its cost to him personally.

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<sup>600</sup> Murphy O’Connor, “The First Letter to the Corinthians,” 807.

<sup>601</sup> Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 133 - “for a Christian to compromise with others is not even a voluntary decision: it is the only way to live out that calling.”

#### 4.3.4 Intertexture

Intertexture is the practice of interweaving elements (meanings, values, roles) from an earlier text or tradition within a later one in order to include some of the meanings, emotions, or realities of the former text.<sup>602</sup> There are examples of (1) oral-scribal and (2) cultural Intertexture in 1 Cor 9:19-27. As mentioned earlier some of these Intertexture references may be seen from different perspectives as being primarily oral-scribal, cultural, social and/or historical. The oral-scribal Intertexture example is in 1 Cor 9:19 where Paul says that he became a slave of all. This goes back to Jesus' *logion* on 'service' also recalled in Mt 20:26-28, Mk 10:43-45, and Lk 22:26-27. The tradition of the 'righteous sufferer' is echoed in 1 Cor 9:19, 24-27: it is an example of cultural Intertexture as it relates to codes, systems and myths known only to cultural 'insiders:' the Hebrew Scriptures speak of many examples, such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the Deutero-canonical Maccabean martyrs.

In this section Paul's treatment of a *logion* on 'service' from Jesus, also recorded in all three synoptic gospels and his references to some Isaian and Maccabean 'servant' themes will be investigated. Paul concludes from these Intertexture references that the believer is commissioned to live a selfless and sacrificial life of service, that this is Christ's life and that because this is Christ's life it is, therefore, salvific.

Commentators note the verbal and thematic similarities between Paul's statement in 1 Cor 9:19 ("I have made myself a slave to all so as to win over as many

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<sup>602</sup> Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 40. The sub-textures of Intertexture are as follows: (1) oral-scribal Intertexture is using or copying the text of another author with or without reference, (2) cultural Intertexture is referring to, alluding to or echoing a text that relates to values, codes, systems and myths known only to particular cultural 'insiders' is also evident in 1 Corinthians. (3) social Intertexture is the social knowledge commonly held by all people of a region. (4) historical Intertexture is the reference to "events that have occurred at specific times in specific locations."

as possible”) and that of the tradition the synoptic writers are relaying in Mark 10:43-45; Matthew 20:26-28; Luke 22:26-27.<sup>603</sup>

<b><u>Matthew 20:26-28</u></b>	<b><u>Mark 10:43-45</u></b>	<b><u>Luke 22:26-27</u></b>
<p><sup>26</sup> Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, <sup>27</sup> and whoever wants to be first must be your slave – <sup>28</sup> just as the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many</p>	<p><sup>43</sup> Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, <sup>44</sup> and whoever wants to be first among you must be slave of all. <sup>45</sup> For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.</p>	<p><sup>26</sup> But among you it shall not be so. Rather let the greatest among you be as the youngest, and the leader as the servant. <sup>27</sup> For who is greater, the one seated at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one seated at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.</p>

In the above-mentioned texts the Synoptic writers all highlight certain features common to Paul in 1 Cor 9:19: i) the setting is one of teaching his followers about discipleship, ii) the main theme is serving, and iii) followers of Jesus are to be like him in their selfless service. Collins concludes that “the study of the tradition history of these synoptic *logia* is fairly complex, but scholars generally agree that there is a genuine *logion* of Jesus at the origin of the tradition.”<sup>604</sup> It is important to recognise that all four writers (Paul, Mark, Matthew and Luke) agree that Christ lived a life of service and that all are asking their followers to follow Christ’s example. There is also general agreement among scholars that “the tradition did not originally include an idea of following Jesus in the self-oblation of his death as a way of following him in service.”<sup>605</sup> This latter point is important because it confirms that the original *logion* of Jesus relayed by Paul, Mark, Matthew, and Luke, referred not to following Jesus in his

<sup>603</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 353. Kugelman, “The First Letter to the Corinthians,” 268 says of 1 Cor 9:19: “Following his Master’s example and precept he has made himself the slave of all (Lk 22:26-27; Mk 10:43-45).”

<sup>604</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 353.

<sup>605</sup> *Ibid.*, 353.

death but to a *living embodiment* of Christ's gospel.<sup>606</sup> Even though the original logion of Jesus did not include the "self-oblation of his death as a way of following him in service," that element is expressed in each (Paul and the Synoptics) text's setting. Paul places this saying in a text that highlights his suffering service (1 Cor 9:19-27) which he later calls his 'daily death' for others (1 Cor 15:31). Mark sets his saying in a passage that records his third prediction of Christ's death (Mk 10:32-45).<sup>607</sup> Matthew locates his saying in a pericope (Mt 20:17-28), that "distils the entire mission of Jesus into terminology of service" and that "restates the fundamental purpose of Jesus' mission, but now in reference to his death."<sup>608</sup> Luke situates his saying during the Last Supper and the inauguration of the new covenant "in his blood" (death).<sup>609</sup> These reports of a Jesus logion, in Hooker's words, "remind us that suffering and victory [or, salvation] belong to each other, and that it is only through the former that the latter is achieved."<sup>610</sup>

The above-mentioned connection between suffering and salvation, and specifically the claim that "only through the former that the latter is achieved," is an idea rooted in the Old Testament.<sup>611</sup> It may be viewed as cultural, that is, as known to 'insiders' of the Jewish culture. Paul is aware of the long-developing tradition of the Old Testament's suffering righteous (such as Job, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Zechariah, Elijah), and the Deutero-canonical accounts of the martyrdom of Eleazar and the Maccabean mother and her seven sons).<sup>612</sup> These traditions were increasingly considered, as time

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<sup>606</sup> Some commentators do recognise the comparison (e.g. Collins, *First Corinthians*, 353; Kugelman, "First Corinthians" in *JBC*, 268). Also, Otto Betz, in *Jesus and the Suffering Servant*, ps. 70-87, puts forward a credible case for believing that "Paul knew the saying of Jesus in Mk 10:38 as well as the soteriological interpretation of Christ's death in Mk 10:45 and in the Eucharistic words of Mk 14:24" (*Jesus and the Suffering Servant*, 85-86).

<sup>607</sup> Hooker, *The Gospel according to Mark*, BNTC (London: A. & C. Black, 1991), 246.

<sup>608</sup> Donald Senior, *Matthew*, ANTC (Nashville: Abingdon, 1998), 226.

<sup>609</sup> Michael Patella, *The Gospel according to Luke*, NCBC (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2005), 141 and Hooker, *The Gospel according to Mark*, 247-251.

<sup>610</sup> Hooker, *The Gospel according to Mark*, 251.

<sup>611</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>612</sup> For example: Job 27:6; Isaiah 52:13—53:12; Jer 7:26; 20:7, 9; 11:18—12:13; 37—39; 1 Kings 19:10, 14; 2 Macc 8. There is a more detailed account of 'Jeremiah and Paul' in the Appendix to this

passed, to express a developing understanding of the righteous person's suffering as atoning for sins or being salvific.<sup>613</sup> Sanders records that Scrolls CD, IQS, and IQH indicate the belief that "the Community, with the good deeds and pious prayers of its members .... atoned for the sins of its members" (IQS 8.3f. and 5:6).<sup>614</sup> There are indications in the Scrolls too "that suffering could be considered atoning"<sup>615</sup> (Sanders, 304) and, that "good deeds substitute for sacrifices as acts of atonement is seen further when one considers the use of *kippurim* '[acts of] atonement.'" In this the Community/Council "are seen as having a priestly function, atoning on behalf of others. It is noteworthy that this involves suffering, which implies a notion of suffering for the atonement of others."<sup>616</sup> Brueggemann, discussing Isaiah 53, states that in God's mysterious way he resolves "to do something new. . . . through suffering, .... to bring to fruition God's intention for the world."<sup>617</sup> As Paul reads Isaiah (especially Isa 42; 52:13—53:12) he understands it to say that the weak and suffering servant "made righteous," that is, atoned for others "so that those who should be harshly judged were declared to be innocent."<sup>618</sup>

Undoubtedly, Paul sees Christ as the fulfilment of the Isaian prophecy of the Suffering Servant and as having "died for our sins" (1 Cor 15:3). This is shown in a comparison of 1 Corinthians and the Book of Isaiah. For example, comparing 1 Cor 15:3 and Isaiah 53:4-8, the conceptual similarities are striking:

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dissertation. See also Jarvis J. Williams, *Maccabean Martyr Traditions in Paul's Theology of Atonement* (Eugene OR: Wipf and Stock, 2010).

<sup>613</sup> Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 158f., 168-172, 204.

<sup>614</sup> *Ibid.*, 303.

<sup>615</sup> *Ibid.*, 304.

<sup>616</sup> *Ibid.*, 302.

<sup>617</sup> Brueggemann, *Isaiah 40 - 66*, 143 – 144. In Brueggemann's view, the 'gospel' of the Old Testament attests that God worked, and still works, re-creation through suffering. This is "the power of God at work through human weakness to bring to fruition God's intention for the world." Paul said in 1 Cor 1:26-31 that "God chose the foolish of the world to shame the wise of the world, and God chose the weak of the world to shame the strong, and God chose the lowly and despised of the world, those who count for nothing, to reduce to nothing those who are something, so that no human being might boast before God."

<sup>618</sup> Brueggemann, *Isaiah 40 - 66*, 143 – 144.

<b><u>1 Cor 15:3</u></b>	<b><u>Isaiah 53:4, 5,6, 8</u></b>
<sup>4</sup> For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that <i>Christ died for our sins</i> in accordance with the scriptures.	<sup>4</sup> Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering. <sup>5</sup> But he was wounded for our transgressions, <sup>6</sup> crushed for our iniquities and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all ... <sup>8</sup> for the transgression of my people he was punished

William Farmer maintains that, other than in Isaiah, “nowhere else in the scriptures that were available to Paul is there a text which speaks so explicitly of a saviour figure who dies in behalf of the sins of others.”<sup>619</sup> These conceptual similarities, in the view of Farmer, make the connection between 1 Cor 15:3 and Isa 53:4-8 “so compelling.”<sup>620</sup> A survey of Paul’s undisputed Letters indicates that this is a consistent part of Paul’s theology and that its message (Christ through his selfless and sacrificial suffering service saves others) is central to his gospel.<sup>621</sup>

As the majority of commentators assert that Paul’s re-interpretation of this *logion* bears similarities with an Isaian perspective on suffering service (including the concept of suffering ‘even to death’), here is the appropriate place to investigate further Paul’s use of the Book of Isaiah and, in particular, his use of Isaiah’s innocent suffering servant in 1 Corinthians.<sup>622</sup> In the view of Richard B. Hays, Paul seems to have developed a

<sup>619</sup> See Farmer, William R. “Reflections on Isaiah 53 and Christian Origins,” 263 and footnotes 11 and 12.

<sup>620</sup> Ibid.

<sup>621</sup> Here is but a selection of such other supporting references from 1 Thessalonians (1:2-10; 4:3, 7), Galatians (5:6; 6:15; 3:20-22; 3:7-10), 1 Corinthians (1:18, 21; 3: 15; 7:16 (x2); 8:11; 9:22; 10:33; 15:2), 2 Corinthians (1:6; 4:1-18), Romans (1:16-17; 8:18-30; 10:9-13; 11:11-12; 13:1-2), Philippians (1:27-30; 2:12-13) and Philemon (1:6, 9). This view is also maintained throughout the Deutero-Pauline Letters (for example: Ephesians 5:6-20; 1 Timothy 1:15-16; 2:4, 15; 4:10, 16). Thus, one can say that this is a consistent part of Paul’s theology and that its message is central to Paul’s gospel.

<sup>622</sup> In his undisputed Letters Paul quotes Isaiah thirty one times (out of a total of eighty nine quotations across all seven Letters). Most commentators agree that there are at least six quotations and a wide range of allusions and/or echoes of various strengths (possibly as many as seventy verbal and/or conceptual references). These references come from First, Second and Third Isaiah. For example: 1 Cor 1:19 (Isaiah 29:14; 2:9 (52:15, 64:3, 65:16); 2:16 (40:13); 3:10 (13:3); 10:22 (65:11); 14:21 (28:11); 14:25 (45:15); 15:3 (58:8, 12); 15:33 (22:13); 15:58 (65:23).

sustained reading of it [The Book of Isaiah] as God's revelation of the 'mystery that was kept secret for long ages but is now disclosed,' and through the prophetic writings is made known to all the Gentiles, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about 'the obedience of faith.'<sup>623</sup>

It is important to consider Paul's use of the Isaian suffering servant themes and storylines. The suffering servant theme appears particularly in Second Isaiah's Servant Songs (Isa 42:1-9; 49:1-6; 50:4-9 and 52:13—53:12). The author(s) of these poems describe(s) the servant of Yahweh as one specially called or commissioned to bring judgement and salvation to the whole world (Isa 42:1-4). Israel's God, Yahweh, alone is the Creator and Ruler of the cosmos; other gods do not exist (Isa 44:6). Through the servant, the People of God are now given a new responsibility: God will make them "a light to the nations" (Isa 42:6), witnesses to his glory (Isa 43:10), and "the culmination of the ancient promise to Abraham that his descendents ultimately would be the source of universal blessing."<sup>624</sup> Though assured of ultimate success, the servant's mission will be opposed (Isa 50:4-9), he will be rejected, and his extensive suffering will climax in his death: "His death is mysterious because of his innocence; the mystery is revealed as the vicarious atoning merit of his death, vindicated by his resurrection."<sup>625</sup> The identity of the Suffering Servant is not disclosed in the Book of Isaiah. It may be the faithful remnant, an innocent third party, the guiltless prophet himself or, most probably, Israel itself.<sup>626</sup> Whatever is the identity of the Suffering Servant, Isaiah's main point is that the prophet is faithful and innocent, that he takes on himself the

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<sup>623</sup> Hays, *The Conversion of the Imagination*, 25-27.

<sup>624</sup> Harris, *Understanding the Bible*, 220.

<sup>625</sup> McKenzie, *Dictionary of the Bible*, 791.

<sup>626</sup> J. J. Collins, in his commentary entitled *Isaiah*, NCBC (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1986), 114 and 220, proposed a "common view," namely that "in the context of Second Isaiah as a whole, the servant must be identified as Israel, although the prophet holds an idealised view of the servant's role, and not all the exilic community lived up to it. He adds that "the significance of this passage goes beyond the historical identification of the servant. It presents a model of piety which allows that suffering can have a positive purpose. As such it broke with a long biblical tradition that regarded suffering as a punishment for sin."



suffering of others, and in doing so achieves the salvation of others.<sup>627</sup> It is these conceptual similarities that make the connection between 1 Cor 15:3 and Isa 53:4-8 “so compelling.”<sup>628</sup>

John J. Collins holds, with the majority of commentators, that “the servant must be identified as Israel, although the prophet holds an idealised view of the servant’s role, and not all the exilic community lived up to it.”<sup>629</sup> He states that Isaiah 52:13—53:12 is a highly significant passage because “It presents a model of piety which allows that suffering can have a positive purpose.”<sup>630</sup> In the context of Isaiah 52:13—53:12, the positive purpose mentioned is a salvific purpose. This is an extremely important interpretation because it asserts that *the servant is identified as the people of Israel, and not just one person, and that that suffering service is salvific*. However, Collins recognises that not all Israelites lived up to the expressed ideal that the suffering of the [faithful] Israelites can have a positive purpose, and be salvific. This understanding broke with a long biblical tradition that understood suffering as a punishment for sin.<sup>631</sup>

This new understanding that the suffering of the faithful Israelite could be salvific continued to grow in the time between Isaiah and Paul. Many of the prophets, such as Isaiah, Jeremiah and Zechariah had been rejected, mistreated, even killed. The martyrs, such as Eleazer, the Maccabean mother and her seven sons, also suffered

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<sup>627</sup> This guiltless suffering is also found in Job (as mentioned by Paul in 1 Cor 4:4. Paul refers to the Servant Songs on a number of other occasions across his undisputed Letters. For example: verbal and conceptual similarities link Gal 1:3-4 (“Jesus Christ who gave himself for our sins”) and Isa 53 (“similarly he has borne our sins” in Isa 53:4, “he was wounded for our sins and bruised for our iniquities” in Isa 53:6). Gal 2:20 explains the voluntary nature of this sacrificial act, motivated by love (“I live by faith in the Son of God who has loved me and given himself up for me”). Farmer, “Reflections on Isaiah 53 and Christian Origins,” 277 concludes that “nowhere else in the scriptures that were available to Paul is there a text which speaks so explicitly of a saviour figure who dies in behalf of the sins of others” as in Isa 53:4. There are also clear Isaian allusions in 2 Cor 5:21; 6:4-10; Rom 4:25; 5:15-19; 10:16): James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered: Christianity in the Making*, Vol 1 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 2003), 808-818. He maintains that the following all draw on Isaiah’s suffering servant: Mt 8:17 (Isa 53:4), Mark 10:45 (Isa 53:10-11), Luke 22:37 (Isa 53:10-11), John 13:3-7 (Isa 53:10-11), Acts 8:32-33 (Isa 53:7-8) and 1 Peter 2:22-25 (Isa 53:4,6,9,12).

<sup>628</sup> See Farmer, “Reflections on Isaiah 53 and Christian Origins,” 263 and footnotes 11 and 12.

<sup>629</sup> John J. Collins, *Isaiah*, CBC 13 (Collegeville MN: Liturgical Press, 1986), 114.

<sup>630</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>631</sup> *Ibid.*, 220.

grievous violence for their loyalty to their faith. By the time of Paul the image of the prophet and that of the martyr were being merged, as can be seen in the case of the Maccabean martyrs (2 Maccabees 8—10).<sup>632</sup> These traditions were increasingly considered, as time passed, to express a developing understanding of the righteous person’s suffering as somehow atoning for sins or being salvific.<sup>633</sup> For example, Hooker sees close similarities between the above-mentioned ‘Service’ sayings (1 Cor 9:19; Mk 10:43-45; Mt 20:26-27; Lk 22:26-27) and passages in 4 Maccabees, particularly 6:29 and 17:21. In 4 Macc 6:29 one of the martyrs prays to God, “Be merciful to your people and let our punishment suffice for them. Make my blood their purification, and take my life in exchange for theirs.” 4 Macc 17:21 says that “the tyrant was punished, and the homeland purified – they having become, as it were, a ransom for the sin of our nation.” In both cases the martyr’s death is interpreted “specifically as an atonement for sin.”<sup>634</sup> Hooker concludes that “the martyrs suffer on behalf of others: they die, not as substitutes, but as representatives of their nation: and because of their faith and fortitude their countrymen are delivered.”<sup>635</sup> They most certainly gave their lives ‘for many.’<sup>636</sup> Even though the links between 1 Cor 9:19, Mk 10:43-45, Mt 20:26-27 and Lk 22:26-27, on the one hand, and Isaiah 53, on the other hand, are close, Hooker believes that the similarities with 4 Maccabees 6:29; 17:21) are even closer than those with Isaiah 53, particularly the “closer verbal link.”<sup>637</sup>

Paul, in advocating the salvific nature of his and his followers’ lives, is loyally giving voice to and developing further an inherited view. Albert Nolan, speaking of the

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<sup>632</sup> Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 158f., 168-172, 204.

<sup>633</sup> Ibid.

<sup>634</sup> Hooker, *From Adam to Christ*, 42 (see ps. 42-55); and Hooker, *The Gospel according to Mark*, 250.

<sup>635</sup> Ibid. The italics are in the original.

<sup>636</sup> Lohfink, *No Irrelevant Jesus*, 86-89.

<sup>637</sup> Ibid., 86-89. One could also mention Daniel 7:27 (when the reign of persecution comes to an end, “then the kingship and dominion and majesty of all the kingdoms under heaven shall be given to the holy people of the Most High, whose kingdom shall be everlasting”); again, suffering leads to victory or salvation.

suffering of many prophets and martyrs, states that “death in such circumstances was widely regarded as an atonement for sin – for one’s own sins and for the sins of others.”<sup>638</sup> He concludes that the early Christians did not invent the concept of martyrdom nor the concept of an atoning and redemptive death; “it was part of their Jewish heritage.”<sup>639</sup>

Returning to Isaiah’s Suffering Servant, Brueggemann understands that Isaiah 52:13—53:12 is a pivotal text which summarises the entire thinking of the Old Testament when he sees Yahweh assuring his servant in Isa 52:13—53:12 that he “shall be exalted” at the beginning of this Song (Isa 52:13) and again at the end (53:10-12).<sup>640</sup> Within the poem, Isaiah “details the life of the servant, a life of suffering and humiliation.”<sup>641</sup> The Servant is an outcast, to be shunned, avoided, and excluded. Yet, this “humiliated one becomes the exalted one by the intention of Yahweh. This exaltation is “the inscrutable resolve of Yahweh to do something new. . . . through suffering.”<sup>642</sup> In Brueggemann’s view, the ‘gospel’ of the Old Testament attests that God often worked, and still works, through suffering. This is “the power of God at work through human weakness to bring to fruition God’s intention for the world.”<sup>643</sup> Paul says in 1 Cor 1:26-31 that “God chose the foolish of the world to shame the wise of the world, and God chose the weak of the world to shame the strong, and God chose the lowly and despised of the world, those who count for nothing, to reduce to nothing those who are something, so that no human being might boast before God.” As Paul reads Isaiah (especially Isa 52:13—53:12) he understands it to say that the weak and

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<sup>638</sup> Albert Nolan, *Jesus before Christianity* (London: Darton, Longman, and Todd, 1976-2001), 137.

<sup>639</sup> Nolan, *Jesus before Christianity*, 137. See also W. H. C. Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church* (Eugene OR: Wipf and Stock, 2008), 57-58; Jurgen Moltmann, in “Die Gekruisigde God,” in *N. G. Teologiese Tydskrif*, (March 1973), 110; and Williams, *Maccabean Martyr Traditions in Paul’s Theology of Atonement*, 64-84.

<sup>640</sup> Brueggemann, *Isaiah 40 – 66*, 141 – 142.

<sup>641</sup> *Ibid.*, 142.

<sup>642</sup> *Ibid.*, 143 – 144.

<sup>643</sup> *Ibid.*, 141 – 142, 144.

suffering servant “made righteous,” and he explains that remark by stating that he “qualified the others to receive the benefit [or salvation], so that those who should be harshly judged were declared to be innocent.”<sup>644</sup>

In brief, the oral-scribal Intertexture reference (1 Cor 9:19) is extremely important in Paul’s development of his argument. The probable Jesus *logion* provides Paul with a strong foundation for his selfless, sacrificial life of service.<sup>645</sup> However, Paul’s understanding of Christ’s selfless, sacrificial life of service as the model for his own life of service and that of his followers is clear throughout 1 Corinthians in his direct and indirect calls to his followers to imitate Christ’s example (e.g. 1 Cor 4:15; 11:1). That foundation is further strengthened by the cultural Intertexture reference to the Old Testament righteous sufferers, especially Isaiah. He uses Isa 53 as a template for understanding Jesus’ life and suffering, for his own life and mission and he appeals to his church members to follow Jesus’ and his own example (1 Cor 4:16; 11:1).

The similarities between 1 Cor 9:19 and the Synoptic traditions (Mk 10:43-45, Mt 20:26-27, and Lk 22:26-27) ground Paul’s understanding of service in the example of Jesus himself. It is evident also, that Paul is significantly influenced by Isaiah. Paul interprets Christ’s life, mission and death through an Isaian lens. The allusions, themes and storylines to Isaiah, Jeremiah, the Maccabbeean martyrs and other righteous sufferers come not just from oral-scribal sources but are also embedded in the Jewish cultural Intertexture. They support the view that Paul believes that his calling is to bring the gospel ‘to the nations’ and that his proclamation requires of him an embodiment of that gospel, that is, a life of selfless, sacrificial service of others. In so doing, he would meet with opposition, rejection and suffering, even death. This

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<sup>644</sup> Brueggmann, *Isaiah 40 – 66*, 141 – 142. 144.

<sup>645</sup> Some commentators do recognise the comparison (e.g. Collins, *First Corinthians*, 353; Kugelman, *First Corinthians in JBC*, 268. Also, Otto Betz, in *Jesus and the Suffering Servant*, ps.70-87, puts forward a credible case for believing that “Paul knew the saying of Jesus in Mk 10:38 as well as the soteriological interpretation of Christ’s death in Mk 10:45 and in the Eucharistic words of Mk 14:24.”

suffering would be borne in atonement for the sins of many and his mission, depending on God to ‘cause the growth’ (1 Cor 3:6, 7), would ultimately be successful (1 Cor 15:58). This is extremely important because Paul is basing his understanding of Christ’s suffering on Isaiah 53, *which gives suffering a positive purpose and value.*<sup>646</sup> Farmer concludes his study of this text by saying that “nowhere else in the scriptures that were available to Paul is there a text which speaks so explicitly of a saviour figure who dies in behalf of the sins of others” as in Isa 53:4.<sup>647</sup> Hooker also draws attention to the similarities between 1 Cor 9:19 and the synoptic ‘Servant’ sayings on the one hand, and 4 Maccabees 6:29 and 17:21 on the other hand. In the references to Maccabees “the martyrs suffer on behalf of others: they die, not as substitutes, but as representatives of their nation: and because of their faith and their fortitude their countrymen are delivered.”<sup>648</sup>

Importantly, this is saying that the life and suffering of Paul (and his followers) are salvific.<sup>649</sup>

#### 4.3.5 Sacred Texture

Sacred Texture is the way in which a text speaks of God or gods, or talks about realms of religious life, salvation, and ethics.<sup>650</sup> In 1 Cor 9:19-27 by far the most

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<sup>646</sup> This Isaian text (Isa 53) may indeed be the first time in the Old Testament that a positive value and purpose was given to suffering.

<sup>647</sup> Farmer, “Reflections on Isaiah 53 and Christian Origins,” 263.

<sup>648</sup> Hooker, *The Gospel according to Mark*, 250. Italics in the original.

<sup>649</sup> Holly Beers, *The Followers of Jesus as the ‘Servant’ – Luke’s Model from Isaiah for the Disciples in Luke-Acts* (London: T&T Clark, 2015), 31-48, 82. Beers asserts that “Paul couches his own vocation in servant language in Gal 1:15-16 [written before 1 Corinthians], echoing the servant from Isaiah 49, ‘whom God sends as ‘a light to the nations, so that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.’”

<sup>650</sup> For a fuller discussion, see Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 120-131. This texture includes sub-textures concerning (1) deity, (2) holy persons, (3) spirit beings, (4) divine history, (5) human redemption, (6) human commitment, (7) religious community, and (8) ethics

prominent sub-textures are (4) divine history, and (6) human commitment to one's role in achieving the goals of that divine plan; these will be examined in detail.<sup>651</sup>

As regards the divine history sub-texture (4) above, Paul's line of argumentation is as follows: he accepts gratefully that, through the life, death and resurrection of Christ, he has been gifted "righteousness, sanctification, and redemption" (1 Cor 1:30). Redeemed by Christ, he is saved, and he is now obliged to *live* as saved. He feels an obligation or commission to embody the gospel he preaches (1 Cor 9:1-18). This gives rise to his missional imperative and the struggle and suffering he experiences in achieving that embodiment, which he believes saves others (1 Cor 9:19-27), as he claims in 1 Cor 9:19-23: "I made myself a slave to all so as to win over as many as possible."<sup>652</sup> This entails Paul becoming "as a Jew to win over Jews... to those under the law, I became like one under the law.... To those outside the law I became like one outside the law.... To the weak I became weak, to win over the weak. I have become all things to all, to save at least some" (1 Cor 9:20-22). Paul does this "to save" others (1 Cor 9:22) and in 1 Cor 9:27a he tells us that he drives himself ("I drive my body and train it") in order to achieve the salvation of others (1 Cor 9:24-27; 15:45-49). In this struggle he believes that he is following the example of Christ (1 Cor 11:1) and that makes it all purposeful and worthwhile, desirable and even joyful. Through his dedication to his salvific role in divine history Paul is also declaring his human commitment.

Regarding the human commitment sub-texture (6): Paul's conformity to Christ's counter-cultural gospel invites opposition, conflict and suffering (1 Cor 4:9-13; 9:24-27), but it is a price he is willing to pay. His mention (1 Cor 9:24-27) of the athlete disciplining himself "in every way" (1 Cor 9:25; 10:33), and of 'driving his body and

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<sup>651</sup> 'Divine history' is Robbins' phrase for 'salvation history' (*Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 123).

<sup>652</sup> The verb ἐδούλωσα is indicative, aorist, active indicating a continuing action.

training it' (1 Cor 9:27) shows that this imitation of Christ causes him anxiety, effort, struggle, strife, and suffering. Nevertheless, he appeals to his followers to live as saved, following Paul's own example (1 Cor 4:16) and the example of Christ (1 Cor 11:1). He and they are now to live the same selfless, sacrificial, suffering, slave-like service of others that Christ lived. In doing so, it was Paul's conviction he and they were saving others.<sup>653</sup> Again, Paul's dedication to his salvific cause expresses both the Divine History and the Human Commitment sub-textures.

There are quite a number of other supporting references in 1 Corinthians to Paul's salvific activity. Firstly, there are nine separate occasions in 1 Corinthians on which Paul uses the word 'to save' (σώσω) or a derivative, namely, 1 Cor 1:18, 21; 3:15; 7:16 (x2); 8:11; 9:22; 10:33; 15:2.<sup>654</sup> On all other occasions in 1 Corinthians it means 'salvation' (liberating the believer from 'this sinful age' to the 'coming age of glory,' transferring the believer from the lordship of evil to the Lordship of Christ). The presumption must be that Paul is using the word in 1 Corinthians in its 'normal' sense, that of saving or bringing salvation to others – whether Jews, Gentiles, the weak, all. Secondly, in 1 Cor 9:22 Paul explains that he has become all things to all, “so that I might by all means save some.” This is the critical point in 1 Cor 9:19-27: Paul believes that his sacrificial life saves others. In Collins' view, “the reference to salvation is a seventh purpose clause parallel to the previous six, [it] paraphrases and

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<sup>653</sup> In other words, in 1 Corinthians there was a *salvation narrative*, sometimes sub-structural but more often super-structural, as in 1 Cor 9. It may be outlined as follows: God had commissioned Paul to be the apostle to the Gentiles, and Paul had accepted that commission gratefully (1 Cor 1: 1-2; 9: 1-2). It involved an increasing embodiment of the gospel, an increasing conformity to Christ (1 Cor 9: 24-27; 15: 45-49). This conformity to the gospel/Christ involved suffering for Paul (1 Cor 4: 9 – 13; 9: 24-27), but it was a price he was willing to pay. Paul's was a missional imperative that puts the other first “in every way” (1 Cor 10: 33): he increasingly identified with the other as he himself became the servant/slave of Christ. This approach, he believed, was in imitation of Christ's own example (1 Cor 4: 16; 11: 1). It was Paul's firm conviction that his embodying of/union with Christ was salvific, that is, that it saved others, that he - through his work and life - saved others (1 Cor 9: 19, 20, 21, 22; 15: 10, 58).

<sup>654</sup> The word (to save), in 1 Corinthians, means to win people over from 'this evil age' to 'the age to come,' to transfer Lordship from the Evil One to the True God, to liberate, to free. In 1 Corinthians Paul always gives these 'eternal salvation' meanings to 'save.'

explains what it is for Paul to win over various groups of people.”<sup>655</sup> Thirdly, there are a number of references in 1 Corinthians which highlight one or other (or, sometimes, a combination) of the elements in the above-detailed salvation narrative. For example, 1 Cor 1:18 reads “The message of the cross .... is the power of God ..to us who are being saved..” and 1 Cor 1:21 says “it was the will of God through the foolishness of the proclamation to save those who have faith.” The message of the cross, the message of Christ’s life, death and resurrection is salvific and is effectively so. Also worth mentioning are 1 Cor 3:15 (“But if someone’s work is burned up, that one will suffer loss; the person will be saved, but only as through fire”) and 1 Cor 7:16 (x2) (“For how do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband; or how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife”). This last-mentioned 1 Cor 7:16 is difficult to interpret, commentators taking either an optimistic or a pessimistic reading.<sup>656</sup> The ‘pessimistic’ view would hold that the translation should be (“How do you know if you might save your husband/wife?”) suggesting that one doesn’t know if one might save one’s husband/wife. The ‘optimistic’ view detects a note of hope and argues that while there is hope there is a reason for staying together. Collins summarises the commentaries as follows: “The thrust of Paul’s overall argument (1 Cor 7:10-24) and the semantic difference between ‘saving’ (v. 16) and ‘making holy’ (v. 14) suggest that the optimistic reading of the text is the preferable reading.”<sup>657</sup> 1 Cor 8:11 (“Thus through your knowledge, the weak person is brought to destruction, the brother for whom Christ died”) is another example of Paul’s saving activity in 1 Corinthians. Paul is sure that his work and life can save, and that he and each ‘strong church member’ also

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<sup>655</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 356.

<sup>656</sup> Jurgen Moltmann is quoted in Collins, *First Corinthians*, 272, as saying: “‘pessimism’ presumes un-Christian despair, and ‘optimism’ presumes un-Christian presumption.” In more recent years, Thiselton and Collins have found themselves on different sides, the former as a ‘pessimist’ and the latter as an ‘optimist.’

<sup>657</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 272.



have the power to destroy, that is, to take salvation from another, by their life-work or example. The same point is made in 1 Cor 9:22: “I have become all things to all, so that I might by all means save some.” There is a transparent message emerging from this verse. Paul believes that his self-sacrificing service saves or brings salvation to others. 1 Cor 10:33 reads “Just as I try to please everyone in every way, not seeking my own benefit but that of the many, that they may be saved.” Behind this verse is the conviction that, if Paul’s service is selfless and sacrificial suffering, then his expectation is that it will be effective, that is, bring salvation. 1 Cor 15:2 (“through it [the preaching of the gospel] you are also being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you”) is yet another example of the same theme. This verse forms an over-arching ‘*inclusio*’ with 1 Cor 1:18, 21. Paul is re-assuring his converts that they are being saved, if they live out or embody the gospel they have received.

The above references, individually and collectively, chart the narrative of salvation in 1 Corinthians: Christ is the unique saviour of the world; salvation is a free gift from God ‘in Christ;’ it is conferred gratuitously; and this salvation is mediated through Paul and/or others. It is Paul’s view that his work of preaching and embodying the gospel, his selfless, self-emptying, sacrificial, suffering service saves others (Jews, Gentiles, the weak, others/all). Paul’s salvific work – as outlined in 1 Cor 9:19-23 and as supported in nine other 1 Corinthian references – is his consistent view over his entire writing ministry.<sup>658</sup>

It is important to note that there is considerable debate as to the exact meaning of 1 Cor 9:23: “All this I do for the sake of the gospel, so that I may have a share in it.” Some translations (e.g. NRSV, NIV and NJB) suggest that Paul here wishes to share

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<sup>658</sup> These are but a selection of such other supporting references from 1 Thessalonians (1:2-10; 4:3, 7), Galatians (5:6; 6:15; 3:20-22; 3:7-10), 1 Corinthians (1:18, 21; 3: 15; 7:16 (x2); 8:11; 9:22; 10:33; 15:2), 2 Corinthians (1:6; 4:1-18), Romans (1:16-17; 8:18-30; 10:9-13; 11:11-12; 13:1-2), Philippians (1:27-30; 2:12-13) and Philemon (1:6, 9). This view is also maintained throughout the Deutero-Pauline Letters (Ephesians 5:6-20; 1 Timothy 1:15-16; 2:4, 15; 4:10, 16).

with others in the *benefits* of the gospel. In contrast, Collins holds that this view is “foreign to the ideas that Paul expresses.”<sup>659</sup> Others claim that he wishes to ‘share in the *work* of the gospel’ (that is, its evangelisation).<sup>660</sup> Thiselton proposes a better interpretation:

to stand alongside the Jew, the Gentile, the socially dependent and vulnerable, or to live and act in solidarity with every kind of person in every kind of situation is to have **a share in the nature of the gospel**, i.e. *to instantiate what the gospel is and how it operates*.<sup>661</sup>

His interpretation fits better with Paul’s own statement in Gal 1:16 (God was pleased “to reveal his Son in me, so that I might proclaim him to the Gentiles”).

It is worth noting, also, that Paul is preaching and embodying a salvation narrative in 1 Corinthians (written around 55 C.E.) that is, in all its main tenets, similar to that preached by him in 1 Thessalonians (written probably in 49 C.E.),<sup>662</sup> in Philippians (written in the mid-fifties),<sup>663</sup> in 2 Corinthians (written about 56-57 C.E.),<sup>664</sup> and in Romans (written in 57 C.E.).<sup>665</sup> This salvation narrative is present, as stated, in Romans 4:25; 14:1-3; 15:1-3, 7. The close similarity in setting, language,

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<sup>659</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 356.

<sup>660</sup> Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 431 – 432; Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 707

<sup>661</sup> Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 707: bold and italic as in the original. Before (e.g. Gal 3: 13; 4: 4-5), during (e.g. 1 Cor 9: 19-23) and after writing 1 Corinthians (e.g. 2 Cor 5: 21; 8: 9; Rom 8: 3-4) the Pauline kerygma was the same, namely, the Son of God became human so that humans might become sons of God (‘in Christ’). Frederick F. Bruce, in his *The Epistle to the Galatians*, (Exeter UK: Paternoster Press, 1982), commenting on Galatians 4: 4-5 (and Gal 3: 13) suggested that what may be a pre-Pauline (baptismal) confession of faith was behind Galatians 4: 4-5 and he tentatively reconstructed the confession as follows: “God sent forth his Son, born of woman, that we might receive our instatement [or, adoption] as sons. Now, because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit... crying Abba, Father.” Similar ideas were to be found in the above-mentioned texts (1 Cor 9: 19-23, 2 Cor 5:21; 8: 9, Rom 8: 3-4) and in Phil 2: 6-8 which stated that “Christ, being in the form of God, emptied himself, taking the form of a slave; and humbling himself, he became obedient to a slave’s death on the cross. (The result was spelled out [in Galatians] at the end of chapter 3, where Christians are transformed into the likeness of Christ’s glorious body.)” And, Paul understood that the goal of his ministry (and that of every individual Christian) was to replicate the pattern of Christ’s kenosis/self-emptying in his own ministry and lifestyle – and, he called on his converts to imitate his example (1 Cor 4: 16) as he and they imitated Christ’s example (1 Cor 11: 1).

<sup>662</sup> Smiles, *First Thessalonians, Philippians, Second Thessalonians, Colossians, Ephesians*, 7.

<sup>663</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

<sup>664</sup> Murphy-O’Connor, “The Second Letter to the Corinthians,” in *NJBC*, ed. Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, Roland E. Murphy (London: Burns & Oates, 1990), 817.

<sup>665</sup> Karris, *Galatians and Romans*, 41.

concepts and theology between 1 Cor 8:11 and Rom 14:15 is evident in the following text box:

<b><u>1 Cor 8:11</u></b>	<b><u>Rom 14:15</u></b>
Thus, through your knowledge [regarding food offered to idols], the weak person is brought to destruction, the brother for whom Christ died.	If your brother is being hurt by what you eat, your conduct is no longer in accord with love. Do not, because of your food, destroy him for whom Christ died.

One can then say that this is Paul's consistent theology and that its message (that through his selfless, sacrificial, suffering service he saves others) is central to Paul's gospel. Throughout 1 Corinthians he presents God as a relationship-seeking God (1 Cor 1:2; 10:1-13), gifting humanity with salvation. Those who accept that gift must then live accordingly. This means living a life of selfless, sacrificial service of others. Both the divine history and the human commitment sub-textures are of assistance to Paul in explaining, confirming and encouraging adherence to both the invitation and the response.

In summary, Paul believes that, in being "all things to all" [i.e. "a slave to all" (1 Cor 9:19)], he is following Christ's example. Christ's death and resurrection changed everything for Paul and for his followers. Having been gifted "righteousness, sanctification and redemption" (1 Cor 1:30), they are to live accordingly. It is Paul's conviction that in doing so he and they are saving others and, thereby, fulfilling their role in God's plan. Thus, he attempts increasingly to conform his thinking and behaviour to Christ's "mind" (1 Cor 2:16). This he believes saves others (he repeats this conviction seven times in five verses in 1 Cor 9:19-23 and in numerous other pericopae in 1 Corinthians). Paul and his followers live lives of atonement for others as they understand Christ did: "I have become a slave of all so as to win over [i.e. save] as

many as possible” (1 Cor 9:19). Paul and others, in preaching and embodying the ‘work of the Lord’ mentioned in 1 Cor 15:58 (“firm, steadfast, fully devoted to the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labour is not in vain”), believe that ‘in Christ’ they save others. In clarifying Paul’s meaning Thiselton’s translation of 1 Cor 6:20b is most apt: “show forth God’s glory, then, in how you live your bodily life,” clearly interpreting *δοξάσατε δὴ τὸν θεὸν ἐν τῷ σώματι ὑμῶν* as an appeal to his converts to ‘glorify God through what you, an embodied Christian, do and are.’<sup>666</sup> Some commentators call this the ‘indicative-imperative’ principle that underpins 1 Corinthians.<sup>667</sup>

Lastly, in 1 Cor 9:19-27 Paul adopts a missional intentionality towards ‘all,’ whether they be Jews, Gentiles, weak, all (that is, whether they be Christian or non-Christian) and he is providing the Corinthian church members with an example that he urges them to follow. Barram says:

Paul’s desire throughout his letters is to see the Corinthian believers adopt the same kind of salvific intentionality in their own behaviour with each other (e.g. in the context of the Lord’s Supper [1 Cor 11:17-34]) that he exhibits in all his dealings with them.<sup>668</sup>

In fact, Barram considers this so important the he declares that “Mission, understood as salvific intentionality, is a relevant rubric for interpreting the entirety of Paul’s letters and career.”<sup>669</sup>

Virtually all of the sub-textures play an active part in this argument. Their interweaving is best portrayed in the following way: God (deity), through Christ (deity/holy person) in his love saves Paul and his followers (divine history, religious community), who now feel obliged to live (ethics) as members of the saved community.

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<sup>666</sup> Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 458. Also, Hays, *First Corinthians*, 107, focuses on “the devotion and service owed to God:” still emphasizing the ‘living the Christian life’ perspective.

<sup>667</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 26.

<sup>668</sup> Barram, “Pauline Mission as Salvific Intentionality,” 243.

<sup>669</sup> *Ibid.*

The interweaving of the sub-textures is a significant contributing factor in Paul's argumentation.

#### 4.4 Rhetorolect Analysis of 1 Cor 9:19-27

The rhetorolect most evident in this pericope is the Apocalyptic Rhetorolect. Paul is writing in this rhetorolect, which was very popular in his day, because it gives this passage a greater sense of urgency and importance.<sup>670</sup>

The Apocalyptic Rhetorolect emerges in 1 Cor 9:19-27 in the numerous mentions of 'winning over,' in the sense of gaining others' eternal salvation (1 Cor 9:19, 20 [x 2], 21, 22). On all occasions except one Paul uses the word κερδήσω (to win over). In 1 Cor 9:22, which is the climactic verse, he uses the word σώσω (to save).<sup>671</sup> It is important to note that it is also found in 1 Corinthians on nine occasions.<sup>672</sup> Paul uses the word σώσω (to save) on a number of occasions in 1 Corinthians (e.g., 1 Cor 1:18, 21; 7:16 (x2); 9:22). The repeated use of the word σώσω (to save) stresses Paul's over-riding concern for the eternal salvation of his followers at Corinth and the urgency he attaches to his proclamation of the gospel.

In 1 Cor 9:24-27 Paul "paints the life of every believer as a foot race," using the *agon* motif as a metaphor for the struggle on behalf of truth and virtue; this is a common motif in Stoic and Cynic literature.<sup>673</sup> It is one Paul uses to good effect here and elsewhere in his Letters (1 Cor 15:32; Phil 2:16; 3:13-14) and it is also found in the Deutero-Pauline Letters. In 1 Cor 9:24-27 Paul compares and contrasts the participant in the Isthmian Games with the participant 'in Christ.' Paul accepts that the Christian way of life is not without its suffering, so he encourages his followers to look hopefully

<sup>670</sup> Stephan Joubert, "1 Corinthians 9:24-27: An Agonistic Competition," *Neot* 35 (2001): 57-68.

<sup>671</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 350-351.

<sup>672</sup> See 1 Cor 1:18, 21; 3:15; 5:5; 7:16 (x2); 8:11; 9:22; 10:33.

<sup>673</sup> William A. Beardslee, *Human Achievement and Divine Vocation in the Message of Paul*, (London: SCM, 1961), 68.

to the *eschaton*: “I drive my body and train it, for fear that, after having preached to others, I myself should be disqualified” (1 Cor 9:27). The athlete struggles to achieve a perishable prize, but, the Christian struggles for an imperishable one (1 Cor 9:25). Paul appeals to his followers not to take their eye off their ultimate goal: “*the whole of everyday life* must be held captive to the purposes of the gospel.”<sup>674</sup>

1 Cor 9:27 is another example of the use of the Apocalyptic Rhetorolect. There is, however, some dispute about the most appropriate translation of 1 Cor 9:27b - μήπως ἄλλοις κηρύξας αὐτὸς ἀδόκιμος γένωμαι. The NAB, for example, translates the phrase as Paul fearing that, “having preached to others, I myself should be disqualified.”<sup>675</sup> Collins follows this translation closely by saying “having preached to others, I myself fail to qualify.”<sup>676</sup> Weiss combines the idea of enslavement in 1 Cor 9:19 and that of ‘for the sake of the gospel’ in 1 Cor 9:23 and prefers the sense of Paul “actively enslaving himself to larger apostolic purposes.”<sup>677</sup> Thiselton, for his part, suggests: “the notion of *that which does not prove itself to be such as it ought*. This last rendering captures well the notion of purpose in relation to calling and verdict.”<sup>678</sup> One might be inclined to translate 1 Cor 9:27b as expressing Paul’s fear that he might not fulfill his God-given role or commission, that he might be adjudged to have failed on the Day of Judgement and, in that sense, might not have remained faithful (to his calling), that he might not have saved others. This might be the better rendering of 1 Cor 9:27b.<sup>679</sup> Moreover, this rendering might recall Paul’s own statement in Gal. 1:16

<sup>674</sup> Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 716. Italics in original.

