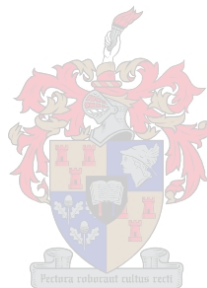


CITY CENTRES OF THE APOSTLE PAUL

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this assignment is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university for a degree.

ABSTRACT

The apostle Paul was called and commissioned to the city centres of the eastern Mediterranean world. These city centres were places of power, trade, wealth and travel. They were the nerve centres of civilisation in the East. People from various parts of the Roman Empire were found in these major cities. The city was therefore a highly significant institution in the Roman Empire. The governing authorities wanted hellenization and romanization to spread from these cities. The Christian leaders also decided that Christianity had to spread in the Roman Empire from its city centres. The apostle Paul's Christian mission was therefore to the various cities in the Roman Empire. The socio-historical realities in these cities therefore formed the context of Paul's life and apostolic work and determined his relation to a city. The political, social, cultural and religious factors in a city could therefore impinge on his life and work. The apostle Paul was usually drawn to these large cities where he could find Jewish communities. As Christianity was resting on a Jewish foundation, his initial strategy was his work in the synagogues amongst the Jews. Paul also needed an alternative venue for his Christian work in the city. These alternate venues were usually the private homes of individuals who had become Christians. In these homes Paul established his church in a city. The hosts in these homes would usually become the benefactors and leaders in the church. Paul's apostolic work in a city was also done in the city streets. His church therefore became thoroughly mixed in terms of social status, however, the church gave all equal rights and privileges. When Paul left a city, he also placed on them the responsibility to reach their surrounding regions and provinces with the Christian message. These cities therefore had to be strategically located. The apostle Paul chose five specific cities that had an advantageous geographical position in the Roman provinces to complete his apostolic work in the eastern Mediterranean world.

OPSOMMING

Die apostel Paulus was geroep en opgedrag vir die stedelike sentrums van die ooste Middellandse wereld. Hierdie stedelike sentrums was plekke van invloedryke mag, ekonomiese handel, rykdom en reis aktiwiteit. Hulle was ook die kern van menslike beskawing in die Ooste. Bevolkings groepe vanuit verskeie dele van die Romeinse ryk was in hierdie groot stede te vinde. Stede was 'n hoogs betekensvolle instelling in die Romeinse ryk. Die politieke owerhede wou he dat hellenization en romanization moes sprei van hierdie stede. Die Christelike leiers het ook besluit dat Christendom moes in die stede van die Romeinse ryk sprei. Die apostel Paulus se Christelike sending was dus tot die verskillende stede in die Romeinse ryk. Die sosio-historiese realiteite in hierdie stede was die samehang van Paulus se apostoliese werk en het ook sy verhouding met die betrokke stede bepaal. Die politieke, maatskaplike, kulturele en godsdienstige faktore in 'n stad kon dus 'n invloed uitoefen op sy lewe en werk. Paulus was gewoonlik aangetrokke tot hierdie groot stede waar Joodse gemeenskappe te vinde was. Aangesien Christendom in die Joodse geloof gegrondves was, was sy aanvanklike strategie om sy werk te loots in sinagoge waar Joode te vinde was. Paulus het ook 'n alternatiewe ontmoetings plek vir sy Christelike werk in die stede nodig gehad. Hierdie alternatiewe ontmoetingsplekke was gewoonlik in die huise van individue wat Christene geword het. Die eienaar van hierdie huishouding het gedien as gasheer, weldoener en leier in die kerk. Paulus het ook sy apostoliese werk voortgesit in die stedelike strate. Sy kerke het as gevolg hiervan 'n gemende samelewing status gehad, nogtans het hy gepoog om alle Christene gelykwaardig te stel. Wanneer Paulus 'n stad verlaat het, het hy het ook aan hulle die verantwoordelikheid gegee om uit te reik na hul omliggende streke en provinsies met die Christen boodskap. Hierdie stede moes dus strategies gelee wees. Paulus het vyf spesifieke stede wat 'n voordelig geologiese posisie in die Romeinse provinsies uitgeken om sy apostoliese werk te voltooi in die ooste Middellandse wereld.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Hellenistic age saw the establishment and growth of many cities. These cities became the nerve centres around which its civilisation was shaped. The Greeks used the cities as a means to spread hellenisation and urbanisation. When Rome became the chief city, its aim was also to use the city as a vehicle to spread romanization throughout its Empire. To do this they founded Roman colonies in various provinces. These colonies were largely settled by military veterans. The city therefore became a highly significant institution in the Greco-Roman world. The city also became an important institution to the Christian community. They saw the potential of reaching their world with Christianity through the cities that had been founded by the governing authorities. Therefore the Christian commission was conceived by them from the start to the finish as an urban movement (Meeks 1983,10). The cities in the Greco-Roman world therefore were to form the social context of Paul's life and apostolic work.

The city of Antioch was Paul's base of apostolic operations. The history of this city had prepared it to be a base from which Christian expansion could take place. Antioch was the political and commercial centre of Syria. It was one of the largest cities in the Roman Empire. There were many Jews and Gentiles living in this city. Many people also came to this city bringing their cults with them. When Christianity was first introduced into this city, many Gentiles decided to become Christians. Antioch therefore became a suitable sphere for Paul to serve an apprenticeship as one called to be an apostle to the Gentiles (Gal. 2:8). In 43 AD he came to teach in this city. Antioch then became the centre of his missionary activities in Syria and Cilicia for many years. His teachings about Christianity were therefore shaped in this city. Jerusalem was to be the administrative centre of Christianity, but Antioch was to be his base from which he would launch three apostolic operations to the Greco-Roman world. On Paul's first two missionary journeys, he took leaders from the Jerusalem church with him, but on his third missionary journey he took along one of his own Greek converts from Antioch. The cities chosen on the first missionary journey were remote from the main roads and from the all important contact with Greek life (Schlatter 1961,143). On Paul's subsequent missionary journeys, he began to choose cities based on their advantageous geographical location in the Greco-Roman world.

Paul's first target city on his second missionary journey was Philippi. Philippi was a Roman colony and one of the leading cities in Macedonia. It was situated near the Aegean Sea and it was on the military and commercial highway called the Via Egnatia. This main road linked important cities in this province. Christianity could spread from such a city. This Roman colony also marked Paul's first clash with the Roman authorities. However, his Roman citizenship aided him in this city. It gave him rights and privileges in the Roman society. Paul's apostolic work in Philippi resulted in the conversion of a woman called Lydia (Acts 16:14). This was significant because women in Macedonia were very influential in their cities. Her house became the meeting place of Christians in Philippi. This church also established a special role of financially partnering with Paul to help him spread Christianity to his target cities. When he left Philippi, he chose Thessalonica as his next target city. Thessalonica was the capital of Macedonia. It had a huge mixed population. It also had one of the best harbours on the Aegean Sea and was on the Via Egnatia. The city attracted many people. Paul began his apostolic work in the synagogue in the city. This was because Christianity was resting on a Jewish foundation. However, most of his work was done outside the synagogue in the streets and lanes of the city. When he left this city, many Greeks who came out of paganism formed part of his church (1 Thess. 1:9). He continued his work in this city by writing letters to the church. His main aim had been to address their eschatological concerns. To allay their concerns Paul also made use of Jewish and Hellenistic traditions that formed part of their context to explain his beliefs (1 Thess. 4:16). Paul's work in this city caused Christianity to spread throughout Macedonia and even into Achaia (1 Thess. 1:8). Paul's second missionary journey also took him from Macedonia into Achaia. In the province of Achaia, Paul chose Corinth as his target city for apostolic work. Corinth was also a huge city that had two seaports. This linked the city with the West as well as with the East. Therefore, Corinth became an important trade centre. Corinth was also a Roman colony that was well known for its bi-annual Isthmian games. However, it was also notorious for its immorality. When Paul arrived in Corinth, Gallio was the proconsul of Achaia. At the tribunal before the city mob and Paul, Gallio decided on the legal status of Christianity (Acts 18:14-16). Gallio's ruling on religious freedom allowed Paul to work in this city for eighteen months. When he left this city, many problems associated with their background surfaced in this church. The Corinthian church is known to us in greatest detail because of Paul's letters to it to solve these problems.

However, Paul's work succeeded and the church in Corinth was able to reach all in Achaia (2 Cor. 1:1).

To address the Christian vacuum that existed in the eastern Mediterranean world between Antioch and Corinth, Paul chose Ephesus as his final target city in the East. Paul arrived in this city in 53 AD on his third missionary journey from Antioch. Ephesus had been chosen as the capital of Asia by Augustus. It was one of the largest cities in the Greco-Roman world. Its strategic location caused it to become an international trade centre. However, it was also a centre of superstition and the home of a goddess called Artemis. Paul wanted to reach the whole of Asia with Christianity by working in this city. Ephesus therefore became the centre of his activities for three years. During this time period he experienced tremendous conflicts with the Jews, with superstitious practices and with the business communities allied with pagan religion. He remembers his time in Ephesus as a fight against wild beasts (1 Cor. 15:32). However, his work was very successful and spread throughout Asia (Acts 19:10). When Paul left Ephesus, his apostolic work in the eastern Mediterranean world was finished.

Paul's mission had been to the cities in the Roman Empire. The political, social, cultural and religious realities in these cities not only formed the context of his life and work, but it also forged it. His commission from the city of Antioch was to take Christianity to the East. This work he managed to complete. To examine how he accomplished this major task, we need to understand the social context of Paul's apostolic work in the city centres of the eastern Mediterranean world. The city centres he chose to fulfil his unique mission were Antioch, Philippi, Thessalonica, Corinth and Ephesus.

2. ANTIOCH IN SYRIA

Antioch was founded by Seleucus I Nicator (the conqueror) in 300 BC. He was one of Alexander the Great's generals. He named the city after his father or possibly his son, Antiochus. He also made it the capital of the Seleucid dynasty in Syria. From its very beginning Antioch had a mixed population. Seleucus had settled many Syrians as well as his military veterans in this city. His military veterans included Macedonians, Greeks and even Jews who had been mercenaries in his army. As a result of a policy of the Seleucid kings concerning different cultures, the city was divided into separate quarters and these quarters were surrounded with walls. One quarter was built for the native Syrians and another was built for the Greeks. The geographer and historian Strabo described Antioch as a Tetrapolis, since it consists of four parts; and each of the four settlements is fortified both by a common wall and by a wall of its own (Harrison 1985,183). The Jewish veterans were given land around Antioch as a reward for their services in the army. One of the foundations of the Seleucid dynasty was the patron deity of Antioch called *Tyche* meaning fortune or lady luck. According to Stambaugh and Balch (1986,146) this deity represented the swing of fortune Hellenistic kingdoms could face as well as the fertility of its fields and the security of the city. During the Hellenistic kingdoms the city of Antioch became prosperous. Its inhabitants also came into close contact with various Oriental cultural and religious ideals. Greek civilisation also flourished in this city. Therefore from the city of Antioch, Seleucus planned to spread urbanization and hellenization to the rest of the eastern Mediterranean world.

The Seleucid dynasty came to an end with the occupation of Syria by the Romans in 64 BC. Syria became an imperial province with the legate of Syria residing in Antioch. This was important so that the Roman emperors could be seen as the legitimate successors of the Seleucid kings. Its position as capital of Syria at this time is not clear. Josephus calls it the metropolis of Syria. However, this title may refer to its position of influence and status in Syria (Tracey 1994,238). The Roman emperors granted freedom to the city. This meant that the city could have its own constitution, be free of a military garrison and be exempt from the payment of tribute (Stambaugh and Balch 1986,146). Antioch received the patronage and protection of the emperors. Many Roman building programs that was started by Caesar and continued by Augustus made Antioch one of the most beautiful cities in the Greco-

Greco-Roman world. Antioch became one of the third largest cities in the Greco-Roman world. Mark Anthony had married Cleopatra in Antioch and Augustus had visited the city twice (Johnson 1987,48). The Roman emperors wanted to romanize the rest of the province of Syria from Antioch. This was because Antioch was not only a political centre, but also a travel and commercial centre in Syria. The city was strategically situated. It was located on the Orontes River. The Romans had improved the road system and developed its seaport Seleucia, as was their practice when occupying a province (Downey 1962,146). Seleucia was one of the principal harbours of the eastern Mediterranean world. The city had easy access to the sea by way of its seaport Seleucia and its land routes gave one access to Palestine, Egypt and Asia Minor. Many Roman merchants came to Antioch. Stambaugh and Balch (1986,147) write that its position as an international thoroughfare is illustrated by the sight of ambassadors from India passing through on their way to see Augustus. Syrian traders from Antioch are also attested everywhere throughout the Roman Empire. They exported goods such as wine, grain, dried fruit and leather. Antioch became a very prosperous city with a population that may have reached 500 000 people.

According to Josephus, since the time of the Seleucid kings the Jews at Antioch had enjoyed isopolity, namely, equal political rights with the Greeks, a privilege of which they were very jealous (Schlatter 1961,109). The Roman emperors maintained the status quo of the Jews in Antioch and therefore many Jews came to live in Antioch. Their commercial interests in this city drew them to Antioch. Many Jews became prosperous in this city and sent expensive offerings to the temple in Jerusalem. They increased their power and influence in this city. The Jews enjoyed good standing with the inhabitants in Antioch. King Herod the Great visited the city frequently. He had the central street paved with marble for two Roman miles in honour of Augustus. This was to show that he was a friend of the ruling powers. In Tidball (1984,80) the concept of friendship in the New Testament was that it conferred prestige and authority. This street became one of Antioch's claims to fame in the ancient world as well as a symbol of Jewish power and influence in this city (Stambaugh and Balch 1986,146). The Jews had a strong influence on the Greek population and many of them were attracted to the Greek speaking synagogues, to the Torah and to the Jewish way of life. These Greeks were not necessarily Greeks by birth, but were Greek speaking Gentiles. According to Josephus a great number of people were "in some measure incorporated with themselves" (Harrison 1985, 184). This meant that they had become

proselytes or had the status of being a God-fearer. A proselyte was a Greek who joined the Jewish community and a God-fearer was a Greek who was drawn to Judaism in varying degrees. In the book of Acts we read of Nicolas who was a Greek proselyte from Antioch that had become a Christian (Acts 6:5). He had moved from Antioch and was now living in Jerusalem. Many Jews from various cities in the Greco-Roman world were also living in Jerusalem. They were known as Hellenists. Many of them believed in Christ. They were, however, forced to flee from Jerusalem when a major persecution broke out against them. They went to various regions in the Roman Empire and some of them came to the city of Antioch.

