

**Paul's Understanding of Spiritual Formation: Christian
Formation and Impartation**

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Abstract

‘Spiritual formation’ is a popular term today, but definitions of its meaning vary. It is usually thought of from the perspective of the disciple rather than from the perspective of the mentor, who accompanies and guides the disciple in the formation process. This thesis seeks to contribute to a greater understanding of the spiritual formation process by a close examination of Paul’s perspective as one forming the protégé.

Chapter 1 surveys writers who have written on topics related to spiritual formation and Paul. Then, current definitions of spiritual formation are compared, identifying areas of agreement and disagreement. The study of this theme in Paul’s writings has been limited.

Chapter 2 offers a definition of spiritual formation based on 1 Thessalonians, and explores its key features on the evidence of this letter. From 1 Thessalonians, it is stated that Paul would find the term ‘spiritual formation’ inadequate. The term ‘Christian formation’ would be more comprehensive to Paul’s thought. Impartation is identified as an important element in this Christian formation process.

Chapter 3 surveys the other letters generally accepted as Pauline, arguing that, while Paul’s basic understanding of Christian formation remains consistent throughout his ministry, certain developments in his understanding can also be identified.

Chapter 4 analyses and compares methods of impartation from his contemporary world that may have influenced Paul.

Chapter 5 studies Paul's method of impartation using **metadi,dwmi** in 1 Thess. 2:8 as a starting point. Three dimensions of impartation can be discerned: the cognitive, affective, and relational dimensions. Proposals about the likely level of influence on Paul from the contemporary groups discussed in chapter 4 and the issue of Paul and power based on the postmodern perspective are examined.

Chapter 6 draws conclusions from the study and reflects on possible implications for the practice of Christian formation today.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Works of Philo:

<i>Cher.</i>	De Cherubim
<i>Det.</i>	Quod Deterius Potiori Insidiari Soleat
<i>Ebr.</i>	De Ebrietate;
<i>Fug.</i>	De Fuga et Inventione
<i>Flac.</i>	In Flaccum;
<i>Her.</i>	Quis Rerum Divinarum Heres Sit;
<i>Ios.</i>	De Iosepho
<i>Legat.</i>	Legatio ad Gaium;

<i>Mut.</i>	De Mutatione Nominum;
<i>Opif</i>	De Opificio Mundi;
<i>Post.</i>	De Posteritate Caini;
<i>Prob.</i>	Quod Omnis Probus Liber Sit;
<i>Somn. 2</i>	De Somniis II
<i>Spec.1</i>	De Specialibus Legibus I;
<i>Spec. 2</i>	De Specialibus Legibus II
<i>Spec. 3</i>	De Specialibus Legibus III
<i>Spec. 4</i>	De Specialibus Legibus IV
<i>Virt.</i>	De Virtutibus.

Other Works:

<i>ADS</i>	<i>Applied Developmental Science</i>
ANLEX	Friberg, T., Friberg, B., Miller, N.F. (2000) <i>Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament</i> (Grand Rapids: Baker Books).
ATANT	Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments
<i>ATR</i>	<i>Anglican Theological Review</i>
<i>AusBR</i>	<i>Australian Biblical Review</i>
<i>BBR</i>	<i>Bulletin for Biblical Research</i>

BDAG	Bauer, W., Danker, W. F., Arndt, W.F. and Gingrich, F. W. 3d ed. (2000) <i>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> (Chicago, London: The University of Chicago Press).
<i>BFT</i>	<i>Beiträge zur Förderung christlicher Theologie</i>
BHT	Beiträge zur historischen Theologie
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
<i>BJRL</i>	<i>Bulletin of the John Rylands Library</i>
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentary Series
<i>BSac</i>	<i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i>
<i>BTB</i>	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
<i>BZ</i>	<i>Biblische Zeitschrift</i>
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
<i>CHE</i>	<i>Christian Higher Education</i>
<i>Chm</i>	<i>Churchman</i>
<i>CT</i>	<i>Christianity Today</i>
<i>DPL</i>	<i>Dictionary of Paul and His Letters</i>
<i>EDNT</i>	<i>Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament</i> . Balz, H. and Schneider, G. (eds.) 1990.
<i>EKKNT</i>	Evangelisch-katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
<i>EvQ</i>	<i>Evangelical Quarterly</i>