<sup>675</sup> Pascuzzi, *First and Second Corinthians*, 57.

<sup>676</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 357.

<sup>677</sup> Victor C. Pfitzner, *Paul and the Agon Motif*, NovTSup 16 (Leiden: Brill, 1967), 95.

<sup>678</sup> Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 717. Italics in original.

<sup>679</sup> The imagery of the athlete and the boxer training (1 Cor 9: 27), having the sense of something ongoing, constant, daily may reinforce Wright’s suggestion. The final verb in the phrase, μήπως ἄλλοις κηρύξας αὐτὸς ἀδόκιμος γένωμαι, being a subjunctive aorist middle, has the sense of something that has not yet been completed, something that is as yet undecided, or ongoing (maybe, ‘lest, having preached the gospel to others, I myself might not become qualified or achieve qualification, or be

that God “was pleased to reveal his Son to me, so that I might proclaim him to the Gentiles.” Some commentators suggest that Paul may have meant the revelation of his Son “to him or in him.”<sup>680</sup> Witherington opts for the ‘in him’ meaning as “the correct interpretation here, especially in the light of Gal 2:20 where Paul speaks of Christ living in him,” and of Gal 4:6 where Paul says that “the Spirit of the Son resides in our hearts.” Furthermore, Brian Malina and Jerome Neyray point out the parallels between the call of the Old Testament prophets and Paul’s call (especially, Jer 1:5-6; Isa 49:1, 6; Isa 6; Ezek 1) and suggest that, as Paul saw his call as coming not from human agency but directly from God, he would have been conscious of the honour but also of the onerous responsibility of his calling.<sup>681</sup> Also, it fits perfectly with another key concern of Paul’s, namely, that he (and his followers) remain faithful, in spite of suffering, to the end (for example, in 1 Cor 1:8; 15:58 [the Letter’s *exordium* and *peroratio*]). It is important to note that however one translates 1 Cor 9:27, it has an apocalyptic ring about it. It is worth noting that this suffering approach to his vocation is echoed in 2 Cor 6:4-10 where, in a passage focused on “the day of salvation,” Paul mentions his self-imposed fasts and vigils as well as the persecutions and other suffering he endured in fulfilling his vocation.<sup>682</sup> He continues these thoughts appealing to the Corinthians to recall their true identity, to renew their allegiance to God and look forward to inheriting God’s promise of salvation.<sup>683</sup>

In short, Paul’s use of the Apocalyptic Rhetorolect in 1 Cor 9:19-27 shows that he is concerned about the eternal salvation of his potential converts (Jews, Gentiles, all)

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judged to have qualified’). Jerome Murphy-O’Connor, commenting on this verse, picks up that ‘unfinished business’ idea (suggested in the subjunctive verb), saying that “conversion is but the beginning of a process which may be aborted by sin,” a life-long process that may at any moment be denied or go ‘off-line.’ Jerome Murphy-O’Connor, “First Corinthians,” 807.

<sup>680</sup> Witherington, *Grace in Galatia*, 106.

<sup>681</sup> Bruce Malina and Jerome Neyray, *Portraits of Paul: An Archeology of Ancient Personality* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1966), 34-51.

<sup>682</sup> Kugelman, “The First Letter to the Corinthians,” 268.

<sup>683</sup> Pascuzzi, *First and Second Corinthians*, 121.

and the imperishable crown that awaits them (1 Cor 9:25). He is driven by his God-given commission to save others (1 Cor 9:27). But there is another aspect of his vocation that concerned Paul greatly. It is that on the Day of Judgement he should be found to have been at all times acting in accordance with his new being, living out his calling as the Apostle to the Gentiles (1 Cor 9:27), that he would have “become the person God [meant] him to become.”<sup>684</sup>

#### **4.5 Theological Synthesis of Paul’s Explicit Claim that his Suffering Saves Others**

Paul has significant common ground with Stoic-Sophist views, for example, their willingness to renounce certain entitlements ‘for the common good’ and their eagerness to conform one’s will to the divine/Divine, even when this necessarily involved much suffering.<sup>685</sup> In 1 Cor 8:1—11:1 Paul argues that Christians must consider not only their legitimate rights to eat idol meat but also their obligation to renounce that right if it becomes a ‘stumbling block’ to a fellow believer’s salvation.<sup>686</sup> He provides in 1 Cor 9:1-18 a personalised example of renunciation of rights so as not to jeopardise the others’ salvation. The rhetorical climax of that argument, namely 1 Cor 9:19-23, asserts that “standing in solidarity with ‘the other,’ as against autonomy or self-affirmation, lies at the heart of the gospel.”<sup>687</sup> In other words, Paul is attempting to persuade the Corinthian church members to adopt a life of Christian service because he believes that such a life would be following Christ’s example and would be saving others. This missional intentionality involves putting the needs of others before one’s

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<sup>684</sup> Wright, *Paul for Everyone: 1 Corinthians*, 120.

<sup>685</sup> However, Paul and the sages differed regarding their views on ‘power’ and ‘weakness.’ For example, Paul concedes certain forms of weakness or unmanliness (unthinkable for the Stoic-Sophist) in order to highlight the ‘power of God’ enabling his work (1 Cor 3:6-7). Paul’s willingness to follow Jesus’ principle of non-retaliation would be regarded as weak or unmanly in the Greco-Roman world. Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 363.

<sup>686</sup> Pascuzzi, *First and Second Corinthians*, 55.

<sup>687</sup> Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 698-699.



own legitimate entitlements, even when that causes suffering, or leads to death. He is also re-defining ‘Christian freedom’ as selfless service of others in one’s daily life.

While Paul focuses significant attention on Christ’s death, he is convinced that he was commissioned to imitate Christ’s *life* of obedience to God’s Will (1 Cor 15:20-22) and that the calling of his followers was a similar one (1 Cor 4:16; 11:1). He and they are imitating the life of Christ in their apostolate to the Gentiles as exemplified in 1 Cor 9:19-27. Their focus must be on doing everything possible to save others (and nothing that would be a stumbling block to that objective, as outlined in 1 Cor 8:11-12). In achieving that goal Paul’s and the Christian’s own lawful entitlements are of secondary concern.

Wright, commenting on 1 Cor 9:19-27, suggests that following Christ’s example “will often mean giving up so-called rights and freedoms in order to become the person God means us to become.”<sup>688</sup> This is summarised in 1 Cor 10:31-33 which has “the character of a *peroratio* in a deliberative rhetorical appeal.”<sup>689</sup> What is critically important there is that the conviction noted already in 1 Cor 9:19-23 re-appears: “do not give offence” (1 Cor 10:32), or, to put it more positively, “try to please everyone in every way, not seeking one’s own benefit, in order that they may be *saved*” (1 Cor 10:33). The missional imperative is, and must be, paramount. Furthermore, in the very next verse (1 Cor 11:1), Paul says: “Be imitators of me as I am of Christ.” The similarities between the ‘Service’ saying of 1 Cor 9:19 and those of the Synoptics (Mk 10:43-45; Mt 20:26-28; Lk 22:26-27) firmly supports this interpretation. Paul is asserting that the renouncing of one’s own lawful rights, putting the other first “in every way” (1 Cor 10:33), is done in imitation of Christ’s own life and mission. Additionally, he is keenly aware of the Old Testament’s long-developing tradition of the righteous

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<sup>688</sup> Wright, *Paul for Everyone, 1 Corinthians*, 120.

<sup>689</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 384.

sufferer, from Isaiah to 4 Maccabees, and the salvific value of that suffering. The personal example Paul gives in 1 Cor 9:19-27 of subordinating his own entitlements to his concern for the other's salvation permeates the entire argument (1 Cor 8:1—11:1).<sup>690</sup>

This is also the overall message of 1 Corinthians.<sup>691</sup> Morna Hooker's summary is apt:

The pattern of the Christ's self-humiliation is the basis of the Christian's life and of his dealings with his fellow-men. This is not simply a question of following a good example: he *must* think and behave like this, because the behaviour of Christ is the ground of his redemption; if he denies the relevance of Christ's actions to his own, then he is denying his very existence in Christ. He must behave like this because he is *in* Christ, and this is the 'mind of Christ.'<sup>692</sup>

Paul applies this "self-humiliating principle" to his work with those 'within' the Law (Jews), those 'outside' the Law (Gentiles), the 'weak,' 'all' (1 Cor 9:19-23). In short, he says: "I have become all things to all, so that I might by all means save some" (1 Cor 9:22b). As the climactic application of the principle outlined in 1 Cor 9:19-23, Paul says that he is prepared to become 'as a Jew,' 'as a Gentile,' as a 'weak person,' as 'all,' and that he is prepared to spend time (training, driving himself) attempting to understand and identify with his potential converts. This ongoing cost to himself (entailing significant suffering) he accepts in order to make his preaching of the gospel real or relevant to them – "so that I might by all means save some." (1 Cor 9:22b).

In 1 Cor 9:19-23 Paul is affirming that, as this humiliating or self-emptying characterised Jesus' life, it should be similar for his followers. He sees a direct connection between "Christ's self-emptying and humiliation and the behaviour he thinks proper in the Christian community."<sup>693</sup> For example, in 1 Cor 11:17-34 Paul is outraged because the behaviour of some church members during the celebration of the Lord's Supper is not selfless service. In other words, it is the living out of obedience to

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<sup>690</sup> Paul, in 1 Cor 9:19-23, "describes his missionary strategy of adaptability in order to accomplish his goal of winning as many as possible to the gospel." Pascuzzi, *First and Second Corinthians*, 56.

<sup>691</sup> See also 1 Cor 5:1-7; 9:19-27; 10:23—11:1; 11:17-34.

<sup>692</sup> Morna D. Hooker, *From Adam to Christ*, 25; italics in the original.

<sup>693</sup> Hooker, "A Partner in the Gospel: Paul's Understanding of his Ministry," 95.

God's plan for us – even to death – that is so important, that gives Christ's death and Paul's (and his followers') living such meaning. Hooker says: "It is in their lifestyle that Christians are to be imitators of Christ."<sup>694</sup>

As Paul reads Isaiah (especially Isa 42; 52:13—53:12) he understands it to say that the weak and suffering servant "made righteous," that is, atoned for others "so that those who should be harshly judged were declared to be innocent."<sup>695</sup> For Paul, this is also true of the Maccabean martyrs. Similarly, the sacrificial lives of Paul and his followers are also salvific. This conclusion is central to Paul's 'gospel' as expressed across his undisputed Letters.<sup>696</sup> Paul's post-Damascus re-interpretation of Isaiah and others (e.g., Jeremiah, Zechariah, 2 Maccabees) leads him to believe that his own calling requires a lifestyle that follows Christ's example and embodies the gospel he preaches.<sup>697</sup> Furthermore, Paul's conviction on another aspect of that same embodiment is clear, namely, that working as the servant of Christ, preaching and embodying the gospel, conforming oneself to Christ, being in union with Christ, effectively saves others.

In summary, Paul believes that, in his life of selfless, sacrificial suffering in service of others, he is following the example of Christ's life. Christ's life of sacrificial service is salvific, as is Paul's (and that of every believer) in living his life of obedient service to God's plan. Earlier in the Letter, Paul calls himself and/or others God's fellow-workers (1 Cor 3:9), God's planters (1 Cor 3:7), and God's master-builder (1 Cor 3:10). Now, in 1 Cor 9:19-23, he is calling himself and others 'partner' or 'participant'

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<sup>694</sup> Hooker, "A Partner in the Gospel: Paul's Understanding of his Ministry," 95.

<sup>695</sup> Ibid.

<sup>696</sup> Gal 2:20; 6:14,17; 2 Cor 1:6-7; 4:8-9, 12,15; 12:7-10, 15; Phil 1:19-21; 2:17; 3:8-11; Col 1:24.

<sup>697</sup> Hooker, *From Adam to Christ*, 25.

in the work of salvation. Moreover, in answering his vocation to save others, Paul believes that this is how he glorifies God (1 Cor 6:20).<sup>698</sup>

This chapter explored whether Paul believes that his own suffering is salvific. The answer is an emphatic affirmative. Moreover, it is not only his suffering that saves others: Paul believes that his entire life of selfless service saves others. This is a consistent part of Paul's theology and its message is central to Paul's gospel. However, he does not explain in 1 Cor 9:19-27 how his life of service is salvific. The ground is therefore prepared for considering two related questions. Firstly, as Paul believes that his own life of service is salvific, then, *how* does he ground the salvific nature of his life? Secondly, how does he resolve the seeming contradiction between the salvific nature of his own work and the *unique* salvific work of Christ? These questions will be addressed and answered in the next chapter.

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<sup>698</sup> It is important also to note that this interpretation of 1 Cor 9:19-27 is supported throughout 1 Corinthians and in Paul's Letters written before and after 1 Corinthians. Brueggemann (*Isaiah 40—66*, 148), commenting on Isaiah 53:11b-12, reminds his readers that "in verses 11b-12, the words are on the lips of Yahweh. The entire transaction of the poem is here summarised. The servant 'makes righteous,' that is, qualifies the others to receive the benefits due to a responsible Torah-keeper, so that those who should be harshly judged are declared to be innocent. That is indeed humiliating work – to extend self in the service and interest of unwarranted vindication for the undeserving. Paul saw his commissioning in a similar light, as evidenced across his Letters (1 Thess 2:10; 1 Cor 1:30; 4:4; 15:34; Rom 1:17; 3:21-26; 5:17).

**CHAPTER 5**  
**PAUL’S SUFFERING AND HIS PARTICIPATORY THEOLOGY**  
**(1 Cor 6:12-20)**

The textured exegesis of 1 Cor 9:19-27 in the previous chapter demonstrates Paul’s belief that, in his life of selfless, sacrificial service of others, he is following Christ’s self-sacrificing example and, thereby, saving others ‘in Christ’ – Jews, Gentiles, weak, all. But, *how* could this be? How does he resolve the seeming contradiction between the unique salvific nature of Christ’s work and the salvific nature of his and his followers’ work? The current chapter explores these questions by investigating 1 Cor 6:12-20 as Paul addresses his union with Christ in that pericope.

Paul’s argument may be briefly stated: it is that he is united ‘in Christ’ by the Spirit, is ‘one Spirit’ with Christ (1 Cor 6:17), ‘one body’ with Christ (the ‘one flesh’ phrase of Genesis 2:24 underpins 1 Cor 6:12-20), that he lives with Christ’s life and mission, and that his actions are Christ’s actions and are, consequently, salvific. Regarding the phrase “that he lives with Christ’s life and mission,” the approach of this investigation is to address the first part of that phrase (‘that he lives with Christ’s life’) in this chapter of the dissertation and the ‘mission’ part in the next chapter of this dissertation.

In Christ, Paul is God’s fellow-worker (1 Cor 3:9) and, importantly, is participating actively in Christ’s life and mission, thus participating in Christ’s salvific work (1 Cor 9:19-23). But, how does Paul argue to this conclusion? Both Paul and the Corinthian church members accept that the believer and Christ are united (1 Cor 6:15). Therefore, he can base his argument on this agreed belief. The difficulty for the church members is in understanding the nature, the reality, the intimacy, and the consequences

of this union. The current chapter explores the nature, reality and intimacy of the union with Christ effected by the Spirit and highlights the implications for Paul's participatory theology of suffering.

The chapter begins by contextualising 1 Cor 6:12-20 and offers a brief overview of the pericope. It then investigates the chosen text by using the five texture and rhetorlect methodology. The chapter concludes by offering a theological synthesis of Paul's suffering and his participatory theology.

### 5.1 Contextualising 1 Cor 6:12-20

There is some disagreement among commentators about the place of 1 Cor 6:12-20 within the structure of the Letter. Collins treats 1 Cor 5:1—7:40 as a single unit.<sup>699</sup> In contrast, Kugelman claims that 1 Cor 5:1-13, 1 Cor 6:1-20 and 1 Cor 7:1-40 are three separate units.<sup>700</sup> The majority of commentators (among them Fee, Pascuzzi, Thiselton, and Witherington) see 1 Cor 5:1—6:20 as a macro-unit and treat 1 Cor 7:1-40 as a separate and distinct unit, which is the stance adopted in this dissertation.<sup>701</sup> The basic issue in 1 Cor 5:1—6:20 that holds the unit together is the sanctity of the church community for which Christ sacrificed himself (see 1 Cor 5:7, repeated in 1 Cor 6:20. See also 1 Cor 1:2) and the church's consequent responsibility to maintain and develop that sanctity (1 Cor 5:8; 6:18). Maintaining and developing that sanctity necessitates a recognition that the believer is 'not his own' (1 Cor 6:19), that he is a 'member of Christ' (1 Cor 6:15) and that, as a result of the Christian's union with/in Christ, he participates in Christ's life and mission: this demands certain actions.

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<sup>699</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 7, 203.

<sup>700</sup> Kugelman, "The First Letter to the Corinthians," 252.

<sup>701</sup> Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 194; Pascuzzi, *First and Second Corinthians*, 36; Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 381; Witherington III, *Conflict and Community in Corinth*, 151.

Certain behaviours are compatible with this union and others are not. For example, Christians must eliminate “malice and wickedness” (1 Cor 5:8), and seek to celebrate their Passover “with sincerity and truth” (1 Cor 5:8). Paul also outlaws incest (1 Cor 5:1-8), and then proceeds to list ‘immorality, greed, idolatry, slander, drunkenness, robbery’ (1 Cor 5:11) as behaviours meriting exclusion (1 Cor 5:11, 13). Put positively, their union with Christ requires that they embody the gospel and, through that embodiment, that they participate in Christ’s life and mission through preaching the gospel to others inside the church as mentioned in this unit of text (1 Cor 5:1—6:20) and outside the church (as detailed in 1 Cor 9:19-27). It is this embodiment of the gospel in a Greco-Roman first century setting that provokes opposition, suffering, even death (1 Cor 6:12, 13, 15, 18). Their Christian lives, like Paul’s, inevitably and inescapably, are marked by suffering now that they are ‘members of Christ,’ participants in Christ’s life and mission, risen from the dead (1 Cor 6:11, 14, 15), ‘temples of the Holy Spirit’ “whom you have from God” (1 Cor 6:19), re-created to ‘glorify God in your body’ (1 Cor 6:20).

Paul’s treatment of the above-mentioned problems indicates that each and every member of the Body of Christ must take responsibility for ensuring his/her own personal holiness and that of the community (1 Cor 5:1-8). Each is to “avoid, through his or her own exercise of freedom, any defilement of the community’s sanctified life.”<sup>702</sup> Now “joined to the Lord ... one spirit with him” (1 Cor 6:17), the believer participates in the Body of Christ, “a life-giving spirit” (1 Cor 15:45). Living the Christian life means, firstly, setting aside one’s own ‘fleshly’ attitudes in favour of the ‘spiritual’ (1 Cor 6:12-14), that is, having the ‘mind of Christ’ (1 Cor 2:16). Secondly, it means taking on an ever-increasing participation in Christ’s life and mission, and,

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<sup>702</sup> Pascuzzi, *First and Second Corinthians*, 46.

through Christ, in others (1 Cor 6:15-19). Thirdly, through Christ, each Christian is renewing and re-creating himself and others, and returning him/them to his/their origin, that is to God (1 Cor 6:20).<sup>703</sup> In that way, Paul states that the believer lives out his call to be holy (1 Cor 1:2).

Throughout the entire unit of 1 Cor 5:1—6:20, Paul is saying to his followers: ‘You are followers of Christ, re-created and sanctified. You are united to Christ and in Christ, united by Christ’s selfless sacrifice for you. Now, as Christians, you are meant to be following Christ’s example (1 Cor 4:16; 11:24, 25), not negating it (1 Cor 5:1-13; 11:17-22). Yes, this means going against both the dominant culture and one’s own self-gratification: it means sacrifice and suffering but it is who you are – a cruciform people.’<sup>704</sup>

## 5.2 Text of 1 Cor 6:12-20

This chapter of the dissertation examines 1 Cor 6:12-20 because in that pericope Paul clarifies his thinking on the union of Christ and his follower(s), and its life-giving (that is, salvation-bringing) consequences:

<sup>12</sup> “All things are lawful for me,” but not all things are beneficial. “All things are lawful for me,” but I will not be dominated by anything. <sup>13</sup> “Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food,” and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is meant not for fornication but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. <sup>14</sup> And God raised the Lord and will also raise us by his power. <sup>15</sup> Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Should I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! <sup>16</sup> Do you not know that whoever is united to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For it is said, “The two shall be one flesh.” <sup>17</sup> But anyone united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. <sup>18</sup> Shun fornication! Every sin that a person commits is outside the body; but the fornicator sins against the body itself. <sup>19</sup> Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own? <sup>20</sup> For you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body.

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<sup>703</sup> Daniel O’Leary, *Listening Hearts*: his Printed Notes from a talk given to hospital and school chaplains, 2012, accessed on his website [www.djol.com/pages/general.htm](http://www.djol.com/pages/general.htm).

<sup>704</sup> The imagined dialogue is created by the author of this dissertation.



The central issue in this pericope (1 Cor 6:12-20) is the holiness of the church members and its consequent implications for their sexual conduct in the context of their relationship with Christ and God. In 1 Cor 6:12-20 and in 1 Cor 7 Paul is anxious to establish a theological foundation for his deliberations on his followers' human sexuality. 1 Cor 6:12-20 consists of three sub-units.<sup>705</sup> First, in 1 Cor 6:12-14 Paul considers a view proposed by some Corinthians, namely, the idea of individual unrestricted freedom (including in sexual matters). Paul argues that the selfless, loving service of Christ should be our model and that it necessitates sacrifice/suffering. Second, in 1 Cor 6:15-17 he discusses sexual intercourse with a prostitute as incompatible with a union with Christ. He had already argued that incest (1 Cor 5:1-13) and a number of other sexual misdemeanours (1 Cor 6:9) were incompatible with union in Christ. Third, in 1 Cor 6:18-20 he appeals to the Corinthians to "avoid sexual immorality," to answer God's call to holiness (1 Cor 1:2; 5:1-8; 6:12-20) and to "glorify God in your body" (1 Cor 6:20).<sup>706</sup> For Paul, the general resurrection of the body and the ensuing embodied glorification of God conditions everything done in the body in the present.

The argumentation (an Inner Texture sub-texture) in this pericope centres, in Witherington's view, on the importance of the now holy human body "in the order of redemption and the practical implications of an eschatological worldview for present sexual conduct."<sup>707</sup> Fee agrees and cites Paul's view of the church as an eschatological community whose existence as God's future people absolutely determines its life in the present age.<sup>708</sup> It seems that some Corinthian church members, probably influenced by Stoic-Sophist dualistic views, consider that embodied existence ceases at one's death.

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<sup>705</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 239.

<sup>706</sup> *Ibid.*, 239f.

<sup>707</sup> Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth*, 164.

<sup>708</sup> Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 230.

They conclude that the body is not of long-term relevance or moral consequence, and neither is what is done in the body (such as eating and sexual actions, see 1 Cor 6:12-14).<sup>709</sup> Paul counters from a theological perspective claiming that the risen Christ is living an embodied existence and, after death, Christians will also live an embodied existence. Moreover, Christians are now ‘in Christ’ (1 Cor 6:15), united to the Lord, are one Spirit with him (1 Cor 6:17), which alludes to Genesis 2:24, and consequently living in a holy union.<sup>710</sup> This union with the Lord, effected by the Spirit, is incompatible with any immoral union (1 Cor 6:15-16). Paul concludes by asserting that the Corinthian Christians now belong to the Lord (1 Cor 6:19) because “you have been purchased at a price” (1 Cor 6:20). He appeals to them to act accordingly, that is, to act as people re-created to “glorify God in your body” (1 Cor 6:20). Moreover, Paul’s own experience demonstrates that preaching and embodying the gospel involve sacrifice and suffering as one constantly puts the others’ salvation first (1 Cor 4:9-13; 9:19-27; 11:17-34). This is the example Paul sets before his followers (1 Cor 4:16; see also 1 Cor 9) and he appeals to them to follow Christ’s example as he does (1 Cor 11:1).<sup>711</sup>

### 5.3 Textured Exegesis of 1 Cor 6:12-20

This section of the chapter applies the chosen socio-rhetorical methodology to 1 Cor 6:12-20. The chosen pericope is considered from the perspective of each of the

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<sup>709</sup> Fitzgerald, *Cracks in an Earthen Vessel*, 54, 65.

<sup>710</sup> Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 467; Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 485; Pascuzzi, *First and Second Corinthians*, 45.

<sup>711</sup> Constantine R. Campbell, in an exhaustive study of *Paul and Union with Christ*, 60-61, concludes that no one word can adequately describe Paul’s understanding of union with Christ. He understands the ‘in Christ’ concept to include notes of location (“location within the realm of Christ”), identification (“involves the identification of believers with Christ”), participation (“the participation of believers in the events of Christ’s narrative, including his death and burial, resurrection, ascension and glorification”), incorporation (“believers are grafted into a community that is founded, shaped and directed by Christ”), instrumentality (“Christ is the instrument of God’s agency for the benefit of humanity, and this role is largely mediatorial”), trinity (“union with Christ involves the inner life of the Trinity”), union (involving “an actual spiritual union with him”), eschatological (“Christ’s resurrection ‘in the middle of time,’ as it were, is an eschatological in-breaking of the future resurrection of the dead”) and spiritual (the unity rests upon an ontological reality).

textures (Inner Texture, Social and Cultural Texture, Ideological Texture, Intertexture and Sacred Texture). This approach enables a deeper understanding of 1 Cor 6:12-20 to emerge.

### 5.3.1 Inner Texture

Inner Texture, according to Robbins, “refers to the various ways the text employs language to communicate.”<sup>712</sup> “The analyst looks at and listens to the ways in which the text uses these words (e.g. repetition of the same word many times, careful sequencing of new terms that build to a strong conclusion, etc).”<sup>713</sup>

The thrust of Paul’s argumentative sub-texture may be stated briefly. The unit 1 Cor 5:1—6:20, of which this pericope (1 Cor 6:12-20) is the climax, communicates very clearly what being a follower of Christ entails. Saved by Christ’s sacrifice (1 Cor 5:7), living in union with Christ, participating in Christ’s own life and mission, Paul’s followers must lead exemplary lives embodying Christ’s selfless sacrifice (1 Cor 5:8). He provides a long list of prohibitions (1 Cor 5:11) and repeats that list in 1 Cor 6:9, 18 adding in 1 Cor 6:9 the warning that “the unjust will not inherit the kingdom of God.” He concludes that, “washed, sanctified, and justified” (1 Cor 6:11), the Christian must endeavour to live the union with Christ, no matter what sacrifice or suffering is entailed.

The Inner Texture narrational sub-texture of 1 Cor 6:12-20 emerges as follows: Firstly, Paul constructs this pericope as if it were a debate with an imaginary interlocutor, a common literary device of the time.<sup>714</sup> Secondly, he uses three rhetorical questions (1 Cor 6:15, 16, 19) to structurally sub-divide his argument and to move the

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<sup>712</sup> See Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation: *Dictionary of Socio-Rhetorical Terms*, [www.religion.emory.edu/faculty/robbins/SRI/defns/s\\_defns.cfm](http://www.religion.emory.edu/faculty/robbins/SRI/defns/s_defns.cfm) accessed on 27-10-2016. Robbins identifies six sub-textures which express Inner Texture: (1) repetition, (2) progression (including *gradatio*), (3) narrational pattern, (4) opening-middle-closing, (5) argumentative, and (6) sensory-aesthetic.

<sup>713</sup> Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 7.

<sup>714</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 242.

argument along programmatically.<sup>715</sup> Each question is a recollection of a fact his listeners already know and accept; these are the ‘stepping-stones’ to the climax of his argument that the believer is in a Spiritual union with Christ. Thirdly, underpinning his argument with a quotation from Genesis (Gen 2:24), gives it additional authority and ensures its reception among his followers. Fourthly, he employs the literary device of *gradatio*, a form of progression sub-texture, with significant effect (1 Cor 6:15-17). Lastly, he avails of the sensory-aesthetic sub-texture in using the diatribe format.

Paul conducts the entire discussion or dialogue in 1 Cor 6:12-20 as if he were debating with an imaginary interlocutor. Dio Chrysostom, Seneca, Musonius, Epictetus and many other writers of the time use this literary technique when discussing moral issues.<sup>716</sup> Many Stoics contend that the ‘paltry’ body and its natural biological actions are morally indifferent as it would be discarded at death, thus releasing the spirit to travel to the next world.<sup>717</sup> Paul, on the other hand, opposes all forms of dualism. In his view, humans are living an embodied existence now and will also live an embodied existence after the resurrection. The resurrection of the glorified body imparts ultimate significance to the human body: the body is ‘for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body’ (1 Cor 6:13), that is, “Christ’s lordship is over Christians in their bodily existence.”<sup>718</sup> The Christian’s body is united with Christ (1 Cor 6:15), indwelt by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:19), and is created to glorify (only) God (1 Cor 6:20). Since this is the body’s destiny there is no place for self-gratification. The imagined interlocutor is, thus, silenced.

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<sup>715</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 15.

<sup>716</sup> Pascuzzi also states that the pericope is presented as a “dialogue between himself [Paul] and an imaginary dialogue partner” (Pascuzzi, *First and Second Corinthians*, 43). Collins, *First Corinthians*, 240 also gives a number of examples.

<sup>717</sup> Fitzgerald, *Cracks in an Earthen Vessel*, 65.

<sup>718</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 245.

Paul also avails of another Inner Texture narrational sub-texture. He presents 1 Cor 6:12-20 in the style of a diatribe, severely and emotionally upbraiding some Corinthian church members.<sup>719</sup> He uses three rhetorical questions to subdivide his argument: “Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ?”(1 Cor 6:15); “Do you not know that anyone who joins himself to a prostitute becomes one body with her?” (1 Cor 6:16); and “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God and that you are not your own (1 Cor 6:19x2)?” These questions are rhetorical as Paul holds that the Corinthian church members know the answers but are not behaving accordingly! He is demanding that they change their behaviour because, for Paul, theology and ethics are inseparable. He maintains that the believers have been re-created and as such are to act in accordance with their new nature: this is known as Paul’s indicative-imperative principle. As Collins says:

In 1 Cor 6:19 the indicative, that “your bodies are not your own,” derives from God’s previous action in Christ (1 Cor 6:20). They are “for the Lord and the Lord is for them,” a Pauline phrase that bespeaks their future destiny and its proleptic implications.<sup>720</sup>

Therefore, Paul appeals to them to “flee immorality” (1 Cor 6:18).

In 1 Cor 6:15-17 Paul is deliberately creating a literary *gradatio* (a process of arranging elements in a series of incremental grades or stages) to bring his argument to a climax.<sup>721</sup> It is noteworthy that commentators do not seem to identify or refer to this *gradatio* in 1 Cor 6:15-17. Paul mentions three unions. He begins by mentioning a union with a prostitute in 1 Cor 6:15-16 which is incompatible with a union ‘with Christ.’ Next, quoting Gen 2:24, he alludes to the marriage union in 1 Cor 6:16.

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<sup>719</sup> Hays, *First Corinthians*, 101-107.

<sup>720</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 242. Collins says that “Paul’s response [here] represents a masterful use of the indicative-imperative *schema*, which he uses with profit in the exposition of *paraenesis* throughout the letter.”

<sup>721</sup> Oxford Dictionary accessed on the internet.

Thirdly, in 1 Cor 6:17 he moves to a union in spirit or, most probably, to a union in the Spirit, a union effected by the Spirit.

Text	Union	Result
<b>1 Cor 6:16a</b>	Whoever is united to a prostitute	becomes one body with her.
<b>1 Cor 6:16b</b>	“The two, it says,	will become one flesh”
<b>1 Cor 6:17</b>	“But anyone united to the Lord	becomes one spirit with him.”

In Collins’ view, the graphic realism of Paul’s language in 1 Cor 6:15-17

contrasts union with the Lord and union with a whore, bodily existence and ‘spiritual’ existence . . . Since the Spirit is the power of the future *eschaton* and Lord is eschatological terminology one should understand by Paul’s reference to union with the Lord a harbinger of ultimate salvation.<sup>722</sup>

This Spirit-effected union signals that Paul holds that the Christian is now, through union with Christ, re-created as a spiritual being, no longer merely a ‘living being’ (1 Cor 15:45), but a ‘life-giving spirit’ (1 Cor 15:45).<sup>723</sup> For Paul this is the highest possible form of existence for humanity and it is already God’s gift ‘in/through Christ.’ This indwelling of the Spirit in each Christian recalls the presence of the Spirit of God in the innermost sanctum of the temple (1 Cor 6:19). The presence of God in the inner sanctum of the temple makes it an exceptionally holy place to be respected and protected against all defilement: it is, for Paul, similar to the presence of the Spirit in the Christian (1 Cor 6:20).

In brief, Paul concludes that one’s union with Christ is real, spousal, corporeal, participatory, and Spiritual in nature (1 Cor 6:17), and that this union has real, everyday implications. In 1 Cor 4:9-13; 9:19-27 and 15:3 Paul asserts that his work of

<sup>722</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 248.

<sup>723</sup> Paul repeats this ‘re-creation’ claim in 2 Cor 5:17.

evangelisation entails suffering, even death (1 Cor 15:31). United with Christ (1 Cor 6:15) and a temple of the Spirit (1 Cor 6:19), the believer is now no longer his/her own but a member of the Body of Christ (1 Cor 6:15), of the “eschatological community whose existence as God’s future people absolutely determines its life in the present age.”<sup>724</sup> He is committed to a life of holiness (1 Cor 1:2; 5:1-8; 6:12-20), participating in Christ’s own life and mission of reconciliation. Therefore, Paul appeals to his followers to avoid all sexual immorality (1 Cor 6:18) as these unions are incompatible with a union ‘with/in Christ’ and the indwelling of the Spirit (1 Cor 6:19). Paul holds out to his faithful followers the ‘sure’ hope of resurrection and ultimate happiness with God the Father. The resurrection of Jesus from the dead, mentioned in 1 Cor 6:14; 15:4, and 15:12-20, is for Paul the “first fruits of those who have died” (1 Cor 15:20). By this he means that Christ’s followers will also be raised: as he mentions in 1 Cor 6:14 and in 1 Cor 15:22-28. This General Resurrection, “was the singular reality that conditioned his entire existence,”<sup>725</sup> even though this meant living a cruciform life, that is, a life characterised by suffering like Paul (1 Cor 4:9-13; 9:19-27; 15:31) and Christ (1 Cor 5:7-8; 8:11; 11:23-26).

The thrust of Paul’s argumentative strategy in 1 Cor 5:1—6:20, an Inner Texture sub-texture (5 above), is clear, well-structured, and logically reasoned, using rhetorical questions to move his argument along. The climax is in the *gradatio* of 1 Cor 6:15-17, a specific form of progression (2 above), where, underpinned by Gen 2:24, he explains that the believer is now a Spiritual being, and must act as a member of Christ (1 Cor 12:27), one with the Lord (1 Cor 6:17), a temple of the holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:19), a holy person, re-created to glorify God (1 Cor 6:20).

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<sup>724</sup> Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 230, 238.

<sup>725</sup> *Ibid.*, 230, 238, 157.

### 5.3.2 Social and Cultural Texture

The Social and Cultural Texture recognises that a text may often betray aspects of the author's social and cultural situation. In other words, it sheds light on the particular society and culture the author is living in, and how it impacts on his thinking and behaviour.<sup>726</sup> The Social and Cultural Texture is broken into three distinct sub-textures, all present in this pericope: (1) specific social topics (e.g., Corinthians influenced by the Stoic-Sophist philosophies have a different view of the body to Paul's Christian view), (2) common social and cultural topics (recognising that Paul was living in a Greco-Roman stratified society, these topics help unpack the writer's or reader's status, rights, the codes by which they live), and (3) final cultural categories (those topics identify the writer's and/or reader's cultural location, for example, as within the dominant culture, subculture, counterculture, contraculture or limited culture rhetoric).<sup>727</sup>

The Social and Cultural Texture emerges in 1 Cor 6:12-20 as Paul addresses some beliefs commonly held in first-century Corinth; in particular, the denigration of the body, the belief that some bodily actions are morally inconsequential, and the self-centredness of some Corinthians' attitude to others.

Paul is aware of the common social and cultural topics current in his society (2 above). In the slogans Paul uses to introduce and to close his arguments (1 Cor 6:12[x2], 13; 10:23[x2]) he shows an awareness of Stoic beliefs current in first-century Corinth concerning the denigration of the body.<sup>728</sup> The leading Roman Stoic philosopher Seneca, a contemporary of Paul, taught that death "frees the self from life's tortures" and that "the immortal soul's release from the body's burden and bondage is

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<sup>726</sup> For a fuller discussion, see Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 71 – 94.

<sup>727</sup> Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 72, 75, 86.

<http://www.religion.emory.edu/faculty/robbins/SRI/index.cf>

<sup>728</sup> Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 462.



what makes death advantageous, to proceed to a better afterlife among the gods.”<sup>729</sup>

This meant that the body was treated as a burden or a prison and that death liberated the spiritual soul. Tabb summarises this view by saying, “Death is a release from all suffering, a boundary beyond which our ills cannot pass” and “it restores us to that peaceful state in which we lay before we were born.”<sup>730</sup> Seneca, for example, believed that death was “the release from [bodily] incarceration.”<sup>731</sup> Paul holds that this denigration of the body is essentially un-Christian and, therefore, unacceptable. As mentioned already, in Paul’s view, the human body is created by God and is re-created incorruptible, glorious, and powerful (1 Cor 15:42-43). “It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body” (1 Cor 15:44). It is therefore un-Christian and incorrect to treat the body as ‘a burden’ to be shed at death: the believer’s body is re-created to “glorify God in your body” (1 Cor 6:20).

1 Cor 6:12-14 contains two slogans that are popular during Paul’s time in Corinth: “Everything is lawful for me” (1 Cor 6:12) and “Food for the stomach and the stomach for food” (1 Cor 6:13). Both slogans express the Stoic belief that some physical actions have little or no moral value and are morally inconsequential.<sup>732</sup> For example, the satisfying of the stomach’s need for food is understood by some Stoics as a “natural biological necessity” and, therefore, morally neutral or unimportant.<sup>733</sup> They seem to generalise from this type of example and conclude that natural biological actions, such as sexual actions, are no more than “the functioning of morally insignificant parts of a morally insignificant body,” a ‘paltry’ body, that is destined for destruction at death.<sup>734</sup> This dualism is abhorrent to Paul who believes that one cannot

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<sup>729</sup> Tabb, *Suffering in Ancient Worldview*, 65.

<sup>730</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>731</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>732</sup> Murphy-O’Connor, “First Letter to the Corinthians,” 804.

<sup>733</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 242.

<sup>734</sup> Pascuzzi, *First and Second Corinthians*, 44; Hooker, *Paul – A Short Introduction*, 125.

separate the embodied person into ‘body’ and ‘spirit’: the embodied person is re-created and raised by God (1 Cor 6:14). Therefore, what one does ‘in the body’ is quite important and valuable, both now and in the future. The dignity of the human body is based on, and draws its value from the bodily resurrection (1 Cor 6:14), the union of believers with/in Christ (1 Cor 6:15-18), and the body as the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:19-20).

Paul addresses the commonly-held dualism in an example of specific social topics sub-texture (1 above), which details his own conviction on the matter. Firstly, his belief is that, because of “the power and purpose of God, who raised Jesus from the dead and who will raise us” (1 Cor 6:14),<sup>735</sup> the believers’ bodies have enormous value and this “impinges on what one does in the body in the present.”<sup>736</sup> The reality of the bodily resurrection – and its implications for us and for our bodies – is what is grounding this argument (Paul will again deal with the resurrection of our bodies in greater detail in 1 Cor 15). Secondly, adverting to his statement that the body is for the Lord (1 Cor 6:13), Paul reminds the Corinthian believers of their union with Christ, “a union so intimate that Paul uses the imagery of sexual union to describe it.”<sup>737</sup>

Pascuzzi, in her commentary on these verses (1 Cor 6:15-20), says that a sexual union with another (not one’s spouse) is “unthinkable.” It is also unthinkable

for a Christian who is one with Christ (‘one spirit with him’, v. 17) to form another [immoral] union. This union of believers with Christ in one holy body precludes immoral unions between a believer and a prostitute, which constitutes a defilement of the whole Christian community.<sup>738</sup>

Thirdly, the climax of Paul’s *gradatio* is his statement that “whoever is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him” (1 Cor 6:17). In his view this Spirit-effected union with the Lord is superior to a relationship with a prostitute and is more intimate

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<sup>735</sup> Hooker, *Paul – A Short Introduction*, 125.

<sup>736</sup> Pascuzzi, *First and Second Corinthians*, 44.

<sup>737</sup> *Ibid.*, 44-45.

<sup>738</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

than even a marriage union. Some commentators (such as Martin and Fee) hold that Paul is here talking of the Holy Spirit as he continues the thought that the Christian's body is "a temple of the Holy Spirit within you" (1 Cor 6:19).<sup>739</sup> Paul says in 1 Cor 3:16-17 that the Holy Spirit indwells the community as a whole. In 1 Cor 6:19 he is stating that the Holy Spirit indwells the individual Christian also. Furthermore, just as the husband or wife may not engage in immoral unions because he or she is 'not his own' (1 Cor 6:19), the Christian is not to engage in any immoral union because he or she is "a temple of the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor 6:19a) and is, therefore, 'not his or her own' either. As the husband or wife is accountable to their marriage partner, so the Christian is answerable to Christ. Paul, in this pericope, is asserting that his relationship with Christ is real, nuptial in nature, and corporeal. It is a union effected by the Spirit and, as explained in 1 Cor 6:12-20, has spiritual implications for the believer.<sup>740</sup> The believer is now living in union with Christ, participating in Christ's life and in his mission of reconciliation. This stance, an expression of final cultural categories (3 above) determines how Paul presents his "propositions, reasons, and arguments both to themselves and to other people."<sup>741</sup>

In 1 Cor 6:12-20 Paul also addresses the self-centredness of some in Corinth. Some Corinthian church members seem to believe that an individual's actions do not affect others in the community. This is a view which Paul strenuously opposes in this pericope (1 Cor 6:18) and throughout 1 Corinthians. He argues that sinful actions damage not only the individual but also the community of believers. This is certainly the case in 1 Cor 5:1-8 where the incestuous man's actions leave many in the community inflated with pride rather than sorrow at the damage being done (1 Cor

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<sup>739</sup> Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 469; Dale B. Martin, *The Corinthian Body* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 176-189; and G. Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 260.

<sup>740</sup> Paul repeats this line of argumentation in 2 Cor 11:2-3. See also Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*, 309-310, for a more detailed discussion of this argumentation.

<sup>741</sup> Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 86.

6:15). He repeats that assertion in 1 Cor 6:18 where he says that joining oneself to a prostitute is sinful and damages all other Christians with whom one is in union and is, also, incompatible with that believer's existing union with Christ (1 Cor 6:17).

Similarly, in 1 Cor 11:27-34 Paul is convinced that some members' unworthy reception of the Lord's Supper causes suffering, such as illness, infirmity and death for them or others. In examining 1 Cor 11:27 ("Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily will have to answer for the body and blood of the Lord"),

Thiselton concludes that

the syntax therefore implies.... being **held accountable** for the sin against Christ of *claiming identification with him while using the celebration of the meal as an occasion of social enjoyment or status enhancement without regard to what sharing in the Lord's Supper proclaims.*<sup>742</sup>

Paul counters the argument that all are free regardless of the consequences for others by saying "not everything is beneficial" in 1 Cor 6:12. Not all actions build up the community, which is a central criterion for Paul in this unit and in several other units throughout the Letter (e.g., 1 Cor 14:5). So, in one's sexual behaviour one's task is "to put ahead of [one's] own immediate satisfaction not only God and Christ but also [one's] fellow members of the Body, who are affected by what [one] does."<sup>743</sup> He argues that one's body and the actions done in that body are important because each believer is united with Christ and all others and God intends raising their re-created bodies for eternity (1 Cor 6:13-14). He reminds the Corinthian church members that they are, as embodied persons, members of the saved people of God (1 Cor 1:30), so they are holy (1 Cor 3:16-17), are possessed by the Spirit, they belong to Christ (1 Cor 3:23), and, participating in Christ's life and mission, are to act accordingly.

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<sup>742</sup> Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 890. Italics in the original.

<sup>743</sup> Nicholas King, *The New Testament – Romans to Corinthians* (Suffolk, UK: Mayhew, 2006), 64.

Pre-imperial Corinth was widely noted for its sexually immoral practices, but there seems to be little evidence that this was the case in Paul's time there.<sup>744</sup> It seems far more likely that Paul selects this 'classic *topos*' to introduce the theological basis on which he could address the specific sexually-related issues he wishes to consider (including those suggested in the Corinthian letter mentioned in 1 Cor 7:1).<sup>745</sup> Paul advocates a whole-person involvement in sexual relationships and in this he is "far ahead of first-century cultural assumptions in perceiving the sexual act as one of intimacy and self-commitment which involves the whole person."<sup>746</sup>

In summary, in 1 Cor 6:12-20 Paul is reminding the Corinthian church members that Christ died for them and was raised again by God (1 Cor 6:14). They are now saved (1 Cor 6:11), are united with the Body of Christ (1 Cor 6:15), are participants in Christ's life and mission, and hope to 'glorify God in the body' forever (1 Cor 6:20). They are in a "radically new relationship with God determining the whole of life's course by the light of the imminent End."<sup>747</sup> Therefore, nothing they do in this life should be incompatible with their embodiment of Christ here and hereafter. This Social and Cultural Texture analysis shows that the believer should not engage in any acts that denigrate the body, or that are of a self-centred nature. Additionally, Paul maintains the significant value of the whole person in the light of the embodied resurrection and, therefore, of the actions of that embodied person. He disagrees with any view that borders on dualism, the view that considers the body as 'paltry,' a 'burden,' and ceasing to exist after death, because it denies the embodied resurrection.<sup>748</sup> He concludes that,

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<sup>744</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 240.