2.1 The Coming of Barnabas and Paul

These Hellenistic Jews came from Cyprus and Cyrene. In Acts 11:19-20 Luke records that they did not only speak to the Jews about the Christ, but also spoke to the Greeks. Stambaugh and Balch (1986,146) believe that the juxtaposition of the different cultures in this city is reflected in this text. Hellenistic Jews also had a wider outlook on the world than the orthodox Palestinian Jews. They spoke to Greek speaking persons in Antioch from various nationalities. Many of them were probably found around the synagogues and had some understanding concerning the background of these teachings. Many of them were converted to Christianity (Acts 11:21). The church that had been started in Antioch therefore had the first significant number of Gentiles in it. These new churches interested the Jerusalem church leaders as they wanted to oversee all the churches started in the Greco-Roman world. They had sent the apostles Peter and John to Samaria to evaluate the Christian work done there (Acts 8:14). These were journeys of survey and organisation by the Jerusalem leaders so that the entire mission of Christianity would be brought into relation with the Jerusalem church. These journeys were also undertaken to affirm, recognise and unite the distant churches with itself. They also did this by installing some of its members in these churches (Schlatter 1961,110). When the church in Antioch came to the attention of the leaders of the Jerusalem church, they decided to send Barnabas on one of these journeys of survey and organisation (Acts 11:22). Barnabas was a Levite who had come from the island of Cyprus. He had a good reputation in the Jerusalem church. He had proven his loyalty to the church and his commitment to work with them when he came to live with them. He was the most suitable choice to undertake such a mission for the

Jerusalem church as the church in Antioch had been started by believers from Cyprus and Cyrene. When Barnabas arrived in Antioch, he was pleased with the work he found in this city. His ministry also caused the work to succeed and grow (Acts 11:24). Barnabas decided to remain on as a leader in this church and in this way the church in Antioch was united with the Jerusalem church.

Barnabas decided to enlist the help of Paul in Antioch. Barnabas knew that Paul had a calling to teach Gentiles, as he had introduced him to the apostles in Jerusalem (Acts 9:27). Paul was also a Hellenistic Jew. Paul had been preaching and teaching for a number of years in the synagogues found in the regions of Cilicia and Syria. In the synagogues Paul would have spoken to many Jews and God-fearers about his faith. Some of his sufferings for Christ that he mentions to the Corinthian church could have occurred during this period. He writes that he had been beaten five times by the Jews forty stripes minus one (2 Cor. 11:24). This punishment was probably due to his Christian preaching in their synagogues. However, his ministry in these synagogues bore fruit. Luke writes that there were churches founded in Cilicia and Syria (Acts 15:41). Paul was then well prepared to work in the church at Antioch.

Barnabas thought that the church in Antioch was also a suitable sphere for Paul's ministry, as the Gentiles in this church needed to be taught Jewish scriptures. He went to search for Paul in Tarsus. Tarsus was Paul's home city and he was a citizen of this city (Acts 21:39). Tidball (1984,93) writes that to be a citizen of Tarsus one had to own property worth 500 *drachmae*. This indicates that Paul could have come from a privileged and wealthy family. When Barnabas had found Paul, he brought him to Antioch. They then formed a preaching and teaching team in the church. Luke records that Paul taught in Antioch for a whole year (Acts 11:24-26). Schattler (1961,111) commenting on Luke's statement states that this remark makes sense only when we assume that Luke intends to picture the apostle as an indefatigable traveller. However, Antioch now became his centre of activities for the regions of Syria and Cilicia (Acts 13:1). Antioch was now also the city where his teachings for his Gentile churches would be forged and developed. It was also the city where he would serve his apprenticeship as a fellow worker with Barnabas and other leaders in the church. In Antioch Paul developed the form of missionary practice and organization which

we call Pauline Christianity (Meeks 1983,10). The church in Antioch was also to become his base of apostolic operations to the rest of the Greco-Roman world.

In Antioch the disciples of Christ were also called Christians for the first time. The origin of this term is not known. However, this name could not have originated with the Jews because they called them the sect of the Nazarenes (Acts 24:5). This was the name given to them by the Jews as an objection to Jesus of Nazareth. This name probably has its origins amongst the ridicule prone population of Antioch. Harrison (1985,183) says that the temper of its citizens was a combination of light heartedness and buffoonery. In their confession to their Gentile neighbours about their faith, the Gentile believers probably spoke a lot about the kingly mission and destiny of Christ. It probably became a subject of popular talk amongst the Gentiles. Christ was thought to be one of their gods or their leader. As they were a distinct sect in Antioch, they became known as Christians. This name was meant to be a derisive name, but the disciples soon accepted it as a title of honour. We see this name being used in the letter of Peter (1 Pet. 4: 16). The bishop of Antioch, Ignatius, in 100 AD also uses this name to describe the disciples of Christ (Johnson 1987,44). This name gave them a sense of identity in Antioch. To strengthen its identity and to unify the churches, leaders from the Jerusalem church also came to visit the church in Antioch.

2.2 Famine Relief in Antioch

The prophet Agabus came to Antioch in 43 AD or in 44 AD. He prophesied in the church of Antioch about a famine that was going to occur throughout the world. Luke writes that this famine occurred during the reign of Claudius (Acts 11:27-28). According to Winter (1994,66) there were various factors that caused a famine. There could be a succession of crop failures causing a regional dearth or a steep rise in price could occur because of a local crop failure. Speculation by local merchants also put the price of grain beyond the people's ability to afford it. Grain was a fundamental commodity in the ancient world. Severe grain shortages in the provinces caused civil unrest and even death. The church in Antioch in full reliance on Agabus's prophecy made arrangements so that the poor brethren in Judea could have food provided for them (Acts 11:29). These famines that occurred were not just a provincial problem, but they were a multi-provincial problem. Therefore these food

shortages were also experienced in Syria. Extant Greco-Roman evidence of the period shows that it was a shortage of uneven intensity spread over a number of years (Winter 1994,69). Grain shortages were a political responsibility and city rulers usually made use of benefactors during such a period. This was a long established tradition in the cities. The church in Antioch could have looked to one of their rich members to be a benefactor. One of their leaders, Manaen, was a Palestinian of high standing (Acts 13:1). He grew up in the court of King Herod and he would have had the wealth and connections to be a benefactor for the poor brethren in Judea. He would have been the natural choice to play such a strategic role during a famine. However, the church in Antioch decided not to follow the policies in the cities. The church allowed all working members in the church to be benefactors. They all had to be responsible for the grain supply and therefore they all gave according to their individual abilities (Acts 11:29). This was a new and radical approach to benefactions. Winter (1994,75) states that this would have been seen as a social revolution to the outsider in the Greco-Roman world. This action was based on a Christian principle. Paul writing to the church in Antioch stated that all Christians had to do good, especially to help the poor Christians (Gal. 6:10). A new principle was also established that it was the duty of the whole church to support the Jerusalem community (Schlatter 1961,114). This is one reason why Paul established his Jerusalem collection in the churches he had founded. He also wanted to keep his churches in relation to the Jerusalem church. The church in Antioch might have collected the famine relief money over a period of time through weekly donations. They could have had two or three years to collect this money.

When the Judean famine occurred in 46 AD, Barnabas and Paul were chosen as delegates from the church in Antioch to take the famine relief to Judea. Titus, a Greek convert, could also have gone with them at this time as a representative of the church in Antioch (Gal 2:1). They did not merely go to hand over the relief money, but probably also acted as administrators of the relief. Ramsay (1927,52) explains that the manner of relief must, of course, have been by purchasing and distributing corn, for it would have shown criminal incapacity to send gold to a starving city. This means that the delegates from Antioch would have bought food and then would have come to distribute it in Judea. It was a severe famine and some of the inhabitants of Judea had died. Queen Helena of Adiabene also visited Jerusalem at this time and brought figs from Cyprus and corn from Egypt to help the poor in this city (Winter 1994,64) She stayed in Jerusalem until the famine had ended.

Barnabas and Paul could also have stayed in Judea until the famine ended. At this time they would have proved to the Jerusalem church their sense of responsibility and brotherhood in a great crisis in their city. The Jerusalem leaders could have affirmed and recognised the apostolic calling on Barnabas and Paul during this time (Gal. 2:9). This would have placed the church in Antioch on a recognised and independent basis (Ramsay 1927,166). Strong personal relationships were important to these churches to keep it in unity. Perhaps after this famine the apostle Peter also came to visit Antioch. He could have come to witness again the grace of God in a Gentile environment as he had done earlier in Cornelius's household (Acts 10:25). He is the only one of the Twelve who is known to have visited Antioch. However, the apostle Peter's actions at a table fellowship meal in Antioch caused a crisis in the church.

2.3 Table Fellowship in Antioch

The crisis over table fellowship that occurred at this time was a typical dilemma in this city. The fourth book of Maccabees is also concerned about this dilemma in Antioch. The bishop of Antioch, Ignatius, also alludes to this problem in his writings in the second century (Stambaugh and Balch 1986,145-146). The orthodox Jews kept strict dietary laws and eating with Gentiles was not acceptable to them. Table fellowship was a central cultural religious tradition of the Jews. The church in Antioch probably met in private homes for prayer, teaching, fellowship and the breaking of bread, but the orthodox Jewish believers observed the law concerning table fellowship with Gentiles. This was a major dilemma for the church. The church in Antioch was under threat to divide into two groups after Peter, Barnabas and other Jews withdrew themselves from the Gentiles after a meal (Gal. 2:11-13). This occurred because Judaizers from the Jerusalem church had come to Antioch at this time. These Judaizers were narrow, rigid and culture bound Jews who could only accept Gentiles into the church if they became proselytes. At this time the apostle Paul had to openly rebuke Peter for his public hypocrisy in this matter (Gal. 2:14). Peter's actions meant that the Gentiles had to become Jews to be part of the church. It also meant that Barnabas and Paul's entire apostolic mission to the nations would have been brought into question. They had preached in the surrounding regions and provinces on their first missionary journey (Acts 13:1-14:26). They had accepted Gentiles into the church without them having to conform to Jewish laws. The Judaizers wanted the Gentile believers in

Christ to accept two matters that were central to Jewish culture and belief. These matters concerned dietary laws and circumcision (Acts 15:1).

These doctrinal issues had to be resolved at a special meeting in Jerusalem in 49 AD. The resolution clearly involved the recognition that Jerusalem was the administrative centre of the church (Ramsay 1927,153). The Jerusalem church was not to be a governor over the other churches, but was to be considered as the head amongst equals. The churches had to be unified by being brought into relation with the Jerusalem church. The church in Antioch sent some delegates including Barnabas and Paul to this council meeting. Luke writes that Paul, Barnabas and Peter spoke in favour of freedom from Jewish laws for Gentiles at this church council (Acts 15:7-12). At the end of the council meeting James, the head of the Jerusalem church, summed up in favour of them. However, the Gentiles had to keep one moral law and three dietary laws so as not to offend their Jewish brethren. The Gentiles in Antioch had to abstain from blood, strangled meat, and things that were offered to idols and from sexual immorality (Acts 15:29). This was a compromise solution to their situation, but it had kept the church's unity intact. The leaders of the Jerusalem church also wrote a letter stating the position that they had taken at this council meeting. This letter was addressed to the churches in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia and was accompanied by two leaders from the Jerusalem church, namely, Judas and Silas. They were sent to confirm what had been written and to unite these churches (Acts 15:22). The church in Antioch therefore became the first church to realize and express the unity between the Jews and Gentiles in one group (Harrison 1985,187). Gentiles could now have equal and full membership in the church of Christ.

2.4 The Commission of Barnabas and Paul

The church in Antioch became the first to develop a missionary vision to reach their world for Christ. The leadership of this church also came from various parts of the world. Luke mentions that there were five leaders in this church who were prophets and teachers. Barnabas came from Cyprus, Lucius from Cyrene, Saul from Tarsus and Manaen came from Palestine (Acts 13:1). Simeon was a Semitic name and he could also have come from Palestine. Lucius was a Gentile name. Some think he was Luke, the beloved physician, who could have been a member of this church. Harrison (1985,185) also mentions that if Luke

knew this church firsthand, he would have had a special interest in presenting its contribution to the development of the church universal. Luke recorded the first commission given by the church to two missionary workers (Acts 13:1-3). Maier (1976,65) says that that work turned out to be the first specially organized missionary expedition in church annals, an ideological invasion of the Greco-Roman world that aimed to announce Christianity in the heart of paganism. A special service was held for Barnabas and Paul commissioning them to the apostolic work that they had been called to do. Lightfoot notes that Paul's conversion may indeed be said in some sense to have been his call to the apostleship. But the actual investiture, the completion of his call, took place some years later at Antioch (Ramsay 1927,67). The church released them and the Holy Spirit sent them as apostles to the cities of the Greco-Roman world. The city's unique history had prepared it to be a base from which Christian expansion could take place. In the past rulers wanted to hellenize and romanize the provinces from Antioch. In 47 AD Barnabas and Paul went from this city to their surrounding regions and provinces in order to Christianize its inhabitants.

3. THE MACEDONIAN CALL

After the Jerusalem council meeting in 49 AD, Paul began to increase his vision. He began to see that his call to apostleship was not only to his homeland and to the adjacent regions of Syria, Cilicia, and Galatia, but call was to all the provinces in the Greco-Roman world. For this reason he wanted to conduct his apostolic work in other provinces in the Roman Empire and to visit all the cities where Barnabas and he had preached (Acts 15:38). This was also in accordance with his own rule of visiting churches he had planted in order to confirm and strengthen them. Most probably he wanted to share with them the decisions reached at the Jerusalem council meeting. They were now Christians by right, not proselytes of Judaism, nor poor relations of Jewry (Perowne 1973, 49). Barnabas agreed that another missionary journey should be undertaken, but wanted to take his cousin, John Mark, with them. Paul, however, refused to take him along as he had left them in Pamphylia during their first missionary journey (Acts 15:38). Paul did not want someone to go along again as an assistant if he was not a completely reliable person. These missionary journeys required that self-denial, complete commitment and reliability be a characteristic of each member of the apostolic team. Barnabas, however, was determined to take him along and so Paul broke off relations with him.

Two apostolic teams then left the city of Antioch. Barnabas took John Mark and went to conduct his apostolic work on the island of Cyprus. Paul chose Silas to take the place of Barnabas (Acts 15:40). He would, however, be in a subordinate position to Paul as he was untrained to the work and as Paul had invited him on this journey. Silas was a prophet from the Jerusalem church and was also one of the leaders chosen by the Jerusalem church to explain the council's decisions to the Gentiles in Antioch. After being free to leave Antioch he had decided to stay in this culturally mixed congregation. Probably he had proven himself in dealing with the questions that the Gentiles had raised in the church at Antioch. Paul also needed a leader from the Jerusalem church at his side so that his message about Christianity could be confirmed. Jewish law also required the testimony of two witnesses. Paul, however, had considerably increased his independence and the churches now started would be directly related to him.

