

, PAUL: AUTHORITY THROUGH IMAGES,

Thesis

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INTRODUCTION

In the opening verses of most of Paul's letters, he claims to be an apostle of Jesus Christ "by calling" or "by the will of God."¹ He defends his apostleship and uses whatever advantages he can find to try and control his assemblies across the Mediterranean world.

We can get a feel for Paul's authority through a careful reading of his letters.² These letters gave direction to his followers on a variety of subjects, and it is because they are letters that they offer an undisguised look into the character of both the assemblies and Paul himself.

Paul traveled from Jerusalem to Rome and founded these house churches along the way. Bengt Holmberg describes "Paul's founding of a local church implied a profound, life-transforming and permanent influence on a group of people."³ However "life-transforming" it might have been, Paul did not have an easy time of it. Since Paul was an itinerant, he could not be in all assemblies at the same time. It was necessary for him to maintain a line of communication with these new converts for their guidance and for solutions to their newly discovered problems. Out of this need to

¹See Rom. 1:1, 1 Cor. 1:1, 2 Cor. 1:1, Gal. 1:1 "Paul an apostle", and in Philem. 1 a "prisoner for Christ Jesus."

²Most scholars accept only seven letters: Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians, and Philemon.

³Bengt Holmberg, Paul and Power (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), 70.

communicate, we find Paul's greatest strength: literary power. In 2 Corinthians 10:10 his letters are described as "weighty and strong (or powerful)." But what is meant by "weighty and powerful?" Did Paul have authority over these people? And if so, what type of authority was it? This is the purpose of my thesis: to try and define Paul's authority as it was demonstrated in his letters to his assemblies.

Before you can look for something in these letters, you must know exactly what you are looking for. Authority is such an illusive concept to define. Holmberg defines authority as signifying "a type of social relation between at least two persons where one is the ruler."⁴ John Schutz in defining authority does so with respect to power - "power is the source of authority, and authority is a version of power as it interprets power and makes it accessible."⁵ And Ernest Best in his article "Paul's Apostolic Authority" looks at authority from a practical view - "authority is exercised when rules are set down and where those who break these or other generally recognized rules are punished."⁶

Authority seems easy enough to point out when you come across it in the texts but it can become difficult to understand because of the maze of relationships involved;

⁴Holmberg, Paul and Power, 135.

⁵John Howard Schutz, Paul and the Anatomy of Apostolic Authority (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 21.

⁶Ernest Best, "Paul's Apostolic Authority," Journal For The Study Of The New Testament 27 (1986) 3-25: 12

cultural/social implications, and the context in which it is used. An attempt will be made to grasp Paul's authority through his use of imagery. Concentration will be on the self-understanding of Paul as he described himself to his churches through these images: "apostle," "prophet," "Christ-like," "father," "mother," "brother/sister," "master builder," "planter," and a patron-client type image.

To go about this in a systematic method, I will establish models. I will explain how these terms might have been understood to someone living in the first century Mediterranean world and then I will compare Paul's use of these terms to see if the two are agreeable. Or does Paul use these terms to fit his particular needs without consideration to how they might have been understood by those who called Paul the founder of their church?

CHAPTER 1

GOD CENTERED TERMINOLOGY

In this first chapter I will look at the obvious authoritative terms (apostle, prophet, and Christ-like analogies) used by Paul and determine if these comparisons by Paul between himself and these terms were the way in which his followers would have understood them.

APOSTLE

Paul often referred to himself as an "apostle" (Rom. 1:1, 11:13; 1 Cor. 1:1, 4:9, 9:1, 9:2, 15:9; 2 Cor. 1:1; Gal. 1:1, and 1 Thess. 2:6), and he used the word "apostle" in eleven other references in varying contexts.

The role of the apostle (Grk. apostolos meaning messenger, envoy, or ambassador) was well established in the 12 apostles of Christ. The Hebrew equivalent shaliah according to The Encyclopedia of the Jewish Religion was "an agent appointed by and empowered to act in behalf of his principle."¹ It also adds that when combined with mitzvah, it meant an "emissary appointed to fulfill religious functions. The Talmud says that he is Divinely protected from harm while fulfilling his duties."² However in the Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, apostolos is

¹J. Zwi Werblowsky & Geoffrey Wigoder, The Encyclopedia of the Jewish Religion (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1965), 353.

²Ibid., 353.

defined as only "legal rather than religious."³

In contrast, the twelve "apostles," or more commonly called disciples⁴ of Jesus were chosen men whom Jesus called out of society⁵ and sent them out on a religious journey with the authority to perform their calling.⁶ They became missionaries of Jesus and were to be supported by those who heard their message. "Their work was rooted in the rural world,"⁷ where they were "compensated for their preaching and healing" (Lk. 10:17f) and where trust in God was needed for sustenance (Mt. 6:25f).

Luke gives the job description of an apostle in Acts 1:22-23, "So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us - one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection." Paul could not meet all of Luke's qualifications, in fact Paul did not act as a Jesus apostle. He supported himself with a trade and for the most part would not allow himself to be supported by the community (1 Cor. 9:3; 2 Cor. 11:7, 12:13) with the exception of

³K.H. Rengstorf, Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964), 414-415.

⁴Most often they are referred to as mathetes - a learner or a disciple, but not necessarily an apostle. They certainly had authority.

⁵At least Peter, Andrew, James, John, and Levi were called out of society (Mk. 1:16-3:19).

⁶Compare Mt. 9:36-10:42.

⁷G. Theissen, Social Setting of Pauline Christianity (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), 31.

accepting a gift from the Philippians (Phil. 4:15-17). Paul, in being different, had to defend his authority on several occasions while still recognizing the "apostles" at Jerusalem (Gal. 1:17,19).

Paul traces his authority back to his Damascus road experience and his encounter with the risen Christ (1 Cor. 9:1 & 15:8-11).⁸ He writes to the Corinthians that the authority he has was given to him by the Lord.⁹ He associates his writings as a "command of the Lord" (1Cor. 14:37).

Paul cleverly claims that what he says is not "his words" but more accurately "God's word" (1 Thess. 2:2-3, 2:13, 4:15; 1 Cor. 14:37; 2 Cor. 5:18-20). He proclaims the "will of God" (1 Thess. 4:3). Anyone then who disagrees with Paul, does not have an argument with Paul but rather with God (1 Thess. 4:8 & Gal. 1:8). This authority he has been given is over all Gentiles (Rom. 1:5, 11-15, 11:13, 15:14-24; 2 Cor. 11:28). The claim of apostleship by Paul is most prominently defended in his letters to the Romans, Corinthians, and Galatians.

Greek letters often opened with this formula: the author identifying himself and then addressing to whom the letter

⁸"Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are not you my workmanship in the Lord?" (9:1). "Last of all to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. For I am the least of the apostles...on the contrary I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God which is with me" (15:8-11).

⁹Compare 2 Cor. 13:10 with 10:8.

was written. In Romans 1:1, Paul states, "Paul, a servant (doulos) of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle (apostolos)" and later adds, "I am an apostle to the Gentiles" (11:13). Paul is not unique in referring to himself as a doulos of Jesus Christ (compare James 1:1; 2 Pet. 1:1, and Jude 1) but this is not a slave as one might immediately think. Barrett points out "a Greek did not think of himself as the slave (doulos) of his ruler or king, nor did he think of himself as the slave of his divine king, or god, or speak of his service to the god as slavery."¹⁰ But this reference to himself as the servant shows that Paul saw his mission from above. He is unique as an apostle in his relationship to God, not in the function of an apostle. "As an apostle - and only as an apostle - he stands in no organic relationship with human society as it exists in history."¹¹

Paul's use of apostle in Romans 16:7 shows that he considered others to be apostles. Paul referred to Andronicus and Junias both as apostles. Barrett states, "They were senior in standing to Paul himself."¹² This is argued on the basis that Paul says they were apostles of

¹⁰C. K. Barrett, The Epistle to the Romans, Harper's New Testament Commentaries (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1987), 16.

¹¹K. Barth, The Epistle to the Romans (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), 27.

¹²Barrett, The Epistle to the Romans, 284.

"note" and that they were in Christ before him. However, Best may be right in thinking that when Paul uses apostle it does not imply authority; the two are separate.