<sup>745</sup> *Ibid.*, 239-240.

<sup>746</sup> Derek S. Bailey, *The Man-Woman Relation in Christian Thought* (London: Longmans, 1959), 9-10, quoted in Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 474 – and with which Thiselton agrees. See, also, B. Byrne, "Sinning against One's Own Body: Paul's Understanding of the Sexual Relationships in 1 Cor 6: 18," *CBQ* 45 (1983), 608 – 616.

<sup>747</sup> Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*, 309.

<sup>748</sup> Fitzgerald, *Cracks in an Earthen Vessel*, 54, 65; Tabb, *Suffering in Ancient Worldview*, 66.

saved by Christ (and, importantly, one body with him), Christians are in a union with Christ. Their embodied actions should be compatible with their new being: as a result they should avoid immorality and all the other proscribed behaviours (1 Cor 6:12-20) and live a life of holiness (1 Cor 1:2; 5:1-8; 6:12-20) as participants in Christ' life and mission. Living in a 'sinful' world will involve self-denial (1 Cor 6:18), putting the other person first always (1 Cor 8:7-13), suffering (1 Cor 4:9-13; 9:19-27), maybe even death (1 Cor 15:31). The aim, now and in the next life, is to glorify God 'in Christ' as embodied Christians (1 Cor 6:20).

The dominant culture at Corinth, based on Stoic-Sophist philosophies, treated the human body as a 'paltry' body, destined for destruction at death.<sup>749</sup> Furthermore, the slogans mentioned by Paul in 1 Cor 6:12-13 express the Stoic belief that some physical actions have little or no moral value and are morally inconsequential.<sup>750</sup> Paul's counterculture view is based on the importance of the body, a member of Christ (1 Cor 6:16), a temple of the Spirit (1 Cor 6:19), and re-created to glorify God (1 Cor 6:20). Paul's rhetorical questions (1 Cor 6:15, 16, 19) punctuate the argument and assist in moving it forward.

In this pericope all three Social and Cultural sub-textures are evident. Paul makes it abundantly clear that he, and every believer, is on a mission of converting the nations, reconciling all with their relationship-seeking God: this is an example of the specific social topics sub-texture. However, he knows that his view is not accepted in the wider society, it is not the dominant cultural view. Therefore, it is not welcome, it is considered treasonous. In other words, he is preaching and embodying a countercultural view: an expression of final cultural categories sub-texture. In 1 Corinthians he is challenging the dominant view, in the sure knowledge that, being

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<sup>749</sup> Pascuzzi, *First and Second Corinthians*, 44, and Hooker, *Paul – A Short Introduction*, 125.

<sup>750</sup> Murphy-O'Connor, "First Letter to the Corinthians," 804.

God's view, it is the revealed view and, as he mentions in 1 Cor 15:58, the only view that will succeed: a common social and cultural topics sub-texture.

### 5.3.3 Ideological Texture

Ideological Texture places a focus on the individual person and his or her preconceived mindset, especially as these relate to their views of the world, society and humanity. There are four Ideological sub-textures: 1) the individual location sub-texture, for instance the understandings, attitudes and values that guide one's living, 2) the relation to groups sub-texture refers to the different groups to which one may affiliate oneself, such as cliques, factions, action alliances, 3) the modes of intellectual discourse include "theological, historical, sociological, anthropological, psychological, or literary discourse,"<sup>751</sup> 4) the spheres of ideology sub-texture, which indicates "where power impacts upon certain utterances and inscribes itself tacitly within them."<sup>752</sup> This texture is keenly interested in the individual's view (individual location sub-texture), how these views may be shared with groups (relation to groups sub-texture), and how they might be expressed (modes of intellectual discourse sub-texture), and/or interpreted (spheres of ideology sub-texture).<sup>753</sup>

In 1 Cor 6:12-20 the Ideological Texture reveals itself in Paul's re-definition of 'freedom' (individual location sub-texture). His application of that definition to a number of problems raised by Corinthian attitudes puts him in direct conflict with those who espouse the Stoic-Sophist philosophy (relation to groups sub-texture). He recognises that some of his followers find the Stoic-Sophist views attractive and he wishes to engage them in debate on the matter (a mode of intellectual discourse sub-

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<sup>751</sup> Terence Eagleton, *Ideology: An Introduction*, (London: Verso, 1991), 206.

<sup>752</sup> *Ibid.*, 223.

<sup>753</sup> Elliott, *A Home for the Homeless*, 268, quoted in Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 96.

texture). In 1 Cor 6:12-20 the views of Paul and his adversaries are faithfully recorded in the text (spheres of ideology sub-texture).

Paul sets out his understanding of 'freedom' as being secondary to another's salvation. Having re-defined freedom, he then progresses the argument by addressing the Stoic-Sophist philosophy as expressed in three slogans. Arguing against the Stoic-Sophist denigration of the body, Paul explains his understanding of the individual's body as a "member of [the risen] Christ" (1 Cor 6:15), a temple of the Spirit (1 Cor 6:19) and re-created to glorify God (1 Cor 6:20). This discussion needs further elucidation.

As indicated in the Inner Texture analysis, Paul begins his diatribe in 1 Cor 6:12-20 in discussion with an imaginary opponent who argues for unrestricted freedom. While the opponent may be imaginary, the problem is not.<sup>754</sup> Many Corinthian citizens, including some church members, seem to accept a definition of freedom as the authority to act as one wishes, regardless of the effects (especially the suffering) that action may bring on others. At the very least one can do all that is lawful. Paul responds in 1 Cor 6:12-20 that one's actions must not harm others – a principle that he expounds throughout this Letter (see 1 Cor 5:1-8; 8:7-13; 9:12; 11:29-34). The Christian's behaviour must not be a 'stumbling block' to those of immature conscience or faith, rather, as a participant in Christ's life and mission, he/she must build up the salvation of both the individual and the community (a requirement to which Paul will return again in 1 Cor 12:12-31 and 14:4).

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<sup>754</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 242.



“Everything is lawful for me” (1 Cor 6:12) seems to be a popular Corinthian Stoic slogan. Freedom, for the Stoics, is the “quintessential right and privilege of the ideal wise man.”<sup>755</sup> Epictetus says of the wise man that

he is free who lives as he wills, who is subject neither to compulsion, nor hindrance, nor force, whose choices are unhampered, whose desires attain their ends, whose aversions do not fall into what they would avoid.<sup>756</sup>

In 1 Corinthians Paul reiterates his disagreements with the Stoic understanding of freedom.<sup>757</sup> Freedom, in Paul’s view, is not an absolute – as many Stoics seem to be saying. For Paul the freedom of the individual must always be subservient to the other’s good (1 Cor 8:7-13). Paul’s concern is always for those who are weaker, whose faith and/or conscience may not be so mature, and the subsequent fear that they may be scandalised by the ‘un-Christian’ behaviour of their more enlightened brothers and sisters.<sup>758</sup> At times this may mean that Christians may have to forgo the exercise of their own lawful entitlements in order to avoid causing suffering for others.

Paul’s rejection of the Stoic’s dualism also emerges here. In his understanding of biblical anthropology Paul is teaching that humans are living an embodied (but corruptible) existence now and will also live an embodied (but glorified) existence after the general resurrection. He holds that “it is the resurrection of the body that imparts ultimate significance to the human body.”<sup>759</sup> Humans belong to God: they are “for the Lord and the Lord is for them” (1 Cor 6:13) because God through Christ has saved and

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<sup>755</sup> Pascuzzi, *First Corinthians*, 44. The Stoic writers, Musonius Rufus (25—95 C.E.), Dio Chrysostom (40—120 C.E.) and Epictetus (50—135 C.E.) were all near-contemporaries of Paul (c. 5 B. C.—65 C.E.). Dio Chrysostom described the wise (or ideal) man as one “to whom all things are permissible.”

<sup>756</sup> Epictetus, *Discourses* 4.1.1; Collins, *First Corinthians*, 243. Musonius Rufus and Dio Chrysostom, while agreeing in principle with Epictetus, would have put some limitations on one’s freedom (e.g. Dio Chrysostom “taught that even though a person has power to do as he likes it is not permissible to do mean and unprofitable things”) Dio Chrysostom, *Discourses* 14. 13-16, quoted in Collins, *First Corinthians*, 243.

<sup>757</sup> This understanding is also explained in 1 Cor 9.

<sup>758</sup> Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 130.

<sup>759</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 242.

re-created them (1 Cor 15).<sup>760</sup> Moreover, he points out that “your bodies are members of Christ” (1 Cor 6:15), with whom you are ‘one flesh,’ ‘one spirit’ (1 Cor 6:16), and “your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit” (1 Cor 6:19). Therefore, the Corinthian Christians are to flee idolatry (1 Cor 10:14-22) and “glorify God in your body” (1 Cor 6:20).

In summary, freedom for Paul, in contrast with the ideology of many Corinthian Stoics-Sophists, is not an absolute; the freedom of the individual must always be subservient to the good of the other person, especially the weak or immature: this is Paul’s statement of ‘Christian freedom.’ Most certainly it is not to harm another’s salvation. Furthermore, as it is now re-created for God’s glory, it must be what it is (that is, saved in being and action). For Paul the Christians’ freedom is always ‘other-focused,’ always requiring that their behaviour preach and embody Christ’s self-sacrificing and suffering service of others. His argument is underpinned by his belief that the embodied person, is created by God, united with the Body of Christ (1 Cor 6:15), a temple of the Spirit (1 Cor 6:19), created and re-created to “glorify God in the body” (1 Cor 6:20). In other words, Paul is stressing the critical importance of the embodied person and his/her essential need to function as saved. This union with Christ cannot co-exist with the Stoic self-centred understanding of freedom.

An ideological analysis of 1 Cor 6:12-20 reveals that Paul’s re-definition of ‘Christian freedom’ (his individual location sub-texture), conflicts with his imaginary, representative opponent’s view (introducing the relation to groups sub-texture). Paul acknowledges the opposing social and cultural understanding of the body and proceeds to engage in a theological discussion (a mode of intellectual discourse sub-texture). He bases his argument on beliefs he already knows the Corinthians share with him

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<sup>760</sup> Note that for Paul the ‘Lord’ is always ‘the Risen Lord.’

(expressed in the three rhetorical questions in 1 Cor 6:15, 19, 20), he presents three key reasons for maintaining his re-defining view, namely, because of Christ's resurrection each believer is now "a member of Christ" (1 Cor 6:15), a "temple of the Spirit" (1 Cor 6:19), and is re-created "to glorify God" (1 Cor 6:20). He concludes then that the human body is inestimably valuable. It is holy, the main theme of the unit 1 Cor 5:1—6:20, and should be treated accordingly by shunning all immorality (1 Cor 6:18). In 1 Cor 6:12-20 the views of Paul (as written in his Letters) and those of his adversaries, as cross-referenced with the writings of Seneca and Epictetus are faithfully recorded in the text (spheres of ideology sub-texture).<sup>761</sup>

#### 5.3.4 Intertexture

Intertexture is the procedure whereby one includes words, themes, and/or stories from an earlier text within a later one in order to carry over some of the meanings, feelings or attitudes of the earlier text.<sup>762</sup> The four sub-textures of Intertexture are as follows: (1) Oral-scribal sub-texture, which is using or copying the text of another author with or without reference. For example, in 1 Cor 6:16 Paul quotes Gen 2:24. (2) Cultural sub-texture is referring to, alluding to or echoing a text that relates to values, codes, systems and myths known only to particular cultural 'insiders:' it is also evident in 1 Corinthians. For example, the three questions at 1 Cor 15, 19, 20 refer to beliefs already known and agreed to by the Corinthian church members. (3) Social sub-texture is the social knowledge commonly held by all people of a region. Paul's recounting of Stoic-Sophist slogans is an example of Social Intertexture as it is information available widely in the society of his time. (4) Historical sub-texture is the reference to "events

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<sup>761</sup> Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 110-115.

<sup>762</sup> Bakhtin, *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, 14.

that have occurred at specific times in specific locations.’<sup>763</sup> Paul’s rhetorical questions in 1 Cor 6:15-20 refer to beliefs he already preached to the Corinthians while he was living there in 51-52 C.E. and/or beliefs he read and discussed while in Corinth.

Under this oral-scribal Intertexture particular attention will be directed towards the Genesis 2:24 allusion in 1 Cor 6:15-17. There is also a discussion of the similarities in language and concept between 1 Cor 15-17 and Ephesians 5:21-33 which assists in clarifying the Pauline understanding of the nature of the Christ—believer union, even though Ephesians was written some years after Paul’s death. Allusions to his earlier First Letter to the Thessalonians (1 Thess 4:14—5:11) and to his Letter to the Galatians 2:20 will also be examined here. Paul’s unique ‘in Christ’ concept is to be found right across his undisputed Letters and it is particularly significant in 1 Corinthians, especially in 1 Cor 6:15-17: so it will also be investigated. This is an example of a cultural sub-texture because it is known only to Pauline ‘insiders.’

In 1 Cor 6:15-17 Paul is teaching, with the authoritative scriptural support of Genesis, that the believer’s union with Christ is ontological, spiritual, spousal and participatory and that it offers the believer the opportunity of incorporation into Christ and, thus, of living with Christ’s life. These oral-scribal Intertexture references will be treated hereunder in detail: the material mentioned under the cultural, social and historical Intertexture references has already been discussed, for example, in the Social and Cultural, and Ideological Intertexture sections of this dissertation (Chapter 5 sections 5.3.1—5.3.5).

The oral-scribal sub-texture relationship between 1 Cor 6:12-20 and Gen 2:24 in this pericope is critical. Paul quotes Gen 2:24 in 1 Cor 6:16: “the two shall be one

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<sup>763</sup> Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 63.

flesh.”<sup>764</sup> This quotation from Gen 2:24 is “a *testimonium* and an enthymeme” which allows Paul to “counter the dualistic anthropology of the Corinthians with a Semitic and biblical anthropology with its distinct appreciation for the unitive aspect of human sexuality.”<sup>765</sup> He is teaching, with the added authority of the Genesis allusion, that membership of or union with Christ involves a unity that is incompatible with an illicit union with a prostitute.<sup>766</sup> Paul adds that this union with Christ is a union which, as in Gen 2:24, is ‘nuptial,’ and any other immoral or illicit relationship is incompatible with it.<sup>767</sup> Furthermore, in 1 Cor 6:17 Paul states that “whoever is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him.”

The application of this understanding for Paul’s followers is clear. Paul is inviting each of his followers “to make his life a sacrifice of love for others like that of Christ.”<sup>768</sup> Paul, in similar circumstances (1 Cor 7:14), is teaching that when a husband and wife love one another selflessly or sacrificially “then their married love will be a visible sign that they are imitating and sharing this invisible action of Christ: it is a sacrament of Christ’s love.”<sup>769</sup> Thiselton also suggests that Paul can see “this intimacy of self-giving” as making ‘holy’ (1 Cor 7:14) or ‘as in the Lord’ (1 Cor 7:39). This achieves an even clearer profile if Klein is right in perceiving a possible background to 6:18-20 in the covenantal relationship which is presupposed in Hosea 3:1-3.<sup>770</sup> These

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<sup>764</sup> This quotation “follows the unanimous wording of the LXX tradition of Gen 2:24,” and this wording is also found in the Samaritan Pentateuch and in the Targum of Jonathan, as quoted in Collins, *First Corinthians*, 247 and Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 467. The LXX’s ‘two’ does occur in the numerous quotations of Philo and in Mark 10:8, Matt 19:5 and Eph 5:31 as mentioned by Christopher D. Stanley, *Paul and the Language of Scripture: Citation Technique in the Pauline Epistles and Contemporary Literature*, SNTSMS 74 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 195 and Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 467.

<sup>765</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 243.

<sup>766</sup> He had already referred in 1 Cor 5:1-13 to a church member who was in a sexual relationship with his father’s wife. Not only was this relationship sinful and unacceptable behaviour for a Christian, but it also damaged the Body of Christ of which the sinner was a member.

<sup>767</sup> Fee, *First Corinthians*, 260.

<sup>768</sup> Joseph A. Grassi, “Letter to the Ephesians,” in Brown, Fitzmyer and Murphy, *JBC*, 341-349: 349.

<sup>769</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>770</sup> George L. Klein, “Hos 3:1-3 – Background to 1 Cor 6:19b-20?” *Criswell Theological Review* 3 (1989): 373-375.

similarities between 1 Corinthians and Ephesians would indicate that Paul’s view as outlined in 1 Corinthians (circa 55 C.E.) remains the view of the Pauline ‘school’ some fifteen to forty years later.<sup>771</sup>

There is a further important Intertexture relationship between 1 Cor 6:12–20 (written in 55 C.E.) and Ephesians 5:21–33 (written probably fifteen to forty years later) which supports many of the foregoing claims.<sup>772</sup> Both texts have many commonalities: the setting of spousal unity, the emphasis on both spouses becoming one in marriage, the uncontested fact that ‘we/our bodies are members of Christ,’ marriage as a model for Christ’s unity with the church (individually and collectively), and the bedrock theme of Gen 2:24 which is quoted in both texts.

<b><u>Setting</u></b>	<b><u>1 Cor 6:15-19</u></b>	<b><u>Eph 5:21-33</u></b>
<b>(1) Spousal Setting</b>	<sup>15-19</sup> references the model of the marriage relationship	<sup>21-33</sup> speaks of the husband and wife relationship
<b>(2) One in Marriage</b>	<sup>16</sup> “The two,” it says “will become one flesh”	<sup>31</sup> “and the two shall become one flesh”
<b>(3) Our Bodies are Members of Christ</b>	<sup>15</sup> “Your bodies are members of Christ”	<sup>30</sup> “For we are members of his body”
<b>(4) Marriage as a Model of the Church</b>	<sup>6:15</sup> (above) and <sup>12:27</sup> “Now you are Christ’s body and individually members of it”	<sup>32</sup> “But I speak in reference to the church”
<b>(5) Gen 2:24</b>	<sup>16</sup> “The two,” it says “will become one flesh”	<sup>31</sup> “and the two shall become one flesh”

<sup>771</sup> Most commentators accept that Ephesians was written during the period 80-100 A. D., for example, Paul J. Paul J. Kobelski, “The Letter to the Ephesians,” in *NJBC*, 883- 890: 883; Grassi, “The Letter to the Ephesians,” 341.

<sup>772</sup> There are also striking similarities between both documents (1 Cor 6:12-20 and Eph 5:21-33) and Colossians 3:18—4:1.

Christ's selfless love for others is the example or model for family life: not merely between the spouses, but also between the spouses and their children, and between the family members and their slaves.<sup>773</sup> Some commentators also maintain that Paul regards Gen 2:24 as "a symbolic reference to Christ's union with the church."<sup>774</sup> In Henry Chadwick's view "it is a natural extension of the idea of Christ as second Adam (cf. Rom 5; 1 Cor 15), and implies that Eve is a type of the church."<sup>775</sup> This presentation of Christ's love for the church is unique to Paul.

The union between the believer and Christ is a spiritual, ontological and spousal union, as indicated by the allusion to Gen 2:24. As reviewed in Chapter 2 of this dissertation, Hafemann maintains that this union of believer and Christ is "not ontological" but merely "exemplary."<sup>776</sup> However, most commentators would disagree with Hafemann on this point and would accept the ontological nature of the union, for example Deissmann<sup>777</sup> and Gorman.<sup>778</sup> The closeness of the union is identified in 1 Cor 12:1-31 where Paul speaks of the union as the Body of Christ (especially, 1 Cor 12:27).

In Paul's understanding both he and the believer are incorporated into and participate in Christ's life (which may be analysed from a cultural Intertexture perspective, that is, as known only to 'insiders' to the Christian culture). This is shown in his use of the 'in Christ' phraseology. Paul uses the phrase 'in Christ' (and its derivatives) to express the different nuances of the Christian re-creation: it is evident right across his undisputed *corpus*. Hooker notes that it is a phrase that is without parallel in either ancient or modern literature.<sup>779</sup> Throughout 1 Corinthians Paul uses a

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<sup>773</sup> Grassi, "The Letter to the Ephesians," 348.

<sup>774</sup> Henry Chadwick, "Ephesians," in Black and Rowley, *Peake's Commentary on the Bible*: 980-984, 948.

<sup>775</sup> *Ibid.*, 948.

<sup>776</sup> See Chapter 1 of this dissertation, section 1.3.2, for a detailed explanation of Hafemann's view.

<sup>777</sup> Deissmann's view is outlined in Chapter 2 of this dissertation, section 1.4.1.

<sup>778</sup> Gorman's view is presented in Chapter , section 1.4.2 of this dissertation, pages 53-56.

<sup>779</sup> Hooker, *Paul: A Short Introduction*, 84.

number of phrases to express this union, for example, ‘in Christ’ and/or ‘in the Lord’ (twelve times),<sup>780</sup> ‘with Christ’ (six times),<sup>781</sup> ‘into Christ’ (once),<sup>782</sup> ‘body of Christ’ (once),<sup>783</sup> ‘through Christ’ (once),<sup>784</sup> and ‘of Christ’ (three times)<sup>785</sup> are all found in 1 Corinthians. Moreover, they are found over one hundred and sixty times across Paul’s undisputed Letters.<sup>786</sup> There is no doubt that Paul considered these to be important phrases as they expressed “the most intimate possible fellowship of the Christian with the living, risen, spiritual Christ.”<sup>787</sup> These phrases are distinctively Pauline expressions. They are a very significant, even foundational, feature of his theology and lifestyle and are saying something very important about Paul. Being used in different situations they may be given different meanings.<sup>788</sup> Among the most common meanings are the following: (1) an objective usage, for example, in 1 Cor 1:4, 15: 22 referring to the act of salvation performed by Christ, (2) a subjective usage, a being in Christ, as in 1 Cor 1:2, 30; 4:10; 15:18, 22, and/or (3) an attitudinal/action usage, as when Paul asks his converts to adopt a particular attitude or perform a particular action (for example, 1 Cor 4:15, 17). Dunn says that Paul’s understanding of his whole life as a Christian, “its source, its identity and its responsibilities, could be summed up in these phrases.”<sup>789</sup>

Paul adverts to his ‘union with/in Christ’ theme in 1 Corinthians 6:17 in his phrase “one spirit (or, Spirit) with the Lord” (1 Cor 6:17) which indicates that he believes that this spiritual symbiosis or union is effected by the Spirit. It is a spiritual

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<sup>780</sup> 1 Cor 1:2, 4, 30; 4:10,15,17; 9:1; 15:18, 19, 22, 31; 16:24.

<sup>781</sup> 1 Cor 4:8; 9:23; 12:13, 26 (x2); 13:6; 16:16. See also Dunn, *The Theology of the Apostle Paul*, 402-403.

<sup>782</sup> 1 Cor 12:13.

<sup>783</sup> 1 Cor 12:27.

<sup>784</sup> 1 Cor 15:57

<sup>785</sup> 1 Cor 1:12; 3:23; 15:23.

<sup>786</sup> For a fuller discussion, see Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 390 – 412.

<sup>787</sup> Adolf Deissmann, *Paul: A Study in Social and Religious History* (Glasgow: Peter Smith, 1972), 149.

<sup>788</sup> Conceptually, Paul’s ‘in Christ’ term is similar to the ‘abiding’ concept found in John’s gospel.

<sup>789</sup> Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 399 – 400.



(or Spiritual), ontological, and a spousal union as indicated in the allusion to Gen 2:24. The closeness of the union is also identified in 1 Cor 12:1-31 where he speaks of the union as the Body of Christ (especially, 1 Cor 10:16-17; 12:12, 27). Fitzmyer explains that, in his view, “the union implied here is more than a moral union; somehow Christ and the believer share in a union that connotes ‘one flesh.’”<sup>790</sup> Paul is speaking of the believers as “members of Christ himself; their union is not only corporate, but somehow corporal.”<sup>791</sup> Alfred Wickenhauser, speaking of the array of ‘in Christ’ derivatives, asserts that “these texts all agree that Christ is the vital principle of Christians”<sup>792</sup> and that the Christian “lives in Christ, draws all vital power from him, and indeed is a Christian only as long as he lives in this union with Christ.”<sup>793</sup> In 1 Cor 1:18 this ‘power’ or ‘force’ is “God’s power, the manifestation of God’s salvific presence.”<sup>794</sup> 1 Cor 1:24 explicitly identifies this ‘power of God’ as Christ. “Because this divine ‘force’ is at work on us and within us, Paul says, we are being transformed into the glory and image of Christ.”<sup>795</sup> Gorman asserts that this power is divine, that it bears the character of Jesus the Lord, and is by definition empowering, transforming, and salvific. The believer is becoming the clearest possible visible expression of the heavenly One (1 Cor 15:49).<sup>796</sup>

It is asserted in 1 Cor 15:42-44 that this transformation is a re-creation, from corruptible to incorruptible, from dishonourable to honourable, from natural to spiritual. Fitzmyer emphasises that, as a result of this symbiosis, the believers become one with the glorified Lord, “who has become, as of the resurrection, a vivifying [life-giving]

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<sup>790</sup> Fitzmyer, “Pauline Theology,” 1410.

<sup>791</sup> Ibid.

<sup>792</sup> Alfred Wickenhauser, *Pauline Mysticism: Christ in the Mystical Teaching of St Paul*, trans. Joseph Cunningham (Freiburg: Herder and Herder, 1960), 31.

<sup>793</sup> Ibid.

<sup>794</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 102.

<sup>795</sup> Gorman, *Participating in Christ*, 16.

<sup>796</sup> Dunn, *The Spirit of Jesus*, 325; Gorman, *Participating in Christ*, 15-16.

Spirit” (1 Cor 15:45).<sup>797</sup> In 1 Cor 15:45 Paul is contrasting Adam (“a living being”) and Christ (“a life-giving spirit”). There is some debate about the tense of the verb in 1 Cor 15:49. Some commentators read it as a simple future tense but the preferred and more common reading is as a “hortatory aorist subjunctive.”<sup>798</sup> In the latter understanding Paul is appealing to the Corinthians, who are already re-created in the image of the risen Christ, to *continue* to bear that image of Christ. In other words, believers are already “life-giving spirits,” though not yet wholly or completely so, “nevertheless, they are *en route* to a mode of existence wholly like that of the raised Christ in glory.”<sup>799</sup> In Fitzmyer’s view, he is here speaking of a union which “reshapes human beings anew, supplying them with *a new principle of activity on the ontological level of their very beings.*”<sup>800</sup> In other words, a re-creation. In Paul’s own inimitable phrase: “I live, now no longer I, but Christ lives in me” (Gal 2:20).<sup>801</sup>

As a believer “being saved,” it is of the utmost importance to Paul that he act accordingly, that he acknowledge this union ‘in Christ’ by living a life of selfless, sacrificial service of others. It is only on the basis of that union in Christ that he could maintain that his life of sacrificial service saves others: in 1 Cor 9:19-27 he explains that his entire life is an outworking of this belief. Paul holds that every believer has this vocation in life. 1 Cor 4:14-18; 7:16; 9:19-27; 10:33; 12: 1-31; 14:23-25 are all passages in which Paul assumes that every believer is actively concerned about the

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<sup>797</sup> Fitzmyer, “The Letter to the Galatians,” 785

<sup>798</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 572.

<sup>799</sup> Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 1289-1290. Italics in the original.

<sup>800</sup> Fitzmyer, “The Letter to the Galatians,” 785. Italics added.

<sup>801</sup> Paul had already highlighted the believer’s union with Christ in his Letter to the Galatians. For example, in Gal 4:20 Paul states that he is “again in labour until Christ is formed in you.” Interpreting Gal 3:28-29 (“You are all one in Christ Jesus”), Fitzmyer states that “secondary differences [Jew-Greek, male-female] vanish through the effects of this primary incorporation of Christian into Christ’s [risen] body through ‘one Spirit’” (1 Cor 12:13). In Gal 1:16 Paul says that God “was pleased to reveal his Son in me,” indicating the closeness of the union of believer and Christ. F. F. Bruce, on the basis of the last-mentioned reference, and Gal 3:29 maintains that “those who are ‘in Christ’ are also ‘Christ’s’, not only in the sense that they belong to Christ or follow Christ, but even more in the sense that they participate in him by the Spirit.” Frederick F. Bruce, *The Letter to the Galatians*, NIGTC (2014), 190.

other's salvation, considers oneself to be 'on active mission,' or encourages them to be 'on active mission,' in order to build up the church (internally and externally). In 1 Cor 12:1—14:40 he emphasises that each believer is gifted by the Spirit for this very vocation (1 Cor 12:7).<sup>802</sup> These gifts are by definition empowering, transforming, and salvific.

Paul is aware that living the Christian life will be difficult, will necessitate sacrifices, and will invite suffering, even death. He appeals to his followers to 'avoid immorality' and 'every other sin' (1 Cor 6:18). He is inviting each of his Christian followers to make his life a sacrifice of love for others like that of Christ. In Dunn's opinion the believer is becoming increasingly "the clearest possible visible expression of the heavenly One [Christ]" (1 Cor 15:49);<sup>803</sup> this thought is repeated in Gal 1:16; 2 Cor 4:7; 4:10; 4:7—5:5. The believer is becoming a "sacrament of Christ."<sup>804</sup>

In summary in 1 Cor 5:1—6:20 Paul is reminding the Corinthian church members that Christ sacrificed himself for them (1 Cor 5:7-8), and was raised again by God (1 Cor 6:14; 15:4). Now saved (1 Cor 6:11 "washed, sanctified and justified"), they are united 'in Christ,' in the Body of Christ, in an ontological, spousal and Spiritual union. The reference to Gen 2:24, authoritatively highlights the spousal nature of the union of believer and Christ and its incompatibility with any unholy union. The main theme of 1 Cor 5:1—6:20 is the holiness of the community and of each individual believer. The allusion to 1 Thess 4:14-18 repeats God's call to holiness (1 Thess 4:3, 7), to a life of lived-love (1 Thess 4:9-12). This Christ—believer union also offers opportunity of incorporation into Christ's life, into the Body of Christ, meaning that the re-created believer participates in Christ's life and is himself/herself a "*sacrament of*

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<sup>802</sup> Many of these texts receive additional treatment in Chapter 6, Sacred Texture Section.

<sup>803</sup> Dunn, *The Spirit of Jesus*, 325.

<sup>804</sup> Grassi, "The Letter to the Ephesians," 349.

*Christ's love.*"<sup>805</sup> This interpretation is also supported by the majority interpretation of Gal 1:16. Many commentators are of the view that this participation is "a continuing participation in Christ, who is the new life-power in Paul and in his followers."<sup>806</sup> The believer must then act accordingly. Paul, therefore, appeals to all believers to "avoid immorality" (1 Cor 6:18; 1 Thess 4:3-8), such as greed, idolatry, slander, drunkenness, and robbery (1 Cor 6:11). In short, they are to avoid any behaviour that is incompatible with their union with Christ because they have now been saved and their lives are focused on the embodied resurrection (1 Thess 4:17; 1 Cor 6:14). Obviously this personal conformity to Christ is causing many church members pain and suffering, and opposition. Persecution and suffering are heaped upon them for their public embodiment of Christ (1 Thess 1:6-10; 1 Cor 4:9-13). Paul appeals to them to focus on the embodied resurrection, the consequent value of the body and the proleptic demands this makes on their everyday bodily actions. He reminds them to keep their eyes on the ultimate goal – to "glorify God in your body (1 Cor 6:20) and "to meet the Lord in the air" (1 Thess 4:17).

The 1) Oral-scribal Intertexture reference to Gen 2:24 gives Scriptural support to Paul's claim in 1 Cor 6:15-20 that the believer is now an ontological, spousal and Spiritual re-creation. The reference to Ephesians 5:21-33, although written possibly 20-30 years after Paul's death, indicates that this belief is still held in the Christian community. 2) The Culture Intertexture allusion, is revealed in the three questions of 1 Cor 6:15, 19, 20 and in the assertion that the believer is 'in Christ' or 'in the Lord.' Paul's unique 'in Christ' concept is to be found right across his undisputed Letters and it is particularly significant in 1 Corinthians, especially in 1 Cor 6:15-17 and 1 Cor 6:17 show beliefs that the church members know and accept, but may not have thought

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<sup>805</sup> Grassi, "The Letter to the Ephesians," 349. Italics in the original.

<sup>806</sup> Gorman, *Cruciformity*, 32; see also Tannehill, *Dying and Rising with Christ*, 81

through. 3) The Social Intertexture slogans (1 Cor 6:12-13) are rooted in the writings of Epictetus and Dio Chrysostom and are widely known in first-century Corinth.<sup>807</sup> 4) The historical Intertexture is referenced in Paul's mentioning of internal beliefs of the church community as these may well have been taught by Paul himself when he preached in Corinth (51-52 C.E.). Cleverly, Paul interweaves these Intertexture references into his argument using both cultural and social Intertexture allusions to assist him in addressing the obvious conflict between his Christian belief and the Stoic-Sophist group and calling on the Scriptural voice of authority also.

### 5.3.5 Sacred Texture

Sacred Texture refers to the way in which an author expresses his or another's understanding of the Sacred sub-textures whether based in religious or secular texts.<sup>808</sup> In this analysis particular attention is paid to the following (1) the divine, (2) holy persons, (5) human redemption, and (8) ethics.

Regarding (1): In 1 Cor 6:12-20 Paul provides some significant insights into the relationship between the Divine and the human in discussing the fundamental nature of his (and others') union with Christ. He creates a *gradatio* (which climaxes in 1 Cor 6:17) in which he declares that the union between Christ and the Christian is a spiritual union, and is more real and intimate than even the marital union. It is a union in which the believer becomes "one in spirit with the (risen) Lord" (1 Cor 6:17), a union in which the believer is "joined indissolubly with Christ,"<sup>809</sup> that is, risen and now living with a

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<sup>807</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 243.

<sup>808</sup> Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation: *Dictionary of Socio-Rhetorical Terms*, [www.religion.emory.edu/faculty/robbins/SRI/defns/s\\_defns.cfm](http://www.religion.emory.edu/faculty/robbins/SRI/defns/s_defns.cfm) accessed on 27-10-2016. This texture includes aspects or sub-textures concerning (1) deity, (2) holy persons, (3) spirit beings, (4) divine history, (5) human redemption, (6) human commitment, (7) religious community, and (8) ethics

<sup>809</sup> Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 260. Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 469, agrees with this interpretation.

*new* life-force: the believer is re-created.<sup>810</sup> Re-created, the believer now lives and participates in Christ's life. That union is, in the view of many commentators, with Christ's death and resurrection.<sup>811</sup> This dissertation argues that the union goes even further: it is a union with Christ, his life, mission, death, resurrection and exaltation; in other words, *the total Christ-event*.

Regarding (2) Holy Persons: In 1 Cor 3:16-17, Paul speaks of the Holy Spirit who dwells in the community, and in 1 Cor 6:17 he applies this metaphor to every Christian individually. However, living with a new life-force, a new being, requires that one's behaviour is in accordance with that life-force or being. Therefore, in 1 Cor 5:1-8 Paul says that just as the entire community must safeguard its holiness, so must each individual believer, whose body is no longer their own to use at will but is the sacred place of the Spirit's indwelling.<sup>812</sup> The same conclusion is arrived at in 1 Cor 10:16-17 where Paul insists on the union of all Christians, which is brought about by their sharing in the Eucharistic bread and cup: "Because there is one loaf, we, many as we are, are one body, for we all share the one loaf" (1 Cor 10:17). The unity of Christians is derived from their physical consumption of the one loaf, a oneness that transcends any mere extrinsic union effected by collaboration to attain a common goal.<sup>813</sup> It is critically important, also, to realise that the union with Christ, effected by the Spirit, is a Spiritual union. By that Paul means that the believer is now committed to act as a Spiritual person, as commanded in 1 Cor 6:18.

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<sup>810</sup> This is the view of a number of commentators: 2 *Clement* 14:5, quoted in Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 467, Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 485, Pascuzzi, *First Corinthians*, 45. It is supported by Paul's reference in 1 Cor 6:14 to the "principle of the act of resurrection, the agent of which is regularly the Holy Spirit in Paul (such as 1 Cor 15:44; Rom 8:11). See also Galatians 6:15; Romans 5—8; 2 Cor 5:17.

<sup>811</sup> Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 390-391, Albert Schweitzer, *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle*, (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1998), 15-16, Gorman, *Cruciformity*, 32.

<sup>812</sup> Pascuzzi, *First and Second Corinthians*, 45.

<sup>813</sup> Fitzmyer, "Pauline Theology," 824. Paul uses the same figure of marriage in Ephesians 1:23; 4:16 to express the same transcendent union.

Paul emphasises the intimacy of the spiritual union by his use of the imagery of marital union to describe the union of the Christian with Christ. 1 Cor 6:20 (“For you have been purchased at a price”) states that the ‘ground’ of this assertion of unity between Christ and the individual Christian is that Christians are saved by Christ’s sacrificial service and, through the gift of salvation, are transformed. Fitzmyer says that the ontological reality that is the basis of the union is the possession of the Spirit of Christ: ‘We have all been baptised in one Spirit to form one body’ (1 Cor 12:13, 17).<sup>814</sup> The Christian is rooted in the reality that is the risen Body of Christ; it is a living, dynamic union with the individual risen body of the Lord.<sup>815</sup> As it is a union with the *Risen* Lord, effected by the Spirit, the phrase is given an orientation towards eschatological salvation. It is important also to realise that Paul is not making this statement as new teaching. His blunt “don’t you know?” in 1 Cor 6:16, 19, 20 asserts that the Corinthians already know this meaning and interpretation of the ‘body of Christ.’

Paul’s use of his ‘in Christ’ concept to express this union with Christ is found in 1 Corinthians and right across his undisputed corpus. Campbell defines it as “union, participation, identification, incorporation – terms that together do justice to the widespread variety and nuance of Paul’s language, theology, and ethical thought about our relatedness to Christ.”<sup>816</sup> For Paul, these terms express his conviction that this union of believer and Christ is the realest of real relationships, more real than the natural world’s relationships. It is also a spiritual union more intimate than the marital union. Furthermore, this union is participatory, that is, the believer participates in Christ’s life.

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<sup>814</sup> Fitzmyer, “Pauline Theology,” 824. Fitzmyer explains that “This possession of the Spirit springs from the sacramental incorporation of Christians into the body of Christ and is, as it were, the term of Paul’s soteriological Christology. From another viewpoint, it has often been called the key to his whole thought.”

<sup>815</sup> Ibid.

<sup>816</sup> Campbell, *Paul and Union in Christ*, 420.

Regarding (5), human redemption sub-texture: Paul’s statement in 1 Cor 6:17 that “whoever is joined to the Lord becomes one Spirit with him” is followed immediately by the caution in 1 Cor 6:18 to “avoid immorality.” In other words, immorality is incompatible with being ‘joined to the Lord’ because the believer is now living with the Lord’s life-force. Put positively, the believer is one with Christ in his life-force or life-principle and must act accordingly, must see everything with the “mind of Christ” (1 Cor 2:16), he or she must see with God’s eyes (1 Cor 1:18-25): *actio sequitur esse (action follows being)*. Deissmann, as mentioned in the Literature Review/Chapter 2 of this dissertation explains his interpretation by saying that this ‘in Christ’ means “‘in’ the living and present spiritual Christ, who is about him on all sides, who fills him, who speaks to him, and speaks in and through him.”<sup>817</sup> It is a union which is organic, ontological, vital, personal, transforming, mediated by the Spirit and, importantly, implies reciprocal action.<sup>818</sup>

Earlier in the unit (1 Cor 5:1—6:20), of which 1 Cor 6:12-20 is the conclusion, Paul says: “Do you not know that the unjust will not inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Cor 6:9). He follows this with a long list of incompatible behaviours in 1 Cor 6:9-10, “fornicators nor idolaters nor adulterers nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor robbers will inherit the kingdom of God.” The Corinthian church members, on the other hand, are now “washed, sanctified and “justified,” so the above-mentioned behaviours are ‘incompatible.’ Paul also criticises the church members for their divisiveness (1 Cor 11:17-34). In short, he is calling them to a life of selfless, loving service following his example (1 Cor 4:16) and the example of Christ (1 Cor 11:1). Paul knows from his own experience and from the experience of his other

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<sup>817</sup> Campbell, *Paul and Union in Christ*, 32, 134-135, 420.

<sup>818</sup> *Ibid.*, 134-135, 135-138. Explaining Paul’s ‘union with Christ,’ Deissmann uses the analogy of air, saying, “Just as the air of life, which we breathe, is ‘in’ us and fills us, and yet we at the same time live in this air and breathe it, so it is also with the Christ-intimacy of the Apostle Paul: Christ in him, he in Christ” *Ibid.*, 140.



churches that this life of service will require selflessness and suffering, even death (1 Cor 4:9-13; 5:7-8; 9:19-27; 11:17-34; 15:31).

What emerges about the Sacred Texture in 1 Cor 6:12-20 has implications for Paul's theology throughout 1 Corinthians. Paul expresses in 1 Cor 6:12-20 that the Christian is in an ontological, spiritual, spousal union or communion with the risen Christ. This raises the question: if the believer is in a spiritual union with Christ the "life-giving spirit" (1 Cor 15:45), is the believer also a 'life-giving spirit'? A number of arguments may be presented, all supporting an affirmative answer to that question.

First, Paul asserts that united with the life-giving Christ, he is now also an eternal life-giver. In 1 Cor 15:42-49 Paul explains this 'life-in-the-Spirit' in greater detail. In contrasting the natural and spiritual in 1 Cor 15:42-44 he states that humanity inherited a natural body from Adam but now believers inherit a Spiritual body from Christ. That Spiritual body is "a life-giving Spirit" (1 Cor 15:45), an 'eternal-life-giving-Spiritual body' (1 Cor 15:48). He finishes this unit appealing to the believers: "Let us bear the image of the heavenly one" (1 Cor 15:49). Some commentators read the verb in 1 Cor 15:49b as an indicative future verb ἐφορέσσομεν while others read it as φορέσωμεν an aorist subjunctive.<sup>819</sup> Pascuzzi, for example, understands the verb in question to be an indicative future active first person plural verb, meaning that "in and through Christ, the Corinthians will attain and live this completely transformed spiritual existence, but it is a future eschatological reality that must be awaited."<sup>820</sup> This seems to suggest that the "transformed spiritual existence" is in the future and "must be awaited."<sup>821</sup> In other words, it is not here now. Thiselton and others, such as Conzelman and Barrett, agree with this reading that "the indicative future has the

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<sup>819</sup> Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 1288-1289.

<sup>820</sup> Pascuzzi, *First Corinthians*, 89.

<sup>821</sup> Ibid.

probability of the textual issue,” claiming the support of “‘B,’ a few miniscules, with the Coptic, Sahidic, Gregory Nazianzus and most of the modern translations, including NRSV, REB, NIV, NJB, RV, AV/KJV.”<sup>822</sup> However, Fee, Collins and others read that verb φορέσωμεν (‘let us bear’) as the subjunctive aorist active tense first person plural conveying the sense ‘let us continue to bear’ [what we already bear].<sup>823</sup> Collins states that “the greatly preponderant external evidence ... [and] a variety of other important manuscripts”<sup>824</sup> understand the verb as subjunctive. Furthermore, this majority view fits better with the overall thinking of the Letter. Paul is adamant that Christ has risen (1 Cor 15:4), that believers are already living with a new life-force or being (1 Cor 6:17), and that they must “be firm, steadfast, always fully devoted to the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labour is not in vain” (1 Cor 15:58). This dissertation, therefore, accepts the dominant or majority view arguing that the aorist subjunctive is more consistent with Paul’s own theology in this Letter.

Kugelman presents a further argument. In Genesis 2:7 it is God who breathes life into mortal bodies: in 1 Cor 15:45-49 it is Christ who breathes new, eternal life into mortal bodies.<sup>825</sup> Recalling Paul’s many statements on the indwelling of the Spirit (e.g. 1 Cor 3:16-23; 6:19; 2 Cor 6:16), Kugelman comments on 1 Cor 15:45-49: “By the action of the indwelling Spirit whom he [Christ] has sent to them they are being transformed ever more perfectly into his image.”<sup>826</sup> Paul is here stating that this transformation is taking place in his (and the Christians’) very being, as well as in his thinking, living, preaching, and embodying of the gospel. “From the ‘heavenly man,’ the glorified Christ, the baptised inherit his life and glory. Even now they share in the

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<sup>822</sup> Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 1289. Conzelman and Barrett are also quoted here as agreeing with Thiselton’s view.

<sup>823</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 572; Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 787 and many other commentators hold with the subjunctive reading (see Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 1289).

<sup>824</sup> *Ibid.*, 572.

<sup>825</sup> Fee, *Pauline Christology: An Exegetical-Theological Study*, (Peabody MA: Hendrickson 2007), 118.

<sup>826</sup> Kugelman, “The First Letter to the Corinthians,” 274.

life of the risen Lord.”<sup>827</sup> They are sharing in Christ’s life-giving Spirit and, as Christ does, *they are sharing that life-giving Spirit with others.*

Collins takes a different starting-point. He says that Paul’s opening statement on the spiritual or “inspired” body is that “if there is a natural body there is also an inspired body” (1 Cor 15:44b); the reality of the second is as sure as that of the first.<sup>828</sup> Using Gen 2:7 as an underpinning authoritative reference, he affirms that “the human person became a living being,” but Christ, the “last” or ultimate person, “is a life-giving spirit” (1 Cor 15:45). His interpretation of Gen 1—2 “allows Paul to develop an Adam-Christ typology by means of antithetical parallelism,” through which he contrasts humanity’s initial state of existence with its eschatological state,<sup>829</sup> the natural or ‘earthly’ with the spiritual or ‘heavenly.’ He concludes

where the first received life, the last gives life; whereas the first is natural, the last is spiritual; whereas the first is formed of dust of earth, the last is from heaven.<sup>830</sup>

And, being from heaven, “sanctified” (1 Cor 1:30), and “being saved” (1 Cor 1:18), Paul appeals to the believer: “Let us [continue to] bear the image of the heavenly One” (1 Cor 15:49). Charles S. C. Williams and other commentators concur and point out that 1 Cor 15:49 “in view of the present participation of the Christian in Christ, the subjunctive ‘let us bear,’ attested by the Chester Beatty papyrus and others, is better.”<sup>831</sup>

Kugelman accepts this interpretation as he argues that

even now they [the believers] share in the life of the Risen Lord; by the action of the indwelling Spirit whom he [Christ] has sent to them they are being transformed ever more perfectly into his image.<sup>832</sup>

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<sup>827</sup> Kugelman, “The First Letter to the Corinthians,” 274.