Paul started his journey from his apostolic base of operations in Antioch. The two witnesses went northwards to the city of Tarsus and then on towards the cities of the Roman province of Galatia, namely, Derbe, Lystra, Iconium and Pisidian Antioch. At Lystra Paul chose another assistant to help him in his work. His name was Timothy. Timothy had an excellent reputation in the church. He had been taught the scriptures from his childhood by his mother and grandmother (2 Tim. 1:5). However, he came from a mixed marriage. His mother was a Jewess and his father was a Greek. This placed a stigma on him amongst the Jews. Paul removed this stigma by having him circumcised. Paul wanted to do this as it was his policy at that time to conciliate the Jews (Acts 16:3). According to Pharisaical laws Timothy could now be accepted as a Jew. Maier (1976,82) also writes that with a Jewish mother and a Greek father, Timothy was a personal symbol of the universality of the faith.

When Paul left Pisidian Antioch, he had hoped to preach in the Roman province of Asia. However, Paul and his team were forbidden to do this by the Holy Spirit. Paul would eventually preach in Asia, but this trip was not destined for this province. The apostolic team then tried to enter the province of Bithynia and again a divine manifestation did not allow them to (Acts 16:7). Eventually they ended their journey at the seaport of Troas. It was an important trade harbour during the Hellenistic and Roman times. At the seaport Luke, the author of the book of Acts, joined them. This is indicated by the 'we' passages found in the book of Acts (Acts 16:10). He was a Gentile physician (Col. 4:14). He could now give an eyewitness account of this period of Paul's missionary journey.

Ramsay (1927,205) believes that Luke was a man from Macedonia who was probably one of the many Greeks who were seeking their fortune away from home. There is a tradition that Luke was a member of the church in Antioch. Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea, in the fourth century supports this tradition. This tradition could have come about because some manuscripts have a 'we' passage in Acts 11:28. Codex Bezae has a statement that the prophecy of Agabus was uttered, "when we were gathered together" (Harrison 1985,185). As the Jerusalem church sent envoys to churches that had been founded by their members so the church in Antioch could have done likewise. The church at Antioch could also have sent some of their members to strengthen its relationship with churches that had been started by their members. Luke could have come on such a journey to survey the Pauline churches and would have met Paul in Troas. Schlatter (1961,144) also believes that Luke's

position only becomes intelligible if we assume that the church of Antioch had sent him to visit the churches recently founded by Paul. At this seaport Paul again received a divine manifestation in the form of a vision in the night. In this vision he saw a man from Macedonia calling them to his province. The team agreed that this was the guidance that they had wanted and immediately set off to conduct their apostolic work in the cities of Macedonia (Acts 16:9-10).

3.1 PHILIPPI IN MACEDONIA

The city of Philippi was about ten miles inland from the Aegean Sea. It was situated on a broad plain enclosed by mountains. People from the island of Thasos first settled here. The city was then founded by the Greek orator, Callistratus, after fleeing from Athens in 365 BC. It was named Krenides probably because of the springs and waters nearby. Almost five years later in 361 BC this city was seized and refounded by Philipp II, father of Alexander the Great. He increased the size of the city, settled more inhabitants in it and built a wall around the city. He also renamed it Philippi in his honour. According to Perowne (1973,51) he was interested in the alluvial gold that washed down the rivers nearby. He used the gold to build his armies. After Philip's rule, Macedonia was then ruled for many years by various generals of Alexander and their descendents.

In 167 BC the Romans annexed Macedonia. The province of Macedonia was then divided into four separate districts by the Roman general, Aemilius Paullus. Philippi was located in the first district. The capital of this district was Amphipolis. However, Luke says that Philippi was the leading city of its division (Acts 16:12). Philippi was a growing city and was to become the greatest city of its division. In 42 BC Anthony and Octavian defeated Brutus and Cassius at the famous Battle of Philippi near the Gangites River. This was to avenge Julius Caesar's assassination and this also brought an end to the Roman republic. To celebrate this victory Anthony renamed Philippi as *Colonia Victrix Philippensium*. He also made it a Roman colony. The formation of these colonies was one of the ways Rome tried to romanise the provinces. Strabo says that up to this time Philippi had remained only a small settlement, but was now made larger (Finegan 1962,786). Anthony settled some of his army veterans in this city.

After Octavian defeated Anthony the city was re-colonized. Octavian settled many people here who had sided with Anthony in Italy. They were dispossessed of their homes and sent here and elsewhere. Philippi therefore had a mixed population of Romans, Macedonians and Thracians. Octavian also renamed this colony again. It became known as *Colonia Augusta Julia Philippensis*. It became primarily an agricultural centre. It was, however, on a strategic military and commercial highway called the Via Egnatia. This Roman road ran through the city as well as through its broad plain. It was nearly 400 miles long and linked

the Adriatic Sea with the Aegean Sea. Many people travelled on this road to the harbour called Neapolis.

3.1.1 The Founding of the Philippian Church

Paul and his team arrived at Neapolis in 50 AD. This was a commercial harbour in Macedonia and the terminus of the Roman highway called the Via Egnatia. He did not preach in this seaport, as his target city was Philippi. It lay about nine miles inland from this harbour. Paul now began to choose cities that had an advantageous geographical position and political organisation in the Greco-Roman world. They could serve as natural centres of communication to the rest of the province. Schattler (1961,144) says that the result of this was that provincial and national churches came into being. Paul's habit was to go first to the synagogue in the city to expound his message of salvation to the Jews. However, there must have been very few Jews living in Philippi because there was no synagogue in this city. Jewish law required a minimum of ten men in a community to establish a synagogue. There is also not much archaeological evidence to show that Jews lived here. There was, however, a place of prayer for Jews about a mile west of Philippi. This Jewish place of prayer was outside the city walls and near the Gangites River. Paul learned about this place of prayer and on the Sabbath he and his team went there. Paul met a group of pious women here and presented his message of salvation to them. In the Greco-Roman world far more Gentile women were associated with Judaism than men. The first woman to respond to their message was a Gentile woman called Lydia.

Lydia had been attracted to Judaism probably in Thyatira. She was a businesswoman who sold purple dyed textiles from Thyatira in Philippi. Thyatira was a large commercial centre and was famous for its dyeing. She was probably a wealthy woman because she could import these textiles into Philippi. Usually it was the men who dealt with purple who were also able to become members of the civic councils and therefore have a major role in the life of their communities (Gill 1994,114). Latin inscriptions found in Philippi mentions such traders. This shows one that there were strong commercial links between cities. Luke reports that Lydia and her household believed Paul's message (Acts 16:15). They were therefore the first Christian converts in Philippi. Her household could have included her children if she was a widow and her helpers in her business. A suggestion has been made

based on a survey of Egyptian census returns that Lydia was a divorced woman. Another suggestion has been advanced that she was a freedwoman in the imperial household (Blue 1994,184-186). She wanted Paul to stay in her home and to use it as a Christian meeting place in the city. This would have been a more advantageous place to reach the city of Philippi with his message of salvation than the Jewish place of prayer by the river. Lydia's home therefore played an important role in establishing a Christian community in Philippi. However, Christian meetings in Lydia's home did not bring Paul's mission to the attention of the public. It was rather the mocking cries of a slave girl who decided to follow them in the city.

3.1.2 Religious Activity in Philippi

The slave girl who followed them was possessed by a spirit of divination. She therefore played a major role in the religion she represented. Her divination all formed part of the activities found in Roman and Greek religion. Roman religion was official in the city since the founding of the colony. Other religious cults played a smaller role, but some Oriental cults were becoming influential. The religions found in Philippi reflected the composite population of this city. The Roman religions one could find in Philippi were those involving Jupiter, Mars and the emperor cult. The Greeks worshipped Athena. The Egyptians brought the cults Isis, Serapis and Harpocrates to Philippi. The worship of Cybele, the Great Mother from Anatolia was also found here. The Thracian god Liber Pater and goddess Bendis were also worshipped in this city (Finegan 1962,787).

The apostle Paul had come into contact with many cults in the Roman Empire. He was therefore aware of the peril he could put himself and his team into if he had to command the divining spirit to leave this slave girl. Many people had come to her to have their fortunes read. People were therefore held in bondage to their superstitious fears and hopes. This allowed her owners to accumulate much wealth because divination was bound up with financial interests (Acts 16:16). She followed Paul and his team for many days. Her cries about them were true, but coming from a fortuneteller would not help the Christian cause in this city. Ramsay (1927,215) states that 'God the highest' was a widespread pagan expression and salvation was the object of many vows and prayers to that and other gods. Paul allowed this slave girl to follow them for several days. Eventually Paul had to deal

with this matter. Perhaps after a few days the owners realised that the girl was restored to normal. She could no longer tell anyone's fortune and the owners realised that they were faced with a great financial loss (Acts 16:19). They immediately decided that Paul and Silas had to be seized and dragged to the forum so that they could face the two Praetors in this Roman colony.

3.1.3 Roman Colonial Administration

The title Praetors was a courtesy title for the two magistrates who were in charge of the Roman colony (Ramsay 1927,218). Their function corresponded with the Roman consuls in Rome. Philippi was regarded as a free city with privileged citizenship. It was a miniature Rome away from Rome. The plan of the city is Roman. The different buildings erected in the city such as the theatre, the forum and the baths were built in a Roman style. Going to the Gangites River, Paul would have passed beneath a Roman arch in the city wall. A Roman arch of this kind was usually built at the founding of the colony. It symbolised the privileges, dignity and prestige of the city. One of the privileges of this colony was that the colonists depending on their civil status enjoyed the same rights of proprietorship as if their land were part of Italian soil (Stambaugh and Balch 1986,155). The official language of the city was Latin. Many inscriptions in Latin have been found in this city. According to Meeks (1983,45) Barbara Levick counted 421 inscriptions from Philippi, only 60 of which are Greek. Half the names found in inscriptions are also in Latin. The political officials usually came from the Roman colonists. Perhaps some came from influential native families loyal to Rome and who were granted Roman citizenship. Many army veterans had also settled here. This Roman colony served as a source for many soldiers who were recruited into the Praetorian guard (Phil. 1:13). The Praetorian guard formed the bodyguard of the emperor and held a higher status than the other soldiers. The coins in this city also show the military motifs in the city.

The charges the owners of the slave girl laid against Paul and Silas carried serious consequences. Their accusation was, "these men being Jews, exceedingly trouble our city and they teach customs which are not lawful for us, being Romans, to receive or observe" (Acts 16:20-21). It was against Roman laws for Jews to make proselytes of Roman citizens (Maier 1976,86). These charges immediately appealed to their anti-Semitic prejudice. It

also appealed to their pride in their Roman character. The charges brought against them were also regarded as treason by the Praetors. The Roman laws of a fair trial were disregarded as the Praetors were bent on pleasing the crowd. The characteristic weakness of the Roman municipality government in the cities was always a danger to their city's order (Ramsay 1927,224). This situation also marked Paul's first clash with Roman officials. Paul and Silas were beaten openly by the lictors and then placed in the city jail. The lictors were the official attendants of the Praetors and were responsible for arresting and scourging people (Acts 16:35). In the jail they were punished by being placed in stocks. These wooden stocks were to secure the prisoners as well as to inflict a bit of torture upon them. The stocks and chains were fixed to the prison walls. Instead of complaining Paul and Silas began to sing praises to God. Providentially in response to their singing an earthquake occurred and shook loose the prison chains from off the walls and also caused the bars holding the doors to fall loose (Acts 16:26). The prisoners were now free to escape. When the jailer arrived, he thought that they had escaped. According to Roman laws he had to guard them with his life. He now had to face the disgrace of a dishonourable death for his laxity. Therefore he decided to commit suicide. If he had to die this way according to Roman laws, his widow would be able to inherit his estate without penalty (Maier 1976,88). Paul, however, called out to him from the dark prison that no prisoner had escaped. Probably after securing the other prisoners, he took Paul and Silas to his home. He knew they were teaching a new doctrine of salvation in the city and wanted to know more about it. After hearing their message of salvation he and his household became Christians (Acts 16:32-33).

The following day the Praetors sent their lictors to free Paul and Silas so that they could leave the city. However, Paul and Silas asserted their Roman citizenship. Roman citizenship was a rare and valuable status in the Roman Empire. Roman citizens were not to be beaten and they had a right to a fair trial. For this mal-administration of justice there could be serious consequences for the city officials as well as for the colony. Therefore the Praetors came to apologize to Paul and Silas for their unfair treatment and also asked them to leave the city (Acts 16:39). Paul and Silas's citizenship also insured that the church would not be treated in an unfair and highhanded manner. When they left the prison, they went to the church in Philippi which was now in Lydia's home. They came to bid the church farewell and to prepare for their journey to the next city. Luke was no longer going

to accompany them, as his personal witness of Paul's mission ends here. Ramsay (1927,201) writes that it is almost universally recognised that the use of the first person in the sequel is intentional marking that the author remained in Philippi when Paul went on. He would accompany Paul again a few years later. Luke would probably have assumed a measure of leadership in this church. This is probably the reason why the church was so supportive of Paul's apostolic work (Phil. 4:15-16). They financially partnered with Paul to help him spread Christianity in the cities of the Roman Empire. Paul, Silas and Timothy now continued on their mission journey along the Via Egnatia through Amphipolis and Apollonia to their next target city, Thessalonica, which was also the capital of Macedonia.

3.2 THESSALONICA IN MACEDONIA

Thessalonica was founded by Cassander in 315 BC. He was one of Alexander the Great's generals. He tactfully named the city after his wife who was the daughter of Philip and Alexander's half-sister. The city was initially settled by the inhabitants of about 26 villages that Cassander had destroyed in this region. One of these villages was Therma and this doubtless accounts for the loose statement of Strabo that Thessalonica was formally called Therma (Finegan 1962,629). Cassander built a wall around the city that extended for six miles and interspersed it with towers. Thessalonica became an important commercial seaport during the Hellenistic times and attracted people from various parts of the ancient world.

In 167 BC Thessalonica became part of the Roman Empire after Aemilius Paullus defeated Perseus, king of Macedonia (179 – 168 BC). Aemilius Paullus decided to divide Macedonia into four districts. Each district was to have its own capital. The capitals of these districts were Pella, Amphipolis, Pelagonia and Thessalonica. Thessalonica was the capital of the second Roman district. In 148 BC the Romans reorganised the province and Thessalonica was chosen as the capital of the entire province. According to Pliny it was also granted the status of being a free city in 42 BC (Gill 1994,414). This was because the city had supported Octavian and Anthony in the Battle of Philippi. The Roman proconsul also resided in Thessalonica and the city became the seat of Roman administration in this senatorial province.