<i>ExpT</i>	<i>Expository Times</i>
<i>FN</i>	<i>Filologia Neotestamentaria</i>
<i>GTJ</i>	<i>Grace Theological Journal</i>
<i>HDev</i>	<i>Human Development</i>
<i>HervTeoSt</i>	<i>Hervormde Teologiese Studies</i>
<i>HNT</i>	Handbuch zum Neuen Testament
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>IJChilSpir</i>	<i>International Journal of Children's Spirituality</i>
<i>IJPR</i>	<i>International Journal for the Psychology of Religion</i>
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
<i>IRM</i>	<i>International Review of Mission</i>
<i>JBJEC</i>	<i>Jewish Believers in Jesus: The Early Centuries</i> ,(eds.) Skarsaune, O and Hvalvik, R. (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers)
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
<i>JHumPsych</i>	<i>Journal of Humanistic Psychology</i>
<i>JPT</i>	<i>Journal of Psychology and Theology</i>
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
<i>JSNTSup</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement</i> Series
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>

<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
<i>JTSA</i>	<i>Journal of Theology for South Africa</i>
KEK	Kritischeexegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament (MeyerKommentar)
Lampe	G. W. H. Lampe (1961), <i>A Patristic Greek Lexicon</i> (Oxford: Clarendon).
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LSJM	Liddell-Scott-Jones-McKenzie (1968) <i>Greek-English</i> <i>Lexicon</i> (Oxford: Clarendon).
<i>LTQ</i>	<i>Lexington Theological Quarterly</i>
NCB	New Century Bible
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NovTSup	Supplement to <i>Novum Testamentum</i>
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
PBM	Paternoster Biblical Monographs
<i>PHILO</i>	Trans., Yonge, C.D (1993) <i>The Works of Philo, Complete</i> <i>and Unabridged, New Updated Ed.</i> , (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson).
<i>PRS</i>	<i>Perspectives on Religious</i>
<i>Studies</i>	
<i>RB</i>	<i>Revue Biblique</i>
<i>RE</i>	<i>Religious Education</i>
<i>RevExp</i>	<i>Review and Expositor</i>

<i>RL</i>	<i>Religion and Literature</i>
<i>SBJT</i>	<i>Southern Baptist Journal of Theology</i>
SBLDS	SBL Dissertation Series
SBLSP	<i>Society for Biblical Literature, Seminar Papers</i>
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
<i>SJT</i>	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i>
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
<i>SSpir</i>	<i>The Study of Spirituality</i>
<i>SWJT</i>	<i>Southwestern Journal of Theology</i>
<i>TDNT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> , ed. Kittel and Friedrich.
<i>TTR</i>	<i>Teaching Theology & Religion</i>
<i>TynB</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
TZ	<i>Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
<i>WTJ</i>	<i>Wesleyan Theological Journal</i>
<i>WUNT</i>	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
<i>ZST</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für systematische Theologie</i>

Bible Translations

NAS	New American Standard
ESV	English Standard Version

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 The Research Topic

1.1.1 Purpose of the Study

Spiritual formation has become a familiar term. Academic institutions have ‘Departments of Spiritual Formation,’¹ churches have spiritual formation programs,² and books are being written with spiritual formation in their titles.³ In 2008, *The Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care* published its inaugural issue. It is used much, but the nature of its usage is not always consistent. My goal in this study is to analyze the term ‘spiritual formation,’ deciding whether or not it is adequate. Then study Paul, in order to see if he can shed light and offer a definition that can command agreement, and in the light of this, assess strengths and weaknesses in modern understandings of spiritual formation.⁴ Once we have discussed Paul, and derived our own definition from him, we can analyze his views as a beginning point.

1.1.2 Basis for Choosing Paul

The Apostle Paul was chosen because he has written in relation to topics like sanctification, discipleship, growth, maturity, all topics that relate to

¹ E.g., see Talbot School of Theology: Spiritual Formation at http://www.talbot.edu/academics/course_descriptions/spiritualformation/spiritualformation.cfm.

² E.g., see Eastbrook Church at <http://www.eastbrookchurch.org/>.

³ E.g., M. Robert Mullholand Jr.’s book *Invitation to a Journey: A Road to Spiritual Formation* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1993). The Harvard system will be our primary use of footnote reference.

⁴ The issue of anachronism arises; we will see how spiritual formation is defined and understood and then look into related concepts that Paul writes about in his letters. I will address more on anachronism later.

spiritual formation. Understanding how Paul thought of these issues will aid us in comparing the modern term to Paul's thought.