In his letters to the Corinthians, Paul uses the term apostle in different contexts that may shed some light on his understanding of the term (1 Cor. 4:9, 9:1, 9:5, 12:28-29, 15:7; 2 Cor. 11:5, 12:11-12). In the first reference he states, "For I think that God has exhibited us apostles as last of all, like men sentenced to death; because we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels and to men" (1 Cor. 4:9). F.F. Bruce in his commentary states this image is like the "condemned criminals in the amphitheatre, to fight with wild beasts as the grand finale of the games, a spectacle (theatron) in the eyes of heaven and earth."¹³ Paul does allude to fighting with beasts in 15:32, "I fought with beasts at Ephesus." Barrett brings out an interesting point, "Being a spectacle for the whole world, condemned to die, was the same position of Christ himself."¹⁴

In the next two references in 1 Corinthians 9, Paul defends his apostleship by asking the question, "Am I not an apostle?" The first important note of this passage is Paul's defense of his apostleship. By asking the question, "Am I

¹³F.F. Bruce, I & II Corinthians, The New Century Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 1987), 50.

¹⁴C.K. Barrett, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, Harper's New Testament Commentaries (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1987), 110.

not an apostle?" he sets them up for his answer. His justification is that he too has seen the risen Lord (1 Cor. 15:8-11) as the others had, and that his commission had come from the risen Lord (1 Cor. 9:1) and not from humans. As proof they, the Corinthians, are the seal of his apostleship (1 Cor. 9:2).

The second interesting comment in this verse (1 Cor. 9:5) is the reference to marriage. Apostles apparently had the right to be married. "Presumably the majority were married, and took their wives with them on their journeys."¹⁵ In the same letter we are told Paul's opinion concerning marriage in chapter 7. He wished that they could be as he was (1 Cor. 7:7). From the context it appears that he is unmarried. However, he is not here "commanding" (epitage) them to do so, only "saying" (lego) by permission (suggnomen).

In 1 Cor. 12, Paul lists offices, or perhaps functions, within the assembly appointed by God: "first apostles, second prophets, third teachers" and so on concluding with "speakers of tongues" (v. 28). Apostles have the prominent position in this list and are qualified by having seen the risen Christ (1 Cor. 15:5-10). It is important to notice a later shift in the Pauline school concerning the priority of this list in the letter to the Ephesians. There the apostles are first, the prophets second, and thirdly are evangelists

¹⁵Barrett, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 203.

(euaggelistas) not teachers (didaskalous) as Paul stated earlier. This of course puts emphasis on bringing or preaching the "good news" or the "gospel." After the death of the ones who had seen the risen Christ, the "power" or "authority" was left solely on the bringers of the good news, the evangelists. Their new, prominent role moved them up on the list within the churches.

In 1 Cor. 15:7, Paul mentions that Christ appeared to James, then to all the apostles. The question is then, who are "all the apostles?" Does Paul mean the Jerusalem apostles or does Paul use the phrase in some broader meaning? Barrett suggests that it is not a reference to the twelve but is broader in scope.¹⁶ Bruce points out that "all" the apostles mentioned here included James, who did not belong to the Twelve, so he suggests that it refers to a larger scope.¹⁷

In Paul's second letter to the Corinthian assembly, he talks of not being inferior to the "superlative" apostles (2 Cor. 11:15), and then justifies his apostleship by his actions (2 Cor. 12:11-12). It is not obvious who these "superlative" apostles (hyperlian apostoloi) are, whether they are the Jerusalem apostles whom Paul says he did not meet (Gal. 1:19), or as Barrett argues "they are not the Jerusalem apostles; it is clear Paul at least sees himself

¹⁶Barrett, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 343.

¹⁷Bruce, I & II Corinthians, 141-142.

equal and perhaps even a little more than them."¹⁸ According to Luke, Christ's ministry was signified with signs and wonders (Acts 2:22) and the Twelve at Jerusalem performed the same signs and wonders (Acts 2:43), so too Paul performed the same signs and wonders (2 Cor. 12:12). But Paul claims to be more, "I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God which is with me" (1 Cor. 15:10).

The last reference of Paul's use of apostle is in Galatians 1:17,19, "Nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me...but I saw none of the other apostles except James the Lord's brother." Schutz points out a contrast here, "Paul contrasts not only Judaism with Christianity (i.e. Saul with Paul) but also himself as apostle with the Jerusalem Christians."¹⁹ Paul, while wanting the Jerusalem church's blessing, was called to go beyond the boundaries of Judaism and he boldly did so.

In all these references where Paul uses the term "apostle," none is explicitly used to show a unique authority. Of course, Paul expected obedience from his followers (Philm. 21; Phil. 2:12; 2 Cor. 10:6), but not obedience to an "apostle." He uses apostle primarily where his position is questioned, as at Corinth or Galatia. Or

¹⁸C.K. Barrett, The Second Epistle to the Corinthians, Harper's New Testament Commentaries (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1987), 273.

¹⁹J.H. Schutz, Paul and the Anatomy of Apostolic Authority (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 135.

where he wanted to establish himself in a community where he had not been before, like Rome. Holmberg states, "Paul's apostolate and the Jerusalem leaders' apostolate are scarcely compatible terms."²⁰

Ernest Best convincingly demonstrates that in Paul's case being an apostle is not necessarily related to exercising authority. He writes, "At no point do we find him issuing instructions to others on the basis of his apostleship."²¹

In associating himself with the Jesus-movement Paul had to show a personal witness to its leader, Christ. The Jesus chosen apostles walked and ate with Jesus and they were legitimated in that he appeared to them after his resurrection where they, like him, could perform signs and wonders. Paul needed this experience to become an equal to those who knew Jesus before and after his death. Paul claimed that experience "on the road to Damascus" and claimed to perform signs and wonders like them. He even claimed to be "caught up to the third heaven" (2 Cor. 12:1-4).

He only needed to call upon this fact when under question from his followers and he did not attach apostle and apostolic authority together.

²⁰Bengt Holmberg, Paul and Power (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), 180-183.

²¹E. Best, "Paul's Apostolic Authority," Journal for the Study of the New Testament 27 (1986): 11.

PROPHET

Without calling himself one, Paul compares himself to a prophet in three key passages: Gal. 1:15, "But when he who had set me apart before I was born and had called me through his grace"; 2 Cor. 13:10, "I may not have to be severe in my use of the authority which the Lord has given me for building up and not for tearing down", and Rom. 1:1, "Set apart for the gospel of God." What exactly could be gained from this image and how would this image be understood by his listeners? We must begin with an explanation of "prophet."

F.F. Bruce, in his commentary on the Corinthian letters, talks about prophets and states "prophets declared the mind of God in the power of the Spirit."²² This title prophet is translated from the Hebrew word nabi. It means to "flow forth," as the prophet was used by God as a mouthpiece.

The kings often failed, so the "mouth-of-God," the prophets, were often seen as the true leader. As a result of their access or relationship with God, these prophets often acted as intercessors for the people and could perform miracles, heal the sick, and raise the dead (2 Kings 5; 1 Kings 17:17f).

The appearance of Christian prophecy could be supported in Paul's letters, but in a different context. Holmberg writes, "There is no indication that there were wandering

²²Bruce, I & II Corinthians, 123.

prophets, rather we must think of them as having an important and permanent function in worship in the local church."²³

Paul regarded prophets as the highest function within the local church by placing prophets next to apostles in his list of church functions (1 Cor. 12:28). We are told in 1 Cor. 14:3 that the function of the prophet was "he who prophesies speaks to men for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation." And later in the same chapter Paul writes, "if all prophecy, and an unbeliever or outsider enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all, the secrets of his heart are disclosed" (1 Cor. 14:24-25). Paul's defense of prophecy can be found in 1 Thess. 5:19f.²⁴

In Romans 1:1, Paul uses the phrase "set apart for the gospel of God" (aphorismenos eis euaggelion theou). Barrett points out that (aphorismenos - root aphorizo) is "not only similar in meaning to, but also has the same consonants as the Hebrew root p-r-sh, which underlines the word Pharisee."²⁵ Paul uses this phrase from a background of the Old Testament where "the prophets were set apart by God for their work"²⁶ (compare Jer. 1:5 and Isa. 49:1). Here Paul

²³Holmberg, Paul and Power, 23.

²⁴"Do not quench the Spirit, do not despise prophesying" 1 Thess. 5:19-20.

²⁵Barrett, The Epistle to the Romans, 17. Paul does claim to be a Pharisee in Phil. 3:5.

²⁶Ibid., 17.

understands his call from God to proclaim Jesus Christ similar to that of Jeremiah and Isaiah's call, that had its power or authority not in the person of the prophet, but rather in the Son of God whom God raised from the dead.

The next reference in 2 Corinthians shows Paul's understanding of the Judaic meaning of prophet and his sense of authority. "I write this while I am away from you, in order that when I come I may not have to be severe (apotomos) in my use of the authority (exousian - power) which the Lord has given me for building up and not for tearing down" (2 Cor. 13:10).