The city maintained a Greek republican form of administration under Roman rule. Many inscriptions found in this city are also in Greek (Meeks 1983,47). The city government consisted of a citizen's assembly and a governing council consisting of five or six men called politarchs. There were no Roman garrisons in the city. Thessalonica was also given the right to strike imperial and autonomous coins. It became an important communications and trading centre. This was because of its strategic situation. It was one of the best harbours of the Aegean Sea and was the chief seaport of Macedonia. This seaport gave people access to various parts of the Roman Empire. It was also on the famed Roman military and commercial highway called the Via Egnatia that linked important Roman and hellenised communities with each other. Thessalonica was also the terminus of an

important road that ran right up to the Danube River. This strategic location caused the city to flourish. Thessalonica became one of the most populous cities of Macedonia.

3.2.1 The Thessalonian People

When Paul entered the city in 50 AD, the city had a population of about 200 000 people. As Perowne (1973,54) states the population was a mixture of all sorts and conditions of many races. Greek culture was, however, predominant in this city. Traders, orators and hand workers came from Italy, Asia Minor and Achaia to Thessalonica. Paul was attracted to this city because of its large Jewish population. As was his custom, he went directly to the synagogue in the city to use it as a base for his presentation of the Christian gospel. The synagogue was the centre of his apostolic mission in a city. As Christianity was resting on a Jewish foundation, it was the most suitable place to begin his apostolic work in a city. In the synagogue Paul would not only address the Jews, but also a large body of Gentile hearers who sat in and around the synagogue. They also had an understanding of the Jewish scriptures. Paul preached that Jesus was the Christ in the synagogue and discussed and disputed this matter with the Jews (Acts 17:2-3). However, this message did not appeal to many orthodox Jews in the city. After three weeks of apostolic work in the synagogue, he was not allowed to preach in the synagogue any longer. This shows one that strong resistance to his message began early in the synagogue. The synagogue could have been used as a place of instruction on a daily basis as was done in a nearby Macedonian town called Berea (Acts 17:11). Therefore Paul's message in the Thessalonian synagogue might not have been limited to three Sabbaths only (Acts 17:2).

After Paul's work in the synagogue was finished, he continued his apostolic work in the city for a few months. This is shown by the fact that he had to support himself by doing leatherwork and tent making in the city (2 Thess. 2:9). The Christians in the Phillipian church which was about 100 miles away also twice sent him financial help (Phil. 4:16). The large body of Thessalonian people Paul reached in the city also gives reason for a longer period of apostolic work outside the synagogue (Acts 17:4). Paul's affection for them could also only have been developed over a long period of time (1 Thess. 2:17). During this time period in Thessalonica Paul won some Jews, many God-fearers, large numbers of Greeks and prominent women in the city to Christianity.

The Jews Paul had persuaded came from the synagogue. They formed the nucleus of his church. The Jews had been drawn to this city because of its commercial advantages. They had a strong presence and influence in the city. They were also protected by the Roman government. There is not much archaeological evidence about their existence in the city during this time period. There was, however, a Jewish inscription found that could be dated to the mid-first century BC which mention the highest god (Stambaugh and Balch 1986,156). An ancient Samaritan synagogue was also discovered near Thessalonica. Hellenistic Jews also chose Greek names for their Semitic names. Jason, one of Paul converts in Thessalonica, was his Greek name for his Semitic name of Joshua or Jesus (Maier 1976,91). Paul also used his Roman name in the Roman setting instead of his Semitic name of Saul. Other Jews who became Christians in the city included Aristarchus. Aristarchus is also a Greek name. He also became one of Paul's travelling companions (Acts 19:29; 20:4). Paul's success in the synagogue and in the streets of the city caused a lot of jealousy amongst the Jews. Gentiles and prominent people that they had hoped to convert to Judaism had become Christians. Jason was probably a prominent Christian in this city, as his home became the meeting place of the new church. It was probably also the lodging place of Paul, Silas and Timothy (Acts 17: 5-6). Perhaps it was also the place where Paul worked. The church in Jason's house flourished.

Orthodox Jews jealous about the success of Christianity in their city and perhaps upset that the offer of salvation was being made freely to the Gentiles decided to stir up a riot in the city. Luke records that the Jews went to enlist the help of evil men in the market place (Acts 17:5). These men were poor, uneducated, vulgar and ready for excitement. They were also the most superstitious and enslaved to paganism. They formed the lower classes in Thessalonica. Perhaps the anti-Semitic feelings amongst the people in the Roman Empire were strengthened after Claudius had expelled the Jews from Rome in 49 AD (Acts 18:2). The Jews of Thessalonica were perhaps relying on this general feeling to accomplish their goals against the leaders of the Thessalonian church. The city mob led by the Jews went straight to Jason's house to look for Paul and his associates. In this manner they managed to get Paul and his associates expelled from Thessalonica (Acts 17:10). The Jews of Thessalonica also used the same means to get Paul expelled from the nearby Macedonian town called Berea (Acts 17: 13-14).

Paul's apostolic work, however, did not only affect the Jews. It also affected many devout Greeks. These devout Greeks were either proselytes or God-fearers. Many of them became Christians. The mass of the church, however, did not come from the Jews nor from the devout Greeks. They came from the Gentiles who came directly out of paganism. This shows one that after being expelled from the synagogue, Paul continued his work in the streets of the city. Paul addressing this group of people in his letter to them stated that they had turned from idols to serve the living and true God (1 Thess. 1:9). Idol worship was a common Gentile practice. Many of these idols were foreign cults that were practised in Thessalonica. Oriental cults were widespread throughout Macedonia. From the first century BC the Thessalonians officially honoured Rome. A temple was erected to Julius Ceasar as a god in the city. A temple for Augustus and for the genius of Rome was also built in this city. These imperial cults were probably located in the western part of the city as it was in this area that a statue of Augustus was found and a damaged statue of an emperor (Gill 1994,415). These cults reinforced and legitimised one another. They were also seen as the guardians of the social order. The Egyptian idols Iris and Serapis were also served in this city. Their worshippers included Romans of high status. Two cults were particularly prominent in this city. They were the cults of Dionysus and Calibirus (Johnson 1987,78). Both were fertility cults. The idol of Dionysus was worshipped with a state appointed priest. Dionysus was the god of wine. This cult involved extreme drunkenness and phallic worship. Its rites were about the celebration of nature and the nurturing of life. Its female attendants were known as nurses. Perhaps this is why Paul stated that he had been as gentle as a nurse among them (1 Thess. 2:7). The cult of Calibirus came from the island of Samothrace. This idol attracted members of the city's upper classes. It involved orgiastic dancing and intoxication. Paul therefore had to warn the Thessalonian Christians about sexual vices and drunkenness (1 Thess. 4:3). This was because of the temptation to go back to these idols and also because he wanted to educate them about their Christian morality.

The better educated were usually more open minded to the preaching of Paul. This is probably the reason why many leading women in Macedonia were attracted to the preaching of Paul. The poorer women were usually more drawn to superstition and paganism. The women of Macedonia were, however, more freer and influential than the women who lived in other Roman provinces. Extant Macedonian inscriptions also assign to

them a higher social influence than is common in the Greco-Roman world (Harrison 1985,196). In all three Macedonian cities where Paul preached influential women became Christian converts. Stambaugh and Balch (1986,157) writes that Macedonia was famous for producing aristocratic and royal ladies of outstanding vigour, from Olympias, mother of Alexander the Great, to Cleopatra VII, last of the Greek rulers of Egypt. Perhaps some of the leading women who became Christians were the wives of the leading men in Macedonia.

The leading men of the city were called politarchs. The politarchate was a senior, annual magistracy attested predominantly in the cities of Macedonia after Roman intervention in the second century BC. They were a group of five or six men who formed the governing council in the city. Scholars are not sure if there were politarchs before the Roman intervention in Macedonia. Some scholars believe in their existence before 167 BC. A number of inscriptions have been found which seems to prove that they could have existed before Rome ruled Macedonia. Other scholars think that they came into existence at the time the province was incorporated into Rome. The politarchate for Macedonian cities became necessary when the rulers of Rome divided Macedonia into four districts. The politarchs were given administrative and executive functions. Some of these functions were civic duties such as convoking and proposing motions in the citizen's assembly. They were also responsible to the citizen's assembly and to the Roman proconsul to ensure order and peace in their cities. They, however, had no military authority. Although their magistracy only lasted a year, they could serve in this office again (Horsley 1994,421-425). Previously it was thought that Luke had just coined this word in his book of Acts (Acts 17:6). However, many inscriptions about these rulers of the city have been found in Thessalonica.

When the city mob went looking for Paul and his companions and did not find them, they brought Jason and some Christians they had found in his house to the politarchs. The charge the Jews laid against Paul and his companions was a very serious and dangerous one. They accused them of treason. Luke writes that they were accused of turning the world upside down (Acts 17:6). This meant that they were raising a revolt against the Roman authorities (Johnson 1987,77). They were also accused of saying that there was another king, namely, Jesus (Acts 17:7). Paul had proclaimed that Jesus was the Christ or Messiah. The word Messiah meant anointed king. This upset the crowd as well as disturbed the

politarchs. The politarchs might also have had an understanding that this was a religious matter that they were dealing with. However, they could not allow disloyal political agitators in their city. Their city could lose its freedom if it allowed political subversive activities in its midst. The politarchs were forced to deal with this situation because if they did not, they could be accused of treason. Ramsay (1927,230) states that many a man was ruined by such a charge under the earlier emperors. The politarchs decided to take a security pledge from Jason and the other Christians that the cause of the disturbance should leave the city. This was a very prudent action taken by them in this situation. They had dealt effectively with the problem and had inflicted punishment on no one. This manner of dealing with difficult situations was a common one in Roman law and had been applied by the politarchs in their city. They had maintained peace and had the security that it would be ensured.

Peace and security was the common watchword of the rulers of Rome. Paul was therefore forced to leave Thessalonica because of this peace pledge. He probably had to leave another Macedonian town, Berea, also because of a similar ruling because there is also attestation of politarchs in Berea (Acts 17:14). Perhaps this is the reason why Paul warns the Thessalonians that the governing authorities peace and security were false because they would not escape God's judgement (1 Thess. 5:3). He also wrote that he longed to come and help them spiritually. However, Paul stated that Satan had hindered him (1 Thess. 2:18). This statement did not apply to the Jews or to the city mob. It referred to the decision taken by the politarchs to expel him from their cities. It effectively separated him from his church. This interpretation of the term "Satan" as denoting action taken by the governing power against the message from God is in keeping with the figurative use of the word throughout the New Testament (Ramsay 1927,231). The politarchs magistracy only lasted a year and Paul could hope in a change of policy or attitude by the new politarchs towards the Christian faith. Their policy towards Paul and his associates eventually changed and Paul could then revisit the Thessalonian believers on his third missionary journey. But between 50 AD and 51 AD Paul could only keep in contact and help these Thessalonian Christians by writing letters to them.

3.2.2 The Thessalonian Epistles

Paul wrote two epistles to the Thessalonians in 51 AD. It was written primarily to help the Gentile believers. In his address to the Thessalonians he included the names of Silvanus and Timothy (1 Thess. 1:1). Both of them were men the Thessalonians greatly respected and therefore were men of weight. By including them in his address Paul was acknowledging that the three of them were responsible for the teaching and apostolic work in their city (Beare 1962,622). The letters, however, were not drawn up by a committee of three, but Paul wrote these letters in response to the reports he had heard about the Thessalonian believers. These letters were possibly Paul's first letters to a church. There was a short period of time between the two letters to the Thessalonian church. Possibly it could have been a few weeks. They give us insight into Paul's apostolic work in the city and reveal the conditions the Thessalonian believers were facing. The first letter was written as a response to Timothy's report about them. Paul had sent Timothy from Athens to Thessalonica as he was concerned about this church who had been deprived of experienced and strong Christian leadership (1 Thess. 3:1-2). Timothy reported his findings to Paul in Corinth (Acts 18:5). Paul had also received a report from an unknown source in Corinth that prompted him to write the second letter. In the letters it is clear that the majority of believers came from paganism. The persecution Paul had experienced in Thessalonica had not stopped, but it had developed into a dangerous persecution against the Christians in the city. These Christians were suffering serious trials for their faith caused by their pagan neighbours. Perhaps instigation by the Jews at Thessalonica played a role in their persecution (1 Thess. 2:14). Paul commended them, however, because these trials did not stop them from spreading their faith all over Macedonia and into Achaia (1 Thess. 1:8). Paul chose target cities like Thessalonica because of its strategic potential for spreading the Christian message.

The tone Paul used in his first letter was one of joy and triumph at their success even in his absence. However, his second letter had a more sombre and formal tone because they were being shaken in mind by their eschatological concerns. Their eschatological concerns made them a close-knit community (Schlatter 1961,146). They were waiting for the arrival of their new king, namely, Jesus. Some of the Thessalonian believers, however, had died through natural causes or perhaps through persecution. They thought that none of them

would die before Christ came. Therefore this situation caused them great anxiety. Paul had taught on these subjects in Thessalonica, but now it required greater clarification (1 Thess. 2:5). Some thought that Christ had come already. This might have been due to a prophecy, or to a letter attributed to Paul or to a wrong teaching (2 Thess. 2:2). They were greatly distressed as they thought they had missed Christ's arrival and now had to face God's wrath. Paul had to explain to them that a chain of events first had to occur before the day of Christ could come. This shows one that his apostolic teaching ministry to the Gentiles in the Greco-Roman world clearly emphasized eschatological beliefs. At this time Paul might have believed that Jesus Christ would arrive in his lifetime. Paul explained that a great rebellion against God would first occur led by the arrival of a man of lawlessness who possessed supernatural demonic powers. This would be a satanic caricature of the arrival of Jesus Christ. Widespread general apostasy would mark this man's arrival. Beare (1962,628) also mentions that in the Dead Sea Scrolls the theme of treason to the covenant is linked with the man of the lie. Paul, however, told them a restraining power was withholding this situation from occurring then. The Thessalonian believers were also told that God's judgment was awaiting those who had caused them such great pain and suffering (1 Thess. 2:14-16).

He explained that the arrival of Christ would be in a similar manner to an arrival of a king, general or dignitary in the city. In Hellenistic cities an arrival by a visiting king, general or an important dignitary were marked by great rejoicing as the people went out into the streets to welcome them with shouts of joy and praise. Trumpets would announce their arrival in the city. Such important dignitaries would usually arrive with a vast train of attendants. The people in the city would join the cortege and go to a place in the city where the dignitary would reward and honour deserving citizens. The Thessalonian people would have welcomed the proconsul of Macedonia into Thessalonica in such a manner. Paul stated that Christ's arrival would also be accompanied with the sound of a trumpet and with the shout of command (1 Thess. 4:16). He also wrote that all the dead believers in Christ would be resurrected and then all Christians would go up to meet Him in the air. This is all imagery Paul took from a Hellenistic ceremonial arrival of a king. Beare (1962,625) notes that the imagery of the Hebrew apocalyptic is combined in a most unusual way with imagery drawn from quite a different tradition. But in this way Paul restored the hope of the Thessalonians that Christ's arrival had not yet taken place.