There is a current deficiency in the modern literature on Paul and issues like spiritual formation. Much of modern day theology is rooted in the Pauline Epistles. Almost every major area of theological study uses the Pauline corpus as a resource. A topic such as spiritual formation deserves as much attention as, say, anthropology or pneumatology, but little has been published on Paul in the area of spiritual formation. To help illustrate the point, a search on an ATLA Database yielded 7,319 articles on the Apostle Paul, 4,651 references to the Apostle Paul and theology but very few articles were displayed when the keywords Apostle Paul and spiritual formation were typed. Gordon Fee writes,

I am one Paulinist who thinks that the apostle has been poorly served in the church on this score. Paul is basically viewed and studied as either a theologian or a missionary evangelist, which of course are parts of the whole; but any careful reading of his letters will reveal that spirituality is crucial to his own life in Christ, as well as being the ultimate urgency of his ministry to others.⁵

The Apostle Paul wrote to the church in Galatia, "My children, with whom I am again in labor until *Christ is formed in you*. . ." (Gal. 4:19). Also, Colossians 1:28, "And we proclaim him, admonishing every man and

⁵ Fee (1992) p.96.

teaching every man with all wisdom, that we may present every man complete in Christ.”⁶

James Samra did a brief survey of Pauline scholarship in the area of spiritual growth and maturation by discussing the views of nine scholars—Schlatter, Käsemann, Klaiber, Sanders, Dunn, Meeks, Hays, Engberg-Pedersen, Gorman. Samra concludes that “a need exists for greater definition of Paul’s conception of maturity.”⁷ He also writes that “the idea of maturity in the undisputed Pauline epistles is generally a neglected theme. Even when maturity is recognized as important to Paul, there is a lack of definition and explanation as to what Paul thinks maturity is.”⁸ This study will try to aid the discussion as to what Paul thinks maturity is by contributing to the dialogue of spiritual formation.

1.1.3 Limitations

First, we must deal with the issue of anachronism. To ask Paul to help us understand spiritual formation would be difficult because there is no equivalent term in the New Testament for it. It is a modern term. So a working definition which has aspects of topics that are mentioned in Paul’s letters like sanctification, holiness, growth will be important to

⁶ This comes from a disputed letter of Paul but still emphasizes what Paul desired. The focus of this study will be on the undisputed letters of Paul.

⁷ Samra (2006) pp.8-25.

⁸ Samra (2006) p.167.

draw out. Once we acquire these aspects from Paul, it will help when compared to present definitions of spiritual formation. I will propose a synthesized definition after surveying the various modern definitions and, from there, study Paul's understanding of the elements which comprise this definition, as well as compare to see if Paul adds anything new.

There is a verb for form, **morfo,w** in Gal. 4:19, and spiritual, **pneumatiko,j** (Gal.6:1, nineteen times in total in the undisputed letters of Paul). There is no term for 'spiritual formation,' but Paul certainly writes about the concepts of growth and maturity as well as how Paul related to his converts. Understanding these concepts in Paul will aid us in understanding spiritual formation today. I will use 1 Thessalonians as our foundation in the following discussion. Issues like growth, holiness and sanctification are particularly prevalent in this letter.⁹

Victor Copan also researched Paul and issues related to spiritual formation (Paul as spiritual director). He also wrote about some issues in his study:

The uncontested Pauline letters are of an occasional nature and were intended to be neither systematic nor exhaustive treatments of this topic. Thus any analysis of Paul's letters must remain tentative, indicative, and partial. Another closely related limitation has to do with the parameters we have set for our study. Our sample texts, the uncontested writings of Paul, do not provide a full picture, but merely a starting point. For a full picture, all the texts of the Pauline corpus, the book of Acts and extracanonical

⁹ Lyons (1995) p.200 based on using *Gramcord* writes, "1 Thess. makes up only 4.6% of the total words in the Pauline corpus (32,440). Yet its percentage of explicit holiness words is more than twice the corpus average (.675 compared to .327)." See chapter 2 for my reasons for using 1 Thessalonians as the foundation.

references to Paul would have to be considered. This is not possible within the confines of a work of this nature.¹⁰

I echo these limitations and consider our study a beginning point.

1.2 Survey of How Paul Relates to People

Before delving into the term ‘spiritual formation,’ it will be helpful to discuss how various writers have viewed Paul’s relationship with his converts/other believers. This will give us an idea of what has already been written and help us formulate more questions before we discuss the term.

1.2.1 Ernest Best

One of the first works that studied how Paul helped his disciples grow was Ernest Best’s *Paul and His Converts* (1988).¹¹ According to Best, of the three major areas of Paul’s work—pioneer missionary,¹² theologian,¹³ and pastor — it is his role as pastor that has received the least attention.¹⁴

He begins by stating that Paul’s aim as a pastor was to see his converts grow (1 Thess. 3:2, 10; 5:11).¹⁵ How? Paul helped his converts

¹⁰ Copan (2007) p.3.

¹¹ Best discovered that “here was a field that had not been explored recently as a whole.” Best (1988) p.vii.

¹² See Munck (1960).

¹³ See Dunn (1998).

¹⁴ Best (1988) p.1.