The first thing that appears is Paul's understanding of his relationship with Christ and authority. Paul does not say "my authority" but the Lord's authority given for Paul's use. This establishes an important foundation for understanding the common prophetic charge at the end of the verse. Jeremiah uses the same imagery of building up and tearing down in 1:10 and 24:6.²⁷ Paul, too, uses the same words in 2 Cor. 10:8 and associates the authority as coming from the Lord.²⁸ But even though Paul uses a prophetic image,

²⁷"See, I have set you this day over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant" Jer. 1:10, and "I will build them up, and not tear them down; I will plant them, and not uproot them" Jer. 24:6.

²⁸"For even if I boast a little too much of our authority, which the Lord gave for building you up and not for destroying you, I shall not be put to shame" 2 Cor. 10:8.

the authority is not his by his position, but only for his use, given by the Lord who has the exousian.

The last reference of Paul using the image of a prophet is found in Gal. 1:15, "But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and had called me through his grace." The phrase "set apart" was discussed earlier and demonstrates a prophetic call reported by Jeremiah in 1:5, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you." "Before I was born or formed" was a common way for a prophet to introduce himself (see Judges 16:17; Isa. 44:2,24, 49:1,5). J.B. Lightfoot states that Paul's "consecration" to his ministry is derived from this verse. He states, "First the predestination to his high office, which dated from before his birth; secondly, the conversion and call to the Apostleship, which took place on the way to Damascus, Acts 9:3; and thirdly, the entering upon his ministry in fulfillment of this call."²⁹

Koch's definition of a prophet best fits Paul, "a spokesman clearly authorized by God who - left to his own resources, is duty bound to his conscience and no one else."³⁰ The only exception in Paul's case is that he sees his authority and his sender as Christ, who himself was sent of God. Paul, no doubt, valued the prophets, that

²⁹J.B. Lightfoot, The Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1987), 82.

³⁰K. Koch, The Prophets (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 16.

explains why a later letter understood them comparable with the apostles as the foundation of the church (1 Cor. 14:4 and Eph. 2:20 & 3:5).

CHRIST-LIKE

There are several ways in which Paul compares himself with Christ. Barrett says, "The life of an apostle is a particularly clear reflection of Christ crucified."³¹ This relationship enabled Paul to be confident because his mission was not his own; but rather, he was fulfilling the mission of God (i.e., Rom. 1:1-6). Whenever Paul showed authority or used "boastful" language, it was not based on his position but it was in Christ who gave him this authority (2 Cor. 10:8, 13:10).³² Barrett continues, "Paul's privileged status as a special representative of Christ gives him authority but none of the ordinary human accomplishments of authority; his privilege is suffering (1 Cor. 4:9-13; Col. 1:24)."³³

Paul had a special "privilege" but not in the eyes of most, for his privilege was that of Christ himself - Christ crucified, "O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as

³¹Barrett, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 116.

³²For the explanation of 2 Cor. 10:8 see page 15 above. "I write this while I am away from you, in order that when I come I may not have to be severe in my use of the authority which the Lord has given me for building up and not for tearing down" 2 Cor. 13:10.

³³Barrett, The Epistle to the Romans, 16-17.

crucified?" (Gal. 3:1). T. Callan suggests, "Paul justified his boasting by identifying with Jesus - he boasts of his accomplishment as a servant of the Lord."³⁴

Schutz states, "The quest for power often appears to be a quest for its symbols."³⁵ The cross as a symbol of power is used by Paul especially in 1 Cor. 1:10-4:21. However, Paul mentions the cross of Christ 7 times in his letters (1 Cor. 1:17,18; Gal. 5:11, 6:12,14; Phil. 2:8, 3:18). Schutz explains, "In 1 Cor. 1:10-4:21, we have an elaborate exposition of apostolic authority in preparation for its specific application in 5:1."³⁶

Paul begins 1 Corinthians 1 by denying his power, "was Paul crucified for you?" (v. 13), and tells the Corinthians that when he visits he will "find out not the talk of these arrogant people but their power" (1 Cor. 4:19). There were apparently some there who did have power so Paul, in defending himself to these people, takes them back to the cross of Christ (1 Cor. 1:18); back to the "logos of the cross."

This return to the cross "produces opposite effects in those 'who are perishing' and those 'who are being

³⁴T. Callan, "Competition and Boasting: Toward a Psychological Portrait of Paul," Journal of Religious Studies, vol. 13, number 2: 39.

³⁵Schutz, Paul and the Anatomy of Apostolic Authority, 187.

³⁶Ibid., 190.

saved.'"³⁷ The counterpart to "foolishness" is God's power. Barrett states, "This is where Paul's understanding of the gospel begins; cf. Rom. 1:16."³⁸

Paul puts forth his mission to the Corinthians in 2:1-5. In these five verses Paul outlines all the key elements:

"I knew nothing except for Christ crucified"
 "I was with you in much fear and trembling"
 "my words were demonstration of Spirit and of power"
 "faith in power of God"

As the Corinthian church was divided,³⁹ Paul stresses that the Christians at Corinth are collectively the body of Christ, and a church divided means Christ is divided (1 Cor. 12:12).

Paul's sense of power is derived from the cross of Christ. It is this same cross that he says he suffered persecution for "only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ" (Gal. 6:12). It is in this cross that Paul can glory, "but far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Gal. 6:14) and those who oppose him and Christ are enemies of the cross, "for many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, live as enemies of the cross of Christ" (Phil. 3:18).

³⁷Bruce, I & II Corinthians, 34.

³⁸Barrett, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 52.

³⁹See especially G. Theissen, Social Setting of Pauline Christianity and Barrett in both his commentaries on the Corinthian letters.

The next area is Paul's understanding of his relationship with Christ. In 2 Cor. 5:18-21, Paul establishes the relationship that through Christ, God is reconciling all the world to himself. Paul's part in this plan is that he has been given this message of God's reconciliation through Christ to deliver to the world, "the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and designated Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 1:3-4). This mission is through Jesus Christ and God the Father (Gal. 1:1).

Paul continues in 2 Cor. 6:1 that he is "working together with him (Christ)" to accomplish this deliverance of reconciliation. This does not mean that Paul sees himself equal to Christ. It shows that God is working through Christ and Paul to accomplish his purpose, and does not automatically imply that they are equals.

Paul tells the Corinthians to imitate him (1 Cor. 4:15). This is not an egotistical statement by Paul, for in telling them to imitate him he later qualifies the statement by stating "be imitators of me as I am of Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1). The source is still Christ and Paul is the bridge. This idea of imitation is repeated in 1 Thess. 1:6 and Phil. 3:17.

Paul does not establish himself as the only one the Corinthians should imitate. In 1 Cor. 4:6, Apollos is included as one to "learn by" and in 1 Cor. 16:16 the whole

household of Stephanas is given preference, because they were the first converts in Achaia.

Paul not only is to be imitated as he imitates Christ, he not only has power from God through Christ, but in four passages he says he is "speaking in Christ." This is a sense of verbal authority where Paul is speaking on behalf of Christ as his representative.

The first reference is in Romans 9:1, "I am speaking the truth in Christ, I am not lying." It should be obvious that if one is speaking in Christ the output should be nothing less than the truth, but Paul added the obvious, "I am not lying." Barrett explains, "he speaks the truth in Christ, and his conscience bears witness in the Holy Spirit. In comparison with these divine witnesses (8:26,34) the verdict of his own conscience is unimportant (1 Cor. 4:4)."⁴⁰

The next reference in 2 Cor. 2:14,17 presents a peculiar image, "But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumph, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere...in the sight of God we speak in Christ." There seem to be two images at work here: one of a triumphant procession and another concerning fragrance.

Herbert Gale points out, "The picture seems to be that of a leader returning victoriously from his conquests. Ordinarily, the persons being led in such a situation would

⁴⁰Barrett, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 102.

be those who had suffered defeat."⁴¹ This is not far from Paul's understanding. Paul suggests that we should "yield" ourselves to God (Rom. 6:13) and that we are "slaves of God" (Rom. 6:22). Of course this differs in that it was not a hostile take over by God but rather a willing submission to God. However, the imagery is striking. In the second image of "fragrance," Barrett suggests, "The use of incense was customary in triumphal and quasi-triumphal processions, both royal and religious."⁴² He also points out that the apostolic procession was considered by Paul to be a spectacle before the whole world (1 Cor. 4:9),⁴³ so this could be an alternative solution to a unique image used by Paul.

The last reference is in 2 Cor. 12:19, "It is in the sight of God that we have been speaking in Christ." Paul's conscience must be clear, speaking in Christ, for here he admits that God is fully aware of his actions. To a listener, this adds validity to what the speaker (Paul) is saying. Whether what he says is really true or false, it is hard to argue with someone when they say "God" has approved of their mission.

Paul's boasting is done, not in himself, but in Christ. "In Christ Jesus, then, I have reason to be proud of my work

⁴¹H.M. Gale, The Use of Analogy in the Letters of Paul (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1964), 148.