Paul then also tried to strengthen their morality in preparation of Christ's arrival. Usually much advance preparation was required by the city for a visit by a king. In the same way Paul exhorted the Thessalonians to prepare themselves for that day. He, however, did not give them a set of rules that they had to obey. His ethical instructions were to give them clear guidance concerning their conduct. Paul wrote that his conduct among them could also serve as an example for them (1 Thess. 1:5). Paul had lived and worked among them for months. Some Thessalonian Christians, however, had stopped working and wanted to live off the charity of others. This was due to their incorrect eschatological beliefs. This was, however, an unhealthy situation in the church. Paul therefore had to remind them of how he had worked night and day so as not to be a burden to any of them (1 Thess. 2:9). This was also the policy that Paul and Barnabas had adopted when they left Antioch on their first missionary journey (1 Cor. 9:6). Tidball (1984,94) also says that manual labour was highly regarded by the Jews and treated with dignity. The natural order of work had to be maintained for the development and growth of the church. These two epistles would have helped them in their Christian faith. They, however, needed further instruction and strengthening and Paul would do so at a later time. His apostolic work in Macedonia was however over, but his second missionary journey had not yet come to an end. After Paul had been expelled from Macedonia, he came into Achaia (Acts 17:15). Passing through Athens, he decided that his next target city would be the most important trading centre in the Roman province, namely, Corinth.

4. CORINTH IN ACHAIA

The city of Corinth was founded as a Roman colony in 44 BC by Julius Ceasar. Previously it had been destroyed by the Roman general L. Mummius after the city had led a rebellion against Rome in 146 BC. Corinth then lay desolate for nearly a century before Ceasar gave orders for this city to be rebuilt and re-colonized. He settled the colony with many Italian freedmen and with dispossessed Greeks. He called the city *Colonia Laus Julia Corinthiensis* in his honour. Corinth became the capital of the senatorial province of Achaia and the proconsul resided in this city. Because of its importance as a political centre of a Roman province, many Greeks from wealthy families came to fulfil magistracies in this city and even to serve as benefactors (Gill 1994,449).

Corinth was strategically situated. The city was on the Isthmus connecting the Peloponnese with central Greece. Therefore the roads running to the north and to the south went through Corinth. Corinth also controlled two seaports, namely, Cenchreae on the Saronic Gulf and Lechaion on the gulf of Corinth. This connected the city with the Adriatic and the Aegean Sea and this facilitated trade with Asia and Italy. Many ships would land at one of its seaports and its goods would be transported over the Isthmus to another ship at the other seaport. This is because the Isthmus was very narrow. At its narrowest area it was only three and a half miles. People like Nero dreamt of a canal that could be cut through the Isthmus, but it only became a reality centuries later. The goods of the East and the West were therefore transported through Corinth. Sometimes the ships would be dragged on sledges across the Isthmus on a marble tramway which Strabo called a haul-across (Finegan 1962,682).

The historian and geographer, Strabo stated that Corinth could be called wealthy (Meeks 1983,47). This was because of a number of reasons. One reason was that it was one of the largest trading centres in the Roman Empire. It was a city where ambitious people could make their fortune. Many people aspired to become the local aristocracy in this city, as the city had no indigenous aristocracy. Another reason for Corinth's wealth was its chief deity, Aphrodite. This was a fertility goddess. It had more than a 1000 priestess prostitutes working in its temple. These prostitutes had been slaves who had been dedicated to the goddess by their owners (Stambaugh and Balch 1986,158). The majority of Greeks never

saw anything wrong with prostitution. This goddess was worshipped with great devotion in this city. She had temples on the Acrocorinth, at the harbour and inside the city. Her image even appeared on the Corinthian coins. Corinth therefore became notorious for its immorality. From the time of the poet Aristophanes (400 BC), “to live like a Corinthian” or “to Corinthianize” was a proverbial expression of dissolute living (Gilmour 1962,685). Corinth also prospered because of the Isthmian games. This was a major Panhellenic festival that occurred every two years. These games were founded as early as the sixth century BC and were important to all Greeks. Some games that were played here were boxing and foot racing (1 Cor. 9:24–27). There were also competitions for men and women. Johnson (1987,102) writes that even Nero competed in them and matters were arranged so that he won a prize. People usually competed in these games to win a crown of celery. These games were held near the sanctuary of Poseidon. Corinth’s position on the Isthmus therefore caused it to become one of the largest cities in the Roman Empire.

4.1 CIRCUMSTANCES IN CORINTH

4.1.1 The Jewish Community

Corinth attracted Jews from many parts of the Roman Empire. There were many commercial opportunities in the city. In Corinth there were wealthy Jews and those who were poverty stricken. They worshipped in the synagogue that was near the agora and along the Lechaion road that led to the seaport. A block of white marble that could have been a lintel of a synagogue doorway has been discovered near the agora. The inscription on this block of marble reads, the Synagogue of the Hebrews. Finegan (1962,684) believes that this synagogue may have been the successor to the very one in which, according to Acts 18:4, the apostle preached. When Paul chose Corinth as a target city for apostolic work, it was because of the number of Jews he could reach in this city. He entered the city in 51 AD and started his apostolic work in the local synagogue (Acts 18:4). Paul’s aim was to preach first in the city’s synagogue. It was the first step in his strategy to reach a city with his Christian gospel. In the synagogue he would address a number of Hellenistic Jews and many God-fearers who could be persuaded by the Christian gospel.

In the synagogue he might have met Priscilla and Aquila. One is not sure whether they were Christians before Paul came to Corinth. They were a Jewish couple that had been expelled from Rome by an edict of the emperor Claudias (Acts 18:2). According to a Christian historian, Orosius, the Jews were expelled from Rome in 49 AD. Suetonius, a historian, states that the Jews were expelled because of disturbances “due to the action of Chrestus” (Ramsay 1927,254). These disturbances might have been caused by the visitors from Rome who had attended the feast of Pentecost in Jerusalem (Acts 2:10). They would have returned to Rome and might have started preaching in the synagogues in Rome about the Christ. This situation might have caused the disturbances in Rome. To maintain order in the city the Jews were expelled from Rome. Some of them would have obeyed this edict. However, because of the sheer number of Jews in Rome and the difficulty to keep the Jews out of Rome, the edict was found unworkable in practice. The emperor probably had to draw up stricter regulations for their conduct. Such an edict was not unique. In the past Jews and other foreign groups were also expelled from Rome because of disturbances (Perowne 1973,65).

Priscilla and Aquilla were tentmakers or leatherworkers. They could have been involved in the making of awnings for the Isthmian games which would have been held in April and May 51 AD (Gill 1994,452). When Paul arrived in Corinth, they allowed him to work with them and he probably also used the workplace to teach any inquirers about Christianity. Paul’s work in the synagogue persuaded a number of Jews to follow Christ (Acts 18:8). When Timothy and Silas arrived from Macedonia, the apostolic team in the synagogue became larger (Acts 18:5). The Christian missionaries were therefore asked to leave the synagogue.

4.1.2 The Christian Community

Paul’s aim in Corinth was also to find an alternative venue for the Christian community. This was because he knew he had a limited time to preach about Christianity in the synagogue. One of the God-fearers attending the synagogue became a Christian. He decided to provide a new venue for the church. His name was Titius Justus (Acts 18:7). Titius Justus’s home was next door to the synagogue. The message of Christianity had appealed to Gentiles drawn to Judaism because it offered all the advantages and benefits of

Judaism with none of its disagreeable aspects. Aspects the Gentiles did not like about Judaism were circumcision and becoming a full proselyte. Circumcision was disgusting to them and they did not want to face anti-Semitic prejudice by separating themselves from the Gentile environment. Proselytes were also never regarded as Jews, but as second class Jews. Only their children were regarded as Jews (Gilmour 1962,685). Therefore there were more God-fearers in the synagogues than proselytes.

Titius Justus was probably a man of wealth and status. According to Blue (1994,153) homeowners in the ancient world were a privileged group and financially solvent. Titius Justus's home would have served Paul's purpose by being a base for networks of friendships and associations in the city. Titius Justus is a Latin name and this could indicate that his family came from the original colonists (Gill 1994,111). Many people in this city had Latin names. His citizenship would have provided Paul with an opportunity to reach a number of educated and wealthy people from his home. However, Paul writes that in Corinth not many Christians were high born, noble or wealthy (1 Cor. 1: 26). The majority of them came from poor backgrounds. Many of them were slaves. Corinth had large numbers of slaves living in it. The people Paul mentions by name in the city were those Christians who were probably the benefactors and leaders in the church. They were probably people of status and wealth. Gill (1994,117) thinks that there are now good reasons to think that the Christian communities became established in part through the elite families of the main urban centres in the eastern provinces.

Paul states that the Stephanus household was his first converts in Corinth and that the church should respect his leadership and those associated with him (1 Cor. 16:16-18). Paul had also won Crispus and his household to Christianity. Crispus had been the synagogue ruler. He must have been a wealthy man, as he had to provide for the synagogue. Sosthenes, the synagogue ruler that succeeded Crispus, had also become a Christian. Sosthenes must also have been a man of wealth and influence as Paul also includes him in his opening address when he wrote to the church in Corinth (1 Cor. 1:1). Gaius could accommodate the church in Corinth on his property (Rom. 16:23). This proves that he was a man of wealth and status. A Christian known as Erastus who was the city treasurer was also a member of the Corinthian church (Rom. 16:23). An inscription has been found in Corinth with his name on it. The inscription reads that Erastus in return for his aedileship paved the square

at his own expense (Meeks 1983,48). An aedile was a major magistrate in this city. It was an annually elected office. Usually the way people became the local magistrates in Corinth or in Roman cities were by giving presents to the city in return for offices and public honours. The people Paul mentions in this city shows that he had reached the local elite of the city. However, these differences in social status between the wealthy and the poor in the church caused major problems and concerns for Paul. He had to deal with these problems within the church and with troubles that came from without.

4.1.2 The Roman Policy towards Religious Communities

Various forms of unrest occurred in the Greco-Roman cities. Disturbances in the city could be caused by food shortages. There is reason to believe that there was a food shortage in the province during the time that Paul was there. This is attested at Corinth by inscriptions erected by several Corinthian tribes (Gill 1994,451). However, the disturbances caused by the Jews were their response to the success of Paul's preaching. The Jews were angered at Paul's ability to convert a number of Jews as well as large numbers of Gentiles whom they had hoped to win to proselyte status. Paul's preaching point now being right next door to the synagogue and influential Jews playing a prominent part would have caused them great anger. Paul's experiences in the cities of Macedonia from which he was quickly expelled would have caused him some anxiety in this city. He states that he came to Corinth with fear and trembling (1 Cor. 2:3). However, Luke writes that Paul was reassured that he would stay in this city for a long time because of its evangelistic potential (Acts 18:9-10). The orthodox Jews hoping to get him expelled from their city brought Paul to the forum. Paul stood before the largest *bema* in the Roman Empire. It was an impressive sight and was covered with blue and white marble. In the colony it was known as the *rostra*. According to Gill (1994,449) excavations have revealed that the *bema* was constructed in the Augustan period. It was almost 500 feet long. From this place the proconsul held his court sessions and addressed the people.

In 51 AD Gallio was the proconsul of Achaia (Acts 18:12). He was the elder brother of the Stoic philosopher, Seneca. A discovery concerning Gallio's proconsulship was the inscription found in the city of Delphi. It was set up as a public inscription by Claudias to the people of Delphi. This inscription is usually taken as an anchor in Pauline chronology

(Maier 1976,100). It stated that Gallio was the proconsul in 51 AD. As he could have been the proconsul for two years, he could have fulfilled this office from 51 AD to 52 AD. Another piece of evidence concerning Gallio's proconsulship in Achaia is one of Seneca's letters that mentions that Gallio left Achaia on account of a fever that was a result of the air of the city (Ramsay 1927,258). Paul appeared before him in 51 AD. Many people gathered at the tribunal before Gallio to hear the accusation against Paul. The accusation against Paul was that he tried to get people to worship contrary to Jewish laws (Acts 18:13). Gallio's answer shows that the Jews included in their accusation various other Jewish beliefs. Gallio discerned that this was a religious matter and only concerned the Jewish community (Acts 18:15). He answered the Jews by stating that their problem had nothing to do with Roman law, but only concerned Jewish beliefs. He probably shared the policy of his brother Seneca and that of Rome by giving religious freedom to all people. As a result of this ruling, Paul could now freely carry on his apostolic work in this city. This court case also highlighted the Christian community's independence from the Jewish community to many Greeks. Because of anti-Semitic prejudice the Greeks beat Sosthenes, the new ruler of the synagogue (Acts 18:17). He was probably playing a prominent role in the court proceedings. Gallio ignored this incident. With this ruling on religious freedom in the city, Paul was also going to receive a serious blow in this city.

4.2 CRISIS IN CORINTH

4.2.1 Factions

When Paul left Corinth to go back to his mission base in Antioch, a number of Christian missionaries visited the city. Cephas could have been sent by the church in Jerusalem to survey and examine the work done in Corinth. Other missionaries also came from Palestine with letters of recommendation from the church in that region. This shows that these older churches were interested in the apostolic work being done in the cities of the Greco-Roman world. Apollos had also been sent from Ephesus with letters of recommendation from the brethren at Ephesus. His ministry impressed many because of the philosophical style of his preaching. Luke writes that Apollos was a learned or eloquent man (Acts 18:24). Some Jews had been persuaded by Apollos to follow Christ and it could have included Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue. The Greeks were influenced by various forms of philosophy or

wisdom in those days (Harrison 1985,203). They also began to view Christianity as a system of thought that could have varied interpretation and expression. Added to this problem was the fact that there were no Greek philosophers in Corinth that they could have been proud of. They also found it difficult to deal with their social and cultural differences, Soon the church was divided into four major parties. There was a Paul party, a Cephas party, an Apollos party and a Christ party (1 Cor. 1:12). Some of these allegiances could have been based on the fact of who had baptised them in water. Paul stated that he was glad that he had only baptised a few of them. He had baptised Crispus, Gaius and the household of Stephanus (1 Cor. 1:14-16). Most of the converts were baptised by his associates. Writing from Corinth he explained that it was a sacrament in which believers shared in the death and resurrection of Christ (Rom. 6:1-5).