<sup>828</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 568.

<sup>829</sup> *Ibid.*, 568.

<sup>830</sup> *Ibid.*, 569.

<sup>831</sup> Charles S. C. Williams, “1 Corinthians,” in Black and Rowley, *Peake’s Commentary on the Bible*, 954-966.

<sup>832</sup> Kugelman, “The First Letter to the Corinthians,” 274.

The view proposed by this dissertation is as follows: In 1 Corinthians Paul is adamant that Christ has risen (1 Cor 15:3-5) and is now a “life-giving spirit” (1 Cor 15:45). All believers are now in spiritual union with the risen Christ (1 Cor 6:12-20). As a result they are also ‘life-giving spirits.’ This is Paul’s conviction as evidenced, for example, in 1 Cor 9:19-27; 4:16; 11:1. In those pericopes not only is he saying that he considers Christ and himself to be a ‘life-giving spirit,’ but he is appealing to his followers to imitate Christ and himself in this respect also. In other words, he considers all believers to be ‘life-giving spirits’ and he is calling on them to exercise that life-force or being. The above interpretation is in line with that of Paul’s other undisputed letters.<sup>833</sup>

As detailed in the Literature Review/Chapter 2 of this dissertation, Hafemann holds a different view. He argues that the union of believer and Christ is *not an ontological union it is merely an exemplary union*. This is emphasised in his own statement that

this identification of the suffering Paul with Christ is best explained in view of the *missiological* (not ontological) identity between Paul’s own suffering as an apostle and the cross of Christ that made up an essential aspect of Paul’s early preaching among the Galatians.<sup>834</sup>

Paul Sands offers some significant reflections that aid the analysis here. There is general agreement among commentators, Sands states, that humanity is defined by its creation ‘in the image of God’ (Genesis 1:27).<sup>835</sup> In his view “the *imago Dei* is best understood as a God-given vocation” inbuilt in humanity’s creation and re-creation.<sup>836</sup> That vocation arises out of a God-given call to be a particular type of being in order to perform a specific task, namely, to mediate God’s presence as God’s representative on

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<sup>833</sup> Fitzmyer, “Pauline Theology,” 1407-1409, 1401.

<sup>834</sup> Hafemann, “The Role of Suffering,” 174.

<sup>835</sup> Paul Sands, “Imago Dei,” *Evangelical Quarterly*, 82 (2010):28-41, 28. “Christian theologians agree that human beings are defined by their creation ‘in the image of God.’”

<sup>836</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

earth. This confers dignity and imposes obligations. Sands concedes that failing to fulfil one's vocation incurs guilt, but it does not remove the obligation or revoke the calling.<sup>837</sup> In Paul's words, humanity is called to be "stewards of the mysteries of God" (1 Cor 4:1), to be God's representatives on earth, commissioned to mediate God's presence in the world, and to prepare the way for God's own (second) coming as ruler. Sands concludes that humans image God as they fulfil their vocation to mediate God's presence on earth.<sup>838</sup>

It is important to note also that Paul believes strongly that the Spirit is gifting him and his followers for this commission (1 Cor 12—14). In 1 Cor 12:4-7 Paul comments on the gifts of the Holy Spirit given to *all* believers:

There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit; there are different forms of service but the same Lord; there are different workings but the same God who produces all of them in everyone. To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit.

Later, in 1 Cor 14:12 he describes the 'benefit' as "for the building up of the church." In 1 Cor 12:4 he explains that each Christian is given different kinds of gifts by the Spirit and that each gift is a function, an activity, or a manifestation of the Spirit. It follows that each Spirit-empowered act of service, healing, or teaching, performed 'in Christ' is effective (1 Cor 15:58), not because it is Paul's (or another's) act of service, but because it is also Christ's. Moreover, each Spirit-empowered act, performed in union with Christ is other-centred, is effecting Christ's re-creation, saving others. This is a God-given commission or vocation, a Christian's new-found nature to do so (1 Cor 9:19-27).

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<sup>837</sup> Paul Sands, "Imago Dei," 28.

<sup>838</sup> Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 440, commenting on 1 Cor 15:49 says that "for Paul this means genuine human existence at last; and a genuinely human existence means the resumption of that wise stewardship over creation which was lost by Adam and is now promised [and realised] through the obedience of the Messiah."

Richard B. Gaffin, Jr. offers a pertinent comment:

At the Jordan the Messiah-Son receives the Spirit from the Father as endowment and equipping that is absolutely essential for the impending kingdom conflict facing him – the battle between the Messianic kingdom and the kingdom of Satan.<sup>839</sup>

Throughout 1 Corinthians Paul stresses the Christian’s duty and giftedness to participate in that same battle. For example, Paul assures his followers in 1 Cor 15:58 that “my beloved brothers and sisters, be firm, steadfast, always fully devoted to the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labour is not in vain” (1 Cor 15:58).

Every suffering, every act of service in the Spirit which Paul performs is effective and salvific because it is also Christ’s act of service and part of God’s plan. In claiming a salvific value for his life of service and, indeed, for his suffering, Paul in no way denies his own foundational statement “God causes the growth” (1 Cor 3:6, 8). He is merely saying that ‘in Christ’ he actually brings the gospel to his converts, he saves them and nourishes them spiritually. That this is his calling or vocation, is God’s plan for him (and others), and God sees to it that it is not in vain as God’s plan could not be frustrated. Paul’s labour (and that of his followers), then, is fruitful and salvific (1 Cor 1:4-9; 15:58).

In summary, the Sacred Texture analysis demonstrates that Paul understands – and it is his consistent understanding – that he is united ‘in Christ’ in a spiritual union that is more intimate than the nuptial union because it is a union effected by the Spirit (1 Cor 6:17), the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor 15:45). On the basis of this union he believes that he lives with the life of Christ, participates with Christ in his mission of reconciliation, and that he, in union with Christ, is also effecting re-creation and saving others. For him, this is his God-given commission or vocation, his new-found nature to

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<sup>839</sup> Richard B. Gaffin, Jr., “The Life-Giving Spirit,” *RFP* 1 (2016):19-24.

do so (1 Cor 9:19-27).<sup>840</sup> However, Paul maintains adamantly, that his suffering and his entire life are not salvific *separate* from Christ's. Paul's whole theology is that they are effective 'in Christ' or through Christ (through his union with Christ's life, mission, death, resurrection, and exaltation). One might also add that, for Paul and the Christian, this union 'in Christ' is a life-wide and life-long living out or embodiment of the loving, self-sacrificing gospel of Christ, as embodied in Paul and Timothy (1 Cor 4:17) and, of course, in Christ (1 Cor 11:1).

This union is with the risen Lord and, as such, focuses one's attention on the *eschaton*. Paul leaves his readers in no doubt in 1 Cor 6:12-20 that being in this union with Christ has consequences for them, demanding that they set aside all immorality (1 Cor 6:18) and, instead, live out an eternal-life-giving union with Christ and every other believer. As a "member of the Body of Christ" (1 Cor 6:15), united with Christ in Spirit (1 Cor 6:17), the Christian is tasked with living the life and mission of Christ, and this requires constant effort, sacrifice, suffering, even death. Paul's effort (suffering included) at following Christ's example, at taking on the saving mind of Christ, not only does not cause his 'brother to stumble' (1 Cor 8:13) but actually wins or saves him (1 Cor 9:22). It is also drawing Paul increasingly into Christ (1 Cor 15:49), the life-giving Spirit and is, therefore, in Christ also eternal-life-giving (1 Cor 6:17; 15:45).

Additionally, Paul is stating that Christians suffer as they attempt to bring salvation to others (1 Cor 9:24-27; 15:31) and that they will continue to suffer, to be crucified with Christ throughout the 'already-not yet' period of overlap.

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<sup>840</sup> He returns to this aspect again in 1 Cor 12:1—13: 13. Each and every believer or member of the Body of Christ is given charisms (1 Cor 12:7, 11). Each charism, or spiritual gift, is an expression or manifestation of the Spirit (1 Cor 12:7). In fact, each charism given is an embodiment of grace, of love, ultimately of God himself. 1 Cor 12:4 he explains that there are many different kinds of spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12:4) and that each charism is a function (praxis), an act of service (diakonia), an activity (energema), an expression/manifestation of the Spirit of God. Each charism, each act of service, healing, teaching, performed 'in Christ' is effective – not because it is Paul's (or, another's) act of service, but because it is Christ's.

Regarding Paul's use of Sacred Texture sub-textures one can say: Paul is adamant that he and his followers are God-gifted an ontological, spousal and Spiritual relationship with Christ (Divine-human relationship sub-texture). This relationship is effected by the Holy Spirit and re-creates the believers as holy persons (holy persons sub-texture). As Spiritual beings they are committed to acting as such, that is, they must forsake all incompatible behaviour (ethics sub-texture). Paul orchestrated all the sub-textures to create his particular argument/tune.

#### **5.4 Rhetorolect Analysis of 1 Cor 6:12-20**

As well as using a five-texture approach, the chosen socio-rhetorical analytic applies an Apocalyptic Rhetorolect analysis of the text under consideration. This rhetorolect characteristically includes discussion of the battle between good and evil, the last judgement, heaven and hell, the bodily resurrection, and other similar apocalyptic themes.<sup>841</sup> The apocalyptic scenario is introduced at the beginning of 1 Cor 6, is maintained throughout the chapter (1 Cor 6:9-10, 14), and comes to a climax in 1 Cor 6:15-20.

1 Cor 6:2-3, for example, introduces an apocalyptic scenario in Paul's statement that "the holy ones will judge the world ... [and] the angels." Commentators find in this verse a reference to Dan 7:21-22 and/or Wis 3:1-9. Both references envisage Judgement Day and the involvement of the 'righteous' in that judgement process.<sup>842</sup> That the 'righteous' would judge the 'nations' is a very strong belief in later Jewish writings (Sir 4:11, 15; Jub 24:29; Enoch 1:9; 38:1, 5; 95:3; 96:1; 98:12; 108:12 1 QH

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<sup>841</sup> See [www.religion.emory.edu/faculty/robbins/SRI/defns/a\\_defns.cfm](http://www.religion.emory.edu/faculty/robbins/SRI/defns/a_defns.cfm); Robbins, *Foundations for Socio-rhetorical Exploration*, xv.

<sup>842</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 231.



4:26-27; 1 QHpHab 5:4-5) and is also mentioned in Mt 19:28.<sup>843</sup> Paul obviously inherited and agreed with this traditional, apocalyptic view and he is placing before his followers that role of judge over the nations as part of the ‘reward’ for their fidelity.

Continuing the apocalyptic scenario, the reader is also informed in 1 Cor 6:9 that “the unjust will not inherit the [eternal] kingdom.” The fact that they are offered salvation is not a guarantee that they will inherit the kingdom: they must live justly and as saved (doing away with idolatry, greed and immorality of all kinds as outlined in 1 Cor 6:9-11 and repeated in 1 Cor 6:18). “They have to continuously renounce all such [immoral] behaviour and live as those who are washed, sanctified and justified.”<sup>844</sup> These cautions are repeated throughout 1 Corinthians (e.g. 1 Cor 10:1-22). Paul is encouraging his followers to “remain firm, steadfast always fully devoted to the work of the Lord” (1 Cor 15:58) because incompatible behaviour could mean the loss of salvation.

The allusion to 1 Thess 4:14-18 further heightens the apocalyptic tenor of 1 Cor 6:14.<sup>845</sup> The Thessalonians were concerned about the death of their loved ones (1 Thess 4:13f.). Paul reassures them saying that, as sure as God raised Christ from the dead, he will raise their loved ones too (1 Thess 4:14 - “For if we believe that Jesus died and rose, so too will God, through Jesus, bring with him those who have fallen asleep”). Moreover, Paul, in Smiles’ view, fully expects Christ’s second coming to happen in the very near future, and certainly in his lifetime (1 Thess 4:15). This realisation injects a note of imminence into the discussion and into the lives of Paul and his followers. 1 Thessalonians is dated to 49 C.E. (or earlier) and 1 Corinthians to 53-55 C.E. Thus,

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<sup>843</sup> Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 426; Collins, *First Corinthians*, 231.

<sup>844</sup> Pascuzzi, *First and Second Corinthians*, 43.

<sup>845</sup> Smiles, *First Thessalonians, Philippians, Second Thessalonians, Colossians, Ephesians*, 25. He calls this passage (1 Thess 4:14-18) “one of the most fascinating apocalyptic texts in the entire New Testament.” “For if we believe that Jesus died and rose, so too will God, through Jesus, bring with him those who have fallen asleep” (1 Thess 4:14).

Smiles holds that the imminent end is “a vivid expectation of Jesus’ return which never left him.”<sup>846</sup>

Moreover, rejecting all forms of dualism, Paul in 1 Cor 6:14 asserts that Christ’s resurrection was an embodied one; “Jesus’ ‘mortal body’ was ‘swallowed up by life,’ a new bodily life in continuity but also in discontinuity (immortality instead of mortality) with the previous one.”<sup>847</sup> Similarly, the resurrection of all believers will also be an embodied one. He returns to this apocalyptic topic in 1 Cor 15:36-49 stating that “what is sown a natural body [will be] raised a spiritual body” (1 Cor 15:44).

The central theme throughout 1 Cor 5:1—6:20 is the holiness of the Christian community (1 Cor 5:1-13) and of the individual Christian (1 Cor 6:15-20). Paul in 1 Cor 6:12-20 comes to the climax of his entire argument. He says in 1 Cor 6:13 that “the body is for the Lord and the Lord is for the body,” reintroducing his key theme of the union of the believer with Christ “that bespeaks [the body’s] future destiny and its proleptic implications.”<sup>848</sup> He believes that the resurrection of Christ is an embodied one and that the resurrection of the believer will also be an embodied one. Therefore, the “resurrection of the body imparts ultimate significance to the human body” and to what is done in the body now.<sup>849</sup> He is also laying down the groundwork for his later discussions on the Body of Christ in 1 Cor 12 and the resurrection (1 Cor 15). Paul’s climactic message to his followers is that, redeemed by Christ (1 Cor 6:20), they need to learn to

live the truly human life that brings glory to the God in whose image you are made, and whose unique image, his Son Jesus, died to rescue you from all that will stop you being the person he longs for you to be.<sup>850</sup>

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<sup>846</sup> Phil 1:23 - “I am caught between the two. I long to depart this life and be with Christ, ..... Yet that I remain in the flesh is more necessary for your benefit.”

<sup>847</sup> Nicholas T. Wright, *The Resurrection of The Son of God* (London: SPCK, 2003), 371.

<sup>848</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 242.

<sup>849</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>850</sup> Wright, *Paul for Everyone: 1 Corinthians*, 75.

In brief, placing the discussion in an apocalyptic or eschatological setting emphasises the urgency, imminence, and the critical importance of these matters and the need to act in a manner that safeguards and doesn't jeopardise one's own or any other individual's eternal glory. In Fee's words:

it means that the future (Christ's return and reign) has been determined by the past (Christ's death and resurrection), and that that certain future (guaranteed by the gift of the Spirit) determines the present. The resurrection of Jesus from the dead was not a matter of creed for him; it was the singular reality that conditioned his entire existence."<sup>851</sup>

1 Cor 6:12-20, and 1 Cor 6:1-20 in its entirety are thoroughly eschatological or apocalyptic.

### **5.5 Theological Synthesis of Paul's Suffering and his Participatory Theology**

Undergirding Paul's entire argument in 1 Cor 6:12-20 is the belief that Christ and the believers are individually and collectively united.<sup>852</sup> This is not being contested by the Corinthian Christians, therefore, Paul is basing his argument on an agreed belief. He is reminding them of this union and then dealing with the difficulties they are having about the nature, reality, intimacy and consequences of this union.

The nature of the union with Christ is that it is a God-initiated and God-gifted relationship, effected through the Spirit, which has changed Paul's entire life and *being*. It is "not only corporate but somehow corporal."<sup>853</sup> Through the work of the Spirit "the believer's 'spirit' has been joined indissolubly with Christ."<sup>854</sup> In 1 Cor 6:16 Paul quotes Gen 2:24 to highlight the spousal and indissoluble nature of the union of believer and Christ: that reference gives his teaching added explanation and authority. The believer becomes one Spirit with the Risen Lord and is now living with a new life-force:

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<sup>851</sup> Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 157.

<sup>852</sup> 1 Cor 6:15 – "Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ?" and 1 Cor 3:16-17 – "Do you not know that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?"

<sup>853</sup> Fitzmyer, "Pauline Theology," 1410.

<sup>854</sup> Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 260.

the believer is now re-created as a spiritual being. As mentioned already in the Literature Review of this dissertation, Wikenhauser holds that the union of believer and Christ is “ontological, a share in Christ’s being.” Campbell agrees with this view stating that the “union with Christ relates to all the believer’s actions, characteristics, and status.”<sup>855</sup> Being ‘in Christ’ is now “a continuing participation in Christ, who is the new life-giving force in Paul.”<sup>856</sup> As G. Walter Hansen says: “this does not amount to a loss of human personality, but rather to a Christological renewal of true personality.”<sup>857</sup> a re-creation of humanity’s true nature.

There is a graphic reality behind many of the motifs Paul uses in discussing this union. In his Letter to the Thessalonians (49 C. E.) and in his Letter to the Galatians (50-55 C.E.), both written before 1 Corinthians (55 C.E.), he describes his work of evangelisation and Christian formation of others as “being again in the pain of childbirth until Christ is formed in you” (Gal 4:19), “like a nursing mother taking care of her own children” (1 Thess 2:7). In 1 Corinthians 4:15 he has similar graphic language when he states that “in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel.” These terms denote close, real, and indispensable relationships. Throughout 1 Corinthians he appeals to every believer to continue to seek an ever-deepening identification and relationship with Christ, and a participation in Christ’s life, mission, death and resurrection. In so doing, the reality of this union may entail constant training (1 Cor 9:19-27), suffering (1 Cor 4:9-13), even death (1 Cor 15:31).

The intimacy of the union can be gauged from the imagery Paul uses to describe it, (such as child-bearing/nursing mother, father) as mentioned in the previous

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<sup>855</sup> See page 57 of this dissertation and footnote 241.

<sup>856</sup> Tannehill, “Participation in Christ,” 229-230. See Chapter 1 of this dissertation for a fuller discussion.

<sup>857</sup> G. Walter Hansen, *Galatians* (Downers Grove IL: InterVarsity Press, 2010), 76. Witherington agrees with Hansen’s view; Witherington, *Grace in Galatia*, 190.

paragraph.<sup>858</sup> It should be noted that these roles (birthing mother, nursing mother, father, spouse) all involve prioritising the other person, and are, therefore, self-sacrificing. In writing these Letters, Paul seems to be searching for words and images to portray the intimacy, importance and indispensability of the role he and others perform in forming Christ in others. In 1 Cor 6:15-17 he compares the union of the believer with Christ as even more intimate than the marriage union. His use of the *gradatio* technique asserts the superior intimacy of the believer—Christ union over even the marriage union. Many commentators, such as Collins, Fee, and Thiselton, have highlighted the spousal and indissoluble nature of the union of the believer with Christ.<sup>859</sup> Gorman also holds that Paul conceives of “identification with and participation in Christ as the believer’s fundamental experience of Christ.”<sup>860</sup>

This union has consequences for the partners: “as the individual Christian is now a new creation, it becomes the starting point and base camp for a quite differently motivated and directed life.”<sup>861</sup> The ‘in Christ’ union changes the individual, creating new life, new opportunities, and new responsibilities. The individual is now a new *being* (1 Cor 6:15-17). According to the adage ‘*actio sequitur esse*’ (‘action follows nature’) it would follow that a Spiritual being expresses itself in Spiritual actions.

Paul is deeply concerned about the way in which believers live, particularly if they are contradicting their new being. Therefore, he appeals to them to “avoid immorality” (1 Cor 6:18; 10:14-17) no matter what the cost. This concern is intense

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<sup>858</sup> In Gal 4:19 (“My children for whom I am again in labour until Christ is formed in you”) Paul called himself a mother in labour: the Greek word ὄδινος is translated as ‘to have birth pangs, labour pains.’ He said, in 1 Thess 2:7, that he was “gentle among you, as a nursing mother cares for her children:” the Greek word τροφή is given the meaning ‘nursing mother.’ This was extremely graphic and intimate language for Paul. More importantly, he was seeing himself in an *essential birthing* relationship with the newly-converted – and his role was certainly a very active one, a partner with God/Christ.

<sup>859</sup> See Collins, *First Corinthians*, 248; Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 260; Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 469; John Paul II’s General Audience Address on September 8<sup>th</sup>, 1982: taken from *L’Osservatore Romano*, 13<sup>th</sup> September, 1982.

<sup>860</sup> Gorman, *Cruciformity*, 32. Italics in the original.

<sup>861</sup> Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 411.

and appears in all his Letters, often as the practical outworking of his exposition of profound theological themes.<sup>862</sup> It is particularly so in 1 Corinthians.<sup>863</sup> In Paul's mind, the Christian's new status and being, "which are so programmatic for Paul's ethical framework and instruction, are inextricably bound up with union with Christ."<sup>864</sup> Douglas Campbell claims that "it cannot be denied that Paul is laying out a distinctive ethical system informed by participation in Christ through the Spirit."<sup>865</sup> Therefore, as has been demonstrated throughout this chapter, every aspect and every action of the believer's life, including suffering, *is an outworking of his/her participation, in/with Christ, in Christ's life and mission.* There are numerous examples of Paul's selfless, loving, suffering service of others in his First Letter to the Corinthians. Paul is prepared to go hungry, thirsty, homeless, to be ridiculed, persecuted, slandered, to be treated like rubbish/a scapegoat (1 Cor 4:9-13), to drive his body and train it (1 Cor 9:27), to face death daily (1 Cor 15:31), to bear all things, believe all things, hope all things (1 Cor 13:6), to give himself up to death 'for others' (1 Cor 11:23-26), "so that I might by all means save some").<sup>866</sup> In 1 Cor 6:12-20 Paul declares "the inseparability of Christian

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<sup>862</sup> Campbell, *Paul and Union with Christ*, 369.

<sup>863</sup> In 1 Cor 5:1-8 Paul is explaining that, as a result of receiving the gift of salvation, the Christians are now cleansed or sinless in a cleansed and sinless community and, therefore, must live accordingly. Later in the letter, 1 Cor 10, Paul is exhorting his converts not to engage in idolatrous or immoral practices, as their ancestors/fathers did with disastrous consequences (1 Cor 10:1-13). He bases this advice in the bedrock of their relationship or union with Christ (1 Cor 10:16-17 – "The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because the loaf of bread is one, we, though many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf"). He follows this saying (1 Cor 10:21): "You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and also the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and of the table of demons").

<sup>864</sup> C. R. Campbell, *Paul and Union with Christ*, 375.

<sup>865</sup> Douglas A. Campbell, *The Deliverance of God: An Apocalyptic Rereading of Justification in Paul* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 607, James S. Stewart, *A Man in Christ* (Virginia Beach VA: Regent, 1935), 194, Hooker, "Interchange in Christ and Ethics," 5-7.

<sup>866</sup> The Lord's Supper pericope (1 Cor 11:17-22) exemplifies this point, namely, that celebrating the sacrament of their union with Christ and leaving others hungry and thirsty are incompatible with one another. Another distinctive feature of Paul's letters is his use of compounds (e.g. the 'sun-compounds'), which in Dunn's words "indicate rather a profound sense of participation with others in a great and cosmic movement of God centred on Christ and effected through his Spirit." These sun-compounds are apparent in many of Paul's Letters, including 1 Corinthians (such as 1 Cor 16:16 – "to work with Christ," 1 Cor 9:23 – "to partner/participate with Christ," 1 Cor 12:26 – "to suffer with Christ," Gal 2:19 – "to be crucified with Christ," 1 Cor 12:26 and 13:6 – "to rejoice with Christ," 1 Cor 4:8 – "to reign with Christ").

identity and Christian lifestyle, or of theology and ethics.”<sup>867</sup> He is stating clearly to his followers that their Christian identity must be lived out in their Christian lifestyle. As they are in union with Christ they must avoid all behaviours that would be incompatible with that union, such as those mentioned in 1 Cor 6:7-11, especially idolatry (1 Cor 6:18). Paul explains in 1 Cor 6:20 that the Christian has been saved, “purchased at a price” by the totally selfless, sacrificial life and death of Christ, with whom they are now united. He is appealing to them to act as the Christians they are. This is the example he is encouraging the Corinthian church members to follow.<sup>868</sup> This is how the believers, those united in Christ “glorify God in your body” (1 Cor 6:20).

Paul discusses this topic (the nature of the union of the believer and Christ) again in 1 Cor 15:45-49. He begins that pericope by reminding his readers that the first Adam was gifted with physical or natural life (see Gen 2:7) but that the last Adam is a life-giving spirit (1 Cor 15:45): by ‘life-giving’ he means eternal life- or salvation-giving. Paul’s view is that every believer is a ‘life-giving spirit.’ That is his guiding principle, as evidenced for example in 1 Cor 9:19-27, and that is the example he appeals to his followers to imitate (1 Cor 4:16; 11:1). As the believer’s newly-created nature is life-giving, so is his and their life.

This chapter establishes the reality of Paul’s union ‘in Christ.’ Furthermore, it finds that he believes that this union is a spiritual union, more real and more intimate than the marriage union and that it requires him to live accordingly. It is clear that Paul believes he is sharing *in* Christ’s salvation as a believer and also is a sharer *of* Christ’s salvation, and that he spends his life outworking this participation in Christ. In other words, Paul’s every missionary endeavour, his suffering, his entire life, and his very

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<sup>867</sup> Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 458.

<sup>868</sup> *Ibid.*, 459). Thiselton writes, “As those who belong to Christ by redemptive purchase (1 Cor 6:20), Christians are to live out their bodily existence in union with Christ, indwelt by the Spirit, to the glory of God (1 Cor 6:15-20).” He adds: “A hint of a trinitarian pattern emerges here.”

being is salvific. Clearly, *Paul saw God as the only 'saver'* (1 Cor 3:6: 7), the only one who could offer salvation to humanity. He, Paul, was the 'bearer' of this gospel to others, he 'mediated' salvation to others, as a specially commissioned or delegated (or essential) Apostle to the Gentiles: it was his [Paul's] role in God's saving plan.

Did Paul consider his suffering as 'participatory' in the salvation of others in the sense that he was merely 'a bearer of salvation' to them? Or, did he think that his suffering lifestyle – united with/in Christ in a *spiritual* union – was really Christ's suffering and therefore salvific? This I presume is what Paul meant in 1 Cor 3:6, 7 and 6:15-17 and in numerous other references where Paul is speaking of his union with Christ. *That, in God's Plan of Salvation, He (God) was working salvation through Paul's spiritual union with Christ.* James D. G. Dunn states "divine power in human transience and corruptibility – not divine power obliterating or leaving behind human weakness, but *in* human weakness."<sup>869</sup> (Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 482). If that is correct then there is a sense in which Paul saw his suffering/life/mission as embodying Christ's suffering, and in so far as it did embody Christ's suffering, salvific 'in Christ.'<sup>870</sup>

This prompts another question: how does Paul's salvific life and his suffering relate to the overall history of salvation or the *missio Dei*? Or, to put it in other words, is there an underlying story of salvation acting as a foundational or sub-structural narrative in which Paul and his followers are both saved and saving? Furthermore, if

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<sup>869</sup> Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 482.

<sup>870</sup> Could I suggest the following as my 'line of argument'? 1) Paul is speaking of the unity of the believer(s) and Christ, 2) it is a union that is – as is evident from his use of the *gradatio* technique – closer than the marriage union (v. 16), 3) it is a spiritual union, 4) As a result of this union or new creation, the believer is living with Christ's life and mission (e.g. Paul's 'in Christ' terminology "I live now, not I, but Christ lives in me," and other Galatians texts like 1:16; 2:20; 4:19-20 and numerous 1 Cor texts, for example, 1 Cor 1:9; 4:15; 4:17; 6:17), 5) this union is ontological (see 1 Cor 15:35-45), spousal (1 Cor 6:15-16 is supported by quoting Gen 2:24), participatory (i.e. the believer participates in Christ's life – 1 Cor 6:15 – and in Christ's mission – 1 Cor 15:45-49. 6) Dunn states that "The tension, suffering, death, and life experienced by Paul he experienced as the outworking of Christ's own death and risen life" (Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 484). He also says "That both the death and life to be experienced by the believer are Christ's" (Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 484).



there is a uniting, underlying story of salvation in 1 Corinthians, then, how does Paul's understanding of his life and his suffering relate to it? This will be addressed in the next chapter of the dissertation by exploring 1 Cor 11:17-34.<sup>871</sup>

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<sup>871</sup> Charles K. Barrett, "New Testament Eschatology," *SJT* (1953) 149, states that "Paul himself does not elucidate or explain the 'how,' the 'mechanism' of such a union evidently suggested by the phrase [in Christ]."

## CHAPTER 6

### PAUL'S SUFFERING AND THE FULFILMENT OF THE COVENANT

#### (1 Cor 11:17-34)

There is a reality to Paul's suffering (1 Cor 4:9-13) as he preaches and embodies the gospel. Furthermore, he is God's "fellow-worker," a "partner with Christ" (1 Cor 9:23), who "suffers with Christ" (1 Cor 3:9; 9:23; 12:26). His union 'in Christ,' effected by the Spirit (1 Cor 6:12-20), is such that he can claim that his suffering is Christ's salvific suffering (1 Cor 9:19-27). It is significant that Paul continues to expand on this salvation narrative throughout his undisputed Letters. Dunn summarises Paul's overall thinking by saying that "the process of salvation can be expressed in simple terms as 'becoming like Christ'" and that

integral to this process ... is the thought that conformity is to Christ crucified as well as risen, that the transformation is an outworking of the cross as well as [of] the resurrection. To be transformed into the image of Christ means also to be conformed to his death.<sup>872</sup>

In the view of many commentators, this conformation is to Christ's 'death' and/or 'resurrection.'<sup>873</sup> The question being investigated in this chapter is: do Paul and the believer, through their union 'in Christ,' participate also in Christ's mission? In other words, do Christians participate in the saving work of Christ, the history of salvation or the '*missio Dei*' as beneficiaries and also as active partners.<sup>874</sup> In other words, is there an underlying, uniting story of salvation in 1 Corinthians acting as a Pauline foundational or sub-structural narrative in which Paul and his followers are both

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<sup>872</sup> Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 487.

<sup>873</sup> For example, see Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 599; Michael J. Gorman, *The Death of the Messiah and the Birth of the New Covenant* (Eugene OR: Cascade, 2014), 53; Siu Fung Wu, "Participating in God's Purpose by Following the Cruciform Pattern of Christ," *The Journal for the Study of Paul and his Letters* 5, (2015): 1-19.

<sup>874</sup> Paul uses the words "God's fellow-worker" (1 Cor 3:9), "God's master-builder" (1 Cor 3:10), God's/Christ's "partner" (1 Cor 9:23), and repeatedly and explicitly claims that through his suffering he saves others" (1 Cor 9:19-27).

beneficiaries and active partners, both “being saved” (1 Cor 15:2) *and* “saving” (1 Cor 9:19-23)? And if so, what is this uniting, underlying story of salvation in 1 Corinthians, and how does Paul’s understanding of his suffering relate to it?

Paul’s answer is that there is a covenantal narrative underlying 1 Corinthians in which the New Covenant prophesied by Jeremiah (31:31-34) is fulfilled by Christ’s life, which receives its ultimate demonstration on the cross. This New Covenant is ritually symbolized by Christ at the Last Supper. Christians ‘remember’ and enter into this covenantal narrative and Christ’s saving action by worthily participating in the Last Supper (similar to the way in which Jews celebrate the Passover and enter into the saving event of the Exodus), thus creating a newly covenanted Christian community. To live as part of this Christian covenantal community involves participating in Christ’s life, mission, suffering, death, resurrection, and exaltation. One cannot be in union with the suffering Christ without experiencing similar suffering.<sup>875</sup> Ultimately, to live in union with Christ effected by the Spirit (1 Cor 6:12-20) means participating in the saving work of Christ.

The current chapter explores this covenantal narrative by focusing on 1 Cor 11:17-34. It begins by contextualising 1 Cor 11:17-34 and providing some brief overall comments on the text. The central part of the chapter investigates 1 Cor 11:17-34 by using the five-texture and one rhetorolect instruments of the chosen socio-rhetorical methodology. Finally, it concludes by gathering the theological insights gleaned from the textual analysis into a theological synthesis.

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<sup>875</sup> Paul redefines ‘suffering’ as ‘any initiative that progresses the kingdom of God.’ For a fuller discussion see Chapter 3, section 3.3.1 of this dissertation.

## 6.1 Contextualising 1 Cor 11:17-34

The majority of commentators (e.g., Pascuzzi, Thiselton, Mitchell) maintain that 1 Cor 11:2-34 is part of a larger argument in 1 Cor 11:2—14:40 focusing on “problematic behaviours affecting the community.”<sup>876</sup> The following investigation concurs with these commentators. The behaviours discussed in 1 Cor 11:2–14:40 are (1) the issue of women’s head-dressings at worship (1 Cor 11:2-16), (2) abuses and divisions at the Lord’s Supper (1 Cor 11:17-34), and (3) abuses concerning member’s spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12:1–14:40). This dissertation treats 1 Cor 11:2–14:40 as a single argument with three sub-sections, all dealing with situations causing discord or disunity in the worshipping community.

1 Corinthians in its entirety is focused on unity, specifically on encouraging a church-in-disarray to reconcile with God and to adopt a Christ-focused unity (see, particularly, the Letter’s programmatic statement in 1 Cor 1:10). This is especially true of 1 Cor 11:17-34. Recognising the disunity evident in their celebration of the Lord’s Supper, Paul recalls for them the “tradition he has received from the Lord” (1 Cor 11:23). He contrasts the selfless altruism of Christ with the selfish individualism of the Corinthian church members and urges them to adopt the ‘mind of Christ’ (1 Cor 2:16) or face the consequences of their ‘unworthy discernment’ (1 Cor 11:27-32).

The Lord’s Supper (1 Cor 11:17-34), it can be argued, is both the source and the sacrament of unity and equality for the Christian and the ‘yardstick’ against which all use of the Spiritual gifts must be judged. It can also be maintained that a close reading of 1 Cor 10:16-17 and of 1 Cor 11:17-34 reveal that through participation in the Lord’s Supper, discerned worthily, Paul and his Corinthian followers enter into Christ’s saving event (similar to how, through worthy participation in the Passover, the Jew entered into

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<sup>876</sup> Pascuzzi, *First and Second Corinthians*, 62; Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 799-1161; Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 258-82.

the saving event of the Exodus). If this were true, it would mean that those who are ‘in Christ’ participate in Christ’s/God’s mission of reconciliation, renewal, and re-creation. Paul’s Letter to the Galatians seems to say so (e.g., Gal 1:4, 22; 2:4; 3:26-28; 4:19-20; 5:13-26) and that message seems to be repeated in 1 Corinthians (e.g., 1 Cor 5:7-8; 8:11; 11:23-26; 15:3-5). This re-creation is brought about by God (as stated in 1 Cor 3:6 and 3:7) working through the sacrificial, Christ-embodying lives of Paul and his followers. Furthermore, in Paul’s view, living a life of selfless, other-centred, loving service is in accordance with humanity’s God-given nature.<sup>877</sup> The current chapter will unpack this in greater detail.

## **6.2 Text of 1 Cor 11:17-34**

This chapter of the dissertation will investigate 1 Cor 11:17-34. In this key pericope Paul rebukes the Corinthian church members for abuses at the Lord’s Supper, recalls the inauguration of the New Covenant at the Last Supper, and warns church members against receiving the sacrament unworthily, for which there would be dire consequences. He appeals to them, instead, to be fellow-workers and participants with Christ in God’s plan for salvation. He is asking them to be not just part of the problem but also to be active agents of the solution:

<sup>17</sup>Now in the following instructions I do not commend you, because when you come together it is not for the better but for the worse. <sup>18</sup>For, to begin with, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you; and to some extent I believe it. <sup>19</sup>Indeed, there have to be factions among you, for only so will it become clear who among you are genuine. <sup>20</sup>When you come together, it is not really to eat the Lord’s Supper. <sup>21</sup>For when the time comes to eat, each of you goes ahead with your own supper, and one goes hungry and another becomes drunk. <sup>22</sup>What! Do you not have homes to eat and drink in? Or do you show contempt for the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What should I say to you? Should I commend you? In this matter I do

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<sup>877</sup> Fitzmyer, *NJBC*, 1402-1412. This anthropological understanding was innovative in its time.

not commend you!<sup>23</sup> For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread,<sup>24</sup> and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”<sup>25</sup> In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.”<sup>26</sup> For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.<sup>27</sup> Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be answerable for the body and blood of the Lord.<sup>28</sup> Examine yourselves and only then eat of the bread and drink of the cup.<sup>29</sup> For all who eat and drink without discerning the body, eat and drink judgment against themselves.<sup>30</sup> For this reason many of you are weak and ill, and some have died.<sup>31</sup> But if we judged ourselves, we would not be judged.<sup>32</sup> But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world.<sup>33</sup> So then, my brothers and sisters, when you come together to eat, wait for one another.<sup>34</sup> If you are hungry, eat at home, so that when you come together, it will not be for your condemnation. About the other things I will give instructions when I come.

As mentioned already, 1 Cor 11:2—14:40 is a single unit consisting of three separate sub-sections. The first sub-section is 1 Cor 11:2-16 and it focuses on the issue of women’s head-dressings at worship. It is challenging both in its language (it contains many words that are not in Paul’s corpus) and in its theology (it mentions ideas unusual if not contrary to Paul’s practice elsewhere).<sup>878</sup> Nonetheless, most commentators consider them genuine to Paul and to this Letter.<sup>879</sup> The principal focus of the following socio-rhetorical analysis will be on the second sub-section in 1 Cor 11:17-34, which discusses abuses and divisions at the Lord’s Supper. This pericope will be discussed in detail throughout the textured exegesis, particularly regarding the establishment and outworking of the New Covenant. The last sub-section in 1 Cor 12:1—14:40 discusses the use and abuse of the gifts of the Spirit within the worshipping community and appeals for “unity in diversity and diversity in unity.”<sup>880</sup>

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<sup>878</sup> This encourages some commentators, including Lamar Cope, G. W. Trompf and William O. Walker, to argue that these verses (1 Cor 11:2-16) may be a post-Pauline editorial interpolation. See Lamar Cope, “1 Cor 11:2-16: One Step Further,” *JBL* 97 (1978), 435-436; G. W. Trompf, “On Attitudes to Women in Paul and Paulinist Literature: 1 Cor 11:3-16 and Its Context,” *CBQ* 42 (1980) 196-215; Wm. O. Walker, “The Vocabulary of 1 Corinthians 11:3-16: Pauline or Non-Pauline?” *JSNT* 35 (1989), 75-88.

<sup>879</sup> For example, Collins, *First Corinthians*, 393-94; Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 799.

<sup>880</sup> Pascuzzi, *First and Second Corinthians*, 69.

Before proceeding to discuss the chosen pericope (1 Cor 11:17-34) in detail it is necessary to comment upon the historicity of the Last Supper as Paul considers its historicity to be central to his argument (see 1 Cor 11:23-26). While Rudolf Bultmann, John Dominic Crossan, Herbert Braun and others have either doubted or denied the historicity of the Last Supper,<sup>881</sup> John Meier has demonstrated convincingly for the majority of commentators that

from Paul alone .. the basic affirmation that, on the night he was arrested before being put to death, Jesus held a special, solemn meal with his disciples, a meal marked by striking symbolic actions that were continued in the early church.<sup>882</sup> Meier bases his conclusion on three criteria.

Firstly, the multiple attestation of Paul, Mark, Matthew, and (special) Lukan tradition regarding the Last Supper “argues forcefully for the historicity of Jesus’ Last Supper with his disciples on the night he was ‘handed over.’”<sup>883</sup> Secondly, Jesus was known as a ‘bon vivant,’ a celebrator of meals of salvation with God’s prodigal sons and daughters.<sup>884</sup> In Meier’s own words,

Now, for the last time, Jesus celebrates a meal with his disciples, a meal that signifies in a special way the final banquet, the coming of the kingdom, but now in the shadow of his imminent death.<sup>885</sup>

Thirdly, Meier suggests a criterion for Jesus’ rejection and death. By this he means that Jesus’ life as an associate of public sinners, his ‘freewheeling’ table fellowship, his attitude towards the Mosaic Law, his free offer of salvation to sinners, may all have cumulatively alienated him from the establishment and indirectly (if not directly) led to his arrest, trial and death.<sup>886</sup>

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<sup>881</sup> Rudolf Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1963), 265-267; John D. Crossan, *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant* (San Francisco: Harper, 1991), 360-367; Herbert Braun, “Qumran und das NT,” *TRu* 29 (1963), 213-214.

<sup>882</sup> John Meier, “The Eucharist at the Last Supper: Did it Happen?” in *Theology Digest* 42 (1995), 338.

<sup>883</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>884</sup> In Luke’s gospel alone, there are many accounts of Jesus dining with those considered to be sinners, e.g. Lk 5:27-32; 7:36-50; 19:1-10.

<sup>885</sup> Meier, “The Eucharist at the Last Supper: Did it Happen?” 338.

<sup>886</sup> *Ibid.*

As regards the words and gestures of Christ at the Last Supper, Paul assures us that he received the Eucharistic tradition or narrative long before he handed it on to his Corinthian followers (1 Cor 11:23-26). He received sometime after his conversion around 35—36 C.E., and within a decade of the Last Supper itself.<sup>887</sup> The words and gestures are corroborated by the accounts of Mark, Matthew, and Luke.<sup>888</sup> Olivier-Thomas Venard, reviewing considerable research on the matter, states that the “Last Supper of Jesus did happen,” as “the texts relating to the Last Supper cannot be reduced to cultic legends,” and he concludes that “the historicity of the Last Supper of Jesus, including the words of institution, is generally accepted.”<sup>889</sup> On the basis of the above, this dissertation agrees that the Last Supper happened as a historical event that ritually prefigured Jesus’ death and resurrection.<sup>890</sup> Kieran J. O’Mahony says that Jesus’ own understanding of his death “grew out of his ministry, came to special awareness in Jerusalem and during the Supper and it continued to evolve with greater intensity in the garden and on the cross.”<sup>891</sup>

Perhaps the most significant consideration is that Paul accepted the historicity of the Last Supper. In introducing the Lord’s Supper pericope, drawing on the traditional source or sources available to him, Paul says that the Last Supper happened on the night Jesus was betrayed (1 Cor 11:23). In relating it to the fact of Jesus’ betrayal he is acknowledging the Last Supper’s historical reality.<sup>892</sup> Moreover, it is presented as part of the tradition Paul inherited ‘from the Lord’ (1 Cor 11:23) and one can state

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<sup>887</sup> Stanley Marrow says 35 C.E. in *Paul: His Letters and his Theology*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1986), 18. Michael Taylor, *Paul: His Letters and his Heritage*, (New York: Alba House, 1997), xiv, opts for 36 C.E.

<sup>888</sup> Mt 26:26-29; Mk 14:22-25; Lk 22:14-20.

<sup>889</sup> Olivier-Thomas Venard, “From Last Supper to Mass: Key Propositions,” in *Proceedings of the Irish Biblical Association* 35 (2012). Edited by F. O’Fearghail: 30-73.

<sup>890</sup> Philip B. Mortell, *The New Passover*, Unpublished MA Dissertation, Mary Immaculate College, Limerick, 2014, 41.

<sup>891</sup> Kieran J. O’Mahony, “The Last Supper: What Happened and What Did It Mean?” *Milltown Studies* 70 (2012): 68.

<sup>892</sup> Meier, “The Eucharist at the Last Supper: Did it Happen?” 337; Venard, “From Last Supper to Mass: Key Propositions,” 94-110: 99.



unequivocally that Paul would never have handed on as “a tradition from the Lord” something he did not believe to be so. Gorman says: “Paul’s fundamental claim in 1 Cor 11:23-26 is that Jesus himself interpreted his own death as the inauguration of the New Covenant” making the Corinthians and all others ‘in Christ’ members of the New Covenant.<sup>893</sup>

### 6.3 Textured Exegesis of 1 Cor 11:17-34

This section of the chapter will apply the five textures of Inner Texture, Social and Cultural Texture, Ideological Texture, Intertexture and Sacred Texture to 1 Cor 11:17-34. The hope is that a deeper understanding of 1 Cor 11:17-34 will be enabled.

#### 6.3.1 Inner Texture

The Inner Texture of a text is “the texture of the medium of communication .. the texture of the language itself.”<sup>894</sup> The purpose of this Inner Texture analysis is “to gain an intimate knowledge of words, word patterns, voices, structures, devices, and modes in the text, which are the context of meanings and meaning-effects.” All six kinds of Inner Texture are evident in this periscope but it is opportune to consider especially Paul’s astute (4) opening-middle-closing, (5) argumentative and (6) sensory-aesthetic sub-texture skills: Paul intermingles all three sub-textures in his presentation of his arguments.