⁴²Barrett, The Second Epistle to the Corinthians, 98.

⁴³Ibid., 98.

for God" (Rom. 15:17). Again Paul stresses his relationship with Christ and God. He works for God through Christ. In verse 15 he speaks of writing boldly "by way of reminder,"⁴⁴ but can do so "because of the grace given me by God."

Paul is responsible for the Gentiles (Rom. 15:16) to God and speaks of only what Christ has wrought (katergazomai to accomplish, achieve, work out) through him to win the obedience from the Gentiles (Rom. 15:18), "by the power of signs and wonders" (Rom. 15:19). This is actually Christ's power working (katergazomai) through Paul.

In 1 Cor. 15:31, Paul again speaks of his pride "I protest, brethren, by my pride in you which I have in Christ Jesus." Paul here is boasting in the fact that the Corinthians have converted from a heathen world and he is not boasting in human achievement but boasting in the Lord.

Paul boasts again in Phil. 1:25,26 and even though the relationship, between Christ and himself, is mentioned the phrasing of the sentence seems different. "So that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus, because of my coming to you again." This does seem a bit odd that he would say they should glory in him, but taken in context, Paul is talking of being present with the Lord (Phil. 1:23). This could be paralleled with 2 Cor. 1:14 where Paul says that on the day of the Lord (which is believers present with Christ, compare 1 Thess. 4:16f), "you can be proud of us as we

⁴⁴Compare 1 Cor. 4:17.

can be of you." A sense that all believers are in it together for each other's benefit and this is the context of of this passage if you begin at verse 24.⁴⁵

The "boastful" language of Paul has been addressed recently by Bruce Malina. He points out that first century Mediterranean culture was "an agonistic culture, characterized by competition for honor."⁴⁶ T. Callan argues that Paul was very competitive and extremely boastful as he was "entrapped" in a society driven by competition.⁴⁷ However, the texts demonstrate that any boasting done by Paul was boasting in Christ, not in Paul himself.

Paul speaks of "weakness" at times in association with Christ. "We are afflicted - but not crushed; perplexed - but not driven to despair; persecuted - but not forsaken; struck down - but not destroyed, always carrying in the body the death of Jesus. Death is at work in us" (2 Cor. 4:7-11). Barrett summarizes, "Affliction is serious, but not fatal; perplexity is real, but Paul can still find his way; persecution is fierce, but the Lord stands by his servant;

⁴⁵"My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account" (Phil. 1:23-24).

⁴⁶B. Malina, The New Testament World (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981), 51-60.

⁴⁷Callan, "Competition and Boasting: Toward a Psychological Portrait of Paul," 39.

even the most devastating thrust does not prove mortal."⁴⁸

In the phrase "the death of Jesus," Paul uses the Greek word nekrosis (only found elsewhere in Rom. 4:19) instead of the more common thanatos. Nekrosis indicates the process of dying. Paul may mean, as Barrett suggests, "That one who observed his life as a Christian apostle would see, constantly repeated, a process analogous to the killing of Jesus."⁴⁹

The next reference used by Paul is in 2 Cor. 13:4, "for he (Christ) was crucified in weakness, but lives by the power of God. For we are weak in him, but in dealing with you we shall live with him by the power of God." Christ was crucified in weakness (compare Mt. 26:41 "the spirit is indeed willing, but the flesh is weak") but Christ crucified is the power of God, "but we preach Christ crucified...the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. 1:23-24). Schutz adds, "Paul is speaking here as an apostle, not just as a Christian."⁵⁰ The "we" used at the end of the passage does show that Paul is primarily talking about himself but as the apostle, Paul's message will reveal both the weakness and the power of Christ crucified. This is Paul's understanding of life in Christ, where the theme of weakness yet power based

⁴⁸Barrett, The Second Epistle to the Corinthians, 139.

⁴⁹Ibid., 140.

⁵⁰Schutz, Paul and the Anatomy of Apostolic Authority, 215.

on God's working through the death and resurrection of Christ, is the foundation of Paul's power and is the foundation for the Christian's existence.

"That I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death" (Phil. 3:10). To be a Christian for Paul was to suffer; but because Christ had already died and been resurrected, his power existed now. His fellowship means to suffer. Paul echos this in other letters: 2 Cor. 11:23-27; Gal. 6:17; Phil. 4:13.⁵¹ It must then be a common phenomena for Christians to suffer; indeed, you don't have to read too far in the letter to the Romans to find affliction, "we rejoice in our sufferings" (Rom. 5:3 & 8:35). Paul tells them to "be patient in tribulations" (Rom. 12:12).⁵²

The last boastful statement made by Paul is in the small, personal letter to Philemon. "Though I am bold enough in Christ to command you to do what is required, yet for love's sake I prefer to appeal to you" (v. 19). Paul is writing a personal letter to Philemon, a homeowner in a small town in Phrygia⁵³ concerning a runaway slave, Onesimus. Paul wants Philemon to accept Onesimus back (possibly without

⁵¹"Henceforth let no man trouble me; for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus" (Gal. 6:17), "I can do all things in him who strengthens me" (Phil. 4:13), and see 2 Cor. 11:23-27.

⁵²See also 1 Cor. 7:28, 2 Cor. 1:4-8, and 2 Cor. 8:2.

⁵³J.B. Lightfoot, St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians and Philemon (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1987), 303.

reprimand) not as a slave but as a brother. But what is at issue here, is that Paul says he could "command" ("bold enough") Philemon to do, but he does not. Again his authority comes from Christ, but would Philemon have obeyed if Paul would have commanded?

Paul does appeal in "love" and not by command. Paul cleverly weaves his authority into the letter so that he did not have to command. Paul refers to Philemon as "our beloved fellow worker" (v.1); "the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you" (v.7); "I appeal to you" (v.10); "I am sending you my very heart" (v.12); "I choose to do nothing without your consent in order that your goodness might not be by compulsion but of your own free will" (v.14), and "confident of your obedience" (v.21), all show the clever way in which Paul wrote this letter. He would not have had to command Philemon, for what price would someone pay for their very soul (v. 19).

Christ crucified is the heart of both Paul's authority and his mission. Schutz states it quite well,

"There is a central point at which the work of God in Christ and Christ's own work merge: the gospel. Thus it is that the specifically apostolic quality of Paul's self-consciousness focuses on his charge to preach the gospel."⁵⁴

Paul clearly saw his mission and authority as the will of God to deliver the gospel concerning Christ who was crucified to reconcile the world.

⁵⁴Schutz, Paul and the Anatomy of Apostolic Authority, 232.

CHAPTER 2

FAMILY TERMINOLOGY

The Christian assemblies founded by Paul met in private homes: "the household of Stephanas" (1 Cor. 16:15); "to Nympha and the church in her house" (Col. 4:15), and "the church in your house" (Philem. 2), these are among many references. Consequently the household and its families became most important for Paul and the spread of Christianity.

Homes and buildings, in general, were extremely expensive in Paul's day. V. Branick states, "Property ownership, the single most important sign of wealth in the Roman world, was concentrated in the hands of a small percentage of the population."¹ Paul needed at least one wealthy convert in each city so that the assembly would have a place to meet and a host who could provide food and beverage. An example of wealthy friends are Priscilla and Aquila who not only could afford a home in at least three different cities (Corinth, Ephesus, and Rome) but also could afford to travel.²

The converts would meet in these privately owned homes because there were no other buildings available for them in

¹Vince Branick, The House Church in the Writings of Paul (Wilmington: Michael Glazier, Inc., 1989), 42.

²See 1 Cor. 16:19, Rom. 16:3, and Acts 18:18-19.

which to assemble. Certainly the synagogues were off limits and these early Christians were slow to build their own permanent buildings. R. M. Grant suggests,

"Perhaps their primitive eschatology had something to do with this. Why build if the end of the world is at hand? The slowness was also due to their lack of funds, their uncertain legal status, and their desire to spend what money they had on practical charity."³

In the Mediterranean world of the first century, "the household might include father, mother, the first-born son and his family, along with other unmarried children."⁴ V. Branick states, "The church began with the intimate and intense interpersonal relationships of family members."⁵ Paul was well aware of this fact. His use of terms like "father," "mother," and "brother" demonstrated Paul's relationship to these families and what he expected from them as he portrayed these different roles. This family terminology used by Paul "has its roots in the Old Testament and the Judaism in which Paul grew up."⁶

Paul used especially the parent terminology to show his authority over the assembly while at the same time demonstrating his parental love for his followers. W. Meeks points out that this worked for Paul because the

³R.M. Grant, Early Christianity and Society (San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1977), 146.

⁴B.J. Malina, The New Testament World (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981), 99.