¹⁵ See Best (1991) pp.7-8.

grow through relationships. The area that Best focuses on is how Paul portrayed himself among his disciples, using different models to portray his relationship with his converts — reciprocal, superior/inferior.¹⁶ Best writes that a “superior/inferior relation might suggest an authoritarian relation but it need not if its governing power is love.”¹⁷ One expression of the superior/inferior role was that of parent, father more than mother.¹⁸ And as a good parent, Paul’s task was to bring his children to grow up into mature adults.¹⁹ Paul used commands to help them obey and grow in maturity,²⁰ and instilled in his converts instruction in the Christian life and belief that set them apart from their old life.²¹ Best writes, “They formed a new community and each had a place within it as a member of the Body of Christ. In that way Paul provided them both with a base from which they could grow and a framework within which growth would take place.”²² He was the parent and teacher to this community and his converts looked to him as a model.²³ Best writes, “Paul’s converts should find it natural to

¹⁶ Best (1988) p.29. See also Best (1988) pp.139-140 for his discussion on whether or not these roles are compatible.

¹⁷ Best (1988) p.29.

¹⁸ Best (1988) pp.31-56.

¹⁹ Best (1988) pp.39-54.

²⁰ Best (1988) p.49

²¹ Best (1988) pp.54-55.

²² Best (1988) p.55.

²³ I will later discuss Castelli (1991) whose thesis is that Paul used the discourse of imitation as a means of establishing a power relation between him and his converts.

imitate him. They would look on him as their father and teacher, and model for Christian conduct.”²⁴

Best then proceeds briefly through 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, and Philippians and concludes that Paul did want to be their example but with limitations.²⁵ He never asks them to become full-time vocational missionaries, nor to follow him as Jesus asked, nor expects them to have the same ‘visionary’ life that he had, nor call the married to be celibate as himself; Paul emphasizes his character, work, gospel message and dedication to Christ.²⁶

One question that arises: Was Paul arrogant in asking his converts to imitate him?²⁷ Best writes that Paul believed he imitated Christ and that the call to imitation was not just a call to imitate him but others who imitated Christ, like Silvanus and Timothy and Apollos (1 Thess. 1:6; 2 Thess. 3:7-9; 1 Cor. 4:6).²⁸

Best then goes on to discuss Paul’s authority over the churches:²⁹
“Paul saw his authority as deriving from the Old Testament, from what

²⁴ Best (1988) p.63.

²⁵ See Best (1988) p.68.

²⁶ Best (1988) p.68.

²⁷ See Best (1988) pp.69-70.

²⁸ See Best (1988) pp.69-70. This would also count against the argument that Paul used the language of imitation as a means of control. If Paul wanted to control his converts, he would certainly not use others as an example to imitate because in making that statement, Paul would lose power because Paul would not be the only model that could be copied. We will discuss the issue of Paul and power more in chapter 1, section 1.2.3 and chapter 5, section 5.7 - 5.7.1.2.

²⁹ Best (1988) pp.73-95.

was accepted in society, from the teaching of Jesus, from the tradition of the church; all of which had to be adapted to new situations.”³⁰ Best is different from writers like Castelli, who see Paul trying to control his disciples, but argues that Paul is exercising his authority as essential for preventing the churches he founded from falling apart, making Paul’s goal one of growth and care over control and power.

Best does not feel an authoritarian model is crucial for the modern church.³¹ Paul’s era was not a democratic one as those in the west today so we should not always consider Paul and today’s situation in an equal relationship. But Paul is not entirely authoritarian.

After discussing money³² and Paul’s defense of his converts against opponents,³³ Best turns to the second model which guided his relationships with his converts: the reciprocal.³⁴ Paul was not just parent and leader, giving and not receiving; he was also part of a mutually beneficial relationship, having interchanges that he gains from, like Philemon and others refreshing/comforting him.³⁵ He is a partner with Philemon and the Philippians, not just an authority figure. Paul is in

³⁰ Best (1988) p.85.

³¹ See Best (1988) pp.93-94.

³² Best (1988) pp.97-106.

³³ Best (1988) pp.107-123.

³⁴ Best (1988) pp.125-137.

³⁵ See Best (1988) pp.126

fellowship with others as well as receiving prayer from them.³⁶ So Paul is not just giving to other believers, he also receives.

Paul also uses the term ‘brothers’ often, indicating that he and the believers are on an equal level,³⁷ and he even tries to portray himself as inferior by referring to himself as a slave and a servant.³⁸ So Best brings a balanced view of how Paul portrayed himself among his converts. At times, he acknowledges that he has a position of superiority as the converts’ parent and as the leader of the churches he founded but also portrays himself as equal with them, receiving benefit from them, not just Paul benefiting his converts.

Best does a good job of introducing the topic of Paul as pastor and surveying the field of how Paul pastored his converts, but because it is a survey, it does not adequately answer many questions.³⁹ He also recognizes that factors like culture and worldview in Paul’s days will affect how Paul pastored and his methods are not always directly transferable to today’s society.⁴⁰ It would have been helpful to try to help bridge this gulf between Paul’s days and today.