In 1 Cor 11:17-34 Paul reveals his use of the (4 above) opening-middle-closing sub-texture in establishing, progressing and concluding this pericope.<sup>895</sup> His argument

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<sup>893</sup> Gorman, *The Death of the Messiah and the Birth of the New Covenant*, 53.

<sup>894</sup> Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 7. Robbins identifies six kinds of Inner Texture in a text: “(1) repetitive; (2) progressive; (3) narrational; (4) opening-middle-closing; (5) argumentative; and (6) sensory-aesthetic sub-texture.”<sup>894</sup>

<sup>895</sup> See Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation: Dictionary of Socio-Rhetorical Terms, [www.religion.emory.edu/faculty/robbins/SRI/defns/s\\_defns.cfm](http://www.religion.emory.edu/faculty/robbins/SRI/defns/s_defns.cfm).

may be sub-sectioned as follows: in 1 Cor 11:17-22 he establishes the argument saying that the church members' behaviour at the Lord's Supper is highly problematic; in 1 Cor 11:23-26 he progresses the argument by introducing the Last Supper tradition as an example of the ideal or exemplar; and 1 Cor 11:27-34 concludes the argument by warning them of the consequences and appealing to them to change their ways. The sensory-aesthetic sub-texture (6 above) is displayed in their selfish, self-aggrandising behaviour which contradicts the selfless, sacrificial and suffering behaviour of Christ who offers himself "for you" (1 Cor 11:24) and in Paul's absolute rejection of that self-centredness (1 Cor 11:17-22). Finally, in 1 Cor 11:27-34 Paul challenges the Corinthian church members to live the unity they share 'in Christ' or be condemned on the Day of Judgement.

Throughout 1 Corinthians Paul is urging his followers to avoid disunity and to work towards greater unity (as set out in the Letter's programmatic statement 1 Cor 1:10 and as repeated on other occasions, such as 1 Cor 1:10-17; 12:12-31).<sup>896</sup> In a skilful use of the argumentative sub-texture (5 above) in 1 Cor 11:23-26 he recalls the Lord's Supper tradition he had handed on to them a few years earlier. He recounts the tradition that "on the night he was betrayed...[Jesus]...said, 'This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me ... For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes'" (1 Cor 11:24-26).

Pascuzzi, interpreting these verses, says that in Paul's view,

the community gathers in the *present* to observe the Lord's last supper, to recall the *past* historical event of Jesus' betrayal and self-sacrificing love symbolised in the bread and cup, and to proclaim this death until his *future* coming.<sup>897</sup>

Paul is emphasising that what matters is that the Corinthian church members should live as a saved community remembering and re-living Christ's self-sacrificing

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<sup>896</sup> Unity is also a key theme in 1 Cor 1:10-17; 12:12-31.

<sup>897</sup> Pascuzzi, *First and Second Corinthians*, 67.

love and transforming their own lives and their own world accordingly. In the final sub-section (1 Cor 11:27-34), Paul applies this tradition to the present divisive situation, seeing no separation in his understanding between theology and practice. He stresses that the Lord's Supper, properly celebrated, is a remembrance of Christ's self-sacrificing love for humanity.<sup>898</sup> In the words of the tradition "anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body, eats and drinks judgement on himself" (1 Cor 11:29). In other words, if their behaviour negates the meaning of the Lord's Supper, as the Corinthians' behaviour had done, then, in Thiselton's words, they are

**held accountable** for the sin against Christ of *claiming identification with him while using the celebration of the meal as an occasion for social enjoyment or status enhancement without regard to what sharing in the Lord's Supper proclaims.*<sup>899</sup>

One cannot claim identification with Christ's self-sacrificing love and actions, as remembered in the Lord's Supper and, simultaneously, act selfishly or greedily: that would be to deny the unity between believers and Christ.

His sensory-aesthetic sub-texture skills (6 above) are unveiled in the manner in which he criticises the church members (1 Cor 11:17-22), in the persuasive way in which he uses the tradition of the Lord's Supper to expose their failures (1 Cor 11:23-26), in his warning them of the dire consequences of not living the sacrament of unity and equality they celebrate (1 Cor 11:27-32), and in his appeal to them to re-align their understanding and behaviour (1 Cor 11:33-34) "so that your meetings may not result in judgement" (1 Cor 11:34c). In presenting his proof, through his use of the argumentative sub-texture, Paul is adamant that this issue, the church members' behaviour at the Lord's Supper, cannot wait until he comes to Corinth. It is so

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<sup>898</sup> Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 890.

<sup>899</sup> Ibid. Italics in the original.

important and urgent that it must be dealt with now. He will not allow the discrimination, a contradiction of the purpose of the Lord's Supper, to continue.

In brief, an Inner Texture analysis of 1 Cor 11:17-34 permits a deeper understanding of Paul's argument about the Lord's Supper to emerge. Overall, in 1 Cor 11:17-34 Paul presents the Lord's Supper as "an act of self-giving service and love, to be understood in the light of the Passover."<sup>900</sup> It is a sacrament of unity and equality and Paul challenges the Corinthian church members to live out their selfless and sacrificial lives in imitation of Christ, which will inevitably bring suffering. That, for Paul, would be a true 'remembrance.' It would, also, progress the realisation or actualisation of the New Covenant "until he [the Lord] comes" (1 Cor 11:26).<sup>901</sup>

Paul's intermingling of the Inner Texture sensory-aesthetic (6 above), and opening-middle-closing (4 above) sub-textures enables him to present a strong argumentative (5 above) approach clarifying his thinking and applying it directly in his attempt at resolving the problem.

### 6.3.2 Social and Cultural Texture

The Social and Cultural Texture views a text as a mirror or product of a society or culture, which frequently betrays aspects of the writer's social and cultural situation by the different ways it views the world.<sup>902</sup> Robbins identifies three Social and Cultural sub-textures: (1) specific social topics (ways of talking about the world, for example, conversionist, revolutionist, introversionist, gnostic-manipulationist, thaumaturgical,

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<sup>900</sup> O'Mahony, "The Last Supper: What Happened and What Did It Mean?" 70.

<sup>901</sup> Gorman, *The Death of the Messiah and the Birth of the New Covenant*, 75, points out: "Christ's death effected the New Covenant, meaning specifically the creation of a covenant community of forgiven and reconciled disciples, inhabited and empowered by the Spirit to embody a new-covenant spirituality of cruciform loyalty to God and love for others, thereby peaceably participating in the life of God and in God's forgiving, reconciling, and covenanting mission to the world."

<sup>902</sup> See Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 71 – 94.

reformist, and utopian).<sup>903</sup> One could argue that in 1 Corinthians Paul portrays some of the features of the conversionist (“Salvation is ... available only by a profound and supernaturally wrought transformation of the self”),<sup>904</sup> reformist (“evil may be dealt with according to supernaturally given insights about the ways in which social organisation should be amended”),<sup>905</sup> and utopian (“that people themselves remake the world”) sub-textures.<sup>906</sup> (2) Common social and cultural topics (those peculiar to those living in a particular area, such as, (i) honour, guilt and rights cultures (“honour is a claim to worth along with the social acknowledgement of worth”),<sup>907</sup> (ii) dyadic and individualist personalities, (iii) dyadic and legal contracts and agreements, (iv) challenge-response (this refers to the public or social communication of a message provoking a response from the receiver),<sup>908</sup> (v) agriculturally-based, industrial, and technological economic exchange systems, (vi) peasants, labourers, craftspeople, and entrepreneurs, (vii) limited, insufficient, and overabundant goods, and (viii) purity codes. The final cultural categories (3 above) assist in deciding which cultural group one belongs to and publicly expresses: dominant culture rhetoric, subculture rhetoric, counterculture rhetoric, contraculture rhetoric, and/or limited culture rhetoric.<sup>909</sup>

This Social and Cultural Texture analysis will consider the dominant, subculture and counterculture sub-textures of the final cultural categories (3 above) rhetorically evident in 1 Cor 11:17-34. The conversionist, reformist, and utopian sub-textures of the specific social topics (1 above), and the honour, guilt and rights sub-textures of the common social and cultural topics (2 above) will also be examined.

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<sup>903</sup> Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 72-74.

<sup>904</sup> *Ibid.*, 72.

<sup>905</sup> *Ibid.*, 73

<sup>906</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

<sup>907</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

<sup>908</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

<sup>909</sup> *Ibid.*, 86-89.

The final cultural categories sub-textures (3 above) compare the similarities and dissimilarities between the contemporaneous Hellenistic fellowship meals (an expression of the dominant culture) and the Jewish Passover Meal (an expression of the Jewish subculture) and the Lord's Supper (an expression of a counterculture) are particularly evident in this pericope.<sup>910</sup>

The fellowship meals of the Hellenistic world consisted of a

[formal] meal, a libation [or toast] of wine offered to the god(s) – frequently considered to have been invited to the meal or serving as host – and a symposium, a round of drinking during which various activities took place [such as singing, dancing and/or philosophical discussion].<sup>911</sup>

Xenophon (430—347 B.C.E.), in writing about Socrates' fellowship meals, had said that some (wealthier) guests brought more food than others and that all was placed in the 'common stock' to be portioned out equally among all the guests. Thus it was indeed a fellowship meal in that those who brought most food "got no more than those who brought little with them."<sup>912</sup>

There is ample evidence that behaviour at these 'pot-luck' meals in Corinth was not always in keeping with the ideal.<sup>913</sup> Drunkenness seems to have been a major problem in Corinth and elsewhere, necessitating the banning of such meals in some cities.<sup>914</sup> Social divisions at these meals were commonplace, principally because first

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<sup>910</sup> Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 86-89.

<sup>911</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 417, 430-31. Many of today's voluntary associations celebrate similar Annual or Occasional Dinners.

<sup>912</sup> Xenophon, *Memorabilia*, 3.14.1. The writings of Plato (427—347 B.C.E.), Aristotle (384—322 B.C.E.), Pliny (23—79 C.E.), Martial (38—104 C.E.), Plutarch (45—120 C.E.), Juvenal (55—127 C.E.), and others give a very detailed and corroborating picture of these occasions. See Plato's *Symposium* 174A, Aristotle's *Acharnians* 1085, Pliny's *Epistles* 2.6, Martial's *Epigrams* 1.20; 3.49, 60; 4.85; 6.11, Plutarch's *Moralia* 613F, Juvenal's *Satires* 5.24-25.

<sup>913</sup> A 'pot-luck' meal was a fellowship meal to which all guests brought food which was put in the 'common stock' and shared equally among all guests (Xenophon, *Memorabilia*, 3.14.1).

<sup>914</sup> Pascuzzi, *First and Second Corinthians*, 66-67.

century society was so stratified and the architecture of the host's home often dictated so.<sup>915</sup>

Paul criticises the Corinthian church members for their behaviour at the Lord's Supper gathering precisely because they are acting like an unruly Hellenistic fellowship meal and not appreciating (and living) the differences. In acting as some of their fellow-Corinthians act at their Hellenistic fellowship meals, the church members are practising and promoting divisiveness, self-aggrandisement and self-serving behaviour: "for in eating each one goes ahead with his own supper, and one goes hungry while another gets drunk" (1 Cor 11:21). They were continuing the abusive behaviour of the Hellenistic fellowship meals and not appreciating the difference between an unruly Hellenistic fellowship meal and the Lord's Supper.

Paul, considering the specific social topics sub-texture (1 above), is advocating a very different understanding of the Lord's Supper as against the above-mentioned divisive and abusive Hellenistic tradition, focusing on the conversionist, reformist, and utopian sub-textures (specific social topics). In 1 Cor 11:29 Paul explains that such eating and drinking "without discerning the body," that is, without recognising the body of Christ and our essential equality and unity in this body, "undermine(s) the unity of the community."<sup>916</sup> More importantly, Paul argues that at least some of the Corinthian church members are not understanding or appreciating their participation in the life-giving suffering and death of Christ. Identification with Christ's suffering and death "for you" (1 Cor 11:24) means "being identified with, and involved in, the cross of Christ, in anticipation of judgement" (that judgement is the subject of the following verses in 1 Cor 11:27-34).<sup>917</sup> This participation in the suffering of Christ generates "the

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<sup>915</sup> The *triclinium* was often reserved for the host and his special friends, the *atrium* was for others including latecomers, and the *peristylum* for slaves.

<sup>916</sup> Pascuzzi, *First and Second Corinthians*, 67.

<sup>917</sup> Wolfgang. Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther*, 3:51-58.

social transformation, and it is the very essence of the Lord's Supper (and of baptism) to keep this anchorage in grace and in the cross in sharp focus."<sup>918</sup>

In acting contrary to the *purpose* of the Lord's Supper the Corinthian church members receive Paul's strongest condemnation: "I do not praise the fact that your gatherings are doing more harm than good" (1 Cor 11:17) and "In this matter I do not praise you" (1 Cor 11:22). This is strong condemnation indeed. Paul holds that they are *nullifying or invalidating* the Lord's Supper, a sacrament of unity or community whose purpose is to participate in the life, suffering and death of Christ and to empower the Christ-like transformation of the participants. They are nullifying the New Covenant just as their ancestors (the Israelites in the wilderness, see 1 Cor 10:1) reneged on their God-given and Israel-accepted Covenant (see Deut 32—34 and 1 Cor 10:1-13).

Similarities and dissimilarities can also be drawn between the Lord's Supper (a counterculture expression) and the Jewish Passover meal (a subculture expression). Collins maintains that the Corinthian Lord's Supper is dissimilar to the Jewish Passover meal. For him, it was not a Jewish Passover meal but rather an occasional

festive meal, at the end of which they celebrated a ritual recalling what the Lord Jesus had done on the night before he died, and then proceeded to a more general worship service in which hymns, psalms, speaking in tongues, and prophecies took place (cf. 1 Cor 14).<sup>919</sup>

In contrast, Venard, Thiselton, and most other commentators argue that the Last Supper was a Christian New Covenant Meal set in the context of a Jewish Passover celebration.<sup>920</sup> This view maintains that the 'festive meal' being celebrated in Corinth (1 Cor 11:17-34) recalled both the Jewish Passover and the Christian Last Supper.<sup>921</sup>

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<sup>918</sup> Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 893.

<sup>919</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 430-31.

<sup>920</sup> See Venard, "From Last Supper to Mass," 40, and Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 878-82.

<sup>921</sup> Stringer, *Rethinking the Origins of the Eucharist*, 186. He also quotes, in support, Gerard Rouwhorst, *The Roots of the Early Christian Eucharist*, "The Roots of the Early Christian Eucharist: Jewish Blessings or Hellenistic Symposia?" 295–308. In Albert Gerhards and Clemens Leonhard, eds. *Jewish and*



During this [New] Passover meal Christ introduced specific innovatory sayings and signs into the celebration; sayings and signs that signified the effective establishment of a New Covenant, namely, the one promised by Jeremiah (Jer 31: 31-34).<sup>922</sup> This covenant was prefigured in the Last Supper ‘in his blood’ or by Jesus’ death.<sup>923</sup> As Anders Eriksson says, “the punch line of Paul’s argument is hence the statement: ‘Your Lord’s Supper is a proclamation of the death of Christ,’” the death of Christ ‘for you/others’ (1 Cor 11:24).<sup>924</sup> It is Christ, the suffering paschal or Passover lamb (1 Cor 5:7-8), who through his sacrificial death ‘for you/others’ (1 Cor 11:24) has fulfilled the promises of the Old Testament, who has cleansed his followers, becoming for them “wisdom from God, as well as righteousness, sanctification, and redemption” (1 Cor 1:30).

Christ’s selfless, sacrificial death ‘for you’ (1 Cor 11:24) is being negated by the selfish Corinthian church members as they fail to show that same selfless, sacrificial character shown by Christ’s life and death.<sup>925</sup> As Paul says in 1 Cor 3:22-23: “All belong to you and you to Christ and Christ to God.” They belong to God and stand under God’s authority. Therefore, the freedom exercised by those in Christ is freedom exercised within the parameters of belonging to God in Christ and ordered to God’s glory.<sup>926</sup> Priority must be given to the needs of the ‘other,’ as outlined in 1 Cor 8:11 and in 1 Cor 11:17-22. What disturbed Paul about the Corinthian’s ‘Lord’s Supper’ was that “in eating, each one goes ahead with his own supper, and one goes hungry while

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*Christian Liturgy and Worship: New Insights into its History and Interaction.* JCP 15. (Leiden: Brill, 2007):

152-173 and Thomas J. Talley, *The Origins of the Liturgical Year* (New York: Pueblo, 1986), 18-27; Paul F. Bradshaw, *Reconstructing Early Christian Worship and Eucharistic Origins* (Collegeville MN: Liturgical Press, 2010).

<sup>922</sup> Mortell, *The New Passover*, 10.

<sup>923</sup> William D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: SPCK, 1955), 252. Davies agrees: “For Paul the Last Supper corresponds to the Passover of Judaism; ... it is the New Passover.”

<sup>924</sup> Anders Eriksson, *Traditions as Rhetorical Proof: Pauline Argumentation in 1 Corinthians* (Lund: Lund University Press, 1998), 187.

<sup>925</sup> Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 622.

<sup>926</sup> Pascuzzi, *First and Second Corinthians*, 45-46

another gets drunk” (1 Cor 11:21). He had no alternative but to say, “it is not the Lord’s Supper” (1 Cor 11:20). Paul’s principal concern in 1 Cor 11:17-34 is for the weak, the ‘other’ as that was also Christ’s principal concern: “This is my body which is [given] for you” (1 Cor 11:24). This concern for the other person is “precisely what sharing in Christ’s death as the handing over of the self to be used for God’s loving work of reconciliation and redemption *includes*.”<sup>927</sup> Thiselton, in commenting on these verses, says:

Just as the [Corinthian] Lord’s Supper looks back to the Last Supper when Jesus was about to be handed over, *voluntarily to renounce self-direction and autonomy, to place his selfhood and destiny in the hands of God and human persons without any further ‘say’ in what happens*, so, Paul argues, by **proclaiming it** in word, sacrament, attitude and life.<sup>928</sup>

To summarise the Social and Culture Texture analysis of 1 Cor 11:17-34, most commentators (such as Venard, Meier, and Thiselton) maintain that the Lord’s Supper was a Christian New Covenant meal set in the context of a Jewish Passover meal.<sup>929</sup> Thiselton argues that “the many factors customarily cited to establish a Passover framework remain utterly convincing..[and that].. Jesus presided at a Passover meal which proclaimed his own broken body and shed blood as the new Passover for Christian believers.”<sup>930</sup> Davies states that “for Paul the Last Supper corresponds to the Passover of Judaism; it is the new Passover.”<sup>931</sup> It ‘remembered’ the Mount Sinai and Calvary sacrifices of reconciliation. Paul is very critical of the abusive and divisive behaviour of the Corinthian church members in 1 Cor 11:17-34. Not only does their

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<sup>927</sup> Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 870. Bold and Italics in the original.

<sup>928</sup> Ibid. Bold and Italics in the original.

<sup>929</sup> Venard, “From Last Supper to Mass,” 40; Meier, “The Last Supper: Did it Happen?” 353; and Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 878-82.

<sup>930</sup> Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 874.

<sup>931</sup> W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*, (London: SPCK, 1955), 252.

behaviour invalidate their celebration of the sacrament of unity in Christ, it also lowers their group celebration to the level of an unruly Hellenistic fellowship meal. Paul maintains that Christ, through his sacrificial, suffering service of others, re-establishes God's covenant with his people. As a result, Christ/God expects nothing less than loving, sacrificial, suffering service of others from his chosen people.

The Corinthian church members were bringing their dominant culture 'status'/'rights' to the Lord's Supper celebration and treating those of a lower status unequally. This, Paul shows, is contrary to the Lord's Supper tradition he received "from the Lord" and "handed on" to the Corinthian church members; their new-found belief is a counterculture belief with conversionist/reformist aspects. They must recognise their countercultural belief and its compatible behaviours and act accordingly.

### 6.3.3 Ideological Texture

An ideology may be described as the body of beliefs that guides an individual, group, institution or association.<sup>932</sup> This integrated system "proceeds from the need to understand, to interpret to self and others, to justify and to control one's place in the world."<sup>933</sup> The sub-textures of Ideological Texture are (1) the individual locations of writers and readers (their individual biases and values), (2) the relation to groups (especially the ideological-driven groups to which they may affiliate), (3) the modes of intellectual discourse (which is the particular perspective a reader subscribes to, which sets boundaries around readings), and (4) the spheres of ideology (which concerns the ideology inscribed in the text and how one may analyse it).<sup>934</sup>

In 1 Cor 11:17-34 there is an obvious and serious ideological conflict between Paul's tradition of the Lord's Supper [(1) an example of individual location] and the

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<sup>932</sup> Elliott, *A Home for the Homeless*, 268.

<sup>933</sup> Ibid.

<sup>934</sup> Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 96f.

behaviour of at least some Corinthian church members [(2) relation to group], judging from the text [spheres of ideology]: these will be considered in the investigation.

The overall argument in 1 Cor 11:17-34 may be summarised as follows. In 1 Cor 6:12-20 Paul presents his belief that the believer is in union with the risen Christ. Now, in 1 Cor 11:17-34 he presents his belief in the historicity of the Lord's Supper and his conviction that through its 'remembrance' theology the believer may enter that union with the risen Christ. This means that the believer enters into Christ's life and mission, his salvific act (1 Cor 11:17-34), "the totality of God's reconciling action."<sup>935</sup> Identification with Christ necessitates that the believer, through union with Christ, should become a suffering servant in attitude and action, and be an active, suffering, salvific reconciler. It was the Corinthians' selfish and self-centred behaviour that invalidated their participation in the Lord's Supper and brought down on them Paul's condemnation.

The origins of the Jewish Passover feast predate the Exodus.<sup>936</sup> The Feast of Unleavened Bread, another ancient feast, seems to have been an agricultural festival that was historicised as a celebration of the Exodus before its amalgamation with the Passover Feast under Josiah (c. 600 B.C.E).<sup>937</sup> In Exod 12 both feasts were mentioned as commemorating the deliverance of Israel from Egypt and the establishment of the Mosaic or Sinaitic Covenant.<sup>938</sup> The combined feast centred on Yahweh's "fundamental saving acts," by which he saved or liberated his Chosen People from bondage in Egypt and brought them to the Promised Land of Canaan.<sup>939</sup> At Mount

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<sup>935</sup> Julie Gittoes, *Anamnesis and the Eucharist* (Farnham, Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2008), 147.

<sup>936</sup> Roland Falvey, "Leviticus," in Brown, Fitzmyer and Murphy, *NJBC*, 61-79. John L. McKenzie, *Dictionary of the Bible*, 643, says "it may well have been a "pastoral festival which celebrated the spring yeaning."

<sup>937</sup> John J. Castelot and Aelred Cody, "Religious Institutions of Israel," in *NJBC*: 1253-1283, 1278; John L. McKenzie, *Dictionary of the Bible*, 556.

<sup>938</sup> Mortell, *The New Passover*, 6.

<sup>939</sup> Notker Fuglister, "Passover," in *The Rahner Dictionary of Theology*, Karl Rahner and Herbert Vorgrimmler, eds., (Freiburg: Herder; London: Burns & Oates, 1965), 1167-71.

Sinai, committing themselves to God's Covenant with them, as Exodus 24:11 states: "They saw God and they ate and drank together," marking it as a communion covenant. Boadt says that one "should not underestimate the importance of this covenant in the biblical narrative. All of bible history may be called a theology of covenant."<sup>940</sup> In Boadt's view, Israelite covenant theology "provides the framework for understanding God's earlier promises, .... [giving] the whole Pentateuch its character as 'torah' rather than 'history.'"<sup>941</sup>

The Old Testament Passover Meal, with which Moses and the Israelites ratified God's gifted covenant on Mount Sinai, was to be remembered annually by the Israelites: "This covenant was to be re-presented, re-experienced, re-entered into, and recommitted to annually by each Israelite."<sup>942</sup> They were to remember this day forever as a memorial celebration: "This day shall be *for you* a memorial day" (Exod 12:14; see also Exod 13:9). These celebrations remembered the great saving acts of Yahweh in delivering the Israelites and "were recalled in recitals (the 'haggada') and hymns of praise (especially the Alleluia psalms)".<sup>943</sup> Through the worthy celebration of the Passover meal the Jewish believer entered into the Saving Event.

Having grounded the Last Supper in its true historical setting, the investigation proceeds to address (1) Paul's individual location. Having inaugurated the New Covenant at the Last Supper, Paul points out that Jesus asked his followers to "Do this in remembrance of me" (1 Cor 11:24, 25). Thus, Paul taught his followers to re-enact the Lord's Supper in the belief that it was the fulfilment of this command and that it remembered Christ's mission, life, death and resurrection. However, it is essential to

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<sup>940</sup> Boadt, *Reading the Old Testament*, 174.

<sup>941</sup> Ibid.

<sup>942</sup> Mortell, *The New Passover*, 6.

<sup>943</sup> Fuglister, "Passover," 1167-71. See also Exod 19:33-34, a J source, "highlights the cultic aspects of eating a meal to seal the covenant and the importance of following ritual laws in its covenant rules of chapter 34," in Boadt, *Reading the Old Testament*, 181, quoted in Mortell, *The New Passover*, 6.

note that this is no mere remembering of a past historic event. According to Fuglister, the biblical notion of ‘memory’ is both a subjective and an objective “revival”, which he explains as follows:

Thus at each actual feast the celebrants have a re-actualisation of the Passover salvation: ‘This day *you* are to go forth’ (Exod 13:4, 8). The rite is performed ‘for the sake of all that Yahweh did for *me*, when *I* went out of Egypt’ (Mishnah, Pesachim, 10.5).<sup>944</sup>

Jewish theology holds that one enters into the past salvific event as if one were present on the historic occasion. The Danish biblical scholar, Aage Bentzen, states that, through this remembrance, “members of the congregation ... become contemporary with the fundamental acts of salvation.”<sup>945</sup> Consequently, one becomes a *participant* in the salvific experience of one’s ancestors.<sup>946</sup>

The question may then be posed: is this participation passive or active? In other words, does the believer become a passive beneficiary of the saving event or are they also an active participant, both saved and saving? There are many responses to this question. Paul’s use of the words “Do this in memory of me” in 1 Cor 11:24, 25 may be understood in a number of different ways which are not mutually exclusive. Pascuzzi maintains that, with his use of this ‘remembrance’ word, Paul was pointing out that it is critically important that each celebration would recall the death of Christ (1 Cor 11:25-26) and that those present would allow the reality and meaning of that death to take root in their everyday lives.<sup>947</sup> Therefore, what matters to Paul is “not the words of the

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<sup>944</sup> Fuglister, *Passover*, 1167-1171; italics added.

<sup>945</sup> Aage Bentzen, *King and Messiah: Lutterworth Studies in Church and Bible* (London: Lutterworth, 1955), 12, 72-79, 80.

<sup>946</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 428.

<sup>947</sup> Pascuzzi, *First Corinthians*, 67.

tradition *per se*, but that the Corinthian church members live as one saved community rooted in the self-sacrificing love of Christ!”<sup>948</sup>

Kevin Irwin holds that the Eucharist is “a true experience of Christ’s unique paschal mystery.”<sup>949</sup> He continues by saying that it “recalls” the past in such a way that “all God accomplished then and there is experienced here and now in a new act of salvation.... this unique, once for all act of salvation occurs still.”<sup>950</sup> He adds that it (the liturgical remembrance) “would perpetuate the Sacrifice of the Cross throughout the centuries until he should come again.”<sup>951</sup>

Significantly, an increasing number of commentators are seeing remembrance (or *anamnesis*) in 1 Corinthians 11:24, 25 as involving a presence of Christ. Luke Timothy Johnson, for example, argues that “the term *anamnesis* means ‘to bring to mind’ in something more than a mechanical way; it is a form of presence.”<sup>952</sup> Similarly, the World Council of Churches in its *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry Report* states that “the living Christ [is] present in all his fullness, .... the total being of Christ who comes to us in order to feed us and transform our entire being.”<sup>953</sup> Michael Welker, the German biblical theologian, agrees with this statement saying that this remembrance is more than “an internalisation of Christ’s life, death and resurrection.”<sup>954</sup> He goes on to say that by this act of remembrance “the totality of God’s reconciling action in Christ is

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<sup>948</sup> Pascuzzi, *First Corinthians*, 67. Ian H. Marshall holds a similar view “We, therefore, prefer the view that the action is to remind the disciples of Jesus of the significance of his death,” in Ian Howard Marshall, *Commentary of Luke*, NIGTC (Exeter: Paternoster, 1978), 805.

<sup>949</sup> Kevin Irwin, *Models of Eucharist* (New York: Paulist, 2005), 128

<sup>950</sup> Irwin, *Models of Eucharist*, 127.

<sup>951</sup> Gregory Dix is also in substantial agreement with Irwin’s view (Irwin, *Models of Eucharist*, 128 and 127). Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy* (London: A. and C. Black, 1945), explains *anamnesis* as follows: it is “a re-calling or re-presentation of a thing in such a way that it is not so much regarded as being ‘absent,’ as itself *presently operative* by its effects” (italics in original).

<sup>952</sup> Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, SP (Collegeville MN: Liturgical Press, 1991), 338.

<sup>953</sup> World Council of Churches, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, (Faith and Order Paper 111, The Lima Text, World Council of Churches, (Geneva: WCC, 1982), 13. It should be noted that this latter statement is prefaced by the qualification that “many churches claim so.”

<sup>954</sup> Michael Welker, *What Happens in Holy Communion* (London: SPCK, 2000), 126.

made present.”<sup>955</sup> Julie Gittoes agrees with this interpretation that Christ’s total act of salvation is present in the *anamnesis*.<sup>956</sup> The corollary aspect is also important, namely, that of the believer being present, being there in the saving acts of Christ. As Paul terms it, ‘in Christ.’<sup>957</sup>

Gorman, in his exegesis of 1 Cor 11:17-34, suggests that Paul is making five key theological claims about the Lord’s Supper: (i) it is an “experience of solidarity or fellowship” with Christ and one another, (ii) it is an “event of memory,” meaning “not recollection but present appropriation and participation,” (iii) it is an act of proclamation – “a parabolic sermon,” (iv) it is “a foretaste of the future messianic banquet,” and (v) it is “a microcosm of the New-Covenant life effected by the cross.”<sup>958</sup> Many commentators also maintain that “such **remembrance** constitutes a self-involving proclamation of Christ’s death.”<sup>959</sup> This is achieved through a life lived in identification with Christ “who is for the ‘other.’”<sup>960</sup>

There is considerable agreement, then, that Paul understood this remembrance to involve the believer entering a Spiritual union with the risen, reconciling Christ and, thus, becoming a salvific reconciler. In other words, for an increasing number of commentators, “the Eucharist [or the Lord’s Supper] is Church-generative.”<sup>961</sup> Gittoes explains that the Eucharist is about “becoming Church – the body of Christ nourished

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<sup>955</sup> Michael Welker, *What Happens in Holy Communion*, 126.

<sup>956</sup> “Christ himself and all that he accomplished for us and for creation ... is present in the *anamnesis* which is also the foretaste of his Parousia and fulfilment of the kingdom” Julie Gittoes, *Anamnesis and the Eucharist*, 24.

<sup>957</sup> See sub-section 6.3.2 of this chapter, paragraphs 5 and 6 for further comment.

<sup>958</sup> Gorman, *The Death and Birth*, 54. Thiselton writes: “**Remembrance** of Christ and of Christ’s death (i) retains the biblical aspect of a *self-involving remembering in gratitude, worship, trust, acknowledgement, and obedience*. (ii) It also carries with it the experience of *being ‘there’ in identification with the crucified Christ who is also ‘here’ in his raised presence*. However, still further, it embraces (iii) a *self-transforming retrieval of the founding event of the personal identity of the believer (as a believer) and the corporate identity of the church (as a Christian church of God)* as well as (iv) a *looking forward to the new ‘possibility’ for transformed identity opened up by the eschatological consummation* (v.25), in Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 880.

<sup>959</sup> Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 880; bold and italics in the original.

<sup>960</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>961</sup> Gittoes, *Anamnesis*, 146. Having surveyed many commentators, she mentions in great detail the views of Pickstock, Ford, and Williams, who are essentially in agreement on this point.



by the body of Christ – in order that the “Gospel may be proclaimed in word and deed.”<sup>962</sup> Thus, through participation in Christ, “the Church is incorporated in the process of becoming more fully Christ’s body.”<sup>963</sup> This missiological process of “encounter, healing, transformation and self-giving”<sup>964</sup> anticipates the fulfilment of the kingdom of God. Gittoes concludes her study by saying that, “nourished and transformed by encounter in the act of anamnesis, the Church is sent out to declare the Gospel, to engage in mission,”<sup>965</sup> that is, in the mission of God and Christ.

Having discussed the Last Supper/Eucharist from (1) an individual location perspective,<sup>966</sup> the investigation now proceeds to consider it from a (2) relation to groups perspective.<sup>967</sup> The Letter’s programmatic statement in 1 Cor 1:10 urges the church members to work for unity in the church body, to banish any divisions, so “that you might be united in the same mind and in the same purpose:” in 1 Cor 2:16 he identifies this ‘mind’ as the “mind of Christ.” The first ‘argument’ of the Letter (1 Cor 1:10—4:21) is an appeal for unity in a fractured, divided church community. That appeal for unity continues in 1 Cor 5:1-13 where he is dealing with a case of incestuous behaviour in the church which is dividing and damaging the community. Paul argues that the immoral behaviour is “corrupting and compromising the entire community’s true character of sinlessness.”<sup>968</sup> He ends that particular pericope appealing to them to “celebrate the feast ... with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth” (1 Cor 5:8). 1 Cor 17-34 is a further example of disunity and disarray in the church. And, again, Paul states quite clearly that this divisiveness is harming the church community. Starkly, he

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<sup>962</sup> Gittoes, *Anamnesis*, 146.

<sup>963</sup> Ibid.

<sup>964</sup> Ibid.

<sup>965</sup> Ibid., 147. In her *Anamnesis and the Eucharist*, Gittoes has an excellent discussion of this entire subject, especially of contemporary Anglican approaches. See, also, The Church of England, *Mission-Shaped Church* (London: Church House Publishing, 2004).

<sup>966</sup> Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 96-100.

<sup>967</sup> Ibid., 100-105.

<sup>968</sup> Pascuzzi, *First and Second Corinthians*, 38-39.

states that because of it some church members are experiencing “illness” and “infirmity,” “and some have died” (1 Cor 11:30). Later, in 1 Cor 12:12-26, he is again calling for unity. In that pericope (1 Cor 12:1-31) the problem concerns the use and abuse of spiritual gifts which Paul fears is attacking the unity of the church. It would seem that there is competition in the church between those who have the gift of tongues and those who have other gifts. This is causing disharmony and disunity. To counteract this cancer Paul introduces his ‘body’ analogy stating emphatically that all church members are important and equal (1 Cor 12:11), that all are gifted by the Spirit (1 Cor 12:7, 11), that all are essential or indispensable in the church (1 Cor 12:12-26), and that all gifts are for “building up the church” (1 Cor 14:4). In 1 Cor 5:1-13 and in 1 Cor 12:1-31 he is adamant that untold damage is being done to the church body. It is, literally, tearing limb from limb. Paul reaches the climax of this pericope in asserting that the unity-in-diversity of the body of Christ is such that “if one [part] suffers, all the parts suffer with it; if one part is honoured, all the parts share its joy” (1 Cor 12:26a). This ‘body’ analogy was popular in Paul’s time but it was usually employed in a ‘top down’ manner, namely, to quell individual differences and to enforce the view of the powerful.<sup>969</sup> Paul, on the other hand, uses it throughout 1 Corinthians to stress the importance of each individual, their unique function in the body of Christ and the responsibility of all to encourage diversity-in-unity. Thornton’s interpretation is apt in saying that “those at Corinth who make others feel inferior merely to enhance their own status thus ultimately demean themselves, and Christ.”<sup>970</sup> In other words, envy and status-seeking have no place in the body of Christ. Paul has made the same point in 1 Cor 11: 17-34.

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<sup>969</sup> Williams mentions the speech of Menenius Agrippa to the Roman plebs in *Livy* ii, 32, 8; and Epictetus, *Discourses*, ii, 10, 3; mentioned in Williams, “1 Corinthians,” 962. See also Dunn, *1 Corinthians*, 60.

<sup>970</sup> Thornton, *The Common Life in the Body of Christ* (London: Dacre Press, 1950), 36; see also 34-65, 156-187.

In summary, the analysis of the Ideological Texture of 1 Cor 11:17-34 shows that Paul teaches his followers to re-enact the Lord's Supper in the belief that it remembers Christ's life, mission, death and resurrection. But, the Lord's Supper, for Paul, is no mere remembrance. This act of remembrance makes Christ present in "the totality of God's reconciling action."<sup>971</sup> The corollary aspect is also important, namely, that of the believer being present in the saving acts of Christ. This conclusion is further supported by Paul's distinctively original 'in Christ' concept.<sup>972</sup> When celebrated worthily, the Lord's Supper is Church-generative. Identification with Christ necessitates that the believer, through union with Christ, should become a suffering servant in attitude and action, and be an active, suffering, salvific reconciler. It was the Corinthians' refusal in 1 Cor 11:17-22 to selflessly and sacrificially share with others that invalidated their participation in the Lord's Supper and resulted in Paul's condemnation. For Paul, one cannot participate in Christ and avoid suffering.

Paul knows the tradition handed down to him 'from the Lord' (1 Cor 11:23); he knows well his own 'ideological location.' He understands that the approach of the 'misbehavers' is invalidating their celebration because they are failing to behave in accordance with the new-found beliefs of their Christian faith: the relation to group sub-structure (1 Cor 11:17-22) recognises the 'group-think' of his adversaries. They are acting as a 'clique,' which Robbins defines as a "coalition whose members associate regularly with each other on the basis of affection and/or common interest and possess a marked sense of common identity."<sup>973</sup> Paul reminds them of the tradition, an example of historical Intertexture, and its implication that all celebrants should be living as Christ did (1 Cor 11:23-26). Warning them of the dire consequences of their

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<sup>971</sup> Gittoes, *Anamnesis*, 147.

<sup>972</sup> See sub-section 6.3.2 of this chapter for further comment.

<sup>973</sup> Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 100.

misbehaviour he recalls them to a more authentic celebration of the Lord's Supper, their sacrament of love and unity (1 Cor 11:27-34).

#### 6.3.4 Intertexture

Intertexture is the interaction of the language in the text with other texts (oral-scribal intertexture); cultures (cultural intertexture); social roles, institutions, codes, and relationships (social intertexture); and historical events or places (historical intertexture) in order to carry over at least some of the meanings or emotions of the earlier text.<sup>974</sup>

There are a number of oral-scribal Intertexture allusions and influences underpinning elements of 1 Cor 11:17-34. First, Paul states that Christ established the New Covenant foretold by Jeremiah (Jer 31:31-34). Second, Paul argues that the Lord's Supper is a cultic celebration of remembrance, similar to that detailed in Jubilees 49. Third, Jubilees 49:15 is alluded to in 1 Cor 11:29; punishment comes from not observing the Passover correctly. Fourth, re-interpreting Isaiah's Suffering Servant, he sees the critical importance of suffering in reference to salvation. Therefore, Paul preaches Christ crucified, and appeals to the Corinthian church members to turn away from sin, and to worthily and sacrificially 'remember' the saving action of Christ and their active participation in that saving action of Christ.

There are also some examples of cultural Intertexture in 1 Cor 11:17-34. Paul's adversaries, accustomed to a highly stratified social structure are attempting to bring the cultural practices of the Hellenistic temple banquets into the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Some other church members, Paul's true followers, are celebrating the Passover, a time-honoured remembrance of when God liberated the Israelites from the tyrannical rule of the Pharaoh; it is also mentioned in 1 Cor 5:7-8. Cultural Intertexture,

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<sup>974</sup> Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 40.

such as the order of celebration of the Lord's Supper, is known only to 'insiders' to the culture. There is, finally, an example of the historical Intertexture in 1 Cor 11:23-26. Paul says in 1 Cor 11:23 "for I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you." The words and phrases surrounding the handing on of this tradition "bespeak the authoritative and accurate handing on of *halakah*."<sup>975</sup>

There are also a number of examples of social intertexture in 1 Cor 11:2—14:40, for example 1 Cor 12:1-31. Whereas cultural knowledge is 'insider' knowledge and is consciously transmitted from generation to generation, social knowledge is known to all as it is consciously and unconsciously assimilated from the surrounding society, especially from others' behaviour. It concerns social roles, social institutions, social codes and social relationships.<sup>976</sup> One understands from 1 Cor 12:1-3 that there are serious difficulties in the church's gatherings regarding the use and abuse of 'spiritual gifts,' and the added status acquired by those so gifted. Many 'gifted' individuals seem to have adopted a superior attitude and some are arguing for 'added' status in the church. This disharmony is harming the unity of the church, the programmatic statement of 1 Cor 1:10. Paul feels that this particular problem must be addressed, and he does so in 1 Cor 12:1-31.

The above-mentioned Intertexture references will be detailed and explained in the following paragraphs.

Paul's argument in 1 Cor 11:17-34, a feature of Inner Texture, may be summarised as follows. He is annoyed at the divisive behaviour of (at least some) Corinthian church members at their celebration of the Lord's Supper. He cannot condone it, he strongly condemns it (1 Cor 11:17, 22). In order to bring them back to a worthy celebration, he recalls the original Last Supper in which the Lord's followers

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<sup>975</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 431.

<sup>976</sup> Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 62.

celebrated Christ's ultimate example of his selfless, sacrificial love for others (1 Cor 11:23-26). Paul warns his followers in Corinth that celebrating unworthily brings judgement, punishment, sickness, even death on the unworthy participants (1 Cor 11:27-32). He concludes his argument appealing to the Corinthian church members to celebrate the Lord's Supper worthily by living lives of selfless, sacrificial love for others.

It is necessary to unpack that argument a little more. With his words in 1 Cor 11: 25 "This cup is the New Covenant," Paul is recalling Jeremiah's prophesy of a New Covenant in the 'end times' (Jer 31:31-34),<sup>977</sup> when God would write his covenant on the hearts of his people and forgive his people their sins (Jer 31:31-34). It seems reasonable to accept that, since both traditions (Mt-Mk and Lk-Paul) include the concepts of 'sacrifice' and 'atoning death' and the connection predates Paul<sup>978</sup> and the Synoptic evangelists, it dates to the early church if not to Christ himself.<sup>979</sup>

Importantly, there is no mention of sacrifice, no mention of blood, no mention of sin, or no mention of vicarious atonement in Jeremiah – such as is found in 1 Cor 5:7-8; 11:23-26; 15:3. As Farmer says:

It follows that someone has seen Jeremiah's New Covenant in relationship to the atoning death of the Servant of the Lord in Isaiah 53, and has recognised the essential role of the Suffering Servant of Isaiah in effectuating the covenant that God had promised to write upon his people's hearts.<sup>980</sup>

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<sup>977</sup> Collins maintains that "Pre-Pauline tradition (cf. Lk 22:19-20) added the specification of 'new' to the covenant reference, undoubtedly under the influence of Jer 31:31 and the community's awareness of the eschatological nature of the Christ event." Collins, *First Corinthians*, 433.

<sup>978</sup> See, 1 Cor 11: 23 ("For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you.....my body which is for you.... This cup is the new covenant in my blood").

<sup>979</sup> This is the view of Farmer expressed in "Reflections on Isaiah 53 and Christian Origins," 271–272. Morna Hooker, quoted in Bellingier and Farmer, *Jesus and the Suffering Servant*, 4 (footnote 81) writes that Paul was probably the originator of this view. They (Farmer and Hooker) agree that Paul accepted the connection, valued it and handed it on to his followers even if it originated in the church and was in turn handed on to him.

<sup>980</sup> Farmer, "Reflections on Isaiah 53 and Christian Origins," 271-272 thinks it "probable" that Jesus himself saw this connection. Many other commentators (e.g. Hooker in the same book) believe that Paul was the first to see the connection.

The fact that there is no mention in Paul's account (1 Cor 11:23-26) of this sacrifice being "for the sins of many" causes some commentators to question whether Jesus himself would have used these words.<sup>981</sup> However, it is clear from 1 Cor 15:3 ("that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures") that this phrase and concept are certainly in the tradition Paul had received and, in turn, 'handed on' to his followers. Also, there is mention in the account of the incestuous man (1 Cor 5:1-8) of celebrating the upcoming Passover, "not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness [or sin], but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth [or sinlessness]." As Pascuzzi says, "the evil one's presence is corrupting and compromising the entire community's true character of sinlessness."<sup>982</sup> She continues "Since the community is sinless, it cannot at the same time have sin in its midst."<sup>983</sup> Drawing on Passover imagery, particularly the need to get rid of 'leaven' [1 Cor 5:7] and the idea of being 'redeemed' at a price [1 Cor 6:20; 7:23], Paul insists that "the Messiah's people are required to leave behind the patterns of life belonging to their former slavery."<sup>984</sup> Paul says in 1 Cor 15:3 ("For I handed on to you as of the first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures") and in 1 Cor 5:8 refers to Christ's sacrifice ("For our paschal lamb, Christ, has been sacrificed"). Therefore, Paul believes that Christ's sacrifice, his life-long and life-wide selfless service 'to death,' is in atonement for the sins of many.<sup>985</sup> This is a view that Paul doesn't at any stage question (in this or in any of his other undisputed Letters);<sup>986</sup> in fact, he repeatedly affirms that view: such as Gal 1:3-4 ("Grace and peace

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<sup>981</sup> For example, Lohfink, *No Irrelevant Jesus*, 86-89.

<sup>982</sup> Pascuzzi, *First and Second Corinthians*, 38-39.

<sup>983</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

<sup>984</sup> Wright, *The Day the Revolution Began*, 246.

<sup>985</sup> Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 463: "It is well known that Paul inherited the view that Christ died for trespasses. The general Christian view was presumably that by his death he achieved atonement for the trespasses of others, so that they would not be reckoned to those who accepted his death as being for them. This is a view which Paul repeats without hesitation."