The Paul party was probably those Corinthians who had remembered him as the father and founder of their work. The Cephas party probably comprised those who were drawn to him when he had visited the city. The Apollos party could have been those who had been impressed by his wisdom and rhetoric. Some interpret the Christ party to be those who feel that they had received their call to Christianity from Christ himself. Others think that the Christ party could have been those whom Paul sarcastically calls super apostles (2 Cor. 11:5). It is widely believed that they were a group of men who were teaching current Gnostic beliefs (Gilmour 1962,687). They distinguished between the man Jesus and the divine Christ. Gnostic forms of Christianity could have started in Palestine. Gilmour (1962,696) states that a form of Jewish Gnosticism flourished in Judea in pre-Christian times. These false apostles also began to disparage Paul's lifestyle and teachings and wanted to supplant his authority over the church in Corinth with theirs. They also claimed greater spiritual gifts and better credentials than Paul. Schlatter (1961,176) believes that they acclaimed absolute freedom to the church at Corinth.

Paul tried to deal with this factionalism caused by their beliefs in human wisdom and rhetoric. He tried to give them some reasons why they should not have confidence in a philosophy related to human wisdom. He tried to do this by telling the church that the wisdom of the world is foolishness with God (1 Cor. 1:20). He also reminded them of their status in life when they became Christians. The majority of them had been slaves and by human standards were not wise according to the flesh (1 Cor. 1:26). He also wrote that they

were Christians not through human wisdom, but because of a demonstration of God's power (1 Cor 2:4). By giving these reasons Paul hoped to end the factionalism that was taking place. However, this problem was not the only one caused by teachings on religious freedom. He also had to address them on legal matters.

4.2.2 Lawsuits

According to Harrison (1985,203) the Greeks in Corinth were individualistic in character and this did not only lead to factions, but also to lawsuits. Legal matters that had arisen in the church were taken to the Roman law courts (1 Cor. 6:6). The members in the church that would go to court were probably the wealthier individuals in the church. It would have been easier for them to use the courts than it would have been for the poorer members. Tidball (1984,100) writes that it is highly improbable that the lower classes would even have been able to resort to litigation. Paul wanted the Christian community in Corinth to have its own legal court. This was a principle of the Jewish community. The Dispersion Jews took their legal problems to their own civic courts. Paul also wanted the members of the church to take their legal disputes over property to the leaders in the Christian community (1 Cor. 6:5). This was to ensure that the church would not get a bad reputation in the city.

4.2.3 Immorality and Ascetism

However, the principle of 'all things are lawful for me' was also applied to sexual morality (1 Cor. 6:12). The teaching of religious freedom had negative consequences for the church. It could have influenced a member of the Corinthian church to marry his stepmother (1 Cor. 5:1). Such a practice was condemned by the Romans as well as by the Jews. Paul wanted this member to be excommunicated from the church. Others felt that their religious freedom gave them the right to engage in sexual immorality. Sacred prostitution was practised in this city and they did not see anything wrong with it. That is why Schlatter (1961,177) states that the inclination of the Corinthians to uncontrolled eroticism was caused by the pressure of the Greek heritage. The Greek society had coined the saying, "Foods for the stomach, and stomach for foods" (1 Cor. 6:13). This meant that they did not have to control

their physical desires and needs. They also believed that their spirit could not be defiled by their immoral acts. This belief gave them their licence for their licentiousness.

However, others felt that their spirit should be entirely separated from their flesh. This belief again led to extreme ascetism. Both these approaches can derive from a common source, namely, a dualism that makes a sharp disjunction between the spirit and the body (Harrison 1985,204). Celibacy was held in high esteem amongst them and was seen as a religious and a moral ideal. They no longer wanted to be subject to their natural desires and passions. This gave rise to their practice of spiritual marriages. In such a marriage both partners just lived together, but they did not have a sexual relationship. This belief also caused fathers to refuse to give their daughters in marriage (1 Cor. 7:36-38). Perhaps they felt they were protecting their daughters' sanctity. These religious teachings also affected the women. They now also began to respond in various ways to this freedom that was being taught in the church.

4.2.4 Corinthian Women

The Corinthian women also began to flaunt their religious freedom. They began to see themselves as equal to men in the church and wanted unrestricted participation in the church meetings. One of the praises of the Egyptian goddess Isis was that she gave to women the same power that the men had. Stambaugh and Balch (1986,159) wonders whether the power for women proclaimed in Isis' praises was not one of the factors contributing to the remarkable freedom of the Corinthian women at Corinth. One of Paul's teachings must have been that there is no male and female in Christ (Gal. 3:28). But misunderstood and wrong teachings also affected their clothing. The Corinthian women no longer wanted to wear a veil as was customary in the church and in ordinary society because it was an emblem of their sex. The veil also symbolised a woman's subjection to a man (1 Cor. 11:10). Veils were also a Palestinian custom that would have been worn by the women in the synagogues. The only women who did not wear a veil were the temple prostitutes. The women in the church might have been likened to these prostitutes by outsiders. Therefore this breach of social custom was not accepted by Paul. He also did not tolerate their remarkable freedom of speech in the church (1 Cor. 14:34).

4.2.5 Charismatic Gifts

A consequence of their freedom of speech was the misuse of their spiritual gifts. This especially applied to their gift of speaking in other tongues. They became very enthusiastic in their use of spiritual gifts. This caused chaos in their worship services because there was no order in their meetings (1 Cor. 14:33). Their natural thinking was set aside and therefore no consideration was given to casual visitors. Their church meetings became a place where they exercised their gifts without any restraint. This could have led to various spiritual manifestations taking place. Spiritual manifestations were not unrelated to the class divisions within the church. Tidball (1984,102) mentions that sociologists have often tried to suggest that certain spiritual gifts such as speaking in tongues are particularly suited to those who feel at least relatively deprived. Some scholars feel that the lower classes would have exercised the gifts of speaking in tongues. The upper classes would have been drawn to gifts such as pastoring, leading and teaching. They would have been the natural leaders in the church because of their wealth, education and status in society. The church meetings would also have been held on their property. These class divisions in the church also led to the problems associated with their eating and drinking practices.

4.2.6 Cultic Meals

A problem arose in the church regarding meat that had been offered to idols. There were those who felt that all meat that had been offered to an idol should not be eaten. These Paul said were the Christians with a weak conscience (1 Cor. 8:7). They refused to eat such meat and they refused to buy the meat that was sold at the meat market. The meat market received some of its meat from animals that had been slaughtered in the pagan temples (Johnson 1987,102). An inscription found in fragments concerning a meat market has been found near the agora in Corinth. This inscription dates probably from the last years of Augustus or during the reign of Tiberius (Finegan 1962,684). An inscription concerning a fish market has also been found nearby. The poorer members in the church might have been the weak Christians Paul referred to. The stronger members were probably the educated and wealthier members of the church. They would have realised that these idols that the meat was offered to did not exist (1 Cor. 8:4-6; Rom. 15:1). But those poorer members who had come out of paganism still believed in the reality of these idols. They could not eat meat

that had any connections with idols. The wealthier Christians who were used to easy mixing and socialising began to eat meat regardless of its origin. They also began to express their religious freedom by attending cultic meals held in pagan temples.

Cultic meals that were held in temples were common at that time. Johnson (1987,102) writes that a papyrus from Egypt reads, “Chaeremon invites you to dinner at the table of the Lord Serapis”. Some idols in Corinth that held cultic meals were Dionysus, Asclepius, Demeter, Core and Isis. The devotees of Dionysus held their festive dinners in subterranean dining rooms. At the sanctuary of Asclepius in Corinth there were dining rooms that could accommodate 11 persons. The dining room for Demeter was found in a cave on the Acrocorinth. Meals were even served outdoors in tents at the sanctuary of Demeter and Core. The Egyptian goddess Isis was also popular in Corinth. Her cult also included cultic meals in its rituals (Stambaugh and Balch 1986,158-159). Some members of the church saw nothing wrong with attending these cultic meals. They also believed that they were free to partake in sacrificial meals in private houses. By attending these cultic meals these Christians were participating in idol worship. Therefore Paul had to admonish them that they could not partake of the Lord’s table and the table of demons (1 Cor. 10:21). It would have been unreasonable for them to cut off their friendships and associations with their neighbours. However, the way they practiced their liberty could cause the weaker members to violate their conscience by similar practices. Participating in these cultic meals also led to the shameful practices that were associated with their common meal.

4.2.7 Common Meal

In Paul’s day, it was the custom of Christians to gather as a congregation for a common meal with which the Lord’s supper was then associated (Gilmour 1962,691). However, due to class divisions amongst the church members various disorders took place at this common meal. The host of the common meal would act in a similar manner, as a host would do in the Greco-Roman world. He and his wealthy social equals would eat a better meal first at these common meals. The poorer members of the church who had nothing or little to contribute to the common meal would join them later after their day’s work. But by the time they got to join the common meal, there would be little for them to eat (1 Cor. 11:21). This would shame and humiliate those who had nothing. This destroyed the unity of the

church which the common meal was to symbolise. The Lord's supper which was associated with this meal was therefore desecrated and therefore Paul had to prepare a way for the separation of the Lord's supper from that common meal (Schlatter 1961,185). The Lord's supper was an important sacrament which was instituted in the church (1 Cor. 11:23-26). It was a communion with the Lord and was to symbolise the unity of the church. However, even this part of the common meal was done in a shameful manner. Paul wrote that they did not discern the Lord's body at this meal and therefore they were being judged and chastened by the Lord. They became weak, sickly and even died as a result of the consequences of their actions (1 Cor. 11:30). The table of the Lord was not only to remind them of Christ's death, but it was also meant to give them hope. However, the teaching of a bodily resurrection associated with this hope of the church began to be questioned.

4.2.8 The Resurrection

The Greeks did not believe in a resurrection of the body after death (Acts 17:32). Their Greek background made it difficult for them to accept such a teaching. They believed the body was a prison of the soul and that death brings with it a release of the soul. The soul could then return to the divine world from which it came (Gilmour 1962,692). Therefore, this teaching of a resurrection for those who had died was not accepted. Schlatter (1961,181) writes that they believed that the prospect of living in a body was utterly repellent and Greek rationalism had demonstrated its absurdity. Therefore, for the Greeks in Corinth there could be no immortality with a body. However, the Jewish converts expected to live eternally with a body. The Sadducees and Pharisees were also divided over this doctrine of the resurrection of the body (Acts 23:6-8). Paul stated that the Corinthians had accepted the Christian gospel which he had presented to them. This gospel included the historical fact that Christ had been raised from the dead (1 Cor. 15:1-4). Paul writes that if this resurrection did not occur, then Christianity was a false religion. Therefore for the Greeks in Corinth who were members of the church, this doctrine of a bodily resurrection had to be accepted by them. Paul also explained to them that they would receive a different kind of body than the one they have now (1 Cor. 15:44). It took time for the Corinthians to accept this teaching as well as others. Paul therefore had to spend much time on completing his work in Corinth.

4.3 COMPLETING THE CORINTHIAN WORK

Paul carried out his apostolic work in Corinth in various ways. His founding visit was in 51 AD and it had lasted eighteen months (Acts 18:11). He had been accompanied by Timothy and Silas at that time. However, after the second missionary journey, Silas is no longer mentioned as a mission worker with Paul. They probably parted company at Antioch at the end of this missionary journey. On Paul's third missionary journey he was no longer assisted by the church in Jerusalem, but decided to take one of his own Greek converts with him. He no longer held on to a policy of conciliating the Jews as he had done on his second missionary journey. He decided to put down any Judaizing tendencies in his churches by taking Titus along with him on his third missionary journey. In Corinth many people had been converted to Christianity. Some were Jews that had been converted in the synagogue. The majority of the members of this church, however, came directly out of paganism.

When Paul left this city at the end of his eighteen month stay, many problems that came from within and without the church began to divide it. These were problems associated with their social class background, with their religious teachings and with their ethical behaviour. Tidball (1984,98) believes that social class background holds the key to understanding the problems found in the early church. The church in Corinth was not a socially homogeneous group. Some of them were wealthy, but the majority of them were poor and slaves. When Paul wrote to them, he reminded them of this fact (1 Cor. 1:26). However, it was because of their social differences that they found it difficult to relate to one another. Many of them were also still easily influenced by strange gods and new ideas. They could therefore be easily influenced by new religious ideas and teachings. Therefore when some missionaries from Palestine came to Corinth, they found it easy to deceive this church with their teachings. They also found it easy to invade this church with their claims and succeeded in establishing a following in the church. They became Paul's opponents in Corinth. They criticised his person, reputation and apostolic credentials. They taught a type of Christian gnosticism that adapted the Christian gospel to Gnostic myths. Gilmour (1962,696) writes that it is probable that Jewish Christian Gnostics were a third force very early in Christian history along with the Judaizers. They did not impose the rite of circumcision on the Corinthians as the Judaizers would have done, but rather taught about

religious freedom. Their teachings influenced many in the church and caused all kinds of problems in the church.

Paul had to deal with some of these problems by writing letters. He wrote several apostolic letters to them addressing specific problems they were facing. In 1 Corinthians 5:9 Paul mentions that he had written to them initially about not associating with immoral people in the church. His second letter to the Corinthians dealt with problems within the church. This letter, namely, 1 Corinthians was written from Ephesus in 55 AD. He had received news about this church from a number of sources. Chloe's household had informed him of the formation of factions in the church (1 Cor. 1:11). Sosthenes also explained to him the problems that were besetting this church. Sosthenes was the former ruler of the synagogue at Corinth and probably was a respected member in this church. Apollos could also have informed Paul about the situation in this church as he was in Ephesus at the time when Paul wrote this letter (1 Cor. 16:12). The letter Paul had received from the church at Corinth was probably delivered by Stephanus, Fortunatus and Achaicus (1 Cor. 16:17). Stephanus was Paul's first convert in Corinth and was probably also a patron of a house church. 1 Corinthians addresses many problems within the church. However, Paul still had to write more letters to this church.

Paul also had to visit the city thrice in order to deal with the diverse issues in the church (2 Cor. 12:14). Paul's second visit to the church was described as his painful visit (2 Cor. 2:1). This visit occurred during his third missionary journey. His letters had not succeeded in separating his church from the influence of the Jewish Christian Gnostics. Paul therefore interrupted his apostolic work in Ephesus and paid a short visit to the church in Corinth. He had hoped that he could draw the church away from the men he sarcastically called super apostles. He believed that they were false apostles and servants of Satan (2 Cor. 11:13-15). However, Schlatter (1961,186) says that their high intelligence and imposing spiritual attainments may thus be considered as certain, for weaklings would not have been able to stand up to Paul face to face. Paul left this church with a sense of humiliation. The church had also rebelled against him. Paul then wrote the severe letter and sent it with Titus (2 Cor. 2:4). Johnson (1987,109) believes that the severe letter is contained in 2 Corinthians 10-13. All scholars do not agree with him. However, he writes that it is an amazing production which shows Paul using a rhetorical method that is as old as Socates' Apology and was

continued in the Greek philosophical tradition. They both used irony to emphasise their statements. His severe letter as well as the work done by Titus in this church helped to reconcile the church with Paul. Paul then wrote 2 Corinthians in 56 AD from Macedonia on his way to Corinth for the third and final time. He wrote it to express his relief at the outcome of the trouble at Corinth and also to encourage the collection for the church in Jerusalem. In order to demonstrate the church's unity with other churches, Paul encouraged them to proceed with the collection for the poor brethren in Jerusalem. However, he took some delegates probably from Macedonia to help him with these funds. This was to ensure that no charge of financial mismanagement was laid against him (2 Cor. 8:20-21). The charges, accusations and problems he had faced in Corinth had helped mature him in his thinking and theology.