³⁶ See Best (1988) pp.129-132.

³⁷ See Best (1988) pp.132-135.

³⁸ See Best (1988) pp.135-136.

³⁹ E.g., issues like his views of his converts as his children and parenting in general, Paul philosophy of pastor work and pastoring today.

⁴⁰ E.g., see Best (1988) pp.92-94. But that does not mean Paul is not a good example to follow. In the end, Best concludes with gratitude that Paul “left an example so that the church continues to mature.” Best (1988) p.161.

This work will attempt to build on Best and mine the principles of Paul's method of impartation,⁴¹ how he helped his converts grow, and how it applies today. We will analyze more his concept of how the mentor helps people grow, and therefore shedding light on Paul's conception of spiritual formation and his application of his concept of growth to help his converts mature.

1.2.2 Belleville, Jervis, Hawthorne: Paul and Discipleship⁴²

Paul does not use the words 'disciple' or 'discipleship' in his letters, but he has much to say about the subject.

Belleville defines discipleship as "what it means to live a life worthy of God."⁴³ At the heart of Paul's discipleship in Corinthians is the concept of imitation. Anyone who exhibited a life that was an exemplar of following Christ and living a life worthy of the gospel was worthy to be imitated. Paul wanted his converts to follow his example because He believed his life was one that followed Christ's life.⁴⁴ The Macedonian churches, with their joy in the midst of persecution and generosity despite

⁴¹ This term will be formally introduced in the next section. We will see that Paul saw his own life and relationship with young believers, along with his associates' life, as a significant aspect of their growth in their new faith, and his work of helping them grow was him imparting himself to his converts. Terms like mentoring and discipling will be used synonymously with the work of impartation.

⁴² Taken from Longenecker (1996). Belleville focuses on the Corinthian Correspondence, Jervis on Romans and Hawthorne on Philipians. Weima also contributes, but his work will be integrated into our section dealing with 1 Thessalonians as our foundation to understand Paul and concepts related to spiritual formation.

⁴³ Belleville (1996) p.120.

⁴⁴ Belleville (1996) pp.121-124.

poverty also became a good example to follow.⁴⁵ Discipleship also is conformity to the example of Christ, who set aside his personal rights and privileges for the good of others.⁴⁶

Jervis sees discipleship through the eyes of the ancient world by stating that it is “to achieve likeness to God.”⁴⁷ Likeness to God is achieved by conforming to Christ,⁴⁸ and expressing the righteousness of God.⁴⁹ Conforming to Christ is more mystical⁵⁰ where believers participate with Christ by being ‘in Christ,’ and ‘dying with Christ.’ Jervis writes that “believers are privileged both to share in Jesus’ death and to hope for participation in Jesus’ resurrection.”⁵¹ In addition, faith in the death and resurrection of Christ is the ‘juridical’ aspect where God’s righteousness is infused into the believer and gives the believer the ability to become like God.⁵²

Hawthorne writes that discipleship is “imitating the model of life exemplified by Jesus himself — that is, cutting the cloth of one’s life according to the pattern for authentic living that has been given by Jesus

⁴⁵ Belleville (1996) pp.139-140.

⁴⁶ Belleville (1996) p.123.

⁴⁷ Jervis (1996) p.144.

⁴⁸ Jervis (1996) pp.151-155.

⁴⁹ Jervis (1996) pp.155-161.

⁵⁰ Jervis (1996) p.152.

⁵¹ Jervis (1996) p.154.

⁵² Jervis (1996) pp.155-161.

Christ and so following his example with respect to one's attitudes and actions."⁵³ This is not achievable by human effort; it can only be accomplished through the power of the Holy Spirit.⁵⁴ Paul renounced all things that he previously strove for and considered gain so he could gain Christ (Phil. 3:8-11), which stresses Paul's ambition to conform his life to Christ's life of suffering, death, with the prospect of experiencing the resurrection and exaltation.⁵⁵

Belleville and Hawthorne stress imitation. The objects are Christ,⁵⁶ Paul,⁵⁷ other churches or believers that exhibit Christ-likeness.⁵⁸ For Jervis, discipleship is both a spiritual/mystical and juridical experience of Christ where the end result is likeness to God.

It would have been helpful had the writers addressed more succinctly Longenecker's concern that the term discipleship has different meanings to different people:

Discipleship has been for centuries a way of thinking and speaking about the nature of the Christian life. Today, in fact, the topic of discipleship recurs repeatedly in both scholarly biblical writings and the popular Christian press. The expression "following Christ" is usually used synonymously. But what does Christian

⁵³ Hawthorne (1996) p.166.

⁵⁴ Hawthorne (1996) p.178.