<sup>986</sup> Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 463.

from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself in behalf of our sins”), Gal 2:20 (“I live by faith in the Son of God who has loved me and given himself up for me”), and Rom 5:8 “But God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us”). The Galatian references, written before 1 Corinthians, are of particular importance, because there Paul copper-fastens the connection between humanity’s sin and Christ’s death. In Farmer’s words, Paul “develops this concept of a saviour figure who voluntarily acts sacrificially in behalf of others by identifying this act as one motivated by *agape*.”<sup>987</sup>

Hooker maintains that Paul “may well have been the person” who, reflecting on Isaiah 53, recognised the role of suffering in “effectuating the covenant that God had promised.”<sup>988</sup> Alternatively, he may have received it from the early church tradition. Whichever, this dissertation contends that Paul had understood the *causative* connection between the suffering of Christ and salvation in 1 Cor 11:24-25 (written at least 4-5 years before Romans), where we are told that the New Covenant is caused through (or in) Christ’s giving of his life ‘for you.’<sup>989</sup> In this way, Christ establishes the New Covenant foretold by Jeremiah.

This contention is supported in 1 Cor 15:3-4, 21-22 where Paul argues that ‘death came through a human being,’ namely, Adam (1 Cor 15:21-22), and that ‘all are brought to life in/through Christ’ (1 Cor 15:22), because “Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in

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<sup>987</sup> Farmer, “Reflections on Isaiah 53 and Christian Origins,” 264.

<sup>988</sup> Both quotations are from Hooker, “Did the Use of Isaiah 53 to Interpret His Mission Begin with Jesus,” 102-103. She bases her assertion on Rom 4:25, [Christ] “who was handed over for our transgressions and was raised for our justification.” She finds support for her view in Rom 5:12-21 where Paul emphasises that “it was the *trespass* of Adam which led the many to sin and to die and the grace of God in/through Christ which made them righteous.

<sup>989</sup> “‘In my blood’ has a Semitic ring..... and creates an instrumental or *causal* clause,” see Collins, *First Corinthians*, 433.



accordance with the scriptures” (1 Cor 15:3-4).<sup>990</sup> There are other supporting texts in 1 Corinthians. For example, in 1 Cor 6:14 Paul says that “God raised the Lord and will also raise us by his power,” and in 1 Cor 1:30 where he states that “it was due to him [God] that you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, as well as righteousness, sanctification and redemption.”

It could also be argued that Paul’s awareness of (at least) some elements of that causative relationship of Christ’s suffering and salvation may be apparent in Galatians, written some years before 1 Corinthians.<sup>991</sup> In Gal 1:4 Paul says that Christ “gave himself for our sins that he might rescue us from the present evil age in accord with the will of our God” and “was raised [by God] from the dead” (Gal 1:1): these thoughts are repeated in 1 Cor 15:3-5. In Gal 3:11, attributing salvation to Christ, Paul states that “the one who is made righteous by faith [in Christ] will live [eternally].” Gal 3:26 assures all believers that “through faith you are all children of God” and Gal 4:6 says that “as proof that you are children of God he has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying out: Abba, Father.” Finally, in Gal 6:15 Paul says that believers are “a new creation.” It is also the contention of this dissertation that Paul received the above-mentioned teachings from the early church traditions and handed them on to the Corinthian church “employing the technical terms (‘received’ and ‘handed on’) used in Jewish culture for the transmission of important traditions.”<sup>992</sup> Thiselton asserts that “it is precisely the death of Christ, the ‘New Covenant in my blood,’ which establishes the

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<sup>990</sup> Kasemann, “The Pauline Doctrine of the Last Supper,” 130. “Jesus [is] given over to death for us and the new *diatheke* is founded on this death;” see also Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 885.

<sup>991</sup> Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 1196; Collins, *First and Second Corinthians*, 534. There is some debate as to whether “in accordance with the scriptures” (1 Cor 15:3-5) refers to Isaiah 53 (as Collins, 534, would hold) or to God’s general Old Testament of promise and graciousness (as in Thiselton, 1196).

<sup>992</sup> Pascuzzi, *First and Second Corinthians*, 67. Farmer, in Bellinger and Farmer, *Jesus and the Suffering Servant*, 260-280, suggests that Jesus himself was the first person to make the causal relationship between his suffering and the establishment of the New Covenant.

assurance of redemption.”<sup>993</sup> In this reading, Paul links the New Covenant foretold by Jeremiah to the suffering of Christ, that is, the blood of Christ.

One may suggest that there are a number in Intertexture allusions in 1 Corinthians to the Book of Jubilees. Though it is here analysed primarily from a cultural Intertexture perspective, it also has oral-scribal, social and historical features. That Paul may have been referring to Jubilees in 1 Cor 11:17-34 is not unusual. Collins notes five allusions to Jubilees in 1 Corinthians, while Thiselton suggests as many as fifteen allusions to Jubilees in 1 Corinthians.<sup>994</sup> The Book of Jubilees, according to Sanders, was quite popular in Paul’s time.<sup>995</sup> Also, there is significant thematic coherence in language (e.g. cultic ‘remembrance’ as in Jub 49:2) and in approach to unworthy celebrants as in Jub 49:15. Of particular note is the fact that the author of Jubilees views the Passover as a celebration commanded by the Lord (Jub 49:15), and is to be celebrated each year (Jub 49:15). It is seen as a feast of cultic reminiscence: in Jub 49:2, referring to the original Passover night in Egypt, the author says: “on this night ... *you* were eating the Passover in Egypt”; and Jub 49:15 reassures the Israelites that if they keep this feast worthily then “no plague shall come upon them or slay them in that year.” Both Collins and Thiselton find allusions to Jubilees 49 in 1 Cor 11:17-34.<sup>996</sup> In 1 Cor 11: 29-34 Paul refers to Jubilees 49:15 and mentions that the Corinthians of his time were not keeping the feast as commanded, therefore, “many among you are ill and infirm, and a considerable number are dying” (1 Cor 11: 30f.). Lastly, it is worth noting that Paul’s repetition of the *anamnesis* formula (“Do this in

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<sup>993</sup> Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 885.

<sup>994</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 671; Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 1429.

<sup>995</sup> Gabrielle Boccaccino, *Beyond the Essene Hypothesis* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 86f. It dates Jubilees as before 100 B.C.E. and E. P. Sanders vouches for the popularity of the book in Paul’s time, see *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 362f.

<sup>996</sup> Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 873 footnote 112, mentions a reference in Hofius, “The Lord’s Supper and the Lord’s Supper Tradition,” in *One Loaf, One Cup*, ed. Ben Meyer (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1993), 104. Collins, *First Corinthians*, 428 mentions the Passover event as a ‘reminiscence’ event and references Jubilees 49:7-23.

remembrance of me” in 1 Cor 11: 24, 25) is yet another reference to Jubilees 49:1 (“Remember the commandment which the Lord commanded you concerning the Passover that you should celebrate it at its time”) and 49:7 (“Remember to observe it [Passover] ... all the days of your life, once a year on its day”). The fact that the ‘remembrance’ is found within the traditional formula is an indication that it is *not* an addition made by Paul rather it is part of the ‘received tradition.’ Evidently, Paul uses the Jubilees allusion to give added authority to the Lord’s remembrance command. The Lord’s Supper, for Paul, is a cultic celebration of remembrance, similar to that detailed in Jubilees 49, in which Christ, through his suffering and death on the cross, gives the ultimate demonstration of the New Covenant and saves creation.

Most commentators recognise clear Intertexture allusions to Isaiah 52:13—53:12 in 1 Cor 11:23-26 (and also in 1 Cor 1:30; 5:7-8; 11:23-26 and 15:3-5).<sup>997</sup> A comparative study shows several similarities between Isaiah 53 and 1 Corinthians, particularly similarities in language and thought.<sup>998</sup> For example, ‘handed over’ is to be found in Isa 53:6 and in 1 Cor 5:7-8; 11:23(x2);13:3, 15:3; ‘remembrance’ is mentioned in Isa 26:14; 43:26 and 1 Cor 11:24,25; ‘covenant’ is found on twelve separate occasions in Isaiah, and in 1 Cor 11:25. The thematic similarities are clear and numerous, especially between Isaiah 53 and 1 Corinthians 11. Taken together, these similarities relay a ‘salvation narrative’ that may be outlined as follows: the ‘Servant’/‘servant’ was innocent or guiltless (Isa 53:9; 1 Cor 4:1-5), he took on suffering for others (Isa 53:4-6, 8, 10; 1 Cor 11:24; 15:3), he was faithful to his calling even to death (Isa 53:8-9; 1 Cor 5:7-8), and his atoning death ‘saves’ or makes others ‘whole’ (Isa 53:5; 1 Cor 1:30 and 15:3). Renewed, re-created, the post-exilic

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<sup>997</sup> For example, Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 724, sees in 1 Cor 15:3-5 a reference to Isaiah 53:5-6, 11-12 as does Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 1190-91.

<sup>998</sup> The customary practice of referring to Isaiah 52:13—53:12 as Isaiah 53 or Isa 53 will be followed here also.

community ‘accepts all, Gentile or Jew, who keep his Sabbath’ and ‘cling to his covenant (Isa 53:6-7; 1 Cor 1:24),’ and Judah’s future prosperity depends not on reviving sacrifices at the Temple but on sharing bread with ‘the hungry, clothing the naked, and sheltering the homeless poor’ (Isa 57:7-8). In this way, the restored community will become a ‘light to the nations,’ a beacon of social and economic justice that his predecessors foretold (Isa 58:10; 60:1-3; 1 Cor 8:5-13; 10:24; 11:17-22; 11:23-26; 11:27-32; 15:58; 16:14) ... and ‘Judah will then become a veritable Eden in which God could dwell (Isa 58:11-14; 1 Cor 15:28).’<sup>999</sup> This is why Paul is particularly concerned about the Corinthian church members’ behaviour at the Lord’s Supper, because it is *not* a beacon of social and economic justice. Sadly, it is contradicting this axiom and, therefore, deserves Paul’s condemnation (1 Cor 11:17, 22). The above interpretation, focused as it is on the vicarious suffering of the innocent Christ in order to bring salvation to believers (as detailed in 1 Cor 11:24-25), is strengthened by the re-appearance of those same words, themes and storylines in Paul’s later Letter to the Romans (4:25f), where commentators also recognise allusions to Isaiah 53.<sup>1000</sup> These similarities are further strengthened by the Adam–Christ contrast in both 1 Cor 15:20-22 and Rom 4:25.

Moreover, the language and thematic similarities are convincing. The similarities between Isaiah, 1 Corinthians and Romans are so clear, frequent and apposite (Collins and Thiselton, for example, itemise fifty to sixty references to Isaiah in 1 Corinthians),<sup>1001</sup> that it is, at least, tenable that Paul had Isaiah (and especially Isa

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<sup>999</sup> Harris, *Understanding the Bible*, 220-24.

<sup>1000</sup> Hooker, “Did the Use of Isaiah 53 to Interpret His Mission Begin with Jesus” 102-03.

<sup>1001</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 622-623; Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 1399.

53) in mind as he wrote 1 Corinthians and Romans. Hooker says that Paul used Isa 53 “to interpret Jesus’ mission.”<sup>1002</sup> One might add, ‘and his own mission too.’

Another important and relevant theme running through Isaiah and 1 Corinthians is the contrast between humiliation and exaltation. Paul, in 1 Cor 1:18-25 and 26-31, outlines Christ’s humiliating death on the cross (1 Cor 1:23) and his exaltation at the right hand of God (1 Cor 8:6 and 15:22-28). Brueggemann says that “the humiliated one becomes the exalted one by the intention of Yahweh.”<sup>1003</sup> This is a “radical, powerful, inscrutable resolve of God to do something new through suffering.”<sup>1004</sup> Brueggemann believes that “Newness through suffering is the gospel that attests to the power of God at work through human weakness to bring to fruition God’s intention for the world.”<sup>1005</sup> Brueggemann is speaking of the Book of Isaiah; however, his words apply equally well to 1 Corinthians as this humiliation—exaltation theme is a recurring theme there also. Before writing 1 Corinthians, Paul had dealt with this theme (humiliation—exaltation) in Gal 3:13-14; 4:4. One finds the same theme in 1 Cor 1:18-25; 2:6-10, and in the traditional confession recorded in 15:3-5. Exaltation in humiliation, or renewal through suffering, is an important theme for Paul.<sup>1006</sup>

In summary, Paul’s recounting of the Last Supper clarifies his acceptance of it as historical fact (historical Intertexture, 4 above). The oral-scribal Intertexture (1 above) allusion to Jeremiah 31:31-34 is important because it establishes the Lord’s Supper as being ritually symbolic of Jeremiah’s prophecy and it stresses fidelity to God’s covenant. Paul’s account of the Lord’s Supper is authoritative because it was

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<sup>1002</sup> Hooker, “Did the Use of Isaiah 53 to Interpret His Mission Begin with Jesus,” 103. These similarities between 1 Corinthians are from First, Second and Third Isaiah and are both linguistic and thematic. The similarities between Isaiah 53 and 1 Corinthians are the work of this dissertation; those between Isaiah 53 and Romans 4:25 are the work of Morna D. Hooker, “Did the Use of Isaiah 53 to Interpret His Mission Begin with Jesus.”

<sup>1003</sup> Brueggemann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 142.

<sup>1004</sup> *Ibid.*, 143.

<sup>1005</sup> *Ibid.*, 142.

<sup>1006</sup> Humiliation and exaltation are also central themes in Philippians 2:5-11.

‘handed down to him from the Lord’ as in 1 Cor 11:23: an example of cultural and historical Intertexture (2 and 4 above). Paul’s received tradition states that Christ’s death (‘his blood’) establishes the New Covenant (1 Cor 11:25), that Christ’s giving of his life was ‘for you’ (1 Cor 11:24): it was both voluntary and vicarious. Christ’s suffering, his giving of his life for others, effected the New Covenant. These points are multiply attested in Galatians (which was written before 1 Corinthians), in 1 Corinthians, and in Romans and Philippians (written after 1 Corinthians).<sup>1007</sup> The reference to Jubilees 49:2-15 identifies the Jewish Passover meal as a feast of cultic remembrance into which Jews enter and in which they participate. Similarly, Paul is identifying the Lord’s Supper as a feast of cultic remembrance into which the Christian enters and in which he/she participates. The many references to Isaiah, especially the similarities of language, themes and storyline, express and confirm the ‘renewal through human weakness and suffering’ themes.<sup>1008</sup> Paul’s numerous references to Isaiah show its importance to him in understanding Christ’s mission and his own mission in life.<sup>1009</sup>

### 6.3.5 Sacred Texture

Sacred Texture focuses on the way in which a particular text expresses insights into the nature of God, and the God-human relationship.<sup>1010</sup>

In 1 Cor 11:17-34 these sub-textures emerge in Paul’s discussion of the covenant relationship between God and humanity. Paul sees God’s plan for creation work itself out through a complicated but ever-ongoing process that moves slowly

<sup>1007</sup> There is further attestation for this argument in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, in the Acts of the Apostles, the Pastoral Epistles 1 Timothy and Titus, in 1 Peter and in Hebrews as mentioned in Farmer, “Reflections on Isaiah 53 and Christian Origins,” 260-80.

<sup>1008</sup> Many of these similarities in language, themes and storyline are to be found in Pss 2, 8, 108 and 110, which are also alluded to often in 1 Corinthians.

<sup>1009</sup> Paul D. Hanson, *Isaiah 40–66* (Louisville: John Knox, 1995), 155.

<sup>1010</sup> See *Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation: Dictionary of Socio-Rhetorical Terms*, [www.religion.emory.edu/faculty/robbins/SRI/defns/s\\_defns.cfm](http://www.religion.emory.edu/faculty/robbins/SRI/defns/s_defns.cfm), accessed on 27-10-2016. This texture includes aspects or sub-textures concerning (1) deity, (2) holy persons, (3) spirit beings, (4) divine history, (5) human redemption, (6) human commitment, (7) religious community, and (8) ethics

towards God's goals.<sup>1011</sup> In 1 Corinthians Paul's over-riding concern is about the commitment, or lack of commitment, of the church members to their new-found relationship with God. In this investigation the divine history and human commitment sub-textures will receive special consideration.

As regards the divine history sub-texture, from time immemorial God, "who is faithful" (1 Cor 1:9), enters into a gifted, covenanted relationship with humanity, a central theme in 1 Corinthians. It is first mentioned in 1 Cor 1:9-10, the Letter's programmatic statement, where Paul states that God's people were "called to fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord." Having called them, he "enriched them in every way" (1 Cor 1:5). However, Adam's (and humanity's) disobedience introduced sin and sinfulness into the world (1 Cor 15:21). Over the centuries, God sought reconciliation in his covenantal relationship with his Chosen People (for example, through Abraham, Moses and the Prophets). Though they reneged on their agreement time and time again (1 Cor 10:1-13), God never withdrew the offered gift.

In 1 Cor 11:23-26 Paul gives an account of the Last Supper and the ultimate demonstration of New Covenant love through Christ's death.<sup>1012</sup> In 1 Cor 11:25 Paul quotes Jesus as saying: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood." According to Paul, this indicates that Jesus considered his life and death, symbolically represented in his blood, to be the establishment of the Jeremiah-promised New Covenant. Jesus' statement in 1 Cor 11:24 indicates that his vicarious offering was for "you," namely for the people of the New Covenant (including those with him at the Last Supper).<sup>1013</sup> In 1 Cor 11:25 Paul calls it "the New Covenant in my blood," alluding to the 'blood of the

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<sup>1011</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 123-124.

<sup>1012</sup> Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 208-31; Gorman, *The Death of the Messiah and the Birth of the New Covenant*, 51-68.

<sup>1013</sup> Gorman, *The Death of the Messiah and the Birth of the New Covenant*, 53: "Paul's fundamental claim in 1 Cor 11:23-25 is that Jesus himself interpreted his own death as the inauguration of the New Covenant. His death and his interpretation of his death, mean that the Corinthians – and all those in Christ – are part of the community of the New Covenant."

covenant' ceremony of Exodus 24 which "united the partners in one relationship, so the blood of Jesus is now the bond of union between the covenant parties,"<sup>1014</sup> namely, God and his people. Thereby, God, "who is faithful" (1 Cor 1:9), has re-entered into a gifted, covenanted relationship with humanity with the expectation that the faithfulness would be reciprocated.

Regarding the commitment of believers to live out their new relationship with God, Paul is distressed by the Corinthian church members' display of selfish disunity (1 Cor 17-22, 27-34) especially at the Lord's Supper. In 1 Cor 11:17-22 he is remonstrating with the Corinthian church members because they are behaving in a selfish, self-aggrandising manner and ignoring the needs of other church members: "One goes hungry while another gets drunk" (1 Cor 21). Such divisive behaviour is destroying the unity of the church which is the central theme of 1 Corinthians as expressed in 1 Cor 1:9-10, the Letter's programmatic statement. Paul feels forced to say, therefore, that they are not celebrating the Lord's Supper (1 Cor 11:17, 20).

Continuing his remonstrations with the church members in 1 Cor 11:29 Paul warns that "everyone who eats and drinks [the Lord's Supper] without discerning the body, eats and drinks judgement on himself" (1 Cor 11:29). In the understanding of most commentators when Paul is here speaking of the "body [of Christ]," he is speaking of the relationship of the misbehaving members with Christ but also with their poorer fellow-members.<sup>1015</sup> It should be noted that Paul has already mentioned this theme in 1 Cor 6:15 ("Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ?") and in 1 Cor 10:17 ("because the loaf of bread is one, we, though many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf"). Commentators interpret this mention of the 'body of Christ' as stating that participating in the Lord's Supper is "an actual sharing in the blood and

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<sup>1014</sup> McKenzie, *Dictionary of the Bible*, 156.

<sup>1015</sup> Murphy-O'Connor, "The First Letter to the Corinthians," 810.



body of Christ, which effects a solidarity or bonding among believers and with Christ.”<sup>1016</sup> Conversely, Paul says in 1 Cor 12:26 that “if one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honoured, all rejoice with it.” As Dunn says, that also “means the responsibility of the one for the whole and of the whole for the individual,” even if that involves a readiness to restrain oneself for the good of the whole body.<sup>1017</sup>

Critically, this mention of the church members as forming the ‘body of Christ’ receives its strongest clarification in 1 Cor 12:12-26. “For Paul, the body of believers is Christ, or the [risen] body of Christ..... Believers are bound in a living unity with the risen Lord,” which is effected by the Spirit at baptism.<sup>1018</sup> This unity in Christ is also discussed in 1 Cor 6:15-17 as ontological, Spiritual, spousal and participatory.<sup>1019</sup>

Briefly, one can say that “fundamental to Paul’s concept of the body of Christ [is] both the diversity of its members and their mutual interdependence upon each other.”<sup>1020</sup> It is because the church members are not acting in a “mutually interdependent” manner when celebrating the Lord’s Supper (1 Cor 11: 17-34), when they are remembering Christ’s life given “for you” (1 Cor 11:24) that Paul is so condemnatory towards them (1 Cor 11:17, 22).

Being a participant in the covenant prompts the question as to whether the believer is a passive or an active participant in the New Covenant. This question has been debated frequently over the last century with eminent scholars positioning themselves on both sides.<sup>1021</sup> However, it is fair to say that recently the balance is turning in favour of those who maintain that Paul (across his undisputed *corpus*) is

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<sup>1016</sup> Pascuzzi, *First and Second Corinthians*, 60.

<sup>1017</sup> Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 659-660.

<sup>1018</sup> Pascuzzi, *First and Second Corinthians*, 73-74.

<sup>1019</sup> This last sentence is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5 of this dissertation.

<sup>1020</sup> Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 659.

<sup>1021</sup> Reginald St. John Parry, *The First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, CGTC (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1916), 143 argues for the ‘beneficiaries only’ position. Morna D. Hooker, “A Partner in the Gospel: Paul’s Understanding of His Ministry,” in *Theology and Ethics in Paul and his Interpreters*, ed. Eugene H. Lovering and Jerry L Sumney (Nashville: Abingdon, 1996), 83-100, maintains that believers are beneficiaries and participants/partners in saving.

promoting an active-participation perspective. Robert Lewis Plummer is one proponent of this approach.<sup>1022</sup> In 1 Corinthians he bases his ‘active-participant’ argument on his interpretation of the following texts: 1 Cor 4:14-18; 7:12-16; 9:12; 10:23—11:1; 14:23-25.

In 1 Cor 4:14-18 Paul urges his followers to “be imitators of me” (1 Cor 4:16). The context is important because in that unit (1 Cor 1:10—4:13) Paul is, on the one hand, criticising the Corinthian church members for their “undue adulation” of the triumphalism of the “worldly wise” and, on the other hand, appealing to them to follow his own example of promoting the gospel even though it will mean accepting “worldly disapproval and suffering.”<sup>1023</sup> Here and elsewhere in 1 Corinthians (1 Cor 1:18; 4:8-13; 16:8-9) “opposition and suffering are almost always related to the proclamation of the gospel.”<sup>1024</sup>

1 Cor 7:12-16 offers “corroborating evidence that Paul expected his followers to imitate him through missionary activity.”<sup>1025</sup> There he assumes the believing spouse’s active concern for their partner’s salvation. He “mentions the possibility of an already desired outcome (i.e. the salvation of the non-believing spouse) to encourage the Christian towards peaceful and self-sacrificial behaviour.”<sup>1026</sup> It is important to note that in 1 Cor 7:16 Paul twice refers to ‘saving’ another: “For how do you know, wife, whether you will *save* your husband; or how do you know, husband, whether you will *save* your wife?”

Another example of the Corinthian church members’ concern for the salvation of “uninstructed people or unbelievers” is given in 1 Cor 14:23-25. Here Paul is

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<sup>1022</sup> Of necessity this dissertation confines itself to Paul’s view as expressed in 1 Corinthians (and those Letters written before 1 Corinthians).

<sup>1023</sup> Robert Lewis Plummer, *Paul’s Understanding of the Church’s Mission* (Eugene OR: Wipf and Stock, 2006), 231.

<sup>1024</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1025</sup> Ibid., 232.

<sup>1026</sup> Ibid.

appealing to the church members to “build up” the church through their communication within the church meeting so that it would be intelligible to visiting non-believers. So, the building up of the church “obviously includes not only the edification of current believers, but the addition of new members (1 Cor 8:1; 10:23-24, 31-33; 14:23-25).”<sup>1027</sup>

Plummer goes on to say that

Paul and Apollos are no longer the only ones building the Corinthian church (1 Cor 3:9-17); they serve as an example of the proper attitude which the now numerous builders should have among themselves (1 Cor 4:6; 14:1-26).<sup>1028</sup>

However, two *lacunae* in Plummer’s approach must be mentioned, namely, his omission of 1 Cor 9:19-27 and 12:1-31: including them would have strengthened his case significantly for promoting an active-participation perspective. In his interpretation of 1 Cor 9:12, Plummer does see “the relationship between the apostle’s exemplary evangelistic self-denial and the nature of the gospel.”<sup>1029</sup> However, he doesn’t comment on Paul’s stated self-denial in 1 Cor 9:19-27 (that relationship was the focus of Chapter 4 of this dissertation). There Paul explains that “concern for others trumps knowledge as a criterion for action,”<sup>1030</sup> specifically action focused on saving others. He proceeds in 1 Cor 9:19-27 to give a practical and personal example of his missional intentionality in his efforts and suffering in ‘saving’ Jews, Gentiles, the weak, all. His missional intentionality requires training and suffering as real as that required of boxers and athletes participating in the Isthmian Games (see 1 Cor 9:24-27). Then, having summarised his argument in 1 Cor 10:23—11:1, he appeals to the church members to follow his example as he is following Christ’s example (1 Cor 11:1).<sup>1031</sup>

Furthermore, in 1 Cor 12:7 Paul emphasises that all believers are gifted by the Spirit for their missionary lives. He itemises several “gifts of the Spirit” in 1 Cor 12:4,

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<sup>1027</sup> Plummer, *Paul’s Understanding of the Church’s Mission*, 233.

<sup>1028</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1029</sup> Ibid., 230.

<sup>1030</sup> Pascuzzi, *First and Second Corinthians*, 53.

<sup>1031</sup> This pericope is studied in detail in Chapter 4 of this dissertation.

for example, wisdom, healing, prophecy, mighty deeds, interpretation (1 Cor 12:8-11) and he emphasises that everyone receives gifts of the Spirit (1 Cor 12:7).<sup>1032</sup> These are all “different forms of service” (1 Cor 12:5) or “different workings/activities” (1 Cor 12:6) and are focused on the Lord and the church, specifically on building up the church (or the Body of Christ), both internally and externally (1 Cor 12:7; 14:12).<sup>1033</sup> He proceeds to appeal to the church members to seek the “more excellent way” (1 Cor 12:31b), the way of love (1 Cor 13:1-13), without which all the other gifts are just “noise” (1 Cor 13:1). If, in Paul’s view, they “seek to do all in love” (1 Cor 16:14) they will certainly be “building up the church” (1 Cor 14:12, 26). The context is quite clear that Paul is speaking of building the church both internally and externally, even through suffering (1 Cor 14:16, 22).

Paul explains this duty of the believer again in 1 Cor 10:33: “Just as I try to please everyone in every way, not seeking my own benefit but that of the many, that they may be saved.” Commenting on 1 Cor 10:33, Jerome Murphy-O’Connor assumes that the Corinthian church members are on “active mission.”<sup>1034</sup> He states that it is not enough that the Corinthian church members avoid creating stumbling-blocks, “they must positively empower the conversion of Jews and Gentiles and the continuing growth of their fellow Christians.”<sup>1035</sup> As such, they actively participate in the New Covenant.

As stated in earlier sections, in 1 Cor 11:23-26 Paul recounts the tradition he has received from the Lord. This tradition details Christ’s self-sacrificial giving of his life

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<sup>1032</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 453; Fee, *First Corinthians*, 589.

<sup>1033</sup> Collins *First Corinthians*, 452.

<sup>1034</sup> Jerome Murphy-O’Connor, *Keys to First Corinthians: Revisiting the Major Issues* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 573.

<sup>1035</sup> *Ibid.* Also, Gorman, *The Death of the Messiah and the Birth of the New Covenant*, 75, succinctly summarises this aspect: “Christ’s death effected the New Covenant, meaning specifically the creation of a covenant community of forgiven and reconciled disciples, inhabited and empowered by the Spirit to embody a new-covenant spirituality of cruciform loyalty to God and love for others, thereby peaceably participating in the life of God and in God’s forgiving, reconciling, and covenanting mission to the world.”

“for you” (1 Cor 11:24) and this self-sacrificial giving of his life is the ultimate demonstration of the New Covenant promised by Jeremiah 31:31-34, thus beginning humanity’s re-creation. Paul explains the manner in which this re-creation takes place and its consequences in greater detail in 1 Cor 15. Many commentators agree that 1 Cor 11 and 15 are underpinned by Genesis 1—3; Psalm 8; and Psalm 110.<sup>1036</sup> Two themes that appear in these texts are the ‘image of God’ and ‘dominion’ (particularly that humans’ share in God’s dominion over creation).<sup>1037</sup> Paul Sands, in a closely argued monograph, states that “humans were created in the image of God so that they might exert dominion over creation,”<sup>1038</sup> as commissioned in Genesis 1:28. Wolfhart Pannenberg adds that “Christ ‘imaged’ God in that he fulfilled his God-given, [human] commission of dominion,”<sup>1039</sup> that is, in so far as he mediated the presence, power and rule of God. In the view of many commentators, the second theme, that of ‘royal’ power exercised by humans, is also evident in Genesis 1—3; Psalm 8, Psalm 110 and 1 Cor 4 and 15, and it overlaps with the functionalist or vocation-related ‘image of God’ theme.<sup>1040</sup> Human beings ‘image’ God as they work to complete their royal vocation of mediating God’s presence, rule and power on earth: as they work to fulfil their God-given commission to become more Christ-like (see 1 Cor 15:45-49) and to save a scarred and dysfunctional creation.<sup>1041</sup> Paul invites his followers to proclaim the death of the Lord “until he comes” (1 Cor 11:26). In so doing, Paul is acknowledging the traditional connection between “the Eucharistic cup and the eschatological banquet” that

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<sup>1036</sup> For example, Wright, *Paul: Fresh Perspectives*, 28-29; Lita Cosner, “Christ as the last Adam: Paul’s use of the Creation narrative in 1 Corinthians 15,” *Journal of Creation* 23 (2009), 70-75.

<sup>1037</sup> Both Collins (*First Corinthians*) and Thiselton (*First Corinthians*) find at least one hundred references to Genesis in 1 Corinthians. They also find approximately ten references to Psalm 8 in 1 Corinthians.

<sup>1038</sup> Paul Sands, “Imago Dei,” 28-41.

<sup>1039</sup> Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, vol 2 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 210.

<sup>1040</sup> Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, 210. Otto Weber maintains that the ‘image of God’ symbolism “correlates well with the ‘royal-functional’ view .... favoured by most Old Testament scholars.” Otto Weber, *Foundations of Dogmatics*, Vol 1, trans. by Darrell L. Guder (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1981), 560.

<sup>1041</sup> See also, Wright, *Paul: Fresh Perspectives*, 28-29.

is also mentioned in Mt 26:29 and Mk 14:25.<sup>1042</sup> He is also repeating to the Corinthians that the end has not yet come, thus countering their mistaken idea that the *eschaton* has already come (expressed also in 1 Cor 4:6-8). So, as Christians still “being saved” (1 Cor 1:18), worthy celebration of the Lord’s Supper must show in their daily proclamation of Christ’s gospel, namely, by lives of selfless, sacrificial service of one another. This proclamation of Christ’s gospel in their lives would be salvific for self and others and would be a foretaste of the heavenly banquet. Through Christ’s sacrificial service the New Covenant is established, and, through the suffering of Paul and of Christ’s other followers, the New Covenant will be brought to its eternal fulfilment or completion.<sup>1043</sup>

Paul believes that he and his followers have been gifted salvation by God through Christ and are now expected to live out this saved status or salvific being in their everyday lives. His union with Christ is so intimate, ontological, nuptial, and Spiritual that he could say that he has been crucified with Christ (Gal 2:19-20 and Gal 6:14-18) and that he is depicting “the suffering Christ in his own life and person.”<sup>1044</sup> He asks his followers to imitate his example (1 Cor 4:16; 11:1). It is important to note that it is not merely conformity with Christ’s death and resurrection: it is conformity to Christ (that is, to his life, mission, suffering, death, resurrection, and exaltation). Through participation in the Lord’s Supper, discerned worthily, Paul and his Corinthian followers enter into the Christ-event as active participants (as through worthy participation in the Passover the Jew entered into the saving event of the Exodus). This

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<sup>1042</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 434.

<sup>1043</sup> Mortell, *The New Passover*, 52. Collins, *First Corinthians*, 427 says: “This interpretative word over the cup suggests that the supper is to be remembered as a covenantal meal, one that joins people together and links them with their God. Calling the covenant the ‘new’ covenant (Jer 31:31) Jesus identifies the covenant of which he speaks as the eschatological covenant (1 Cor 11:26). With this designation the meal and Jesus’ death are given ultimate, eschatological significance.” See also Mortell, *The New Passover*, 53.

<sup>1044</sup> Witherington, *Grace in Galatia*, 190.

means that those who are ‘in Christ’ participate in Christ’s and God’s mission of reconciliation and re-creation of creation; this was detailed in Galatians and is now repeated in 1 Corinthians. Many commentators see that

*anamnesis* is a purposeful activity. It is effective not just in establishing bonds of identity and community, but also in forming a community equipped by the Spirit to engage in loving service and missionary activity.<sup>1045</sup>

The World Council of Churches’ *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* report declares that the Holy Spirit is the “immeasurable strength of love which makes it [the Eucharist] possible and continues to make it effective,” to sanctify and renew the Church, to lead it “into all justice, truth and unity,” and “to empower it to fulfil its mission in the world.”<sup>1046</sup> Later in the same document, it states that “all kinds of injustice, racism, separation and lack of freedom are radically challenged when we share in the body and blood of Christ.”<sup>1047</sup> In Paul’s own words “anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body, eats and drinks judgement on himself” (1 Cor 11:29). In other words, as participants in the Eucharist “we prove inconsistent if we are not actively participating in this ongoing restoration or reconciliation of the world.”<sup>1048</sup>

This re-creation is being brought about by God (“God gives the growth” in 1 Cor 3:6, 7) working through the selfless, sacrificial, Christ-embodying lives of Paul and his converts. Paul certainly saw himself as living with and in Christ’s life, as entering into and living Christ’s mission, as entering into Christ’s saving actions through obeying the Lord’s command to “do this in remembrance of me” (1 Cor 11:24, 25). Furthermore, in Paul’s view, living a life of selfless, other-centred, loving service was in accordance with humanity’s God-given nature.<sup>1049</sup>

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<sup>1045</sup> Gittoes, *Anamnesis and the Eucharist*, 24.

<sup>1046</sup> WCC, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, paragraph 17.

<sup>1047</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1048</sup> *Ibid.*, paragraph 20.

<sup>1049</sup> This anthropological understanding was innovative in its time.

In summary, in making this presentation (1 Cor 11:17-34) Paul is laying his foundation on the oral-scribal sub-texture references, he is developing his argument based on these references, he is rejecting the selfish and divisive practices of his time (social and cultural sub-textures), he is applying the Last Supper's historical intertexture reference as a reminder of Christ's selfless and uniting service, and he is concluding his thesis appealing to the church members to follow Christ's example.

Time and time again in 1 Corinthians Paul is stressing that God seeks a relationship with his people. Christ came on earth to re-establish the New Covenant (as foretold in Jeremiah 31:31-34), to reveal God's plan for humanity, and to show them how to live out their gifted, covenanted relationship with God. As Paul says in 1 Cor 11:25, it was the New Covenant "in his blood," which alludes to the 'blood of the covenant' ceremony of Exod 24 that "united the partners in one relationship, so the blood of Jesus is now the bond of union between the covenanting partners."<sup>1050</sup> What upset Paul was that his understanding of the church or the 'body of Christ' as diverse in its membership and as mutually interdependent on each other was being denied.<sup>1051</sup> It was because the church members were not acting in a "mutually interdependent" manner when celebrating the Lord's Supper (1 Cor 11: 17-34), when they were remembering Christ's life given "for you" (1 Cor 11:24) that Paul was so condemnatory towards them (1 Cor 11:17, 22).

Paul places significant emphasis on the ethics sub-texture. Numerous 1 Corinthian texts indicate that he expected believers to participate in the re-creation of creation (e.g. 1 Cor 4:14-18; 7:12-16; 9:19-27; 10:23—11:1; 12:1-31; 14:23-25). Re-created 'in Christ,' humanity's task is to mediate the presence, power and rule of God on earth through an ever-increasing conformity to Christ in one's life, mission,

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<sup>1050</sup> McKenzie, *Dictionary of the Bible*, 156.

<sup>1051</sup> Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 659.



suffering, death, resurrection, and exaltation. This was certainly not being evidenced in the Corinthians' divisive supper practices (see 1 Cor 11:17-22). Paul responds by claiming that through proper participation in the Eucharistic remembrance of 1 Cor 11:24-25, it is possible for the believer to enter Christ's saving act. Moreover, since humanity has been re-created "in the image of the heavenly One" (1 Cor 15:49), each Christian is being invited to be a partner and to actively participate in this re-creation, to exercise God's dominion over creation, to mediate God's presence in the world.

#### **6.4 Rhetorolect Analysis of 1 Cor 11:17-34**

The Apocalyptic Rhetorolect is very evident in this pericope. This rhetorolect highlights the following themes: God is never indifferent to his creation, he intervenes at important moments, he rejects evil in all its forms, and he will deliver creation from the powers of evil. The Apocalyptic Rhetorolect also appeals for trust in God, devotion to God's kingdom, and for his followers to be on the side of the just rather than the wicked. The resurrection, the Last Judgement/Day, heaven and hell, and the conviction that God will be faithful to his covenantal promises are all apocalyptic themes.<sup>1052</sup>

There is a sense of urgency throughout this pericope (1 Cor 11:17-34). In Paul's view the self-centred attitude of (at least) some Corinthian church members is catastrophic for them and for the church in general (1 Cor 11:17, 29; 5:1-8). It draws suffering on the perpetrators and the risk of eternal damnation (1 Cor 27-34). Therefore, he must treat the problem and the underlying theological misunderstandings *now*. There is no time to wait or waste. The Lord's Supper has become a "showcase for the factions within the church community."<sup>1053</sup> Judgement Day is drawing near so

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<sup>1052</sup> Boadt, *Reading the Old Testament*, 515.

<sup>1053</sup> Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 263.

the difficulties must be sorted now. Other problems can wait, but not this one (1 Cor 11:34).

Throughout 1 Corinthians Paul is concerned about the unity of the church: the programmatic statement in 1 Cor 1:9 sets the tone for the entire letter. 1 Cor 11:17-34 is also focused on the unity of the church members at Corinth, or rather, on the disunity. Their disunity is apparent in their attitude to each other, especially towards the ‘have-nots’ (1 Cor 11:17-22; 32-34). They have come together to remember Christ’s life of sacrificial service for others – and some are selfishly getting drunk while others go hungry (1 Cor 11:21). Their misbehaviour is contradicting the very purpose of the Lord’s Supper, the sacrament of unity and equality. This misbehaviour can only bring Paul’s condemnation (1 Cor 11:17, 22) and risks eternal damnation (1 Cor 11:30-34).

Paul continues the apocalyptic tone in 1 Cor 11:26 when he says, “For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes again.”

Thiselton notes that the grammar, syntax, and word order put the emphasis on “the death of the Lord **that you are proclaiming.**”<sup>1054</sup> He is adamant that the verb ‘proclaiming’ here has the meaning of ‘speaking or preaching publicly.’ In participating in the Lord’s Supper “the whole assembled congregation stands in the witness box and pulpit to proclaim their ‘part’” as involved participants.<sup>1055</sup> They are identifying with Christ “as the One ‘for others’ and a lifestyle that reflects this identification.”<sup>1056</sup>

The words “until he comes again” (1 Cor 11:26) are also a reminder to his followers that Christ will come again on Judgement Day. This judgement motif is evidenced throughout 1 Cor 11:17-34, but is especially evident in 1 Cor 11:27-34 where

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<sup>1054</sup> Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 886-887. Bold in the original.

<sup>1055</sup> *Ibid.*, 887.

<sup>1056</sup> *Ibid.*, 886.

Paul warns his followers that unworthy celebration of the Lord's Supper would bring condemnation: it is already bringing condemnation, that is suffering, infirmity and death, as Paul outlines in 1 Cor 11:30. This judgement—condemnation theme is strengthened in 1 Cor 11:27-34 as it contains many examples of judgement language, for example, “unworthily” (v.27), “answerable” (v.27), “scrutinise” (v.28), “judgement” (vs.29, 34), “judge” (vs. 29, 31x2), “chastise” (v.32), and “condemn” (v.32). Most of those words are derived from the root word κρινω (to judge), indicating the use of paronomasia (the repetition of the same word root in nearby verses). With the use of these words, the main thrust of the pericope is towards Judgement Day and the church member's need to discern or judge oneself regularly in order to avoid bringing judgement on one's head: “For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body, eats and drinks judgement on himself” (1 Cor 11:29). For Paul, some have brought judgement and punishment on themselves already: “That is why many among you are ill and infirm, and a considerable number are dying” (1 Cor 11:30). They failed to ‘discern the body’ (1 Cor 11:29) that is, they failed to consider others.<sup>1057</sup> They acted selfishly as mentioned in 1 Cor 11:17-22, failing to recognise Christ's sacrificial and suffering life “for you” (1 Cor 11:24). Paul is warning that they need to amend their ways if they wish to avoid future judgement and eternal damnation (1 Cor 11:27-32). Interpreting 1 Cor 11:29, Collins notes that “people who do not recognise the community as the body of the Lord but dare to eat the bread and drink the cup bring judgement upon themselves.”<sup>1058</sup> In a double entendre Paul, in 1 Cor 34, warns: “don't come together to judge and rank one another disparagingly.”<sup>1059</sup> A “far more serious (eschatological) judgement awaits.”<sup>1060</sup>

<sup>1057</sup> Wright, *Paul for Everyone: 1 Corinthians*, 150-151.

<sup>1058</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 438-39.

<sup>1059</sup> Mitchell, *The Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 265.

<sup>1060</sup> *Ibid.*, 266.

Paul has another difficulty with the showcasing of the factions in the community and he is warning them that they are still fallible, vulnerable pilgrims en route to their final goal; they could still lose their way.<sup>1061</sup> His eschatological statement in 1 Cor 11:26 that “as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes,” indicates that Paul is aware of the traditional eschatological *logion* that links the celebration of the Lord’s Supper with the heavenly or eschatological banquet mentioned in Mt 26:29 and Mk 14:25.<sup>1062</sup> The evidence for Paul knowing any sayings of Jesus is disputed. However, some commentators do maintain that Paul was aware of this Jesus *logion* (e.g. Collins, *First Corinthians*, 353; Kugelman, *First Corinthians in JBC*, 268). Also, Otto Betz, in *Jesus and the Suffering Servant*, ps.70-87, puts forward a credible case for believing that “Paul knew the saying of Jesus in Mk 10:38 as well as the soteriological interpretation of Christ’s death in Mk 10:45 and in the Eucharistic words of Mk 14:24.” (Betz, in *Jesus and the Suffering Servant*, 85-86). This link raises the importance and urgency of celebrating the Lord’s Supper worthily and is an encouragement to continue to celebrate the Lord’s Supper worthily.

In short, Paul is a committed apocalypticist. He believes that God, over the centuries, longs for a personal and covenantal relationship with his creation (1 Cor 1:2). God has, on numerous occasions, intervened in history to show that concern and care. Finally, he has come on earth in Christ to effect a final reconciliation through the New Covenant ‘in Christ’s blood’ (1 Cor 11:25). Humanity must now decide to imitate Christ or be condemned: unworthy celebration of the Lord’s Supper brings

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<sup>1061</sup> Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 888.

<sup>1062</sup> “Paul’s explanation (see the explanatory gar/‘for’) suggests that Paul knew of the traditional eschatological saying that made a link between the Eucharistic cup and the eschatological banquet (Mt 26:29; Mk 14:25).” See Collins, *First Corinthians*, 434.

condemnation as outlined in 1 Cor 11:27-34. The Final Judgement will see the just rise again to life because God is faithful to his age-old promise. All these apocalyptic considerations are included in 1 Cor 11:17-34. In using the Apocalyptic Rhetorolect Paul has given his discussion in 1 Cor 11:17-34 significant importance (it is a matter of eternal life or damnation) and urgency: eternal salvation can be lost at any time and Judgement Day may be very soon.

### **6.5 Theological Synthesis of Paul's Suffering and the Fulfilment of the Covenant**

Paul believes that, from earlier times, God has offered a gifted, covenantal, and spousal relationship with humanity (1 Cor 1:2, 9).<sup>1063</sup> Although his people have reneged on their covenant time and time again (1 Cor 10:1-13), God “who is faithful” (1 Cor 1:9), never withdrew the offered gift to his people. Christ came on earth to again offer this covenant to humanity. He spent his life preaching, healing, restoring, making all things new, re-creating all through his life of sacrificial service,<sup>1064</sup> with the aim of reconciling God and humanity, a central theme in 1 Corinthians. It is mentioned in 1 Cor 1:9, the Letter's programmatic statement, where Paul states that God's people were “called to fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Re-creation through suffering “is the gospel that attests to *the power of God* at work *through human weakness* to bring to fruition God's intention for the world.”<sup>1065</sup>

The ‘New’ Covenant of Jeremiah 31:31-34 is fulfilled through Christ's sacrificial giving of himself, which receives its ultimate demonstration of the cross.<sup>1066</sup> Through the symbolic ritual re-enactment of the sacrificial life of Christ in the Lord's Supper, Paul and his followers *remember* Christ, identify with him, and live with his sacrificial

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<sup>1063</sup> McKenzie, *Dictionary of the Bible*, 153-157.