⁵Branick, The House Church in the Writings of Paul, 17.

⁶Ibid., 16.

"hierarchical pattern of the family was entrenched in law and custom."⁷ "The image of parent was of course widely used in the ancient world," states E. Best. "In particular it was used in the Wisdom literature of the wise man, by Cynic philosophers of their relation to those whom they taught, of rulers towards their subjects and of colonists towards their founding cities."⁸

The parent in Paul's day had much more authority than the parent of today. So Paul could expect obedience even if he was not present (cp. 1 Cor. 5). Paul took advantage of this unique relationship and his comparison of the Christian followers to the family "must be regarded as the most significant metaphorical usage of all."⁹

FATHER

The image of "father" used by Paul in his letters to the Corinthians, the Thessalonians, and to Philemon are all in a context that reflects Paul's authority. In 1 Cor. 4:14,17, Paul calls the Corinthians "my beloved children," (hos tekna mou agapeta noutheton). This reference to the Corinthians as Paul's children, set in a house church where

⁷W. Meeks, The First Urban Christians (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 23.

⁸E. Best, "Paul's Apostolic Authority," Journal for the Study of the New Testament 27 (June 1986): 16.

⁹R. Banks, Paul's Idea of Community (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988), 53.

families gathered, demonstrated Paul's relationship to these people. Regardless of their status they were to be obedient to Paul as their own father.

Paul Veyne describes the first century father as having "judicial authority over his sons and daughters" while he played the roles of "husband, propertyowner, slavemaster, and patron to freedman and clients."¹⁰ As Veyne explains, the father's authority was his last will.¹¹ This was a confession where he was supposed to give something to all kin and members of his household. This was his opportunity to have his survivors publicly praised or condemned. Veyne continues, "His children were bound to him by money and hopes of inheritance."¹²

In 2 Cor. 6:13, "I speak as to children," Paul uses the verb lego, "I speak," or "I say," which carries the connotation command. The verb lego is used some forty times in Paul's letters to his assemblies. Certainly the reader understands the speaker as someone in charge in 1 Cor. 6:5, "I say (lego) this to your shame" (entropen humin lego), and the same phrase is used again in 1 Cor. 15:34. In 2 Cor. 7:3, "I do not say this to condemn you" (hou pros katakrisin lego) and in Romans 11:13, "Now I am speaking to you

¹⁰P. Veyne, A History of Private Life Vol. 1 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987), 71.

¹¹Ibid., 30.

¹²Ibid., 72.

Gentiles" (humin gar lego tois ethnesin). The reader senses that Paul is speaking from a position of authority.

Paul's particular use of the image of father with lego in 2 Cor. 6:13, "I speak as to children" (hos teknois lego), shows Paul saw his position among the members as an authoritative father speaking to his children. In context, he is telling them to open their hearts and he expects them to obey. Paul speaks, though with concern and compassion, wanting them to fully understand his message. Best writes, "Paul's care for them in advising and directing them is indeed often set in terms of the parent-child relation."¹³

The Corinthian church wrote to their "father," Paul, concerning several problems in the church, and Paul wrote back to them, often in a harsh, yet always caring manner. Staying true to the image, Paul could have scolded them as he mentions in 1 Cor. 4:14f, "I do not write this to you to make you ashamed, but to admonish (noutheteo = to warn or to advise) you as my beloved children." Ernest Best writes, "A rod is the way to keep children in order, or at least it was in the ancient world."¹⁴ And Veyne echos the same, adding that a father had the right to put his child to death.¹⁵ Complete obedience was expected, and if not received, the

¹³Best, "Paul's Apostolic Authority," 16.

¹⁴Ibid., 15.

¹⁵Veyne, A History of Private Life, 27.

father should beat the child into obedience. This of course was in a different context, beating the converts into obedience. But by them knowing the position of the father in the family, Paul's use of this image placed him in an authoritative position.

This is the type of obedience Paul wanted from his followers and is evidenced in his personal letter to Philemon, "though I have enough confidence in Christ to order you (epitassein soi) that which is proper" (v.8). Paul feels confident of Philemon's obedience (v.21).

The next reference is in the same letter, "My child, Onesimus, whose father I have become in my imprisonment" (v.10). The details of the statement demonstrate the way in which Paul justifies this father-child relationship. Specifically, Paul describes his action in regard to Onesimus with the verb egennesa, which comes from the Greek verb gennao, which means "to beget" or "engender," and is rarely used in context with a mother, but more frequently with a father. A better translation of this sentence is "my child, Onesimus, whom I begot in my imprisonment," which adds meaning to the relationship between these two prison mates.

Exactly what type of relationship Paul and Onesimus had in prison is difficult to know for sure. What is sure is that Paul was imprisoned and Onesimus was the slave of Philemon. Paul, in using the verb gennao, must mean that Onesimus was his son "spiritually." We do not know how these

two got together, whether Onesimus was captured and put in prison himself or if a Christian brother had introduced them. Regardless, Paul, through sharing the gospel with him, has adopted him as a "spiritual son" and now looks after him as a father would for his son.

Paul wants Philemon to accept Onesimus back not just as a slave,¹⁶ but rather as a fellow brother in Christ (v.16). Paul felt confident enough to "order" Philemon, but instead tells Philemon that he would rather his goodness come from his own free will and not by compulsion (v.14). Just to make sure of the outcome, in the end Paul reminds Philemon that he owes him "even your own self" (v.20). To show that this is nothing more than an image used by Paul and not intended to be a stated fact, we read earlier that Paul thought of Onesimus as a "beloved brother" (v.16). Of course Paul could not be father and brother to Onesimus at the same time unless as a father he was his spiritual father and as brother, his brother in Christ.

The last reference to a father is found in 1 Thess. 2:11; "like a father with his children" (hos pater tekna heautou). In its context Paul maintains the father-child relationship while speaking in a concerned way. He talks of exhorting them and encouraging them as a caring father would do for "his own" (heautou) children.

¹⁶Branick, The House Church in the Writings of Paul, 92.

These Christians whom Paul has brought into the flock are his children in this gospel and he uses this as a basis for his relationship with them. His image of a father not only carried authority in a family-centered assembly but he also saw himself as their spiritual father in the gospel. It may have been an image, but for Paul it rang of truth. For he was their father, their begetter, in the gospel where he was in charge.

The first century Mediterranean world was a patriarchal society where the father had complete control in a family context. This imaginative use of father by Paul in the setting of a family-centered church, would have been understood by those in the assembly. Paul took full advantage of the father's role in the family context, even playing the role of the marriage arranger.¹⁷

MOTHER

Paul does not limit himself to the image of the father. In at least three different instances Paul refers to himself as nurturing in a motherly way.

"But I, brethren, could not address you as spiritual men, but as men of the flesh, as babes in Christ. I fed you with milk, not solid food; for you were not ready for it" (1 Cor. 3:1-2).

"My little children, with whom I am again in travail until Christ be formed in you!" (Gal. 4:19).

¹⁷See 2 Cor. 11:2, "I betrothed you to Christ to present you as a pure bride to her one husband."

"But we were gentle among you, like a nurse taking care of her children" (1 Thess. 2:7).

"Mother" is a curious image. At first this role appears to have implied no authority. However, a side of Paul comes through that cannot be whisked away and must be addressed in this paper.

Joachim Jeremias describes the position of women and motherhood in the first century. This background must be understood before Paul's use of the image can be understood. Judaism of the first century did not allow women to take part in the public arena. When they went out of the home their faces were to be hidden or face charges of adultery.¹⁸ Her face could only be uncovered during her "wedding procession," and then "only if she was a virgin, not a widow."¹⁹

Her position in the house was the same as her position in the public life. Her father had complete control over her life, "up to the age of twelve and a half years."²⁰ She could not possess anything. All she obtained, either through her own work or anything she might find, belonged to her father.

Her position did not change once she reached "twelve and a half" and was married. Jeremias adds, "In marriage the girl passed from her father's power to her husband's

¹⁸J. Jeremias, Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1962), 359.

¹⁹Ibid., 360.

²⁰Ibid., 363.

power."²¹ The new bride took on the same basic duties that she had before marriage: cooking, washing, working wool for money; plus a few new ones - suckling children and preparing her husband's bed.²² Veyne writes concerning suckling of children that shortly after birth the infant was handed over to a wet nurse. Veyne states, "Breast-feeding by a child's natural mother was a thing of the past."²³ Veyne appears to be reporting on a higher class of people in general than is Jeremias.²⁴

The wife found herself in a relationship where she was a slave to her master husband. Children had to respect their fathers over their mothers and "in case of danger of life, the husband must be saved first."²⁵ She had to tolerate living with concubines and only her husband had the right of divorce. In the liturgical services she was simply to listen and she was forbidden to teach.²⁶

At last she found respect in giving her husband sons. However, if she had no children, it was seen as "divine punishment."²⁷ And if she was "fruitful" in some cases, she

²¹Jeremias, Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus, 368.