⁵⁵ Hawthorne (1996) p.174.

⁵⁶ Belleville (1996) pp.124-137; Hawthorne (1996) pp.166-171.

⁵⁷ Hawthorne (1996) pp.172-174; Belleville (1996) pp.137-139

⁵⁸ Belleville (1996) pp.139; Hawthorne (1996) pp.174-177.

Discipleship mean? And what does following Christ mean? *These terms, of course, can mean different things to different people.*⁵⁹

Maybe a dialogue between Belleville, Hawthorne, and Jervis comparing their understanding of discipleship could have helped remedy the issue of different meanings of discipleship.

Our work will incorporate the concepts of discipleship stressed here as well as discuss imitation. Jervis describes the goal of discipleship as likeness to God which is similar to the goal of spiritual formation.

Just as there exists a concern for the different meanings of the term ‘discipleship,’ a similar challenge exists for the term ‘spiritual formation.’ Our work seeks to help remedy the challenge.

Also, discipleship from Paul’s perspective has a large component of the person or persons obeying and living a life that is similar to Christ’s. While this stress on the Christian’s responsibility to obey Christ is one aspect present in Paul’s writings (human responsibility), there are more. Our work will incorporate Paul’s view of discipleship (human responsibility) into the larger scope of spiritual formation from his perspective.

⁵⁹ Longenecker (1996) p.1, italics mine.

1.2.3 Elizabeth Castelli

Castelli has brought into the discussion a different angle of how Paul relates to his converts. Rather than helping them grow, he uses the call to imitation as a strategy of power.⁶⁰ Castelli would argue that seeing Paul through the lens of spiritual formation would be to spiritualize Paul and that scholars would be skirting or ignoring the issue of power in Paul's writings.⁶¹ A new lens needs to be worn to interpret Paul and Castelli uses the lens of Foucault and his views on power relationships.

Chapter two sets the stage for the rest of the book. Foucault's works dealing with 'regimes of truth' and 'technologies of power' provide the hermeneutical framework. Assumptions about

power relations in social networks; about relationship between texts, discourse, and rhetoric, on the one hand, and social formations on the other hand; and about the ways in which reading discourse with its social effects in mind makes a difference for reconstructing early Christian social experience as well as its continuing effects.⁶²

Castelli defines Foucaultian power in her work as "a fluid and relational force that permeates and circulates within the social body," and power is contiguous with social relationships.⁶³ Foucault sensed the materialization

⁶⁰ See Castelli (1991) p.15, contrast Ehrensperger (2007) p.142 who states that imitation in the Bible does not require "sameness or the eradication of difference." Imitation allows for people to "find their own specific way of 'walking in the ways of God.'"

⁶¹ See Castelli (1991) pp.24-33.

⁶² Castelli (1991) p.15.

⁶³ Castelli (1991) p.52.

of new arrangements of power in the early Christian church which he labels “pastoral power.”⁶⁴ The essence of this pastoral power was to direct the minds of people to capture the truth needed for salvation in the next life.⁶⁵ With this idea, those who spoke this message have a specific power to be in command of a group of people and create the group’s foundational distinctiveness. Castelli asserts that Paul used this to control his converts. Specifically Castelli writes,

This reading attempts to resist the arrogant singularity of the drive toward truth, recognizing its elusive and contingent status. It seeks to describe a certain moment in a particular discourse — Paul’s deployment of the notion of imitation in his letters to early communities — as just one particularly poignant sign of the more general drive toward singularity, sameness, and truth in much Christian discourse. The poignancy derives from the repetition involved: the discourse of imitation, articulated by the privileged speaker-who-is-supposed-to-know and producing a particular set of power relations based on an economy of sameness, and the very function of imitation itself point to this drive toward truth.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ See Castelli (1991) pp.46-47.

⁶⁵ Castelli (1991) p.47, quoting from Foucault (1982) pp.214ff on pastoral power:

- (1) It is a form of power whose ultimate aim is to assure individual salvation in the next world.
- (2) Pastoral power is not merely a form of power which commands; it must also be prepared to sacrifice itself for the life and salvation of the flock.

Therefore, it is different from royal power, which demands a sacrifice from its subjects to save the throne.

- (3) It is a form of power which does not look after just the whole community, but each individual in particular, during its entire life.
- (4) Finally, this form of power cannot be exercised without knowing the inside of people’s minds, without exploring their souls, without making them reveal their innermost secrets. It implies knowledge of the conscience and an ability to direct it.

This form of power is salvation oriented (as opposed to political power). It is oblation (as opposed to the principle of sovereignty); it is individualizing (as opposed to legal power); it is coextensive and continuous with life; it is linked with a production of truth—the truth of the individual himself.

⁶⁶ Castelli (1991) p.57.