<sup>1064</sup> Plummer, *Paul's Understanding of the Church's Mission*, 235.

<sup>1065</sup> Brueggemann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 144. Italics in the original.

<sup>1066</sup> Gorman, *The Death of the Messiah and the Birth of the New Covenant*, 53; Mortell, *The New Passover*, 52.

life in a union so intimate, ontological and spousal that Paul could say that he was “united with the Lord” and had become “one spirit with him” (1 Cor 6:17). In other words, Paul is adamant that he and his followers have been gifted salvation by God through Christ and are now expected to live out this saved status or salvific being in their everyday, sacrificial lives. Re-created “in the image of the heavenly One” (1 Cor 15:49), each Christian is being invited to be a partner and to actively participate in this re-creation, to exercise God’s dominion over creation, to mediate God’s presence in the world.<sup>1067</sup>

Paul castigates the behaviour of the Corinthian church members at their “Lord’s Supper” because it is fostering division and not building unity, the unity that they should now be living ‘in Christ’ (1 Cor 11:17-34). Paul recalls for them the “tradition he has received from the Lord” (1 Cor 11:23). He contrasts the selfless altruism of Christ (even to death on the cross) with the selfish individualism of the Corinthian church members (even at their Lord’s Supper) and urges them to adopt the ‘mind of Christ’ (1 Cor 2:16; see also 1 Cor 4:16; 11:1), or face the consequences of their ‘unworthy discernment’ (1 Cor 11:27-32). In other words, Paul presents the Lord’s Supper as a sacrament of unity and equality. As Kieran J. O’Mahony says, “the presenting issue is the failure to discern the *social* body of Christ, that is, contempt for the church of God and the humiliation of those who have nothing.”<sup>1068</sup> Their unity around the Lord’s Table is being invalidated by their selfishness and partisan behaviour which echoes unruly Hellenistic fellowship meals. Paul challenges the Corinthian church members to live out their selfless and sacrificial lifestyle in imitation of Christ,

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<sup>1067</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 572: “The rhetorical analysis of ch. 15 shows moreover that Paul concludes each of his proofs (vv. 34, 49) with an exhortation. Hence, on the ‘greatly preponderant external evidence’ [in the ancient Mss] and the character of Paul’s rhetoric, the subjunctive reading is to be preferred.” Thiselton (*First Corinthians*, 1288) says that “The subjunctive is supported by a wide range of early texts.....” and that “the UBS 4<sup>th</sup> ed. text has the future indicative, supported only by B and a few miniscules

<sup>1068</sup> Kieran J. O’Mahony, *Do We Still Need St. Paul?* (Dublin: Veritas, 2012), 128.

which will bring unity but at a cost, that is, suffering. That, for Paul, would be a true ‘remembrance’ progressing the realisation of the New Covenant “until he [the Lord] comes” (1 Cor 11:26).<sup>1069</sup> Sharing in the Eucharist “makes us a sacrificial people, lifting up and laying down our lives in love for God and one another.”<sup>1070</sup>

In the view of many commentators (such as Dunn, Wright and others) the union in Christ is with the death and resurrection of Christ.<sup>1071</sup> For example, Dunn states: “the process of salvation is a process of growing conformity to Christ’s death.”<sup>1072</sup> Also, Gorman maintains that to be ‘in Christ’ is to be ‘in’ the crucified Christ.<sup>1073</sup> However, Paul is clear in 1 Corinthians that this union or conformity is with Christ, and includes his life, mission, suffering, death, resurrection and exaltation. Tannehill, as discussed in detail in the Literature Review of this dissertation, holds that the believer’s union with Christ involves “a continuing participation in Christ who is [his] new life-power.”<sup>1074</sup>

Paul holds that Christians enter this union by participating in the Lord’s Supper, discerned worthily. In this way Paul and his followers enter into Christ’s saving event as *active* participants (just as through worthy participation in the Passover, the Jew entered into the saving event of the Exodus). It follows then that those who are ‘in Christ’ actively participate in God’s mission of reconciliation, renewal and re-creation of creation. Agreeing with this perspective, many commentators (such as Murphy-O’Connor) maintain that this *anamnesis*, echoing Jub 49:15, is a purposeful activity,

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<sup>1069</sup> Gorman, *The Death of the Messiah and the Birth of the New Covenant*, 75. “Christ’s death effected the New Covenant, meaning specifically the creation of a covenant community of forgiven and reconciled disciples, inhabited and empowered by the Spirit to embody a new-covenant spirituality of cruciform loyalty to God and love for others, thereby peaceably participating in the life of God and in God’s forgiving, reconciling, and covenanting mission to the world.”

<sup>1070</sup> ARCIC (Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission), *One Bread One Body* (London: CTS, 1998), 25, footnote 71.

<sup>1071</sup> For example, see Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 487.

<sup>1072</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1073</sup> Gorman, as detailed in Chapter 1, section 1.4.2 of this dissertation.

<sup>1074</sup> See the Chapter 1, section 1.3.3 of this dissertation for a more detailed presentation of Tannehill’s view.

that is, that the believers are “on active mission.”<sup>1075</sup> He states that it is not enough that the Corinthian church members avoid creating stumbling-blocks, “they must positively empower the conversion of Jews and Gentiles and the continuing growth of their fellow Christians.”<sup>1076</sup> Their salvific intentionality, which Paul personifies in 1 Cor 9:19-27, is rooted in “the character and purposes of God – in the *missio Dei*,”<sup>1077</sup> and God’s fellowship with all creation. The Eucharist “is effective not just in establishing bonds of identity and community, but also in forming a community equipped by the Spirit to engage in loving service and missionary activity.”<sup>1078</sup> The believer and the Christian church are “missional by nature.... drawn into the larger purposes of a missional God.”<sup>1079</sup> In celebrating the Lord’s Supper worthily (1 Cor 11:17-34), Paul’s followers would be preaching, healing, restoring, making all things new, re-creating through their Christ-like lifestyle of sacrificial service.

Paul was under no illusion that converting or returning creation to its Creator would be difficult. It would involve intensive, extensive and pervasive suffering on his part and on the part of his followers (he lists some types of suffering in 1 Cor 4:9-13 and mentions them also in 1 Cor 9:19-27; 11:17-34; and 15:31 [“I face death daily”]). Only through the suffering of Christ, Paul and their followers would this alienated world be re-turned to its God.<sup>1080</sup> Brueggemann states in his commentary on Isaiah 53, a foundational text for Paul in this pericope and in 1 Corinthians generally, that

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<sup>1075</sup> Murphy-O’Connor, *Keys to First Corinthians*, 573.

<sup>1076</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1077</sup> Barram, “Pauline Mission as Salvific Intentionality,” 245.

<sup>1078</sup> Gittos, *Anamnesis and the Eucharist*, 24.

<sup>1079</sup> Barram, “Pauline Mission as Salvific Intentionality,” 245.

<sup>1080</sup> This also means that suffering is now not just something to be endured passively but, suffering for Paul is “*perhaps primarily, an expression of the church’s active engagement with the world for the world’s redemption*,” and as a verification of the church’s battle with the powers of evil (1 Cor 15:23-28). Suffering “is, therefore, a mode of missionary involvement.” There is significant evidence of this approach in 1 Cor 9:19-27; 11:17-34; 15:31-32. Through union with Christ one’s suffering, indeed one’s entire life, in and through the Eucharistic remembrance, becomes “a sacred gateway into living communion with God in his work for our salvation,” in J. Christiaan Beker, *Paul’s Apocalyptic Gospel: The Coming Triumph of God* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 41.



“newness through suffering is the gospel that attests to the power of God at work through human weakness to bring to fruition God’s intention for the world.”<sup>1081</sup>

*The conclusion is now clear: through union with Christ one’s suffering, redefined as one’s selfless, sacrificial service of others or love for others, indeed one’s entire life, becomes, in and through the Eucharistic remembrance, an entry-point into living communion with God in his work of salvation.* Following Christ’s example, Paul and his followers should be engaging with the world in working for the world’s salvation, doing all with missional intentionality. Paul appeals to his followers to be “firm, steadfast, always fully devoted to the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labour is not in vain” (1 Cor 15:58).

Having addressed the questions set out in the Introduction to this dissertation, it is now time to draw the main conclusions of the exegetical chapters together, to apply the principal findings to twenty-first century settings, and to sketch some remaining questions for future research

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<sup>1081</sup> Brueggemann, *Isaiah 40–66*, 144.

## CONCLUSION

Paul lived in a Jewish culture that understood sufferers as individuals who were being punished by God for their sins. Though this was not the only view, it was certainly the dominant view.<sup>1082</sup> It is expressed in 1 Cor 5:1-7; 10:1-13; 11:29-32. Other views expressed in 1 Corinthians include that suffering is visited upon the individual or nation as a method of discipline or purification (1 Cor 5:1-7). There is also in 1 Corinthians the view that one suffers for others, that is, in an act of vicarious atonement, for example, 1 Cor 5:7; 11:24; 15:3, 31.<sup>1083</sup>

The question arises, then, as to how Paul, at the time of writing 1 Corinthians (53- 55 C.E.), understood his suffering. He takes, for his time, an unusual standpoint: he is adamant that his suffering is not a punishment for his sins but an inevitable part of being a Christian preaching and embodying a counter-cultural gospel that aims at converting Jews and Gentiles to Christ: his theology of Christian suffering is an experiential and contextual theology. Paul's suffering is even a treasured aspect of his life as he believes it validates his identification with Christ, especially with Christ's suffering. Paul argues that his suffering is salvific (e.g. 1 Cor 9:19-23) and that, in union with Christ (1 Cor 6:12-20) and enabled by the gifts of the Spirit (1 Cor 12:1—14:40), it is bringing about the fulfilment of the New Covenant to the greater glory of God (1 Cor 6:20; 11:17-34).

The aim of this dissertation has been to investigate Paul's theology of suffering as portrayed in 1 Corinthians, particularly its salvific value and its place in the fulfilment of God's covenant with his people. If these claims were to be validated, it would mean that 1 Corinthians, written in 53-55 C.E., would be recognised as the first time in the extant Pauline corpus that Paul's comprehensive theology of suffering

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<sup>1082</sup> See Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief*, 415-17. It was also the view of contemporary Greco-Roman philosophies: see Tabb, *Suffering in Ancient Worldview*, 23-70.

<sup>1083</sup> Paul also mentions vicarious atonement in Gal 6:17; 2 Cor 5:21; Rom 8:3; and Phil 2:17.

received written expression.<sup>1084</sup> Moreover, it is expressed in a positive way: living out the New Covenant will involve suffering, but it is suffering that has salvific value, it is progressing God's plan for salvation.

### **7.1 A Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation of Suffering in 1 Corinthians**

A socio-rhetorical interpretation, an extended version of Robbins' analytic, has been employed for this investigation. This study has drawn upon the five central 'textures' (Inner Texture, Social and Cultural Texture, Ideological Texture, Intertexture, and Sacred Texture) and two rhetorolects (Apocalyptic and Priestly). As a particular text is the product of a particular author writing from within a particular milieu, it follows that the better one understands the milieu, then the better one understands what the writer meant to convey to readers. A socio-rhetorical interpretation, in appropriating the approaches, methods, and insights of sociology and anthropology, harnesses these resources in an attempt to better understand the milieu of the writer.<sup>1085</sup> Moreover, the textures and rhetorolects may interact with one another, supporting each other and opening up new insights not seen in a single-texture analysis.

#### **7.1.1 Inner Texture**

Some important insights emerge from the Innertexture analysis of this dissertation. In particular, Paul uses many literary techniques, among them tribulation

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<sup>1084</sup> Harvey, *Renewal Through Suffering*, 129 makes this claim for 2 Corinthians. Regarding 1Thess: 1Thess gives valid and important insights into Paul's theology of suffering, which support the thesis of this dissertation. But these are less comprehensive than those in 1 Corinthians (as in 1 Cor 6:15-17; 11:23-26, etc.). Also, there are some questions about the 1 Thess text that lead some commentators to raise questions about their Pauline origin. In Smiles' view, "these arguments cannot lightly be dismissed." – see, e.g. V. Smiles on *1 Thessalonians, Philippians, 2 Thessalonians, Colossians, Ephesians*, (Collegeville MN: Liturgical Press, 2005), 12, 19-20.

<sup>1085</sup> Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 1.

lists, the diatribe, the *gradatio*, and comparison-contrast to communicate his theology of suffering.

Tribulation lists, as in 1 Cor 4:9-13, are a normal literary technique in both Hellenistic and Jewish writings of Paul's time.<sup>1086</sup> They are employed to explain that suffering is a normal part of everyday life, to give an understanding of the reasons for and the purposes of suffering, and to assist people in coping with that suffering.

Throughout 1 Corinthians Paul focuses attention on the suffering of Christ as central to his salvific work (1 Cor 2:1-5) and on the need for his followers to accept their real, everyday suffering as assisting their conformation to Christ (1 Cor 15:45-49). Paul believes that he is chosen by God to be his apostle to the nations. Some commentators maintain that in 1 Cor 4:13 he implicitly refers to his willingness to be an expiatory scapegoat for others.<sup>1087</sup> Undoubtedly, in 1 Cor 9:19-27 Paul claims explicitly that his suffering is salvific, as is that of his followers (e.g. 1 Cor 7:16).

In 1 Cor 6:12-20, by debating with an imaginary interlocutor, Paul uses the literary technique of the diatribe to severely criticise the Stoic view of the human body. Stoics (such as Seneca, Musonius Rufus) believe and teach that the body, in their view a 'paltry body,' is discarded at death and consequently they downplay the importance of the body and its functioning.<sup>1088</sup> Paul, on the other hand, opposes all forms of dualism. In his view, humans are living an embodied (but corruptible) existence now and will also live an embodied (but glorious) existence after the resurrection. The resurrection of the glorified body imparts ultimate significance to the human body: the body is 'for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body' (1 Cor 6:13), that is, "Christ's lordship is over

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<sup>1086</sup> For example, see the work of Horace (65 B.C.E.—8 B.C.E.), Seneca (4 B.C.E.—65 C.E.), Musonius Rufus (25 C.E.—95 C.E.), Plutarch (46 C.E.—120 C.E.), Epictetus (50 C.E.—135 C.E.), and some Greek biographers and historians (particularly in the Stoic-Cynic-Sophist traditions). See Collins, *First Corinthians*, 182f., Thiselton *First Corinthians*, 365f., Fitzgerald, *Cracks in Earthen Vessels*, 47.

<sup>1087</sup> See, for example, Collins, *First Corinthians*, 191 and Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 363-65.

<sup>1088</sup> See Fitzgerald, *Cracks in an Earthen Vessel*, 54, 65; Tabbs, *Suffering in Ancient Worldview*, 66; Loeb Classical Library, *Epictetus: Discourses*, trans. W. A. Oldfather, 112-13.

Christians in their bodily existence.”<sup>1089</sup> The Christian’s body is united with Christ (1 Cor 6:15), indwelt by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:19), re-created to be raised by God (1 Cor 6:14), and is to forever glorify God (1 Cor 6:20).

The *gradatio*, a series of incremental steps or stages, is another literary technique Paul uses to great effect. In 1 Cor 6:12-20 he uses it to establish and explain the ontological, spousal, Spiritual, and participatory union between the believer and Christ. Consequently, Paul is no longer ‘his own,’ he is now “one Spirit with the Lord” (1 Cor 6:17) and as a member of the Risen Body of Christ his future existence as one of God’s people determines how he lives his life in the present age. This requirement is repeated in 1 Cor 9 where Paul provides his own missionary lifestyle as an example of prioritising the needs of others over his own legitimate entitlements, which may lead to suffering. This calls for a re-definition of ‘freedom’ as conditional upon the salvation-needs of others (which Paul communicates with his *gradatio* in 1 Cor 9:19-23, which climaxes in him saying “so that I might by all means save some” in 1 Cor 9:22) and the consequent relegation of one’s own legitimate entitlements.

Paul also uses the compare-contrast technique in 1 Corinthians. In contrast to unruly Hellenistic fellowship meals, he presents the Lord’s Supper as a sacrament of unity and equality (1 Cor 11:17-22) and he challenges the Corinthian church members to live out their lives in a selfless, sacrificial and missional lifestyle in imitation of Christ, which will inevitably involve suffering (1 Cor 4:9-13; 5:7; 9:19-27; 11:23-26; 15:31). That, for Paul, would be a true ‘remembrance’ of the Last Supper and Christ’s saving action.<sup>1090</sup>

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<sup>1089</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 245.

<sup>1090</sup> Gorman, *The Death of the Messiah and the Birth of the New Covenant*, 75. “Christ’s death effected the new covenant, meaning specifically the creation of a covenant community of forgiven and reconciled disciples, inhabited and empowered by the Spirit to embody a new-covenant spirituality of cruciform loyalty to God and love for others, thereby peaceably participating in the life of God and in God’s forgiving, reconciling, and covenanting mission to the world.”

The Inner Texture analysis of 1 Corinthians shows that Paul, through his use of these literary techniques (tribulation lists, diatribe, *gradatio*, and comparison-contrast) within the framework of a deliberative rhetorical letter, emphasises that his suffering is indeed real (1 Cor 4:9-13) and that it is an inevitable consequence of preaching and embodying a counter-cultural gospel. Paul also claims that his suffering (and that of his followers) saves others (1 Cor 9:19-27) because the believer is now in a Spiritual union with Christ (1 Cor 6:15-17), a member of the Risen Body of Christ. His suffering, indeed his every action, is now salvific.

#### 7.1.2 Social and Cultural Texture

The Social and Cultural Texture emerges in some significant ways in 1 Corinthians. First, there is an important comparison and contrast between the status of the Triumphal Procession's prisoners and the status of followers of Christ (1 Cor 4:9-13). Second, there is a distinction between the Stoic-Sophist search for enlightenment and the Christian search for the divine will in scripture (1 Cor 9:19-27). Third, a contrast between the example of Christ and the Hellenistic fellowship meal emerges in 1 Corinthians (1 Cor 11:17-34).

In 1 Cor 4:9-13 Paul takes the imagery of the Greco-Roman Triumphal Procession and inverts the imagery completely because God's view is quite different from the dominant Greco-Roman cultural view. The Greco-Roman Triumphal Procession, an excellent expression of the dominant culture of the day, presents the defeated soldiers as cumulatively disadvantaged and sentenced to excruciating suffering and death as a spectacle for all to witness. The prevailing culture sees Paul and his followers as similarly disadvantaged (e.g., 'the least of all' in 1 Cor 4:9). Paul, however, believes that he and his followers are cumulatively advantaged. They are

chosen by God (1 Cor 1:1-2), “enriched in every way” (1 Cor 1:5), invited to union with Christ (1 Cor 6:12-20), are stewards of the mysteries of God (1 Cor 4:1), and guaranteed eternal salvation if, in spite of their inevitable suffering, they remain faithful to the gospel (1 Cor 15:58).

The Stoic-Sophist sage, using reason and the writings of predecessors, is admirably attempting to understand god, the world, humanity’s reason for being, and the place of suffering in the world. Paul, convinced that he has “God’s wisdom” (1 Cor 2:6-10) and the “mind of Christ” (1 Cor 2:16), acknowledges his privileged position in having Christ as his exemplar. He teaches that Christ’s suffering is the example and means of salvation for all (1 Cor 11:17-34). Therefore, he advises his followers to embrace their inevitable, mission-related suffering as that will assuredly save others (1 Cor 9:19-27). Paul has considerable ‘common-ground’ with the Stoic-Sophist view (such as their searching for god, the god-humanity relationship, the meaning of life, and their views on suffering) and uses that in his work. He is also well-versed in the Old Testament accounts of the ‘righteous sufferers’ such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the Maccabean martyrs. He disagrees vehemently with the dominant Greco-Roman view of Christians as cumulatively disadvantaged. In his view, they have been called by God (1 Cor 1:2), commissioned as “stewards of God’s mysteries” (1 Cor 4:1), gifted by the Spirit for their work (1 Cor 1:5; 12:1—14:40), and look forward to an eternity with God (1 Cor 15:28). They are, consequently, cumulatively advantaged (1 Cor 1:5). He rejects the Stoic-Sophist denigration of the body as exemplified by his rejection of Stoic slogans in 1 Cor 6:12 (x2), 13. Dualism has no place in Paul’s thinking. He is now living an embodied (though corruptible) existence and after the resurrection he hopes to live an embodied (and glorious) existence (1 Cor 15:42-44). Paul’s understanding of salvation is that, living in the already-not yet age, living the Christian life involves

suffering: the suffering of Christ and the suffering of those who are ‘in Christ’ (1 Cor 4:9-13; 9:19-27; 15:30-32). Importantly, he believes that the sacrificial suffering of the ‘righteous,’ of those ‘in Christ,’ is bringing the New Covenant re-creation to completion because they are building God’s kingdom. This building is the positive ‘end’ of their work of salvation: suffering is like the worker’s labour, a means to that end.

In brief, Paul is very critical of the abusive and divisive behaviour of the Corinthian church members at the Lord’s Supper (see 1 Cor 11:17-34). Their self-seeking, self-aggrandising behaviour invalidates their celebration of the sacrament of unity in Christ, lowering their group celebration to the level of an unruly Hellenistic fellowship meal. Paul points out that Christ, through his sacrificial, suffering service of others, re-establishes God’s covenant with his people. Christ/God expects Christians to live a loving, sacrificial, suffering service of others, aimed at ‘saving others’ and reconciling humanity with its Creator. Living out that sacrament of equality and unity every day, Paul believes that he is participating in the life, mission and suffering of Christ and is bringing about dramatic transformation in the behaviour and being of his followers: that should be and is the essential purpose of the Lord’s Supper.<sup>1091</sup>

### 7.1.3 Ideological Texture

The Ideological Texture reveals some points of disagreement between Paul and his contemporaries. Paul’s Christian ideology is diametrically opposed to the dominant Greco-Roman ideology expressed in the Triumphal Procession’s religious thanksgiving service, his rejection of the Stoic-Sophist dualism is total, and his re-interpretation of Isaiah’s Suffering Servant as fulfilled in Christ is foundational to his thinking on suffering.

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<sup>1091</sup> Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 893.



The Greco-Roman ideology views the Triumphal Procession as encapsulating a religious ideology, reaching a 'grand finale' in a religious ceremony of thanksgiving to the gods of war (especially Jupiter) for granting Rome victory and for ensuring the *Pax Romana*, a temporary peace based on violent conquest. Against this ideological background, Paul preaches and embodies a totally different religious ideology, accepting the one true God (1 Cor 8:6) who, through Christ, will conquer all enemies in love (1 Cor 15:20-28) and will ensure an eternity of peace based on love. 1 Thessalonians, written some years before 1 Corinthians, mentions the suffering his preaching caused for the local church members (1 Thess 1:6; 3:3-7). According to Luke's account in the Acts of the Apostles, Paul meets with considerable opposition from Jews in the synagogue in Corinth that forces him to stop preaching in the synagogue and to move his centre of preaching to the home of Titus Justus (Acts 18:5-8).<sup>1092</sup> Paul had come to expect hardship, oppression, suffering, even death (like Christ) in his faithfulness to God. That was certainly his experience (1 Cor 4:9-13; 15:31), and the experience of Christ who was crucified in his faithfulness to the will of God (1 Cor 5:7). In short, Paul's Christian ideology of the One, True God is opposed to the plethora of gods in some Greco-Roman ideologies. Moreover, the courageous suffering of Paul and his followers is destroying the false gods celebrated in the Triumphal Procession (1 Cor 15:23-28).

Paul also disagrees with the Stoic-Sophist dualistic view that considers the body as 'paltry,' a 'burden,' and ceasing to exist after death, because it contradicts the Christ-based belief in the embodied resurrection (1 Cor 15). The Stoic-Sophist schools teach that the incorruptible human spirit is incarcerated in the corruptible human body and

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<sup>1092</sup> Pascuzzi, *First and Second Corinthians*, 7. The opposition Paul experienced in the synagogue of Corinth was because of differing ideologies within Judaism, namely, the Messiahship of Christ. See also Luke Timothy Johnson, *Acts of the Apostles*, 323.

that death releases the spirit to join the gods.<sup>1093</sup> However, based on his understanding of Old Testament anthropology, Paul teaches that humans are living an embodied (but corruptible) existence now and will also live an embodied (but glorified) existence after the general resurrection. He holds that “it is the resurrection of the body that imparts ultimate significance to the human body.”<sup>1094</sup> Every person belongs to God: they are “for the Lord and the Lord is for them” (1 Cor 6:13) because God through Christ has saved and re-created them (1 Cor 15).<sup>1095</sup> Moreover, Paul points out that “your bodies are members of Christ” (1 Cor 6:15), with whom you are “one flesh,” “one spirit” (1 Cor 6:16), and “your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit” (1 Cor 6:19). Therefore, he appeals to them to flee idolatry (1 Cor 10:14-22) and, instead, to “glorify God in your body” (1 Cor 6:20).

Preaching a counter-cultural gospel, Paul expects opposition, persecution, even death (1 Cor 4:9-13; 9:19-27; 11:17-34; 15:31). Paul sees Christ as embodying the Suffering Servant of Isaiah. This is evidenced in his treatment of Christ’s *logion* recorded in 1 Cor 9:19 (and in Mt 22:26-28; Mk 10:43-45; Lk 22:26-27) and in his use of Isaian vocabulary, themes and storylines. Isaiah’s Suffering Servant, though innocent, takes upon himself the sin and suffering of others, dies for others and is exalted by God. Through his life of selfless, sacrificial service Christ achieves “righteousness, sanctification and salvation” for all (1 Cor 1:30; 5:7; 11:23-26; 15:3-5). Paul interprets Christ’s life through an Isaian lens and understands that his own life-mission is to imitate Christ, to embody Christ’s missional intentionality (1 Cor 6:12-20; 9:19-27).

Paul’s Isaiah-based re-definition of freedom is opposed to the view held by some Corinthian church members who are influenced by the Stoic-Sophist teaching on

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<sup>1093</sup> Fitzgerald, *Cracks in an Earthen Vessel*, 54:65; Tabb, *Suffering in Ancient Worldview*, 66.

<sup>1094</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 242.

<sup>1095</sup> Note that for Paul the ‘Lord’ is always ‘the Risen Lord.’

freedom as an individual's absolute right to do whatever one's entitlement dictates, even if this adversely affects one's neighbour. Paul, in contrast, teaches that the freedom of the Christian is secondary to the other person's salvation (1 Cor 8:11-12). This is Christian freedom for Paul: freely choosing to place the needs of others before your own. The believer is re-created and is now living in an ontological, spousal, and Spiritual union with Christ and other believers (1 Cor 6:12-20; 12:1-31), and should now live, as Paul did, as an interdependent member of the Body of Christ.

Paul teaches his followers to re-enact the Lord's Supper in the belief that it remembers Christ's life, mission, death and resurrection. However, the Lord's Supper is more than merely remembering a past event. Paul and all believers enter this union with Christ's life-mission through worthily celebrating the Lord's Supper (1 Cor 11:17-34). The believer being present, being there in the Last Supper, is participating in God's saving acts through Christ. As Paul terms it, they are 'in Christ,' in the risen, reconciling Body of Christ. The believer thereby becomes an active participant. Paul expects all his followers to live out this new-found union (1 Cor 6:12-20) and interdependence on each other (1 Cor 12:12-31). He held out to them the example of Christ's sacrificing service, even to death (1 Cor 11:23-26), and his own example (1 Cor 9). It was the Corinthians' refusal in 1 Cor 11:17-22 to selflessly and sacrificially share with others that invalidated their participation in the Lord's Supper and resulted in Paul's condemnation. For Paul, one cannot participate in Christ and avoid suffering.

In brief, Paul rejects the ideology behind the Greco-Roman Triumphal Procession and the dualism of the Stoics-Sophists, because he sees Christ as the fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy of the Suffering Servant, who through his suffering, conquers evil and re-opens the way to God. It is now the believer's vocation, through union with Christ, to participate in this reconciliation of humanity with God. For Paul,

one enters this union with Christ through the worthy celebration of the ‘Lord’s Supper remembrance’ and a selfless, sacrificial life.

#### 7.1.4 Intertexture

Paul uses Intertexture allusions frequently and expertly in writing 1 Corinthians.<sup>1096</sup> In 1 Cor 4:9-13 he alludes to the scapegoat/ransom image of Proverbs 21:18 and Tobit 5:19 as he implies that he is willing to become an atoner for others. Using a *logion* that he shares with Mark, Matthew, and Luke, and which may be traced back to Christ himself, he asserts this willingness explicitly and repeatedly in 1 Cor 9:19-27 where he explains that his entire life is devoted to selfless service of others “so that I might by all means save some” (1 Cor 9:22). This Intertexture allusion also shows itself in 1 Cor 6:12-20 where Paul uses Genesis 2:24 to express the intimacy of the believer’s union with Christ. In 1 Cor 11:17-34 he references Jeremiah (Jer 7, 26 and 31), and the Suffering Servant Poems of Isaiah (Isa 42, 49, 50, and 53) to explain the sacrificial service required in living out this union ‘in Christ.’ Paul’s unique phrase ‘in Christ’ (1 Cor 6:17), which is to be found throughout 1 Corinthians and across his undisputed corpus, is of crucial importance as it also assists in establishing the participatory nature of the believer’s union with Christ. The ‘in Christ’ sayings, found in 1 Corinthians, taken together portray a detailed salvation history brought about by the salvific suffering of Christ, Paul, and his followers as they give expression to their re-created being. Paul’s use of Daniel 7:18, 21, and 27 remind all that the re-creation is not yet complete. The above Intertexture references are integral to Paul’s theology of suffering in 1 Corinthians.

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<sup>1096</sup> Paul quotes from at least nine Old Testament books and alludes to over 30 Old Testament books. He also includes quotations and allusions to Intertestamental books and to Jewish and Hellenistic writings.

In the view of some commentators, Paul may be expressing a willingness to become an atoner for others in 1 Cor 4:9-13.<sup>1097</sup> These commentators find similarities in language, themes and storylines between 1 Cor 4:13 on the one hand, and Proverbs 21:18 and Tobit 5:19 on the other hand, specifically their use of the scapegoat/ransom themes and the Atonement Day ceremony images.<sup>1098</sup> Kugelman states that the key word in 1 Cor 4:13, *περικάθαρμα*, may refer to “an expiatory offering or a ransom.”<sup>1099</sup> Nestle-Aland and other commentators also draw attention to this allusion. These suggest that Paul sees Christ in a scapegoat or atonement role. This view is supported by other atonement—sacrifice references in 1 Cor 5:7; 8:11; 11:24 and 15:3-5. In setting Christ before his followers as the one to imitate (1 Cor 4:16; 11:1) Paul is teaching that he and his followers have that role also.

In keeping with his re-interpretation of Isaiah’s Suffering Servant, Paul believes that he is commissioned to live out a vocation of sacrificial, suffering service. He personifies this vocation in 1 Cor 9:19-27 and repeats unambiguously his belief, which is implied in 1 Cor 4:9-13, that this entire life is salvific. Many commentators see in 1 Cor 9:19 (“I have made myself a slave of all so as to win over as many as possible”) allusions to an original logion of Christ, recounted also in Mt 20:26-28; Mk 10:43-45

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<sup>1097</sup> See Collins, *First Corinthians*, 191. I accept that some commentators “do not see atonement in these verses” and/or don’t accept the allusions to Proverbs or Tobit. However, some commentators do recognise the above-mentioned atonement allusions (e.g. Collins, *First Corinthians*, 353; Kugelman, “First Corinthians” in *JBC*, 268). See, also, ps. 154-156 of this dissertation for a detailed discussion of the matter. As Elizabeth Johnson says: “the church has never officially defined any one specific way of understanding salvation, never opted for one biblical metaphor or one theological theory over another” (E. Johnson, *Creation and the Cross*, 156).

<sup>1098</sup> The evidence for Paul knowing any sayings of Jesus is much disputed. However, some commentators do maintain that Paul was aware of this Jesus *logion* (e.g. Collins, *First Corinthians*, 353; Kugelman, *First Corinthians* in *JBC*, 268). Also, Hanson, Wright, and Betz, in *Jesus and the Suffering Servant*, ps. 70-87, put forward a credible case for believing that “Paul knew the saying of Jesus in Mk 10:38 as well as the soteriological interpretation of Christ’s death in Mk 10:45 and in the Eucharistic words of Mk 14:24.” (*Jesus and the Suffering Servant*, 85-86). See also BAGD, 647; Barrett, *First Epistle*, 112; Lietzmann, *An die Korinther*, 21.

<sup>1099</sup> Kugelman, “The First Letter to the Corinthians,” 260.

and Lk 22:26-27.<sup>1100</sup> There is agreement across the four references that the original logion referred to a *living or lifestyle* following of Christ's example of self-sacrificing service. Throughout 1 Corinthians Paul puts the emphasis for the Christian on embodying their faith in their lifestyle as it is this self-sacrificing love that is salvific (e.g., 1 Cor 1:10; 4:16; 5:1-8, 9-13; 6:7-11; 11:1; 11:23-26). Furthermore, Paul calls on the Corinthian church members to imitate him (1 Cor 4:16) as he imitates Christ (1 Cor 11:1). Both of these requests occur in passages where Paul discusses his suffering and his voluntary sacrificing of his rights for others' salvation (1 Cor 4:6-17; 9:19-27; 10:23-33). Paul saw himself as a Christ-like embodiment of a suffering servant whose suffering saved others. Likewise, he is saying that the suffering of his Corinthian followers also has an atoning value (1 Cor 7:16; 8:11).

There is in 1 Cor 6:16 an underpinning quotation from Gen 2:24 ("the two shall be one flesh") that expresses the intimacy of the union with Christ.<sup>1101</sup> With this quotation from Gen 2:24 Paul counters "the dualistic anthropology of the Corinthians with a Semitic and biblical anthropology."<sup>1102</sup> He is teaching, with the authority of the Genesis allusion, that union with Christ involves a unity that is incompatible with an illicit union,<sup>1103</sup> due to its 'nuptial' nature. Through his ontological and spousal union with Christ, Paul accepts that he now lives with Christ's life and mission (1 Cor 6:12-

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<sup>1100</sup> Thiselton, Hanson, Wright (*Jesus and the Suffering Servant*, and others, as mentioned in the dissertation, *passim*) all mention this comparison. Also, Otto Betz, in *Jesus and the Suffering Servant*, ps. 70-87, puts forward a very credible case for believing that "Paul knew the saying of Jesus in Mk 10:38 as well as the soteriological interpretation of Christ's death in Mk 10:45 and in the Eucharistic words of Mk 14:24." (*Jesus and the Suffering Servant*, 85-86).

<sup>1101</sup> This quotation "follows the unanimous wording of the LXX tradition of Gen 2:24," and this wording is also found in the Samaritan Pentateuch and in the Targum of Jonathan, as quoted in Collins, *First Corinthians*, 247 and Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 467. The LXX's 'two' does occur in the numerous quotations of Philo and in Mark 10:8, Matt 19:5 and Eph 5:31 as mentioned by Christopher D. Stanley, *Paul and the Language of Scripture*, 195 and Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 467.

<sup>1102</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 243.

<sup>1103</sup> Paul had already referred in 1 Cor 5:1-13 to a church member who was in a sexual relationship with his father's wife. Not only was this relationship sinful and unacceptable behaviour for a Christian, but it also damaged the Body of Christ of which the sinner was a member.

20) and that he enters the Christ event through worthy remembrance at the Lord's Supper (1 Cor 11:17-34).

Jeremiah is an important prophet for Paul and his theology of suffering. They are similarly called by God (Jer 1:5 and Gal 1:15).<sup>1104</sup> Both are prophets of the New Covenant: Jer 31:31 reads: "The time is coming when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and the people of Judah," while 1 Cor 11: 25 states that "This cup is the new covenant in my blood". Jeremiah repeatedly called the Israelites of his time to repentance but they were often 'faithless' (e.g. Jer 3: 6ff.), while Paul was constantly appealing to the Corinthians to repent and re-commit to their covenantal relationship (e.g. 1 Cor 5: 1-7; 10:14-22). Both Jeremiah and Paul were persecuted.<sup>1105</sup> Both confronted false prophets.<sup>1106</sup> In Jer 7: 2-4 Jeremiah pleads with his contemporaries to "amend your ways and your doings," and "I [God] will dwell with you in this place" (Jer 7:3). Paul many times made the same request (1 Cor 10: 1-13) of his Corinthian converts on the same grounds (e.g. "Do you not know that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you" in 1 Cor 3:16). Both Jeremiah and Paul accepted that their 'gospel' would not always be popular and it was their experience that they would be mistreated, beaten, plotted against and that the religio-civil establishment would even seek their death. They considered this suffering almost as a proof that they were preaching God's word.

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<sup>1104</sup> Jer 1:5 reads: "Before I formed you in the womb ... I appointed you a prophet to the nations," while in Gal 1:15 Paul says that God "from my mother's womb had set me apart .... that I might proclaim him to the Gentiles."

<sup>1105</sup> See Jer 20: 7, 9 and 1 Cor 4: 9-13. Jeremiah's "temple sermon" enraged and alienated the king and the priests "who seized him and threatened his life: it is recounted in Jeremiah 7, and again in Jeremiah 26," and Paul in 1 Cor 15:31 says that he faced "death daily" because of his proclamation of the gospel. On a number of occasions both Jeremiah and Paul were imprisoned for the sake of the gospel.

<sup>1106</sup> See Jer 6: 13-15, 14: 14-16 and 1 Cor 1: 10-17, 11: 19, 2 Cor 11: 1-15.

With his words in 1 Cor 11: 25, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood,” Paul is recalling Jeremiah’s prophecy of a New Covenant (Jer 31:31-34).<sup>1107</sup> It is important to note that there is no mention of sacrifice, blood, sin, or vicarious atonement in the Jeremiah reference; however, all four elements are found in 1 Cor 5:7-8; 11:23-26; 15:3.<sup>1108</sup> It would seem that Paul may well have been the first to make the connection between “the new covenant and the atoning death of the Servant of the Lord in Isaiah 53,”<sup>1109</sup> and to have seen the essential connection between the suffering of Jesus, the fulfilment of the Suffering Servant prophecy, and the establishment of the New Covenant.<sup>1110</sup>

Paul re-interpreted Isaiah, especially the Servant Poems of Isaiah 42, 49, 50 and 53, as prophesying that a servant would come, who though innocent, would voluntarily take on himself the sin and suffering of others, who through this suffering would save God’s chosen people, and who would then be exalted at the right hand of God. He believed that Christ fulfilled these prophecies. The similarities of language, theme and

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<sup>1107</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 433, maintains that “Pre-Pauline tradition (cf. Lk 22:19-20) added the specification of ‘new’ to the covenant reference, undoubtedly under the influence of Jer 31:31 and the community’s awareness of the eschatological nature of the Christ event.”

<sup>1108</sup> 1 Cor 5:7-8 (“For our paschal lamb, Christ, has been **sacrificed**”); 11:25 (“This cup is the new covenant in my **blood**”); 15:3 (“**that Christ died for our sins**”); 8:11 (“The **brother for whom Christ died**”). One could also mention Romans 4:25 which has excited much support for Paul’s understanding of Second Isaiah and its role in his own apostleship (Hooker in *Jesus and the Suffering Servant*, 88-103). Also, N. T. Wright has said: “I have no problem in saying that he [Paul], like Jesus, regarded Isaiah 53 as one central piece of a picture that was far wider and richer than any single text. It is not the only, or even the controlling, element in his thought. Genesis and Deuteronomy and Psalms must be given their due. Nor is the death of Jesus, whether as representative, substitute, or whatever, the only meaning he finds in Second Isaiah. As we have seen, his own apostleship, his own suffering, are part of the picture as well. He [Paul], like Jesus, exegeted the text not just as a matter of theory but as a matter of symbolic vocation.” (Wright, *Jesus and the Suffering Servant*, 296). One could also reference the writings of Otto Betz, J. Ross Wagner, Wm Farmer, Wm Bellinger, Morna Hooker, R. E. Clements, etc. (Many articles in *Jesus and the Suffering Servant*).

<sup>1109</sup> Farmer, “Reflections on Isaiah 53,” 271-272, thinks it “probable” that Jesus himself saw this connection. Many other commentators (e.g. Hooker, in the same book) believe that Paul was the first to see the connection. It may have been part of the tradition Paul inherited from the early church: if so, then he accepted or agreed with it and he certainly preached it as central to his faith.

<sup>1110</sup> Both quotations are from Hooker, “Did the Use of Isaiah 53,” 102-103. She bases her assertion on Rom 4:25, [Christ] “who was handed over for our transgressions and was raised for our justification.” She finds support for her view in Rom 5:12-21 where Paul emphasises that “it was the *trespass* of Adam which led the many to sin and to die and the grace of God in/through Christ which made them righteous.



storyline are convincing evidence that Paul saw the sins of the people as *causing* the suffering of Christ and the suffering of Christ as *causing* the salvation of his people.<sup>1111</sup>

The Covenantal narrative of 1 Corinthians shows that the New Covenant prophesied by Jeremiah (Jer 31:31-34) is fulfilled by Christ's life. This New Covenant is ritually symbolised by Christ at the Last Supper. The believer remembers Christ's saving action and enters into this covenantal narrative by participating in the Last Supper (similar to the way in which Jews celebrate the Passover and enter into the saving event of the Exodus), thus creating a newly covenantal Christian community. Therefore, to live 'in Christ', in the Body of Christ, as part of this Christian covenantal community involves participating in Christ's life, mission, suffering, death, resurrection, and exaltation.

A final Intertexture allusion is the coherence of both language and themes between 1 Corinthians 4:6-8 and Dan 7:18, 21, 27. Paul holds that, while Christ has been raised from the dead (1 Cor 15:3-5), and righteousness, salvation and sanctification are available to all (1 Cor 1:30), the *eschaton* has not yet come in its fullness. Therefore, Christ's followers are not yet 'satisfied,' 'rich,' or 'kingly' (1 Cor 4:6-8). Significantly, suffering is still a reality of life for Christians.

In summary, Gen 2:24 is a key Intertexture reference for Paul in establishing the nature of the believer's union with Christ (1 Cor 6:12-20): thereafter one is living with Christ's life and mission. It is clear from a close reading of 1 Corinthians that Paul's Intertexture references to Prov 21:18, Tobit 5:19, and Leviticus 16 indicate that the 'scapegoat' or 'ransom' theme is in the background as he writes 1 Corinthians. Paul sees himself, like Jeremiah, as a prophet of the New Covenant and, like Jeremiah,

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<sup>1111</sup> That humiliation-exaltation theme is found in 1 Cor 1:18-25; 2:6-10, and in the traditional confession recorded in 1 Cor 15:3-5. It is also found in Gal 3:13-14; 4:4 and in Philippians 2:6-11. See also Isaiah 52:13—53:12. Many of these themes are discussed in greater detail in Chapters 3 and 6 of this dissertation (especially in the Intertexture sub-sections).

persecuted because he is calling his people to repentance and reconciliation. It also shows Paul's willingness to be an atoner for the sins of others (1 Cor 4:13). Moreover, the covenantal narrative of 1 Corinthians shows that the New Covenant prophesied by Jeremiah (Jer 31:31-34) is fulfilled by Christ's life with its ultimate demonstration on the cross. Paul's 'in Christ' compendium expresses his view that the believer enters Christ's life-long saving event and, thus, participates in Christ's missionary vocation. Undoubtedly, Paul is also heavily influenced by Isaiah 42—53 in understanding Christ's mission and lifestyle as one of sacrificial service of all others. And, as is clear from 1 Cor 4:16; 11:1, it also clarifies for him his own sacrificial vocation, and that of his followers.

#### 7.1.5 Sacred Texture

Sacred Texture refers principally to the manner in which a text reveals the writer's insights into the divine and its relationship with humanity.<sup>1112</sup> While this texture features throughout 1 Corinthians in Paul's comparison of the false wisdom of 'this age' as against the true Wisdom of God, it is most evident in his detailing of the nature and purpose of the believer's relationship 'with' or 'in Christ.' Having entered the Spiritual union with Christ and other believers (1 Cor 6:15-17), Paul, through his worthy remembrance of the Eucharist (1 Cor 11:17-34), participates in Christ's life and mission, for which the Spirit has gifted him (1 Cor 12:1—14:40), to the glory of God (1 Cor 6:20) who has called the believer into this union with his Son (1 Cor 1:2), even though that will inescapably involve suffering (1 Cor 4:9-13; 9:19-27).

Throughout the macro unit of 1 Cor 1:11-4:20, of which 1 Cor 4:9-13 is the climax, Paul contrasts the 'false' wisdom of 'this age' and the 'true' wisdom of God as

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<sup>1112</sup> See Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation: Dictionary of Socio-Rhetorical Terms, [www.religion.emory.edu/faculty/robbins/SRI/defs/s\\_defns.cfm](http://www.religion.emory.edu/faculty/robbins/SRI/defs/s_defns.cfm) accessed on internet.

revealed through Christ (1 Cor 2:8; 3:18-23). Through this ‘wisdom of God,’ Paul recounts in 1 Cor 11:23-26 how Christ re-establishes the (New) Covenant, as foretold in Jeremiah 31:31-34, showing people how to live their re-created, gifted and covenanted relationship with God. This God-given gift of union in Christ is an ontological, Spiritual, and dynamic union with the risen Christ (1 Cor 6:12-20). It is more fundamental and intimate than the nuptial union because it is a union “in the Spirit,” effected by the Spirit (1 Cor 6:17), the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor 15:45). With this union, there is “a continuing participation in Christ, who is the new life-power in Paul and in his followers.”<sup>1113</sup> This dissertation has demonstrated that, not only is the believer’s participation in Christ a participation in his death and resurrection, but that it is an active and dynamic participation in the total Christ-event. If one asks the question as to how the believer actively participates in the Christ event, then Paul’s answer is through worthy participation in the Eucharistic remembrance (1 Cor 11:24-25). Re-created and commissioned as a steward of God’s mysteries (1 Cor 4:1), the believer is to live with this new-found life and being, the life and mission of Christ through which one is daily saving others.