²²Ibid., 369.

²³Veyne, A History of Private Life, 14.

²⁴E. Best also refutes this idea on page 16.

²⁵Jeremias, Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus, 369.

²⁶Ibid., 369-374.

²⁷Ibid., 372.

"received special privileges under the law for having three or more children."²⁸

Veyne sums it up best what being a mother in the first century meant, "To be a mother of a family was an honorable prison."²⁹

How then was Paul understood by the assemblies if he compared himself to a "mother"? There are three distinct references that will shed some insight into this understanding.

In 1 Cor. 3:1-2 (compare this with 14:20 for the same form of the image) Paul refers to the Corinthians as "babes in Christ." They were not ready for "meat," so he "gave them milk to drink." F.F. Bruce writes, "this analogy was commonplace in contemporary pedagogics."³⁰

The Corinthians were not mature in Paul's opinion as he described them as "babes," yet they were not outside the circle of believers, for he tacks on "in Christ." They were not nonbelievers, but rather believers; "but they have only just made a beginning in the Christian life."³¹ As Bruce pointed out, this image may have been "commonplace" and found in a variety of ancient writings, yet we cannot think that Paul needed any other sources to draw upon for this

²⁸Veyne, A History of Private Life, 13.

²⁹Ibid., 73.

³⁰Bruce, I & II Corinthians, 42.

³¹Barrett, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 80.

comparison. Paul was "quite capable of noticing for himself the kind of food that is usually supplied to infants."³²

Jerome Murphy-O'Connor writes that Paul's point is simple, "True Christian perfection or maturity manifests itself, not in intellectual speculation, but in behavior modeled on that of Christ...when judged by this criterion the Corinthians appeared as only "children" capable of assimilating nothing stronger than milk."³³

Paul then used this image to draw an analogy between the Corinthians and "babes" and himself as the apostle and their "mother." In using this analogy to show their immaturity in Christ, Paul logically would have used the comparison of a parent to make the scenario work. But still, he places himself in the position of being superior to them, as a parent is compared to their children.

In Galatians 4:19 Paul describes himself as a woman in labor, "my little children, with whom I am again in travail until Christ be formed in you!" Paul uses here the Greek word pain which means "again," implying that this is the second time he has felt the birth-pangs for these Galatians. H. Gale writes, "Here the picture is introduced for the purpose of suggesting pain or distress."³⁴ Paul only uses the analogy to show pain: the analogy fails as soon as he

³²Barrett, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 80.

³³J. Murphy-O'Connor, 1 Corinthians, New Testament Message (Wilmington: Michael Glazier, Inc., 1985), 20.

³⁴Gale, The Use of Analogy in the Letters of Paul, 63.

says "again" for no woman can bear the same child twice.

"Until Christ be formed in you" suggests time. Paul does not suggest that once they believed they were suddenly solidified as mature Christians.³⁵ This takes time. Paul has done his part in bringing the gospel to the Galatians. However, they have allowed "another gospel" (v.8) to be preached among them. They now want to keep the Jewish laws (5:1-12) which has caused Paul to once again deliver the gospel of grace (compare 2:19-21). So as it took great effort to bring them the gospel the first time, it will now take great effort and much pain to deliver again the message to them.³⁶

The third and final reference where Paul compares himself with a mother is 1 Thess. 2:7, "but we were gentile among you, like a nurse taking care of her children."³⁷ This reference of a nurse is a simple one. It demonstrates Paul's compassion for his Thessalonian "children" in Christ. In a

³⁵Compare 2 Cor. 13:9,11; Gal. 3:3 "strive toward perfection," and Phil. 3:12,15.

³⁶To understand the real trauma of childbearing in the first century, see Veyne, A History of Private Life, 9, and read how painfully real this image must have been to those women who heard it.

³⁷There are some differences depending on which translation you are reading. Some have the Greek epioi (gentile) as is the reading in the RSV, while others have nepioi (babes). The contrast between babes and mature is common (see Rom. 2:20; 1 Cor. 3:1, 14:20; Gal. 4:1,3; Eph. 4:13f, and Heb. 5:13f). Gale states that teleios (mature) and nepios (babes) stand in contrast, see 21-26.

letter where the Thessalonians were concerned about their dead fellow Christians (see 4:12-18 for reason for letter), Paul lovingly caresses them with an image of a mother or nursemaid soothing her child as only she can.

All three of these references by Paul, as motherly nurturing, show his full understanding of the role of the mother. Not the negative oppressed role, but the positive role: the role of a care-giver; the one who feeds them for their nourishment; the one who through great pain brings them into the world and gives them life, and the one who is gentle and deeply cares for her children. He draws upon these positive aspects and uses them effectively to get his point across. This image of a mother would have reached beyond any religious boundaries and would have been understood by all, regardless of their cultural differences.

BROTHER

The next family term is "brother."³⁸ Banks writes, "The term 'brother' is far and away Paul's favorite way of referring to the members of the communities."³⁹ Paul's usage of "brother" in a family context shows his sincere desire

³⁸Paul does not leave out sisters. He references them in Rom. 16:1, "our sister Phoebe, and Philm. 2 he mentions "Apphia our sister." Paul mentions sister in the diakonia in 1 Cor. 7:15, "the brother or sister is not bound," and Phil. 4:3, "help these women for they have labored side by side with me in the gospel."

³⁹Banks, Paul's Idea of Community, 55.

to belong to this assembled group that he has gathered - an image of equality and not so much authority as brothers in the Christian assemblies should have for each other.

The gospels support the use of "brother" for fellow believers and followers. Jesus, in the gospel accounts, defines brothers as "whoever does the will of my father which is in heaven" (Mt. 12:50). The question gets asked by Jesus, "who are my brothers?" And he then replies with an outstretched hand toward his disciples, "Behold my brothers" (Mt. 12:48).

Jesus, also in the Matthew account, says to a multitude, "for you have one teacher, and you all are brothers" (Mt. 23:8). In John 20:17 Jesus tells Mary after he has resurrected "to go to my brethren and say to them." And in a more wide-sweeping sense of the word, brother is said in a context that implies all believers, "the saying spread abroad among the brothers that this disciple (John) was not to die" (Jn. 21:23).

Josephus in writing about the history of the Jewish people refers to them as "brothers" in several instances. For example, brother is a title which Alexander Balas gave to Jonathan the high priest and also to Demetrius Soter.⁴⁰

⁴⁰The Works of Flavius Josephus (Philadelphia: The International Press, John C. Winston Co.), 378, 384. Brother was not a term given lightly. Read the story of Caius, the "brother of Jupiter," 359.

Christian brothers had some authority as a group. In 1 Cor. 5, Paul writes concerning a man who was sexually involved with his father's wife, that he was surprised that the "church" had not already cast the man out. This then presupposes that they had the authority to excommunicate the man from among their number.

Paul uses brother in some 110 different places in varying contexts throughout his letters. He uses brother when identifying a single person such as Timothy in 2 Cor. 1:1 and Philem. 1,⁴¹ and brothers when identifying with small groups of believers as in Romans 16:14, "and the brethren who are with them." He uses "brethren" to refer to a group traveling from Macedonia (2 Cor. 11:9) and "brethren" in Phil. 1:14; Gal. 1:12, and 2 Cor. 9:3. Paul also uses the term "brethren" to refer to whole assemblies in some 18 places.⁴²

Paul, in using "brother," demonstrates the quality of the relationship. A relationship that was spiritual and rose above the social limitations placed on such a relationship. For just as Aristotle had written some 350 years before Paul that one cannot be friends with a slave as slave, but can be friends with him as a man,⁴³ Paul too echos the same ethical

⁴¹It is interesting to note that he calls James the Lord's brother and not our brother (Gal. 1:19).

⁴²Rom. 1:13, 7:1,4; 1 Cor. 1:10,11,26; 2 Cor. 1:8, 8:1, 13:11; Gal. 1:11, 3:15, 4:12; Phil. 1:12, 3:1,13, and 1 Thess. 1:4, 2:1,9.

⁴³Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics (Roslyn: Walter J. Black, Inc., 1943), Book 8, ch. 13, 203.

ideology in his letter to Philemon. Paul requested Philemon to take back Onesimus "no longer as a slave but more than a slave, as a beloved brother" (v. 16). Paul did not want to abolish slavery but to cause a relationship greater than slavery - a brotherhood in Christ which would bring with it a new set a rules for treating each other. They were no longer to judge one another (Rom. 14:10) or cause one another to stumble (Rom. 14:21). There should be no more divisions (1 Cor. 1:10) and they should rid themselves of someone who is not acting properly (1 Cor. 5:11-13). If one sins against his brother he sins against Christ (1 Cor. 8:12). They should comfort one another (1 Thess. 4:18), help each other (Phil. 4:3), through love serve one another (Gal. 5:13), and Paul sums it all up in 2 Cor. 13:11, "agree with one another, live in peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you."