In this city Paul wrote his epistle to the Romans. Harrison (1985,206) observes that the letter to the Roman church is free of any overtones of continuing turmoil in his environment. His work in Corinth was finished. Paul now wanted Rome to be his next target city for apostolic work. However, his plans did not proceed as he had intended. When he left Corinth for the first time, his target city had been the capital of Asia, namely, Ephesus. He now left the city of Corinth for the last time in 57 AD. Paul now wanted to complete his apostolic work in the eastern Mediterranean world by addressing the elders of the church in Ephesus about his apostolic work in their city.

5. EPHESUS IN ASIA MINOR

When the Hellenistic king Attalus III of Pergamum died in 133 BC, he bequeathed his kingdom which included Ephesus to Rome. The Roman authorities then made the province of Asia a Roman senatorial province and Caesar Augustus chose Ephesus as the province's capital city. This made Ephesus the governmental centre of the province of Asia. The Roman proconsul also now resided in the city. The city was recognised as a free city by Rome and it had home rule with a Greek constitution (Meeks 1983,44). Ephesus was probably chosen as the political centre of Asia by Rome because of its favourable position in the province. The city possessed a good harbour that was situated on the Cayster River and had excellent access to the river valleys of both the Hermus and the Maeander (Finegan 1962,115). This city was also strategically situated on the west coast of Asia Minor. This gave the city access to major land and sea routes and Ephesus became an international trade centre. People from all over the province and from Spain, Sicily, Greece, Egypt and the Black Sea came to trade in this city. This brought the riches of the Roman Empire to Ephesus. Some of the merchandise traded here is mentioned by apostle John in his book of Revelation. The merchandise included gold, silver, pearls, precious wood, fine linen, purple, silk, wheat, cattle, sheep and horses (Rev. 18:11-13). The city experienced tremendous growth and became very prosperous and probably brought great wealth to Rome as well. It became one of the third largest cities in the Roman Empire after Rome and Alexandria. Inscriptions found in Ephesus also name the city as the first and greatest metropolis in Asia. Strabo around 20 AD also wrote that the city because of its advantageous situation, ... grows daily, and is the largest emporium in Asia this side of the Taurus (Trebilco 1994,306). The city also had a large population. There were about 200 000 to 250 000 people living in Ephesus. Maier (1976,105) describes part of the population as the wildest collection of pagan priests, exorcists, magicians, religious prostitutes, cultists and charlatans in the Roman Empire.

To show its importance, significance and status in the Roman Empire, large monumental public buildings were constructed in the city. In the ancient world an indicator of wealth and status of a city was the number of donations made and the number of public buildings that were constructed. These large buildings became a dominant and crucial defining characteristic of the city. Some of these large buildings in Ephesus would include the palace

of the proconsul, the temple of Artemis, the theatre, the temple of Augustus, the stadium, various other cult temples and shops (Trebilco 1994,306-307). Ephesus had also benefited greatly from the peace and stability that came with Roman rule. Therefore in 29 BC the Ephesians dedicated a sacred precinct to Roma (the genius of Rome) and to Augustus. The Roman authorities also officially conferred upon Ephesus the title of temple warden of the imperial cult. This title was also conferred upon other cities in the province if the emperor favoured a particular city. This caused much urban rivalry in the province for the honour of building each new emperor's temple and this annoyed the Roman authorities (Harrison 1985,208). As a result of this rivalry, Ephesus became a centre of emperor worship. This also showed its loyalty to the Roman Empire.

The city was also a centre to which many people came from all over the province for any number of reasons. People came to Ephesus because it was the capital city of the province, an assize city, an international trading centre and the home of the temple of the goddess Artemis. Communications with the interior was also improved and as a result new cities were founded in the province. There were about 500 towns in this province (Perowne 1973,77). Ephesus was also made a centre of a Roman communications network for the province of Asia. It was therefore possible to keep in contact with the rest of the province from this city. This was important for the Roman military as well to maintain efficient administration in this province. A college of *tabellarii* (messengers or couriers) was also based in this city (Trebilco 1994,309). The city also regularly had an influx of visitors who brought their cults as well. Ephesus was a home of many cults. When the apostle Paul arrived in this city on his third missionary journey in 53 AD, he decided to make it the centre of his activities. It was a centre from which all Asia could be affected. He planned not only to reach the city with his gospel, but also the entire province of Asia through his mission helpers that he was going to train in the city.

5.1 Paul's Apostolic Work in Ephesus

Paul had planned to conduct his apostolic work in Asia earlier on his second missionary journey since it was the leading province of the eastern Mediterranean world. However, Paul and his associates decided rather to go to the cities of Macedonia at that time. Various reasons have been given concerning why he did not go there at that time. One reason given is that Luke was the man of Macedonia who came to them at that time and persuaded them to come to Macedonia. Another reason given was that apostle John was working here since 47 AD and might have considered it his area of influence (Perowne 1973,74). However, at the end of his second missionary journey, Paul visited the city taking Priscilla and Aquila with him. This couple had helped Paul in Corinth and now transferred to Ephesus to give him the same sort of help there (Acts 18:18). At the end of Paul's stay in Ephesus, they moved to Rome probably to give Paul the same kind of assistance that they gave him in Corinth and in Ephesus (Rom. 16:3). Paul also made contact with the synagogue during his brief stop in the city to present his message in such a way that they would desire to hear more. When he left this synagogue, they invited him back (Acts 18:20). This was a rare occurrence in Paul's ministry. But this invitation had opened up the door for his work among the Jews in this city when he returned. Paul left the city at this time because he wanted to keep the Jewish Passover in Jerusalem and to return to his base of apostolic operations, namely, Antioch. He probably wanted to report on his missionary activities in the cities of Macedonia and Achaia. He probably also wanted to discuss the details of his third missionary journey to Ephesus. This discussion would probably also have included his plans of bringing an offering to the poor brethren in Jerusalem from the churches he had planted. When Paul left the church in Antioch on his third missionary journey, it was going to be the last time that he was to be commissioned for apostolic work in the East.

Paul had planned to stay in his target city Ephesus much longer than he had stayed in other cities. In 53 AD Paul arrived in Ephesus on his third missionary journey. The first group of people he encountered were disciples of Apollos or John the Baptist. There were many religious groups and individuals that were entering the city at this time. An example of this would be the Alexandrian Jew, Apollos. He had been influenced by the message of John the Baptist and preached the message of repentance to the Jews and the prophecy of Christ's immediate return. This group of twelve men who Paul met may have been

influenced by Apollos or they might have been an independent Baptist group. Johnson (1987,107) writes that there is evidence that many of John's followers continued for a long time as a group independent of the Christian church. These groups accepted John the Baptist as a prophet and practised the Johanine baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins and waited for the coming of the kingdom of God. This shows one that religious movements that were launched in Palestine affected the Hellenistic Jews of the Diaspora. Aquila and Priscilla met Apollos in Ephesus and helped correct his beliefs (Acts 18:26). In the same way Paul was able to help these disciples by completing and perfecting the work done by Apollos or John the Baptist. Paul re-baptised these disciples and confirmed them for Christ (Acts 19:5-6). This incident is significant for Paul's work in the city because now he had a nucleus of Christian believers at his side in Ephesus. This also meant that he did not have to concern himself with a rival Jewish group carrying on the prophetic mission of John the Baptist. This would have been a hindrance to his evangelisation of the Jews. His work was beginning to solidify in the city. Paul could now concentrate his efforts on reaching the Jews in the synagogue in Ephesus.

The Jews were very active in the city and region. The province of Asia had one of the highest concentrations of Jews. There were about 82 places in Asia where Jews are known to have lived. They were drawn to a city of Ephesus because of its economic advantages. The historian Josephus records a series of edicts guaranteeing the rights of the Jews in Ephesus (Meeks 1983,44). For example, they were exempted from military service if they were Roman citizens. He also records a letter written in 14 BC by Agrippa to the magistrates and people of Ephesus requesting that the Jews of Asia should be able to collect sacred money to send to Jerusalem and that they should not be forced to appear in court on the Sabbath (Stambaugh and Balch 1986,150). Generally, the documents represent a favourable policy by the Roman authorities towards Jews in the Diaspora. However, there are indicators that there were tensions between them and the Gentiles in Ephesus (Acts 19:34). The Jews in Ephesus allowed Paul to preach to them for a period of three months (Acts 19:8). He argued and pleaded with them until he was asked to leave the synagogue. The Jewish community had been split in two by his message. When he left the synagogue, he took some Jewish converts with him as well. This was the fruit of his three month ministry in the synagogue. However, Jewish opposition to his work had become very

strong. Schlatter (1961,163) believes that the passionate hostility of his Jewish adversaries proved that Judaism was shaken to its foundations.

After leaving the synagogue, he continued his ministry in the hall of Tyrannus. Some manuscripts state that he rented this hall from the fifth hour to the tenth, namely, from 11am to 4pm. During this time period the hall would not be utilized because public life usually ended at the fifth hour in the Greek cities (Ramsay 1927,271). Romans and Greeks normally started their day at dawn and ended their activities an hour before noon. After this their time would be spent on home life, rest and other activities. Paul also worked as a tentmaker during the first part of the day. His habit was usually to start working before dawn and then to continue until the fifth hour (2 Thess. 3:8). He worked to supply his needs and those of his associates (Acts 20:34; 1 Cor. 4:12). However, when work was stopped because of the heat of the day, Paul began to preach and teach in Tyrannus's hall. This probably tested his ability to attract people into the hall during this time period. The hall of Tyrannus was a school where lectures were given. Perowne (1973,77) says the word school, Greek *skhole*, denotes leisure implying these studies were the privileged of the leisured. Tyrannus seems to have been a Greek teacher of rhetoric or philosophy. It is not certain whether Tyrannus was a lecturer or the owner of the hall. Other scholars see this hall as a guild hall rather than a lecture hall. This is because guild halls were often named after the guild's patron (Trebilco 1994,311). Paul taught in this hall for a period of two years. This proved to be a very successful time in Paul's apostolic work. Paul's audience was probably a large interested ethnic conglomerate. Luke writes that within two years all the Jews and Greeks in Asia heard Paul's message (Acts 19:10). This could occur because many people were continually entering and leaving the city. Many of them probably heard of Paul's teachings in the hall through his dedicated converts. They probably came to listen to his messages in the hall, became converts themselves and returned to the province to tell others of their new found faith. Some left the hall and found churches where they lived. For example, Ephaphras became a disciple of Paul's in Ephesus and he returned to Colossae and found a church in that city (Col. 4:12). There were churches found in Hierapolis and Laodicea as well (Col. 4:13). Probably all the churches mentioned in the book of Revelation were founded during this period. These were the churches at Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea. All these churches were in cities that were centres of trade and within easy reach of Ephesus.

Paul had taught in many homes in Ephesus as well (Acts 20:20). Churches were also founded in private homes. Nympha had a church in his home in Laodicea and Philemon had a church in his home in Colossae (Col. 4:15; Philem. 1:2). Both of them would probably have met Paul when they visited Ephesus. Tychicus could also have taken the gospel to neighbouring towns (Col. 4:7). Paul received visitors who came from different parts of Asia and he also received visitors who came from other Roman provinces as well. There is also no evidence that Paul left Ephesus to found churches in other cities in Asia. He could have kept in contact with other churches by writing letters, or by sending personal representatives or by going himself. Paul wrote letters to the Corinthians in Ephesus. Some scholars believe that he could have written to the Galatians, Philippians, Colossians and to Philemon at this time (Johnson 1987,108). These letters were written to address specific problems and needs in his churches. Paul also sent Timothy, Titus and Erastus from Ephesus as his personal representatives to churches he had founded. These mission helpers could also have been sent to different cities in Asia to help establish the churches found there or they may have founded churches in Asia as well. Perhaps this is the reason Paul includes Timothy's name in his letter to the Colossians because Timothy may have helped this church (Col. 1:1). Paul also planned to visit Colossae if the letter to Philemon was written in Ephesus (Philem. 1:22). Paul also made a brief trip to Corinth from this city which is not recorded in the book of Acts (2 Cor. 12:14). Ramsay (1927,275), however, does not believe that such a trip took place at this time. He believes that this conjectural visit is more likely to have been made from Philippi, for clearly, Paul resides in Ephesus throughout this period. His apostolic ministry had been very successful in Ephesus. He had won many Jews as well as many Romans, Greeks and Asiatics to Christianity, but many of them still held on to ancient magical practices in this city.

5.2 Magical Arts and Practices

Ephesus was a centre of magical arts and practices in the ancient world. These occult arts flourished in this city. Ancient writers like Plutarch used to refer to such writings about the occult as Ephesian tales (Stambaugh and Balch 1986,149). Ephesus was also known for its famous Ephesian letters. According to Trebilco (1994,314) they were six magical terms which people thought were words of power. They could be used as written amulets or as

spoken charms or to ward off evil spirits or to promote success in business. The statue of the goddess Artemis was adorned with them. Many inscriptions found in Ephesus have references to magicians and curses. Magical papyri which preserved incantations, prayers and tharmaturgical formulae have also been found here. The superstition of all Asia was centred in this city (Ramsay 1927,277).

It was therefore significant that unusual miracles of healings and exorcism accompanied Paul's apostolic work in this city (Acts 19:11). The aprons and handkerchiefs that Paul used brought healing and deliverance to people. These aprons and handkerchiefs were probably connected to his work as a tentmaker in Ephesus. There was a widespread belief at the time that the bodies of particular people or whatever touched them had thaumaturgical powers (Trebilco 1994,313). Another ancient belief among Jews and Gentiles was that evil spirits were often the cause of sickness. The practice of exorcism was therefore quite common. In Ephesus we have an example of itinerant Jewish exorcists trying to drive away an evil spirit using Christ's name. They tried to use the name of Christ as a magical term without any faith in Christ. Johnson (1987,108) writes that non-Christians employed similar formulae, for example, a magical papyrus reads, "I adjure you by Jesus the God of the Hebrews." These exorcists were the seven sons of a Jewish chief priest called Scaeva. There is no evidence of a Jewish chief priest called Scaeva and these men may have been imposters. However, Luke does not indicate that they were imposters. Their unsuccessful exorcism of the demoniac in Ephesus became known throughout the city.