In chapter 3, Castelli does a brief study on the concept of mimesis in antiquity. She looks at the function of mimesis in the religious, cosmological and aesthetic spheres, in political theory, and in the disciplines of education, rhetoric and ethics.⁶⁷ Her conclusions are as follows:

The features are interrelated and reinscribe each other. First of all, mimesis is constituted through a hierarchy in which the model is imbued with perfection and wholeness, and the copy represents an attempt to reclaim that perfection . . . because of the superior value which is bestowed upon the model in the mimetic system, the question of authority is foregrounded in the mimetic system; the model has authority to which the copy submits. Finally, sameness is valued above difference, and the value undergirds the entire mimetic relationship. This elevation of sameness creates a tension in the mimetic relationship, which incorporates both a drive toward sameness and a need for hierarchy. The copy aims at sameness, but can never attain that sameness because of the hierarchical nature of its relation to the model.⁶⁸

So the implications of Castelli's study of antiquity essentially have the mimetic relationship as a strategy of control by the individual being imitated. The copy can never be as good as the model; hence, the copy will always be subservient to the model in a hierarchal relationship. Sameness with the model is valued over difference; sameness produces unity and harmony while difference can produce discord.⁶⁹ These

⁶⁷ See Castelli (1991) pp.16, 59-87.

⁶⁸ Castelli (1991) p.86.

⁶⁹ Contrast Ehrensperger (2007) pp.113-114 who states that Paul was more influenced by the values of the "kingdom of God" than the culture of antiquity. Ehrensperger writes that Paul's system of values "implies a relating to others in weaker positions in ways which support them in their lives; it is attentive and responsive to their needs, and . . . empowers them for life."

implications form the lens through which Castelli evaluates Paul beginning in Chapter 4.

Through the findings of chapter 3, Castelli looks at imitation in Paul—1 Thess. 1:6, 2:14; Phil. 3:17; 1 Cor. 4:16, 11:1—to explain “how imitation reinforces certain ideas about social relations within the Christian community and the relationship of those ideas to Christian truth.”⁷⁰ Castelli’s argument regarding Paul is that he

has appropriated a notion of mimesis completely naturalized within first-century culture, so that the term mimesis would evoke for his original audiences the rich set of associations sketched out in the previous chapter . . . mimesis functions, in Paul’s writings, as a discourse of power, as the reinscription of power relations within the social formation of early Christian communities.⁷¹

Castelli counters notions in the Christian church of ideas of Paul as a spiritual leader and founder of churches. Rather than seeing his role of apostleship as one of church planter and missionary/pastor, Castelli says that Paul uses the title of apostle as a means of control; Paul’s ‘specialness’ is granted because he speaks the gospel message.⁷²

Using a postmodern lens of seeing Paul has made a contribution in the area of Paul’s conception of maturity. Castelli brings to light the potential pitfall that a mentor could use his/her ‘act of helping someone

⁷⁰ Castelli (1991) p.16.

⁷¹ Castelli (1991) pp.16-17.

⁷² See Castelli (1991) p.99.

grow' as a means of controlling the person and abusing them for the mentor's personal gain.

Castelli also sheds new light on how Paul's use of paternal imagery could be interpreted. Rather than illustrating how Paul cares for the well-being of his converts, Castelli argues that paternal imagery is a rhetoric of authority.⁷³

Castelli then links the concept of salvation with the idea of sameness. Castelli writes, "Christians are called . . . to imitate (to be the same as) Paul while their difference from the rest of the world is continually articulated as their salvation. It is perhaps better seen this way: it is the Christians' sameness that is their salvation, while it is the non-Christians' difference that is their damnation."⁷⁴

The conventional thinking of Paul as pastor/theologian is challenged.⁷⁵ Paul is using the discourse of imitation to enhance his power among his converts. Imitation eradicates difference and affirms Paul's authority as an apostle.

The final chapter applies her analysis of Paul to modern day religious texts that assert common truth regarding human salvation and

⁷³ See Castelli (1991) pp. 101, 109-110.

⁷⁴ Castelli (1991) p.115.

⁷⁵ Dunn (1998) p.626 sums up the position: "A major feature of Paul's theology is his vigorous ethical concern. As a pastor as well as theologian, Paul was inevitably concerned with the outworking of his gospel—not only in terms of the beginning and process of salvation . . . and of communal worship and ministry . . . but also in terms of how believers should live. His letters bear witness to the depth of this concern."

behavior. After already being armed with Foucault's thoughts, Derrida, feminism, and postcolonial criticism enter the fray.⁷⁶ The Scriptures' call to sameness can also be political ploys which seek to exalt the Bible's worldview and bring those who disagree into configuration.⁷⁷ Unity is therefore a precursor to domination. Castelli believes this concept from Christianity has caused problems in the Western civilization.⁷⁸ The next step is to "reinscribe difference" and to rethink ideas of identity.⁷⁹

In relation to how Paul related to his converts, Castelli brings in new light to the discussion. She could accuse scholars of skirting, ignoring, or glossing over the issue of Paul's use of imitation as a means of power over his disciples, but having never viewed the text through the eyes of Foucault, the average reader would not be aware of this issue in Paul. Castelli has made us aware.