For Paul these family images worked well as he effectively blended his gospel with these powerful images to better communicate his message. He took advantage of the "family-centered" assembly by using images that were common to all in aiding to their understanding of his powerful message concerning Christ, while at the same time demonstrating a genuine, caring relationship for these followers. Robert Banks writes concerning these family images, "All these are quite clearly not merely relationships in name only, in some purely theological or superficially

pious name, but relationships of a very genuine and personal kind."⁴⁴

⁴⁴Banks, Paul's Idea of Community, 56.

CHAPTER 3

ECONOMIC TERMINOLOGY

There are still some images used by Paul which did not fit into the two major areas covered in the first two chapters that need to be mentioned. These are images that do not have an obvious authoritative posture and are secular in their use. However, their application is not limited to the realm of the secular world only, for within the assembly these terms would have been understood since the members lived out in the secular world. As to the authoritative posture these terms may have had for Paul is at first unclear but will be investigated in this chapter.

Since this category is broad in its scope, it can be subdivided into two smaller units; "occupational terms" which will include: "master builder," and "planter," and a second category "patron-client" terminology, where an analysis of Paul's awareness of a patron-client relationship will be examined.

Paul was different from the typical first century religious itinerant, in that he supported himself as a tentmaker¹ and did not rely on the community for support

¹R.F. Hock, The Social Context of Paul's Ministry (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), 21.

(1 Cor. 9:3; 2 Cor. 11:7, 12:13). Meeks writes,

"Paul was able to achieve the near self-sufficiency of which he was so proud because it was not unusual for artisans to move from place to place, carrying their tools with them and seeking out, say, the leatherworker's street or quarter of whatever town they came to."²

This was contrary to the apostles coming up from Jerusalem who were told that God would provide for all their needs even for food, drink, and clothes (Mt. 6:25f). These early Christian itinerants were "homeless, roving propagandists without roots or a means of livelihood."³ Their call was to forsake all; their homes, possessions, family and whatever sense of security they may have grown accustomed to.

Theissen, however, claims "his reward is to be found in those who are saved rather than in material support."⁴ Paul's trade offered him this freedom from community support as it allowed him to be free from all people as "he traveled over 10,000 miles around the Mediterranean."⁵

The occupational images used by Paul are unique glimpses into the person of Paul and can aid in our understanding of how Paul operated and how his use of language was instrumental in delivering a difficult message to a removed group of people.

²Meeks, The First Urban Christians, 17.

³Theissen, Social Setting of Pauline Christianity, 27.

⁴Ibid., 51.

⁵Meeks, The First Urban Christians, 16.

Hock writes, "the chief stigma of the trades is that they were considered slavish."⁶ Paul, a tradesman, "came into contact with a tradition of philosophy -namely Cynic- that addressed itself to the question of suitable occupations and trades for the urban poor."⁷ Paul indeed was a tradesman and applauded hard work (1 Thess. 2:9, 4:10-12) but the Cynic philosophy was extremist. It stressed independence from worldly needs and pleasures, becoming critical of society and its material interests. A disciple of Jesus may have been safe from the Cynic's criticism because he led a life of "handouts," but someone like Paul, who chose to support himself, and on the surface would have appeared to work for worldly gain, would have come under their attack. Paul did work, not for possessions as such (he of course needed money for food, drink, lodging, and travel), but rather he worked "to avoid the suspicion that he works under the cloak of greed or 'peddles' the gospel, as do others."⁸

If Hock is right in describing Paul as "being bent over a workbench like a slave and of working side by side with slaves, of thereby being perceived by others and by himself as slavish and humiliated, of suffering the artisans' lack of status and so being reviled and abused,"⁹ how then does he

⁶Hock, The Social Context of Paul's Ministry, 35.

⁷Ibid., 68.

⁸Theissen, Social Setting of Pauline Christianity, 51.

⁹Hock, The Social Context of Paul's Ministry, 67.

accumulate such wealthy friends (i.e. Priscilla and Aquila, and Philemon) and by what authority would this "slavish" person attract such a following? It was a combination of Paul's overwhelming charisma and the subject of his message, Christ, that so captivated these people who apparently were starving for spiritual guidance. Otherwise why would they have even listened to this "slave" from the artisans' street?¹⁰

MASTER BUILDER

Paul compared himself to a "master builder" in 1 Cor. 3:10, "like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation." Jeremias under a section titled "Building activity" states, "The princes of the Herodian royal line were enthusiastic builders...as a result the building trade held an important position in Jerusalem under their rule and for some time afterwards."¹¹

In the building of any structure the master builder or architekton was "responsible for the day-to-day work."¹² Shanor continues,

"As architekton, Paul assumes responsibility for overseeing the coordination on general progress of the work, a fact to which his authoritative posture in the Corinthian Epistle itself bears cogent testimony."¹³

¹⁰This will be examined in detail in the last section of chapter 3 under the patron-client section.

¹¹Jeremias, Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus, 10.

¹²J. Shanor, "Paul as Master Builder: Construction Terms in First Corinthians," New Testament Studies, 34 (1988), 465.

¹³Ibid., 465-466.

It is interesting to note that Paul the "builder" is separate from the "building." He saw himself as the architekton and thus played the authoritative role in laying the foundation which he attributes to Christ. Paul was given this position by "the grace of God."¹⁴

There seems to be some question as to who the "other man" is that is building upon Paul's foundation? Shanor says, "Paul had other leaders, such as Apollos in mind when he refers to the other man."¹⁵ C.K. Barrett agrees with Shanor,¹⁶ but F.F. Bruce in his commentary has a different opinion. He states, "In light of Paul's own policy not to 'build on another man's foundation' (Rom. 15:20) - and especially so in Rome - we may not be far astray in discerning here an allusion to the Peter party and even, perhaps, in identifying another man with Peter himself."¹⁷ We may never know for sure who this other person was.

The "final inspection" so to speak, of this building is the test of fire (1 Cor. 3:13) which will test the work of each man. Shanor states, "Paul simply affirms that if the work of any builder is consumed, he will, in some sense, be

¹⁴Elsewhere Moses is described as master builder in Hebrews 8:5.

¹⁵Shanor, "Paul as Master Builder: Construction Terms in First Corinthians," 465.

¹⁶Barrett, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 87.

¹⁷Bruce, I & II Corinthians, 43.

fined."¹⁸ Shanor adds, "This statement of the Apostle is in complete harmony with the payment policy found in many of the secular contracts relating to temple construction."¹⁹

Even in this secular image of a "master builder," Paul expresses authority. He is the architekton of this building and the members are the builders themselves.

PLANTER

In 1 Corinthians 3:6-9, Paul uses the image of a "planter." It was Paul who planted, Apollos who watered, but it was God who gave the growth. Paul then adds that the "planter" and the "waterer" are nothing - but only God who gives the growth is the important ingredient.

Paul introduces this agricultural image to demonstrate that all are equal in working for God towards the same goal. There should be no division as was the case in the Corinthian church. H. Gale explains, "The analogy is presented, obviously, to suggest the wrongfulness of the rivalry and fractionalism which, in Corinth, mistakenly presupposes the superiority of one leader as over against another."²⁰ The analogy has no other purpose but to reflect on the Corinthian problem.

¹⁸Shanor, "Paul as Master Builder: Construction Terms in First Corinthians," 470.

¹⁹Ibid., 470.

²⁰Gale, The Use of Analogy in the Letters of Paul, 80.

If we are to follow through with the imagery, Paul and Apollos are here described as equal: "he who plants and he who waters are equal" (v. 8). And each is to receive his wages according to his labor apparently on the Day of Christ (1 Cor. 3:13 & 4:5). Again as in the case of the "master builder," Paul still separates the planter and the waterer from the field. Paul, in doing so, does not imply that the "field" belongs to him, but insists it belongs to God. However, he still sees his position on this "farm" different from the Christians at Corinth. True, Apollos has a different role from just being part of the "field," but Paul's is the initial work, the laying of the foundation. For what good is a waterer if there is no seed in the ground to water and consequently grow? Paul takes the lead position and even though he made himself equal with Apollos, he did not appoint Apollos as the planter and himself as the waterer, thus making a distinction between their two roles.

PATRON/CLIENT

The second subcategory to the "economic terminology" is the patron-client relationships that Paul may have been involved in. To determine if Paul's usage of certain images was controlled by a patron-client relationship, we must first define this complex behavior and secondly define the framework within which to analyze the terminology.