After this incident many pagan and Jewish believers who had held on to magic papyri, books and devotional trinkets then decided to burn them publicly. This was probably due to the belief in the purifying power of fire. Many magicians also decided to change their professions and to burn their books (Acts 19:19). Books were usually burnt in public to openly repudiate its contents. In the Greco-Roman world books that were considered harmful, dangerous and seditious were usually forcibly seized by the Roman authorities and others and burnt openly (Trebilco 1994,315). In Ephesus the people voluntarily burnt their books on magic openly and at a great personal loss. Luke records that the monetary value of the books burnt was enormous. Its value was about 50 000 Greek *drachmae* (Acts 19:19). However, Paul's apostolic work did not only affect the financial affairs of the believers, but it also had an impact on business allied with pagan worship.

5.3 Artemis of the Ephesians

Demetrius was a silversmith in Ephesus whose business relied on the worship of Artemis. He made silver statuettes and shrines for the hordes of pilgrims who came to visit the temple of Artemis. His business suffered as a result of Paul's work in the city. Many people no longer wanted to buy his silver shrines of Artemis. This situation is similar to the one reported by Pliny to Trajan in 112 AD in which the drastic drop of sales of sacrificial animals was attributed to the spread of Christianity (Harrison 1985,213). Demetrius also established the link to his financial loss to Paul's apostolic work in the city. He decided to organize a meeting with tradesmen whose businesses were dependent on the worship of Artemis. Harrison (1985,208) also writes that her worship was big business for the city. Demetrius was probably the guild-master of the guild of silversmiths because he organizes the protest. A riot broke out in the city because of this guild. Trebilco (1994,342) states that Luke's picture of the role a guild or association could play in disturbing the city is in keeping with the information we have about guilds from other sources of the period. The Roman authorities were very wary of guilds because of the potential unrest they could cause. Therefore guilds could also be banned by the Roman authorities. Demetrius's guild disrupted the city because of a fear concerning their trade and livelihood. Demetrius was probably one of the richer tradesmen because he sold silver shrines. Silver was an expensive material and would have been preferred by the wealthy devotees of Artemis. Shrines of Artemis were made of various materials such as terra cotta, marble and silver (Ramsay 1927,278). The poorer tradesmen would have made shrines of terra cotta for the poor devotees of Artemis. The shrine was a miniature replica of the temple or part of the temple. These shrines would have been used as votive offerings when one visited the temple, or it was taken home by pilgrims or placed in graves. Shrines were a common part of pagan cults. Many shrines of terra cotta and marble have been found in Ephesus, but no silver shrines have been found. These shrines would have been in great demand in Ephesus because it was the home of the Greek goddess called Artemis. This goddess was the patron of Ephesus.

Artemis was a native Asian deity taken over by the Greeks and identified with their own goddess. This goddess was an ancient form of a mother goddess of Asia Minor. She was a major attraction in Ephesus. Perowne (1973,74) writes that her cult had a firm hold on the

imaginations of people of the Near East, Egypt, Greece and Rome. Her temple was first built in the sixth century BC from the local white marble. It became the largest and most lavishly decorated temple in Ephesus. The temple had been decorated by the best painters and sculptors of the age and was seen as the glory of Ephesus and as the ornament of the province. Her temple was acclaimed as one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Her image was said to have fallen from the sky. She was known as the chaste huntress of the Greeks. Hellenistic writings about Artemis of Ephesus concentrate typically on her role as a saviour (Stambaugh and Balch 1986,150). Many scholars believe she was a goddess of fertility and love. This is because she had many breasts in front of her cult image. However, this view is not accepted by all because no evidence can be found in the primary sources and myths that fertility was a primary characteristic of this goddess (Trebilco 1994,320). The only sources in which she is mentioned as a fertility goddess is in polemical writings about her. Other scholars believe she was a mistress of destiny. The zodiacal signs on her statuettes expressed her power over fate. Ephesus was the temple keeper of this goddess and this made the city a centre of religious life. Artemis was worshipped and honoured by many devotees for her many benefits to humans. Huge crowds of people came to Ephesus annually to celebrate the festival of Artemis in March and April (Maier 1976,105). This goddess was not only worshipped in Ephesus, but also in the whole province of Asia and throughout the world (Acts 19:27). It was an expansionist cult.

The temple of Artemis was very prosperous. It owned revenue producing property, herds of deer and sacred fish (Stambaugh and Balch 1986,150). The temple served as a bank and was a repository for private and public donations, legacies and treasures. The temple also loan money to people. It had been used as a bank since the fifth century BC. It was customary in the ancient world for temple treasuries to serve as banks in the ancient world because it was considered sacrosanct (Johnson 1987,118). Vast amounts of money were stored in the temple and therefore the temple of Artemis was intricately linked to the economic affairs of Ephesus. The temple also served as an asylum for criminals, runaway slaves and those in debt. However, the ancient rights of the asylum of the temple were abused. This caused the Roman authorities to question the asylum privileges of the temple and to curtail it. Apollonius of Tyana also complained against the practices in the Ephesian temple and stated that it was just a den of robbers (Trebilco 1994,343). However, the reputation of Artemis and Ephesus were linked. They were closely identified with each

other because the worship of Artemis went beyond the religious sphere and involved the financial, cultural and civic affairs of the city. Artemis's name was even used on coins and important documents in the city. Even the names of the citizens of Ephesus were inscribed on the temple walls.

When Demetrius complained about Paul's preaching, it was because his preaching not only affected their prosperity, but also the standing and reputation of Artemis and Ephesus. Paul's preaching had struck directly at the power of the goddess and the business community associated with her. Paul's teaching that the gods made with hands are not gods infuriated the idol worshippers (Acts 19:26). Their riot moved from the streets into the theatre in Ephesus that was usually used during festivals honouring Artemis. This theatre has now been fully excavated and could hold up to 24 000 people. This theatre was used for plays and regular assemblies and it was a natural meeting place for an impromptu meeting, which they now held.

Because many people did not know the reason for the assembly, the Jews decided to let Alexander speak to the crowd. This was to let the crowd know that the Jews were not the cause of their trouble. Alexander was probably the coppersmith who afterwards was to do Paul great harm (1 Tim. 4:14). Jewish writers like Josephus was concerned about the Jews relationship to pagan worship and wrote that Jews avoided blaspheming and offending pagan deities (Trebilco 1994,354). However, the Ephesians knew that the Jews did not believe in pagan shrines. Jews were also known to disrupt pagan shrines. When the crowd realised Alexander was a Jew, they began to chant Great is Artemis of Ephesus for two hours. Ramsay (1927,279) writes that 'Great Artemis' was a common formula of devotion and prayer as is attested by several inscriptions. This riot in this theatre shows one the passionate local loyalties the people had. The city mob was usually the most dangerous enemy of Christianity, but they could be held in check by the Roman officials in the city.

5.4 Roman and City Officials

The city officials normally resided over public meetings held in the theatre. The town clerk that came to the theatre was one of the highest officials in Ephesus (Ramsay 1927,281). He could exercise great influence in the city's affairs. He was responsible for civic administration and usually took the lead in the assembly. He was therefore the appropriate person to address the crowd. Being in close contact with the court of the proconsul, he was concerned about the consequences of this riot. The relationship between the city and its officials with the proconsul was important. The consequences of a riot in a city could be serious. Ephesus could lose its freedom, the guilds causing the disturbances could be disbanded and the city officials could be punished (Trebilco 1994,344). He was also concerned that proper legal procedures were not followed in this matter. The legal procedures had to involve the court, the proconsul and the regular assembly. Ephesus was an assize city. This meant that people from all over the province could bring their cases to the Roman proconsul or to one of his legates for adjudication. This had not been done by the rioters. Legal action was usually brought against an individual by another at that time. The town clerk gave Paul his legal rights in the city and turned the situation against the rioters. It was Demetrius and his guilds that would be in trouble and not Paul.

Other civic officials also came to Paul's aid during this incident. They were known as the asiarchs. Many scholars believe that they were the sponsors of the cult of emperor worship, but Paul could not subscribe to any part of emperor worship. The inscriptions about the asiarchs have led to a different conclusion. Kearsley (1994,365) states that it is Ephesus which has produced the largest number of inscriptions referring to asiarchs, a group around sixty. None of them shows that they were priests of the imperial cult in the province. Inscriptions suggests that these men performed some public benefaction, proposed motions in city councils and had duties within the sphere of civic administration. These men were known as Paul's friends.

5.5 Ephesian Trials

However, Paul also had a lot of foes in Ephesus. In his letter to the Corinthians Paul writes that a great door for effective work had opened to him in Ephesus, but there were many that opposed him (1 Cor. 16:9). This opposition came from the synagogue and from the business community allied with pagan worship. The Jews plotted against him in the city and this caused him much affliction (Acts 20:19). He does not say what kinds of difficulties were caused by them in Ephesus. They were his fierce opponents and probably wanted to kill him. Only when Paul was in Jerusalem were they able to lay serious accusations against him. These accusations were that he taught against the law, the Jews and the temple and that he had brought a Greek from Ephesus into the temple (Acts 21:27-29). The Gentiles also probably wanted to kill him. Paul writes that Aquila and Priscilla had been willing to lay down their lives for him (Rom. 16:3). This could only have happened in Ephesus when the city mob was in uproar against him (Acts 19:29). Paul was staying and working with them at that time. The opposition he faced in this city could have led to an Ephesian imprisonment. Some scholars believe that he was imprisoned in Ephesus (Johnson 1987,108). The Corinthians had also heard about his distress in Ephesus. When Paul writes to them he alludes to a sentence of death that he had received in Ephesus (2 Cor. 1:8-9). When Paul wrote to Timothy, he also remembers the household of Onesiphorus who helped him while he was in chains in Ephesus (1 Tim. 16-18). An Ephesian imprisonment would also have made a trip to Colossae possible if Onesimus met Paul in an Ephesian prison (Philem. 1:22). If his letter to Philemon had been written in Rome, it would have indicated a reversal of his plans of conducting apostolic work in the West by coming back to the East.

Paul also writes that he had fought wild beasts in Ephesus (1 Cor. 15:32). He was probably writing metaphorically, but it was not uncommon for prisoners to be thrown to wild beasts. There was a large stadium in Ephesus where these fights with animals occurred. Finegan (1962,117) mentions that the stadium was a focus of special interest in Ephesus about the time Paul was there, for an inscription shows that it was rebuilt under Nero (AD 54-68). Paul's fight with wild beasts could also refer to his struggle against the city mob in Ephesus. Ramsay (1927,230) states that this term is an interesting mixture of Greek and Roman ideas and corresponds well to Paul's mixed education as a Roman citizen in a

Greek philosopher's lecture room. In the lecture room he would have heard about the Platonic comparison of a city mob to a wild beast.

In 56 AD Paul left Ephesus after three years of apostolic work in the city (Acts 20:31). In 57 AD Paul addressed the elders of the church of Ephesus in Miletus. He reminded them of his lifestyle, trials and work in their city. He had established and founded a strong work in their city. His long residence in this city had suited the greatness of his work for he had reached the whole province of Asia. Rome was to be his next target city for apostolic work. His apostolic work in the eastern Mediterranean world was finished.

6. CONCLUSION

The ancient world in which Paul lived was seen as a collection of cities. These cities were the centres of political power, wealth, trade and civilisation. Many people were drawn to the cities for a wide variety of reasons. The city communities therefore became very large. The cities were also filled with people from various parts of the Roman Empire. Many Jews were also drawn to the cities, as they had become centres of trade. This was significant for the Pauline mission because the synagogues in the cities provided a base to start his apostolic work in a city. In these synagogues Paul was able to reach the Jews as well as the Gentiles. This was because many Gentiles had found Judaism attractive and they could be found in and around these synagogues. Because of these socio-cultural factors the expansion of Christianity in the Roman Empire was therefore planned from start to finish as an urban mission. The cities in the Greco-Roman world therefore formed the social context of Paul's apostolic work.

Paul's preparation and apprenticeship for this urban mission began in the city of Antioch. Antioch was the political centre of Syria. Antioch provided him with many opportunities to deal with various issues relating to the Jews and Gentiles in the church. Table fellowship between the Jews and the Gentiles as well as the status of Gentiles in the church were the first conflicts in this church. However, these issues were also resolved. Antioch therefore became the first city where Jews and Gentiles had equal rights in fellowship in its church. They were also first called Christians in this city. The history of the city had prepared it as a base from which the political powers wanted to spread their ideals. This city was therefore the appropriate place from which Christianity could be launched to the Greco-Roman world. From this large city in 47 AD, the apostle Paul was commissioned to reach the city centres of the East with Christianity (Acts 13:1-3). On Paul's missionary journeys from Antioch he was drawn to major cities that were strategically situated. In these cities he planned to reach many people with the message of Christianity. Paul also envisioned these cities as mission centres to their surrounding regions and provinces.

The first major city he was drawn to was Philippi. This was a Roman colony and it was strategically situated on the Via Egnatia. Many people would travel along this important road. Paul managed to found a church in this city. His conflict with the political authorities

in this city ensured that they would not treat the church in an unfair manner. A unique characteristic of this church was that it financially partnered with Paul to help him to spread Christianity to various Roman provinces (Phil. 4:15-16). Paul's second major city that he chose for apostolic work was Thessalonica. This city was the capital of Macedonia. It was an ideal city to reach a large number of people with Christianity. Many people he reached in this city came out of paganism. They became a close-knit community. This was because of their eschatological interpretations and concerns. However, they were also very zealous in spreading Christianity in their surrounding provinces (1 Thess. 1:8). Corinth was Paul's third major city. It was also a Roman colony and it was the capital of Achaia. Paul spent eighteen months reaching many people with his Christian gospel in this city. His apostolic work in this city was a great challenge to him. This was because the church he had founded in this city was very unstable. They misinterpreted their religious freedom, they followed false religious leaders, and they allowed their class status to cause divisions and held on to their Greek heritage. However, Paul apostolic work did not fail in Corinth, but succeeded and spread from this city into the province (2 Cor. 1:1). To complete his work in the East, Paul chose Ephesus as his final target city. Ephesus was the capital of Asia. It was also a centre of superstition and the worship centre of the goddess called Artemis. This city became Paul's centre of apostolic work for a period of three years. He encountered many afflictions in this city, but when he left Ephesus, all Asia had heard the Christian message.

By 57 AD Paul had reached the major city centres of the eastern Mediterranean world with Christianity. He had founded and established a new community in the East. His work had accomplished at a deeper and more significant level what the governing authorities had tried to do by socio-cultural means. People could now belong to a community that gave them equal rights and privileges regardless of their race, status and sex (Gal. 3:28). It was also a community that would continue to spread the message of Christianity in the East. Paul's apostolic work in the eastern Mediterranean world was therefore complete.

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