Paul stresses many of these themes again when he speaks of his followers as the ‘body of Christ (1 Cor 12:27).’ “Fundamental to Paul’s concept of the body of Christ is both the diversity of its members and their mutual interdependence upon each other.”<sup>1114</sup> However, Paul is distressed by the Corinthian church members’ display of disunity (1 Cor 17:22, 27-34). Paul in 1 Cor 11:17-22 is remonstrating with the Corinthian church members because they are behaving in a selfish, self-aggrandising way and ignoring the needs of other church members: “One goes hungry while another gets drunk” (1 Cor 11:21) and some who “eat and drink without discerning the body, eat

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<sup>1113</sup> Gorman, *Cruciformity*, 32; Tannehill, *Dying and Rising with Christ*, 81

<sup>1114</sup> Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 659.

and drink judgement on” themselves (1 Cor 11:29). Such divisive behaviour is destroying the unity of the church: that unity is the central theme of 1 Corinthians as expressed in 1 Cor 1:9-10, the Letter’s programmatic statement. Paul feels forced to say that they are not celebrating the Lord’s Supper (1 Cor 11:20). Critically, this mention of the church members as forming the ‘body of Christ’ receives its strongest clarification in 1 Cor 12:12-26. “For Paul, the body of believers is Christ, or the body of Christ..... Believers are bound in a living unity with the risen Lord,” which is effected by the Spirit at baptism.<sup>1115</sup> This unity in Christ is also discussed in 1 Cor 6:15-17 as ontological, Spiritual, spousal and participatory.<sup>1116</sup>

Not only is the individual believer united with Christ as a member of Christ’s risen body, but he is gifted with charisms to help him live out Christ’s counter-cultural gospel. Paul returns to this aspect again in 1 Cor 12:1—13: 13. Each and every believer or member of the Body of Christ is given charisms (1 Cor 12:7, 11). Each charism, each act of service, healing, or teaching, performed ‘in Christ’ is effective – not because it is Paul’s (or another’s) act of service, but because it is Christ’s.

One might add that, for Paul, this union in Christ involves a lifestyle embodiment of the self-sacrificing gospel of Christ (1 Cor 4:16; 11:1).<sup>1117</sup> The verb *καταγγέλλω* in 1 Cor 11:26, carries “overtones of speaking publicly” and witnessing to “the participant’s self-involving appropriation of the cross both for salvation and lifestyle.”<sup>1118</sup> In 1 Cor 12:1—14:40 Paul explains that the believer is gifted by the Spirit for this work of evangelisation. Called to this life of selfless, sacrificial service of others, the believer must live as a life-giving spirit (1 Cor 15:45-49), as an eternal-life-

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<sup>1115</sup> Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 73-74.

<sup>1116</sup> This last sentence is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5 of this dissertation.

<sup>1117</sup> In Thiselton’s words this is “an identification with Christ as the One ‘for others’ and a lifestyle that reflects that identification. .. It also carries overtones of speaking or preaching publicly, to publish or to promulgate, or to perform a declarative speech-act openly.” Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 886-887.

<sup>1118</sup> *Ibid.*, 886-887.

giver, living the vocation to which one was called (1 Cor 1:2), and for which one has been gifted by the Spirit (1 Cor 12—14). This ministry of sacrificial service means suffering for everyone who embodies and preaches the gospel of the crucified Lord (1 Cor 1:18-25; 4:9-13) in pursuit of the salvation of others (1 Cor 9:19-27).<sup>1119</sup> In embodying this ministry Paul and his followers are “God’s fellow-workers” (1 Cor 3:9) in Christ, empowered by the Spirit, saving others and, thereby, fulfilling their role as participants or, to use Hooker’s word ‘partners,’ in God’s plan (1 Cor 9:19-27).<sup>1120</sup>

The primary message of 1 Corinthians is that Paul is calling all from disunity and factionalism to unity and conformity (1 Cor 1:9-10): conformity to the “mind of Christ” (1 Cor 2:16), through the empowering Spirit (1 Cor 2:5), to reach the “wisdom of God” (1 Cor 2:7). In this interpretation of the Suffering Servant, God is saving or re-creating the world through selfless, sacrificial love (1 Cor 16:14) until the day “when the Son himself will [also] be subjected to the one who subjected everything to him, so that God may be everything to everyone” (1 Cor 15:28).<sup>1121</sup> This, for Paul, is the message of Isaiah (Isaiah 52:13—53:12), of 1 Corinthians (1 Cor 1:18, 21: 3:15; 4:9-13; 7:16; 8:11; 9:19-27; 10:33; 11:17-34; 15:2) and it is also Paul’s message in 2 Corinthians, Philippians, and Romans.

In summary, Paul discounts the false wisdom of ‘this age’ as against the true wisdom of God (1 Cor 2:6-16), which Christ is embodying and is also inviting Paul and

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<sup>1119</sup> 1 Cor 9:19 reads, “I have become a slave of all so as to win over [i.e. save] as many as possible”.

<sup>1120</sup> In other words, in 1 Corinthians there is a *salvation narrative*, sometimes sub-structural but more often super-structural, as in 1 Cor 9. It may be outlined as follows: God/Christ had commissioned Paul to be the apostle to the Gentiles, and Paul had accepted that commission gratefully (1 Cor 1: 1-2; 9: 1-2). It involved an increasing embodiment of the gospel, and an increasing conformity to Christ (1 Cor 9: 24-27; 15: 45-49). This conformity to the gospel/Christ he preached involved suffering for Paul (1 Cor 4: 9 – 13; 9: 24-27), but it was a price he was willing to pay. Paul’s was a missional imperative that puts the other first “in every way” (1 Cor 10: 33): he increasingly identified with the other as he himself became the servant/slave of Christ. This approach, he believed, was in imitation of Christ’s own example (1 Cor 4: 16; 11: 1). It was Paul’s firm conviction that his embodying of/union with Christ was salvific, that is, that it saved others, that he - through his work and life - participated through Christ in saving others (1 Cor 9: 19, 20, 21, 22; 15: 10, 58).

<sup>1121</sup> Brueggemann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 144.

his followers to imitate him so that he and they may imitate Christ (1 Cor 4:16; 11:1). Their commission is to embody Christ's gospel, to follow Christ's (and Paul's) example. Not only are they to follow Christ's example, but in union with Christ and living with Christ's life, they have also been gifted by the Spirit for this vocation of selfless, sacrificial love (1 Cor 16:14), through which they work for the reconciliation of creation with the Creator (1 Cor 15:28).

#### 7.1.6 Texture Interaction

It is necessary to note that the different textures on occasions amplify, explain and/or support each other. This is an important feature of the chosen analytic for this dissertation. An example is evident in Chapter 4 of this dissertation. In 1 Cor 9:19, Paul's Intertexture reference to a tradition also preserved in Mt 22:26-28; Mk 10:43-45; Lk 22:26-27 echoes a *logion* of Jesus.<sup>1122</sup> All four writers agree that Jesus' original *logion* referred not to following Jesus in his death but to a living or lifestyle following of Jesus by his followers. Paul is using the Intertexture *logion* of Jesus to give his own Inner Texture argument additional, scriptural authority. Moreover, he adds in 'the self-oblation of his death' to stress his call for a faithful lifestyle, even to death, which emerges in the Sacred Texture (1 Cor 15:58).<sup>1123</sup> In Chapter 5 the Inner Texture argumentative structure leads the reader to the climax of the 1 Cor 5:1—6:20 unit in 1 Cor 6:15-20, stressing its importance. The Intertexture reference to Genesis 2:24 in 1 Cor 6:15-17 underpins Paul's conclusion that the union of believer and Christ is ontological, spousal and Spiritual in nature, and gives it extra authority. A final example might also be mentioned. In Chapter 6 the Social and Cultural Texture analysis of 1 Cor 11:17-34 Paul is contrasting an unruly Hellenistic association

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<sup>1122</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 353.

<sup>1123</sup> *Ibid.*

celebratory meal with the tradition of the Lord's Supper: the former is often marked with divisiveness while the latter is meant to be a sacrament of the church's unity. This insight also emerges in the Sacred Texture analysis of 1 Cor 11:17-34. Thus, Paul makes it quite clear that there is no place for divisive practices at the Lord's Supper.

In the above-mentioned ways one texture gives additional understanding, amplification, explanation and/or authority to another and these interacting textures provide a lens for understanding Paul's theology of suffering in 1 Corinthians.

## 7.2 Paul's Theology of Suffering in 1 Corinthians

Paul's theology of Christian suffering begins with a loving God, who is always seeking a relationship with his creation.<sup>1124</sup> However, his people often reject it, alienating themselves from him in a sinful (see 1 Cor 10:1-13) and consequently chaotic, dysfunctional world. Repeatedly throughout the Old Testament, God appeals to humanity through his prophets to return to their covenantal relationship with him.

The coming of Christ is the turning point. Christ came on earth to establish the New Covenant, inviting humanity (Jew and Gentile) to return to its loving relationship with God (1 Cor 11:23-26). Wright says "I and many others, however, have remained convinced (and have argued in considerable detail) that this passage of Isaiah [Isaiah 53], *seen in its full and proper context of the coming of the kingdom, the return of YHWH, and the renewal of both covenant and creation*, was at the very heart of Jesus' understanding of how his vocation would be fulfilled. He would go ahead of his people and take upon himself the suffering that would otherwise fall upon them."<sup>1125</sup> Paul's depiction of Christ is modelled on Isaiah's Suffering Servant, his acceptance of his

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<sup>1124</sup> In the words of Gorman (Chapter 1, section 1.4.2, this dissertation) God is "a missional God."

<sup>1125</sup> Wright, *The Day the Revolution Began*, 189.

suffering on behalf of others, and his subsequent victorious exaltation (Isa 53).<sup>1126</sup> Christ's sacrificial suffering service for others (1 Cor 4:9-13, 16; 6:12-20; 9:19-27; 11:1; 15:31) achieves creation's salvation. In Isaiah's view, the "gospel" of the Old Testament attests that "God worked, and still works, re-creation through suffering."<sup>1127</sup> This is "the power of God at work through human weakness to bring to fruition God's intention for the world."<sup>1128</sup> The conclusion of this dissertation is that this was also Paul's understanding.<sup>1129</sup> The particularly strong range of similarities in language and theme between 1 Corinthians and Isaiah's Suffering Servant Songs, and Paul's use of Isaiah as a structural storyline in 1 Corinthians, are together convincing that Paul saw the sins of the people as *causative* of the suffering of Christ, and the suffering of Christ as *causative* of the salvation of his people.<sup>1130</sup>

So, the question then arises as to how can Paul claim that his suffering and that of his followers is salvific (1 Cor 9:19-27)? The answer begins in Isaiah.<sup>1131</sup> In the view of the majority of commentators Isaiah 52:13—53:12 states that *the servant is identified as the people of Israel, and not just one person, and that that suffering service is salvific*. In the words of John J. Collins "it presents a model of piety which allows that suffering can have a positive purpose:"<sup>1132</sup> in the context of Isaiah 52:13—53:12, the positive purpose mentioned is a liberating, salvific purpose. This understanding

<sup>1126</sup> Paul's understanding of Christ is based significantly on Isaiah's account of the Suffering Servant, especially the Fourth Servant Song (Isa 52:13—53:12). Also, Isaiah is the most quoted Old Testament book (six times) and the book most often alluded to (80-90 allusions or echoes) in 1 Corinthians. See Collins, *First Corinthians*, 94-95, 622-623, Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 1399-1400, Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 482-487, 764-765, Pitre, Barber and Kincaid, *Paul a New Covenant Jew*, 129-16.

<sup>1127</sup> Brueggemann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 144.

<sup>1128</sup> *Ibid.*, 144

<sup>1129</sup> Mark D. Baker and Joel B. Green (*Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, Downers Grove, Ill: Intervarsity Press, 2011, Chapters 2 and 3) make similar claims for 1 Peter.

<sup>1130</sup> See also Hooker, "Did the Use of Isaiah 53 to Interpret His Mission begin with Jesus?" 98.

<sup>1131</sup> Wright says "I and many others, however, have remained convinced (and have argued in considerable detail) that this passage of Isaiah [Isaiah 53], *seen in its full and proper context of the coming of the kingdom, the return of YHWH, and the renewal of both covenant and creation*, was at the very heart of Jesus' understanding of how his vocation would be fulfilled. He would go ahead of his people and take upon himself the suffering that would otherwise fall upon them." (Wright, *The Day the Revolution Began*, 189).

<sup>1132</sup> Collins, *Isaiah*, 114.



broke with a long biblical tradition that understood suffering as a punishment for sin.<sup>1133</sup> As Paul reads Isaiah (especially Isa 52:13—53:12) he understands it to say that the weak and suffering Servant “made [others] righteous,” that he “qualified the others to receive the benefit [or salvation].”<sup>1134</sup> Even though the links between 1 Cor 9:19, Mk 10:43-45, Mt 20:26-27 and Lk 22:26-27, on the one hand, and Isaiah 53, on the other hand, are strong, Hooker believes that the similarities with 4 Maccabees 6:29; 17:21) are even stronger than those with Isaiah 53, particularly the “closer verbal link.”<sup>1135</sup> Therefore, Paul, in advocating the salvific nature of his and his followers’ lives, is loyally giving voice to an inherited, though minority view: “it was part of their Jewish heritage.”<sup>1136</sup>

Paul maintains in 1 Corinthians and in all his other undisputed Letters that his suffering is salvific only ‘in Christ.’ Through his *gradatio* of 1 Cor 6:16-17 Paul declares that the New Covenant offers humanity a re-creation, a union in Christ that is ontological, spousal, Spiritual, and participatory (1 Cor 6:12-20).<sup>1137</sup> This re-creation is confirmed in 1 Cor 15:36-44, where Paul states that at the General Resurrection what “is sown corruptible, [it] is raised incorruptible. It is sown dishonourable, it is raised glorious. It is sown weak; it is raised powerful. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body” (1 Cor 15:42-44). Additionally, Paul uses the phrase ‘in Christ’ (and its derivatives) to express the different nuances of this re-creation ‘in Christ’ right across

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<sup>1133</sup> Collins, *Isaiah*, 114.

<sup>1134</sup> *Ibid.*, 114 115.

<sup>1135</sup> Hooker, “Did the Use of Isaiah 53 to Interpret His Mission begin with Jesus?” 98. One could also mention Daniel 7:27 (when the reign of persecution comes to an end, “then the kingship and dominion and majesty of all the kingdoms under heaven shall be given to the holy people of the Most High, whose kingdom shall be everlasting”); again, suffering leads to victory or salvation.

<sup>1136</sup> Nolan, *Jesus before Christianity*, 137. See also Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church*, 57-58; Jurgen Moltmann, “Die Gekruisigde God,” 110; and Williams, *Maccabean Martyr Traditions in Paul’s Theology of Atonement*, 64-84.

<sup>1137</sup> This *gradatio* is critically important in Paul’s theologising. However, it is not identified in any of the available Commentaries. It is noted, also, in the Literature Review of this dissertation that some commentators, such as Hafemann, maintain that the believer’s union with Christ is “not ontological,” it is merely “exemplary.” It follows for Hafemann that the believer’s suffering is not the suffering of Christ. See Chapter 2, section 1.3.2 of this dissertation.

his undisputed *corpus*. At different times it emphasises union, identification, incorporation and/or participation, “terms that together do justice to the widespread variety and nuance of Paul’s language, theology, and ethical thought about our relatedness to Christ.”<sup>1138</sup>

Of particular interest to this dissertation, this ‘in Christ’ phrase also expresses the view that “the believer partakes in the events of Christ’s death and resurrection rather than simply benefiting from them.”<sup>1139</sup> Gorman maintains that to be ‘in Christ’ is to be ‘in’ the crucified Christ: “it is a participation in the death of Christ.”<sup>1140</sup> This dissertation, however, has demonstrated that this union is “a continuing participation in Christ, who is the new life-power in Paul and in his followers.”<sup>1141</sup> In other words, that it is a participation in the total Christ-event; not just in Christ’s death and resurrection but *also in his life and mission of re-creating creation*.<sup>1142</sup> Recreated in the “image of the heavenly One” (1 Cor 6:15-20; 15:45-49), Paul and all believers become “life-giving Spirits” (1 Cor 15:45), “sacraments of Christ’s love.”<sup>1143</sup> they share salvation with others. Gorman, as discussed in the Literature Review of this dissertation (page 54) is adamant that this re-creation “creates a missional, justice-making people.”<sup>1144</sup> In

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<sup>1138</sup> Campbell, *Paul and Union With Christ*, 406, 420.

<sup>1139</sup> Tannehill, quoted in Campbell, *Paul and Union with Christ*, 48; Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 482-487.

<sup>1140</sup> See this dissertation’s Chapter 1, section 1.4.2 for a detailed treatment of Gorman’s view. This interpretation is also supported by John Paul II, who has said that Christ’s followers “are not just passive beneficiaries of the redemption wrought by Christ.” He appeals to the suffering faithful to ‘Come! Take part through your suffering in this work of saving the world, a salvation achieved through my suffering! Through my cross! Gradually, as the individual takes up his cross, spiritually uniting himself to the cross of Christ, the salvific meaning of suffering is revealed before him.’ (John Paul II, *Salvifici Doloris*, para. 26).

<sup>1141</sup> Gorman, *Cruciformity*, 32; Tannehill, *Dying and Rising with Christ*, 81

<sup>1142</sup> In particular, see Chapter 1 (this dissertation) sections 1.3.3 and 1.4.2 for the views of Tannehill and Gorman on this point.

<sup>1143</sup> Grassi, “The Letter to the Ephesians,” *JBC*, 349. Italics in the original.

<sup>1144</sup> See a detailed presentation of Gorman’s view in the Literature Review Chapter of this dissertation (pages 53-56).

other words, each believer is tasked to exercise God's dominion over creation, to progress God's mission towards its guaranteed fulfilment (1 Cor 15:28, 58).<sup>1145</sup>

Paul enters this participatory mission ritually and symbolically through the 'remembrance' of the Eucharist (1 Cor 11:23-26), just as the Jew through worthy remembrance of the Passover entered into that saving event. This is the believer's 'entry point' into the total Christ-event: an encounter and union with the risen Christ (1 Cor 6:15-20). Through union with Christ Paul's and the believer's suffering, *redefined as selfless, sacrificial service of others, indeed one's entire life*, enters, in and through the Eucharistic remembrance, into living union with Christ in his work for creation's salvation.<sup>1146</sup>

The believer must then act in accordance with this new *being* (1 Cor 6:17). In a *logion* in 1 Cor 9:19 that may be traced back to Jesus, participation in Christ is a participation in Christ's self-sacrificing life and mission (1 Cor 9:19-27 and 11:23-26).<sup>1147</sup> It requires that one preach and embody Christ in a world needing salvation or reconciliation (1 Cor 4:9-13; 9:19-27; 11:17-34; 15:31).<sup>1148</sup> In pursuing this mission in himself and in others, Paul and the believer are empowered by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:15-17). The gifts of the Spirit are all mission-focused (1 Cor 12:1—14:40), they are given to each individual (1 Cor 12:11) "for the building up of the church" (1 Cor 14:4). Indeed, through their entire lives they are saving others, on account of their union with Christ and their consequent participation in Christ's salvific mission. Dunn, as discussed in the Literature Review of this dissertation, calls this participation the

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<sup>1145</sup> For example, Hafemann states that "Paul's theology is a missionary theology:" see Chapter 1, section 1.3.2. of this dissertation. Siu Fung Wu also agrees: see page 49 of this dissertation.

<sup>1146</sup> J. Christiaan Beker, *Paul's Apocalyptic Gospel: The Coming Triumph of God*, 41. Italics added.

<sup>1147</sup> Mt 20:26-27; Mk 10:43-45; and Lk 22:25-27 record the same Jesus-*logion* which is also recorded in 1 Cor 9:19 (Collins, *First Corinthians*, 353). Kugelman, "The First Letter to the Corinthians," 268, says of 1 Cor 9:19: "Following his Master's example and precept he has made himself the slave of all (Lk 22:25-27; Mk 10:43-45)."

<sup>1148</sup> Paul's working definition of suffering is any effort involved in preaching/embodying the gospel of Christ.

believer's "role as a participant in God's work of salvation in Christ," whereas Hafemann calls it outworking our missionary theology.<sup>1149a,b.</sup>

This turning of self and others towards God is going to meet with opposition from self and others: overcoming this opposition is what Paul calls 'suffering' (1 Cor 4:9-13; 9:19-27; 11:17-34; 15:31). Paul's working definition of suffering is any effort involved in preaching or embodying the gospel of Christ. Suffering is, thus, an inescapable "part of the saving process itself,"<sup>1150</sup> of returning creation to God (1 Cor 4:9-13; 9:19-27; 11:17-34; 15:31). Through Paul's union with Christ (1 Cor 6:12-20), his suffering is Christ's suffering; therefore, it is salvific. Paul sees suffering as a necessary, creative sign of conversion to God, a sign of God-at-work through his followers: it is primarily positive because through suffering humanity is reaching towards its ultimate goal, union with God (1 Cor 15:28).<sup>1151</sup> Suffering tells Paul that he is bringing "life out of death, power out of weakness, salvation out of sin."<sup>1152</sup>

One gift of the Spirit in Paul's theological matrix that is superior to all others is love: without it all other gifts are just a "resounding gong or a clashing cymbal" (1 Cor 13:1). This gift "never fails" because it is the Spirit of God at work, the all-conquering love that is God (1 Cor 13:8-13).<sup>1153</sup> God will then be returned to his rightful and central role, and all that is not-God (1 Cor 15:23-28) will be overcome by God-who-is-

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<sup>1149</sup> See this dissertation (Chapter 1, section 1.3.1) for a more detailed discussion of Dunn's view (a), and (Chapter 1, section 1.3.2) for Hafemann's view (b).

<sup>1150</sup> Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*, 327.

<sup>1151</sup> Paul had given an example of this connection between suffering/death and life/salvation in Gal 4:19 ("my children, for whom I am again in labour until Christ is formed in you"): Christ is "coming to birth out of suffering." He returns to that same topic in discussing Christ's battle over his ungodly enemies (1 Cor 15:23-28). Paul is joining Christ in that battle (1 Cor 15:29-34) even though it entails "facing death [=suffering] every day" (1 Cor 15:31). Later in that same chapter (1 Cor 15:50-58) Paul is again speaking of the final victory of the resurrection and is reassuring the Corinthians who have joined him in that same battle that victory will be theirs (1 Cor 15:58 – "be firm, steadfast, always fully devoted to the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labour is not in vain).

<sup>1152</sup> John M. Barclay, "Paul's Story: Theology and Testimony," in *Narrative Dynamics in Paul: A Critical Assessment*, ed. Bruce W. Longenecker (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 154.

<sup>1153</sup> Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 413-40; Collins, *First Corinthians*, 484-85, Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 1073-74.

Love (1 Cor 13:1-13; 16:14), until God's love, *agape*, self-gift is complete and God is everything to everyone (1 Cor 15:28).<sup>1154</sup>

In brief, Paul claims that he is living with Christ's life and mission, that his life is one of loving, spiritual and sacrificial union with Christ (1 Cor 6:15-17).<sup>1155</sup> Paul also believes that he enters or participates in the life of Christ, in other words, in Christ's saving life-event. Consequently, Paul's and the believers' suffering and their entire lives, are salvific. Effecting the salvation of others, even though it brings inevitable suffering, progresses the salvific mission of Christ, fulfilling their vocation as "God's fellow-workers" (1 Cor 3:9), 'co-builders' (1 Cor 3:10), "stewards" (1 Cor 4:1), 'co-partners' (1 Cor 9:23). This is a vocation that awaits every Christian.

The conclusion of this dissertation is clear: *through union with Christ one's 'suffering,' redefined as one's selfless, sacrificial loving service of others, indeed one's entire life and being, becomes, in and through the Eucharistic remembrance, an entry into living communion with God in his work of salvation.*

Consequently, this dissertation submits that 1 Corinthians is the first extant New Testament document to outline Paul's comprehensive theology of suffering, giving suffering positive, salvific meaning, motivation and purpose (not 2 Corinthians as claimed by Anthony E. Harvey and James D. G. Dunn).<sup>1156</sup>

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<sup>1154</sup> Michael J. Himes, "The Suffering of Christ," in *Suffering and the Christian Life*, ed. Richard W. Miller (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2013): 122-123.

<sup>1155</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 177. Referring to 1 Corinthians, he states that "For Paul, suffering is not just something that has to be endured passively because of the onslaughts and opposition of the powers of this world (as in 1 Cor 4:8-13), but also, and *perhaps primarily, as an expression of the church's active engagement with the world for the world's redemption,*" as a verification of the church's battle with the powers of evil (1 Cor 15:23-28). Suffering "is therefore a mode of missionary involvement" (Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 177). There is significant evidence of this approach in 1 Cor 9:19-27; 11:17-34; 15:31-32,

<sup>1156</sup> See Harvey, *Renewal through Suffering*, 128-129; Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 482, footnote 90.

### 7.3 Paul's Theology of Suffering as a Rhetorlect

During the late 1990s and early 2000s, commentators, including Vernon K. Robbins, became increasingly aware, not just of the different classical or secular modes of rhetoric (e.g. judicial, deliberative and epideictic) in early Christian writings, but also of the Old Testament and/or Early Christian “modes of rhetoric or discourse”<sup>1157</sup> expressed in those writings. Robbins calls these rhetorlects. He identifies six major rhetorlects: Apocalyptic, Miracle, Pre-creation, Priestly, Prophetic, and Wisdom.<sup>1158</sup> They are “identifiable on the basis of distinctive configurations of themes, images, topics, reasonings, and argumentations.”<sup>1159</sup> These forms of discourse grow out of the belief systems and contexts in which the people of God developed over the previous millennia, and are best understood and interpreted in that background. Calling these six rhetorlects ‘major’ begs the question as to the existence and identity of other ‘minor’ rhetorlects (e.g. feminist). At The Pretoria International Conference in 1994 Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, argued that there were other ‘central textures,’ e.g. feminist, liberation theology; these later received Robbins’ approval as ‘other’ or ‘non-central’ textures.<sup>1160</sup>

This dissertation contends that Paul’s theology of suffering has many of the features of a rhetorlect and argues that it should be recognised as such. What this dissertation calls the Pauline ‘Christian Suffering Rhetorlect’ begins its documented history in the Suffering Servant Poems of Isaiah 42:1-9; 49:1-7; 50:4-9 and 52:13—53:12, continues to develop through Jeremiah (7:27; 20:1-2; 26:11; 38:6; 43:2), Daniel (chs. 4, 7), Zechariah (7:1-14; 13:1-9), and on through Eleazer and the Maccabean

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<sup>1157</sup> Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 353. Rhetorlects are rhetorical dialects or “modes of discourse” developed by first century believers “who shaped and reshaped language so that they could articulate their new faith understandings about Jesus Christ and the implications of that faith for life” in their church-communities and in their wider societies.

<sup>1158</sup> Robbins, “Conceptual Blending and Early Christian Imagination,” 329.

<sup>1159</sup> Robbins, *Foundations for Sociorhetorical Exploration*, xxii.

<sup>1160</sup> Fiorenza, “Challenging the Rhetorical Half-Turn: Feminist and Rhetorical Biblical Criticism,” 28-53.

martyrs (2 Macc 5:1—7:42; 4 Macc 6:28-29; 17:21-22) into the New Testament books. After Christ's life, death, resurrection and exaltation it assumed an important role in helping Christians understand Christ's life, death, resurrection, and exaltation, and in helping them live out their selfless, sacrificial and loving lives of service. The early Christians were looking for a template or framework to help them understand and express their faith in Christ. The Suffering Servant Poems of Isaiah 42, 49, 50, 52-53 provided such a matrix for an extensive and developing theology of suffering.

A rhetorlect can be identified as a mode of discourse “identifiable on the basis of distinctive configurations of themes, images, topics, reasonings, and argumentations.”<sup>1161</sup> In Chapters 3 and 6 of this dissertation the Intertexture subsections itemise several distinctive themes, images, topics, reasonings, and argumentations which suggest that Paul is using an Isaian template in developing his theology of suffering in 1 Corinthians. For example, a careful study of 1 Corinthians provides numerous examples of the same language, themes and especially the same meaning and storyline as Isaiah 52—53. The language similarities include *παῖς*/servant (Isa 52:13; 1 Cor 4:1), *ἐδούλωσα*/to enslave (Isa 53:11; 1 Cor 9:19), *κλητὸς*/to call (Isa 55:5, 6; 1 Cor 1:2, 9, 24), *δεδικαίωμαι*/to justify (Isa 53:11; 1 Cor 4:4-5), and *παρέδωκα*/to hand on (Isa 53:11, 12; 1 Cor 5:5; 11:23; 13:3). In short, Isaiah and 1 Corinthians share a number of language similarities when discussing suffering. The thematic coherences between the Book of Isaiah and 1 Corinthians are even more numerous. In 1 Cor 4:9-13, for example, Paul paints a picture of himself as one who is “the last/least of all” (1 Cor 4:9; 15:8), “sentenced to (a shameful) death” (1 Cor 4:9), “a spectacle to the world” (1 Cor 4:9), “held in disrepute” (1 Cor 4:11), “ridiculed” (1 Cor

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<sup>1161</sup> Fiorenza, “Challenging the Rhetorical Half-Turn: Feminist and Rhetorical Biblical Criticism,” 28-53.

4:12), “slandered” (1 Cor 4:12), and “rejected” (1 Cor 4:13). Significantly, the phrase ‘last/least of all’ is repeated in 1 Cor 15:8. The underlying concepts of Isaiah 53:3-6 and 1 Cor 4:9-13 are very similar: Isa 53:3-6 reads “He was despised and rejected by others; a man of suffering/sorrows and acquainted with infirmity... he was despised, and we held him of no account,” while 1 Cor 4:12-13 says “ridiculed .... persecuted ... slandered... We have become like the world’s rubbish, the scum of all, to this very moment.” Another theme evident in Isaiah (particularly Isaiah 42:1-9; 49:1-7; 50:4-9 and 52:13—53:12) is the humiliation—exaltation of the ‘Suffering Servant.’ This theme also appears in 1 Corinthians (especially 1 Cor 1:18-31; 2:1-16; 5:7; 8:11; 11:23-26; 15:3-5). 1 Corinthians and Isaiah 52—53 share a significant thematic or conceptual coherence. Its appearance again in Phil 2:6-11 and Rom 5—8 confirms its centrality in Paul’s theology.

Moreover, the borrowing of the narrative or storyline of the Suffering Servant (as a prefiguring of Christ) and of the believer (as a suffering servant) is particularly strong in 1 Corinthians.<sup>1162</sup> God is the principal actor, the one who reaches out and calls his servant (Isa 52:13; 1 Cor 1:2, 9, 24), and God is the one who sanctifies, justifies and redeems him (1 Cor 1:30). The servant is called to be ‘holy’ (1 Cor 1:2) and commissioned to bring God’s word to the nations/Gentiles (Isa 42:1; 1 Cor 1:1; 9:1-2). God calls him to be a light to the Gentiles (Isa 42:1; 1 Cor 1:1). In bringing that gospel to the nations the servant is also to witness, live, and embody that gospel. The servant is a rejected person, not valued, and disfigured (Isa 52:14; 53: 1; 1 Cor 2:3; 4:9-13). Though innocent (Isa 53:9; 1 Cor 4:4), the servant leads a life of humiliation and suffering (Isa 53:3-5; 1 Cor 4:9-13; 9:24-27), he is wounded for our transgressions and crushed for our iniquities (Isa 53:5; 1 Cor 5:7). He is ridiculed, persecuted, and handed

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<sup>1162</sup> Douglas A. Oss, “A Note on Paul’s Use of Isaiah,” *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 2 (1992): 105-112. It is a strong theme also in 2 Corinthians 4.



over (Isa 53:5; 1 Cor 4:12-13). “Upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed” (Isa 53:5; 1 Cor 15:3-5). He will complete God’s work of salvation “through his own obedient suffering, ultimately through his own humble, shameful, and even sacrificial death” (Isa 53:11; 1 Cor 5:7; 8:11; 11:23-26; 15:3, 21-22; see also Rom 5:19) achieving “atonement and forgiveness.”<sup>1163</sup> Vindicated, victorious, and raised from the dead (Isa 52; 13; 1 Cor 15: 3-5), he will sit exalted at God’s right hand (καὶ ὑψωθήσεται καὶ δοξασθήσεται σφόδρα Isa 52:13; 1 Cor 15:28).<sup>1164</sup>

Hooker has studied the similarity in language, thought and meaning between, on the one hand Isaiah 53:5b (“He was wounded because of our transgressions; and with his bruises we are healed”) and Isaiah 53:11 (“the righteous one, my servant, shall make many righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities”), and, on the other hand, Romans 4:25 (“he was delivered up because of our trespasses; he was raised for our justification”). She argues that Romans 4:25 is “the one clear echo of Isaiah 53 in Paul.”<sup>1165</sup> While accepting Hooker’s assertion that Romans 4:25 is a “clear echo of Isaiah 53,” this writer finds reason to disagree with her assertion that Romans 4:25 is the “one clear echo of Isaiah 53 in Paul.” The above paragraphs indicate that 1 Corinthians is the first Pauline Letter to assert clearly that the sins of the people are *causative* of the suffering of Christ (1 Cor 15:3-5), and that the suffering of Christ is *causative* of the salvation of the people (1 Cor 5:7; 8:11; 11:24; 15:3-5); which was Hooker’s claim for Romans 4:25.<sup>1166</sup>

<sup>1163</sup> Wright, *Simply Jesus*, 151 – 2. One could also argue that the Book of Daniel and that of Zechariah highlight the same message (Wright, *Simply Jesus*, 155 – 162).

<sup>1164</sup> Wright maintains that “there was a belief, hammered out not in abstract debate but in and through poverty, exile, torture and martyrdom, that Israel’s sufferings might be, not merely a state *from which* she would, in Yahweh’s good time, be redeemed, but paradoxically, under certain circumstances and in certain senses, be part of the means *by which* that redemption would be effected.” Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 591.

<sup>1165</sup> Hooker, “Did the Use of Isaiah 53 to Interpret His Mission Begin with Jesus?” 101.

<sup>1166</sup> In Hooker’s view (See previous footnote) this is the “most natural meaning” of both the Hebrew and LXX texts, “Did the Use of Isaiah 53 to Interpret His Mission Begin with Jesus?” 96 - “It is no longer simply that the sins of others have caused the Servant to suffer: now his sufferings lead in turn to their

The above-mentioned Isaian template, and its subsequent theology of suffering, is evident in 1 Corinthians (as detailed in this dissertation), and also in Acts 5:17-41; 14:22; Romans 5 and 8; 2 Corinthians 2:14—3:3; 4:7-11; Philippians 2:6-11; 3:7-11; 2 Timothy 3:10-12; Colossians 1:24.<sup>1167</sup> The work of this dissertation, then, shows why Paul's theology of suffering in 1 Corinthians may be considered a rhetorolect, the Pauline Suffering Rhetorolect.

Jarvis J. Williams, in his *Maccabean Martyr Traditions in Paul's Theology of Atonement*,<sup>1168</sup> presents a convincing argument that martyr theology as portrayed in the Old Testament, and especially in 2 and 4 Maccabees, “shaped Paul's conception of Jesus' death.”<sup>1169</sup> He highlights, as examples, the language and thematic similarities between 4 Macc 17:21-22 and Rom 5:9-10 (the martyrs and Jesus died to save others), 2 Macc 7:33; 4 Macc 17:22 and Rom 3:25 (the use of sacrificial language), 2 Macc 5:1—8:5 and Rom 3:25-26; 5:9-10 (the martyrs and Jesus died to reconcile others with God). Williams makes extensive use of Romans 3:21-26; 5:6-11; 2 Cor 5:14-21; Gal 1:4; 3:10-14; Eph 1:7; 2:11-22; Col 1:13-23; 2:13-14; 1 Tim 2:6; and Titus 2:14 in developing and presenting his argument. However, he makes no mention of 1 Corinthians even though this dissertation shows beyond reasonable doubt that Paul had developed a comprehensive theology of suffering (including martyrdom) when writing 1 Corinthians.

Williams makes a pertinent observation that Paul's purpose was “to articulate the nature and significance of Jesus' death with vocabulary and metaphors that his

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restoration and forgiveness,” 98. Brueggemann, in commentary on Isaiah 52:13—53:12, says that it is “the inscrutable resolve of Yahweh to *do something new*. . . *through suffering*.” In his view, the ‘gospel’ of the Old Testament attests that ‘God worked, and still works, re-creation through suffering.’ This is “*the power of God at work through human weakness* to bring to fruition God's intention for the world.”

<sup>1167</sup> Siu Fung Wu, *Suffering in Romans*; Hafemann, *Suffering and Ministry in the Spirit*; Dennis Hamm, “The Sharing of His Sufferings,” discuss Paul's theology of suffering in Romans, 2 Corinthians, and Philippians respectively. Unfortunately they do not comment one way or the other regarding the possibility of it being a rhetorolect: that suggestion is unique to this dissertation.

<sup>1168</sup> Williams, *Maccabean Martyr Traditions in Paul's Theology of Atonement*, 27-63.

<sup>1169</sup> *Ibid.*, 123.

Hellenistic-Jewish audience would have understood.”<sup>1170</sup> For an audience familiar with the Old Testament narratives, Williams asserts that it would “make sense” for Paul to present Jesus’ death

in known vocabulary and with the help of certain traditions that represent the ideas (i.e. Greco-Roman, OT cultic, and martyrological) that were prominent during the time he wrote his letters.<sup>1171</sup>

One could argue that Williams has made an excellent case for the existence of the rhetorolect of the martyrological death (without ever using the word ‘rhetorolect’) in many of Paul’s Letters. However, he has made no mention of 1 Corinthians in that endeavour. Neither has he made any mention of ‘suffering’ (*in a life-long or lifestyle context*) as distinct from a martyr’s death. In contrast this dissertation has identified the existence of a comprehensive presentation of Paul’s every-day, positive, lifestyle, and apostolic suffering as a rhetorolect in 1 Corinthians.

This dissertation contends, then, that Paul’s theology of suffering has many features of a rhetorolect. Robbins defines a rhetorolect as “a form of language variety or discourse identifiable on the basis of a distinctive configuration of themes, topics, reasonings, and argumentations.”<sup>1172</sup> In his treatment of suffering Paul (and other New Testament writers) has a recurring cluster of ‘themes, topics, reasonings, and argumentations’: (1) Christian suffering as apostolic, which is endured in imitation of Christ’s suffering, (2) in suffering the Christian becomes an example to others, (3) it is the power of the Spirit that enables the Christian to endure suffering, (4) through the Christian’s suffering, indeed through their entire life, they are participating in Christ’s salvific mission and bringing about the New Covenant, and (5) there is joy in knowing that one’s suffering is bringing salvation to others. The above clustering is evident in 1

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<sup>1170</sup> Williams, *Maccabean Martyr Traditions in Paul’s Theology of Atonement*, 123.

<sup>1170</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1171</sup> Ibid., 123.

<sup>1172</sup> Robbins, “Socio-rhetorical Interpretation,” 192-219.

Corinthians (as detailed in this dissertation), and also in Acts 5:17-41; 2 Timothy 3:10-12; Colossians 1:24; and Philippians 3:7-11.<sup>1173</sup> The work of this dissertation shows why suffering, and specifically why Christian suffering as presented in 1 Corinthians, may be considered to be a rhetorolect

### 7.3 Suggestions for Further Research

This dissertation focused on Paul's theology of suffering and its salvific value. Some aspects of this topic are open to further research and development. Firstly, Paul, in mentioning his suffering, is speaking of suffering that is consequent upon following a God-given mission (such as opposition, persecution, even death).<sup>1174</sup> The question subsequently arises: what about other types of suffering, such as illness, accidents, or natural disasters? Can it be argued that the suffering these bring may also be salvific because they are the suffering of the believer and, therefore, of Christ? In particular, can this be shown in 1 Corinthians? Secondly, this dissertation claims that Paul and his followers enter into the Christ-event through the Christian re-interpretation of Jewish Remembrance theology. There is room for an even fuller exploration of this claim in a larger investigation. "Thirdly, this dissertation holds that Paul, in writing 1 Corinthians, had a developed understanding of his own theology of suffering. The question arises, however, as to whether this understanding developed in later Letters: in particular between 1 and 2 Corinthians as suggested by James D. G. Dunn and Anthony E. Harvey (see the Introduction to this Dissertation, ps. 3 and 4)."

This study of Paul's theology of suffering in 1 Corinthians offers some original conclusions. It is the first comprehensive, written expression of Paul's theology of suffering. The importance of the *gradatio* in 1 Cor 6:15-17 in establishing the

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<sup>1173</sup> Dennis Hamm, "The Sharing of His Sufferings," 24. Hamm provides the non-Pauline references (including Acts).

<sup>1174</sup> This is the view of some commentators, such as Hamm, "The Sharing of His Sufferings," 19-48.

ontological nature of the believer's union with Christ and of the 'remembrance' command (1 Cor 11:23-26) as the entry-point into union with Christ are both distinctive to this dissertation.<sup>1175</sup> This dissertation also suggests that 1 Cor 9:19-27 should be added to the canon of Paul's 'tribulation lists' because of its clear mention of suffering. It also claims that Paul's description of suffering throughout 1 Corinthians should be categorised as a rhetorolect, that is, the Pauline Suffering Rhetorolect.

Overall, it contends that Paul portrays a comprehensive theology of suffering in 1 Corinthians, and that he locates it essentially and centrally in the history of God's covenantal relationship with his people. He redefines 'suffering' by giving it new ministry-related meaning, and a positive orientation, motivation and purpose. For Paul, it is an inescapable part of humanity's work of returning creation to its Creator. Suffering is the selfless, sacrificial service of others in the promotion of God's plan for creation. Being the "work of the Lord" this service is "not in vain" (1 Cor 15:58). This means that 1 Corinthians – and not 2 Corinthians (as Harvey and Dunn claim) or Romans (as Hooker maintains) – is the first time in the Pauline corpus and the first time in the extant Western philosophical and religious literature that Paul's new and positive understanding of suffering receives written theological expression.<sup>1176</sup>

#### **7.4 Present-Day Application**

Paul believes firmly that the reconciliation of creation and the Creator, effectively inaugurated by Christ, is not yet complete (1 Cor 15:23-28), and that it is humanity's task, empowered by the Spirit of God, to join Christ's battle and to bring creation to completion as God planned (1 Cor 15:20-28). As members of the Body of

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<sup>1175</sup> Neither point is made in any of the available commentaries.

<sup>1176</sup> Harvey, *Renewal Through Suffering*, 112-29, but especially 129; Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 482. Hooker, "Did the Use of Isaiah 53 to Interpret His Mission Begin with Jesus?" 102-03.

Christ (1 Cor 12:12-31) and as participants in the Eucharist (1 Cor 11:17-34), “we prove inconsistent if we are not actively participating” in this re-creation: one might say even hypocritical.<sup>1177</sup> Humanity was created and re-created to embody and preach reconciliation, the central message of 1 Corinthians (1 Cor 1:9), and until humanity follows the Eucharistic command and truly unites with God and one another (1 Cor 10:16-17; 11:17-23), the world will be a very poor foretaste of the future eschatological banquet (1 Cor 11:26).<sup>1178</sup>

The missional reconciliation of the world with its Creator originates in God and finds its ultimate goal in God (1 Cor 15:28): it “is fundamentally rooted in the character and purposes of God.”<sup>1179</sup> It follows that humans, ‘made in the image and likeness of God’ (1 Cor 15:49) are, by their very nature, also missional. The re-creation is now being brought about by God working through the sacrificial, Christ-embodying lives of believers. Benedict XV, referring to 1 Cor 1:2 and 12:27, has said that, called to be members of Christ and of one another “we are a reality .... that demands visible expression in the life of our communities.”<sup>1180</sup> Borrowing words and themes from Paul (Gal 1:16; 6:14; 1 Cor 1:9; 11:17-34; 15:28, 58), Cavanaugh says that Christians are “to become God’s human presence,” overcoming all alienation, and becoming “reconciled, caring for each other, especially the weak,” enduring all forms of suffering through which “the Church becomes a present foretaste of the future eschatological feast.”<sup>1181</sup>

The Christian believers’ challenge, then, is to share this gospel of unconditional love and unity with the poor, sick, disabled, bereaved, persecuted, homeless, the

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<sup>1177</sup> WCC, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, paragraph 20. Pope Francis, in his exhortation ‘Gaudete et Exsultate,’ pars. 19-23, has said that as true followers of Christ the believers’ “personal mission is inseparable from the building of the kingdom... of love, justice and universal peace.”

<sup>1178</sup> William T. Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 267-68. See also Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 130: “Paul presents himself as the example of the proper non-divisive, conciliatory behaviour to which he calls the Corinthians.”

<sup>1179</sup> Barram, “Pauline Mission as Salvific Intentionality,” 245.

<sup>1180</sup> Benedict XV, Apostolic Exhortation *Sacramentum Caritatis* (Rome: Vatican Press, 2007), # 76, 84, 85, 88, 89.

<sup>1181</sup> Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist*, 267-268.

displaced and the despairing, in fact, with all, knowing that their work will involve effort and suffering, possibly even death. This gospel was counter-cultural in Paul's time, and, arguably, it is still counter-cultural today. Crucially, it will not be in vain (1 Cor 15:58). And because God is love (1 Cor 13:8-13), everything the Christian does "in love" (1 Cor 16:14) is creative, is incarnational, is renewing the earth, is salvific, is succeeding, is creating a world in which God "is everything to everyone" (1 Cor 15:58; 15:28).<sup>1182</sup> That is Paul's message of unity and hope. It is to be found in 1 Corinthians and is to be embodied by Christian believers.

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<sup>1182</sup> Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 1035. In Thiselton's own words: "'God is love' ... is already there in Paul ... It lies at the heart of Paul's theology of grace."

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