Richard Saller defines patronage as "an exchange

relationship between men of unequal social status."²¹ From this relationship two groups of terms are derived, "those applied to the people involved in the relationship and those describing the goods and services which passed between them."²² Group one includes: patron, client, and friend or friendship.²³ Group two includes: favor, debt, duty, benefactor, kindness or favor, merit, and goodwill. Looking for these terms in Paul's letters may reveal a patron client relationship.

The first group of terms (patron, client, friend or friendship) is not in Paul's letters. However, the term "partner" was found in the letter to Philemon (v. 17), which will be discussed later.

In the second group, a few terms appeared but did not reflect a personal patronage relationship between Paul and a patron or client. The term "debt" appears in Rom. 4:4, "Now to one who works, his wages are not reckoned as a gift but as his due" (Grk. opheilema which means due or debt). If one works then one is due his wages; these go together and set the stage for Paul to correlate "grace" and "faith" later.²⁴

²¹J. Saller, Personal Patronage Under the Early Empire (London: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 8.

²²Ibid., 15.

²³Veyne, A History of Private Life, 91. "When shrewed patrons protested that the word 'friend' was more appropriate than 'client,' 'friend' became a flattering synonym for 'client.'"

²⁴Barrett, The Epistle to the Romans, 88.

But it does not indicate a possible patron-client relationship.

The word "debt" and "duty" (Grk. opheilo) both appear in Rom. 15:27, "they are in debt to them, for if the Gentiles have come to share in their spiritual blessings, they ought also to be of service (opheilo) to them in material blessings." The noun form of the word opheilo (debtor) is found in Rom. 1:14, 8:12, 15:27, and Gal. 5:3, but again none imply a patron-client relationship. The term "kindness" appears in 2 Cor. 6:6 but does not indicate a relationship at all.

However, all of these letters have something in common that may explain the absence of patron-client language. They are all written to whole churches or in the case of Galatia, to an entire area. Paul would not have demeaned himself or anyone else in a public address by identifying himself with someone in the assembly as having a patron-client relationship. Saller writes, "The terms 'patron' and 'client' were to be avoided for reasons of politeness."²⁵ As Saller states, "The language of social subordination may have seemed arrogant when used by the patron, a tactless advertisement of his superiority and the relative weakness of his client."²⁶ We can not assume that Paul was in the patron position and that this explains its absence in his letters.

²⁵Saller, Personal Patronage Under the Early Empire, 15.

²⁶Ibid., 10.

Paul does, however, present himself as a "patron" in that what he offers is Christ, but what he expects is followers of him as the one sent of Christ. Paul did have something to deliver, Christ, and in return he expected loyalty to that message, but as Saller writes, "A man was not supposed to form a friendship or distribute a favor with a view to the return, and yet he knew that his recipient was in fact obliged to make a return."²⁷ This may be an answer. Paul felt obligated to deliver Christ to the Gentiles and in doing so, forced a "debt" or a return "favor" from those that accepted his message (Christ) and recognized Paul as the one who brought this favor.

More can be known from his letter to Philemon. Paul writes concerning Onesimus, a runaway slave. Because it is a personal letter, Paul is at liberty to speak freely of existing relationships, if they do exist.

The terms "fellow worker" (v. 1) and "partner" (v. 17) certainly indicate a reciprocal relationship between men of unequal social status (Paul a tentmaker, Philemon a homeowner). Also, phrases like "charge to my account" (v. 18) and "I will repay you" (v. 19), both show a patron-client type of relationship in which Philemon (the patron) provides the house, food, lodging, etc. (v. 22), and in exchange Paul (the client) delivers his "talents," the preaching of Christ.

²⁷Saller, Personal Patronage Under the Early Empire, 14.

But just as the relationship seems set, Paul mixes the terms in the same context with language like, "confidence in Christ to order you" (v. 8), "by compulsion" (v. 14), "your obedience" (v. 21), and in what seems to be a "fresh look" at the slave-master relationship demonstrates Paul's unimpressed attitude towards his client role.

How did Paul get by with this? Because of Paul's self-identity with Christ, both in his calling and authority and in the fact that Christ was the subject of his gospel, Paul played down this patron-client relationship. In fact, what he offered his "clients" was salvation. An account that they could never match, for they owed Paul "even themselves" (Philem. 19).

Certainly Paul needed what a patron could provide; a house, food, and drink, but Paul did work and even though there is no evidence that he owned a home, there is evidence that he rented a home (Acts 19:9f and 28:16,30). So he was somewhat free from this relationship, and if a wealthy patron followed Paul, so much the better.

With the combination of Paul being somewhat self-supportive and the fact that what he offered was Christ and eternal life, it is difficult to imagine him portraying the "client" position. It may have existed and an outsider may have seen Paul as the client in a certain relationship, such as with Philemon, but in the circle of believers, Paul was the leading character, and that cannot be denied.

CONCLUSION

It is obvious that Paul exercised some authority. He claimed that the authority he exerted was given to him by the grace of God and had its power in the death and resurrection of Christ.

To these newly established churches, Paul was the prime source of authority, whether he admitted it or not. All they knew concerning church, Christ, faith, ethics, rituals, etc., they learned from Paul. He not only set out to represent Christ but also to found new churches of believers.

Through the use of these images, Paul revealed his authority. He saw the risen Christ and performed signs and wonders, thus he was an apostle. He saw his calling as that of the prophets in the Old Testament. He chose to use parental images when talking personally to these family gathered assemblies. When drawing upon outside sources to communicate his message across, he chose terms of leadership like master builder and planter.

Through all this, Paul still insisted that his authority was in Christ and it was used to accomplish the purpose of God. Paul could have grabbed real power, but he did not.¹

¹This can also be seen in his use of the image of a "runner" in Phil. 2:16 & 3:14. Paul, too, runs in this race for the "prize of the upward call," but he does not mention wanting to be the winner. There is in this image a sense of authority, in that, Paul has laid the course and he judges those who stray from it. But this is not personal honor. Paul describes the position of each believer in this race in 1 Cor. 12:26, "If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together."

Holmberg points out, Paul's authority was delegated from above, coming from the highest source to which all believers have access (1 Cor. 3:5-9, 21b-23).² Therefore, he eliminated himself as the source of Christ's authority on earth.

In choosing father as a dominant image, "it is the personal and cordial relationship between father and child that is stressed while the element of order and obedience is not."³ Here he chose to build this relationship on love, as a father loves and cares for his children instead of a cold, authoritative relationship through which he would rule from a distance.

He refused financial support from his churches and thereby denied power. The Jesus itinerants accepted and expected support, which added to their authority. Paul, instead, falls back on the parent-child relationship saying, "For children ought not to lay up for their parents, but parents for their children" (2 Cor. 12:14).

In placing his authority in the gospel, Paul again eliminated himself from obtaining power. Every problem or advice was solved or given in terms of his gospel. Therefore, after a time, the churches knew the gospel as well as Paul and could solve their own problems and no longer

²Holmberg, Paul and Power, 185-188.

³Ibid., 185.

needed Paul to interpret scripture, for now they had the source of Christian authority.

This authority that Paul exercised was of course limited to the realm of the believers. Paul laid the foundation for future institutionalized authority in his dealing with the incestuous man in 1 Corinthians 5. Here there was a man who was committing incest with his father's wife. Paul is not present and has never talked with this man, yet he judges the man and tells them to deliver the man to Satan so that the flesh will be destroyed but that the spirit might be saved in the day of Lord.⁴ Paul is angry that this has been going on and that they are arrogant about it. He uses the analogy of the leaven bread to show that the one bad man can spoil the whole church.

It is interesting that Paul says nothing concerning the woman involved. Perhaps she was not a member of the church and therefore Paul had no jurisdiction over her. But he did have over the man involved. The man though excommunicated was not punished, in fact Paul says to banish him from the assembly so that his spirit will be saved in the last day.

This action was something he had expected the assembly to do. And he was angry that they had not dealt with it. The assembly learned the lesson, that they had the authority to deliver the violator over to Satan's domain, the

⁴G. Shaw, The Cost of Authority (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), 69-71.

world. Death, disease, sin and so forth (2 Cor. 4) would destroy the flesh, but in doing so the person would be saved.

The use of images was one tactic used by Paul to deliver his message that opened a small window into the real person of Paul. All of the images mentioned would have been familiar images to his listeners and would have painted a picture of this difficult message of Christ and this new Christian life-style that would have aided in their understanding. Paul's authority was known and was responded to by his followers. But through his entire life's ministry, Paul maintained a distinct relationship between his followers, himself, Jesus, and God. "So let no one boast of men. For all things are yours...and you are Christ's; and Christ is God's" (1 Cor. 3:21-23).

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