Applying her ideas to Paul, one can ask questions. For example, in the case of his relationship with Philemon: what if Philemon did not want to accept Onesimus back? What if Philemon is still hurting emotionally from the wrong done to him by Onesimus? Is not Paul's appeal for Onesimus's reinstatement a potential abuse of his power? What if Philemon wants to discipline Onesimus? Would not Paul's appeal make it

⁷⁶ See Castelli (1991) pp.124-133.

⁷⁷ See Castelli (1991) pp.133-136.

⁷⁸ See Castelli (1991) pp.134-135.

⁷⁹ Castelli (1991) pp.134-136.

difficult for Philemon to carry it out? Paul also wants Onesimus to be accepted with a higher status than slave; would this not be difficult for Philemon if he had a desire to reprimand Onesimus? If this relationship between Paul and Philemon is compromised by the above questions, would this ameliorate Paul's effectiveness to disciple and mentor Philemon, who also has a relationship based on a shared faith with Paul? Does Paul therefore abuse his position as Philemon's mentor? Does Philemon's potential issue with Paul compromise Paul's task of helping Philemon grow or is this part of Paul's process to teach Philemon Christ-like forgiveness?⁸⁰

Castelli has brought to the discussion the potential abuse of someone who is in a position of impartation, where one learns from another. This could affect Paul's effectiveness to impart himself to his disciples.

But there are some issues that must be addressed. Reading and interpreting Paul through this lens of power can make Paul resemble a despotic king rather than a pastor/mentor. There ensues a tension between his discourses: if power is the main framework to interpret Paul, he appears as self-centered instead of other-centered and God-centered which are also present in Paul (Phil. 2:3, 1 Thess. 2:4).

⁸⁰ For a further discussion on the relationship with Paul and Philemon and power, see Polaski (1999) pp.56-68.

What about texts where it appears Paul is abdicating his power?

Castelli briefly discussed the pericope of 1 Cor. 3:5-15.⁸¹ There is an aspect of a hierarchal relationship between the apostles (Apollos and Paul) and the Corinthians as Castelli states, but Castelli does not write about the fact that Paul is also talking about Apollos and others who have influenced the Corinthians and would have inherent power. Others having power in the community where Paul is an authority figure would be a threat. Paul does not try to persuade the Corinthians that he is the proper authority over Apollos and others, he sees himself as part of their group with God being the authority.⁸² And having been given authority, he disavows it and focuses the power on God. Why would he do this if Paul already had power over Corinthian believers?

Though there are inequalities of hierarchy in how Paul views his relationships with his converts (e.g. 1 Thess. 2:7, 11 where Paul uses the metaphor of mother and father in relation to his converts) there also exist terms of equality (e.g. Paul calls the converts brothers, 1 Thess. 1:4,

⁸¹ See Castelli (1991) p.105. She specifically deals with 1 Cor. 3:8, 9.

⁸² Ehrensperger (2007) p.41 states that Paul did not see himself as chief among the apostles but that the apostles had equal standing with one another. This would hurt Castelli's argument because Paul calls on imitation of other apostles and if Paul saw them as equals, then his goal may not be control.

nineteen times in the letter total).⁸³ How can Paul and power be compatible with Paul's desire to have equality with his converts?⁸⁴

There are also sections like 1 Thess. 2:12 where Paul's focus is on his disciples walking in a manner worthy of God. Do not statements like these subvert Paul's authority by getting his disciples' focus off himself and onto God?

Paul also expresses great affection for his disciples like 1 Thess. 2:8.⁸⁵ Control, domination and eradicating difference are not words associated with affection.

Ernest Best noted that Paul did not only ask his converts to imitate him. Others were also worthy of imitation such as Silvanus and Timothy (1 Thess. 1:6), Apollos (1 Cor. 4:6). In Phil 3:17 Paul urges his readers to “‘mark those who so live as you have an example in us,’ probably referring to prominent Christians in the church at Philippi.”⁸⁶ Best also writes,

More strikingly in 1 Thess. 2:14, where in the context of suffering he might have referred to his own suffering, he refers instead to that of the churches in Judea. He holds up before both the Corinthians and the Macedonians the conduct of the other (2 Cor. 8:1-5; 9:2) in relation to their contributions to the collection for the poor saints in Jerusalem. The apostles and the brothers of the Lord

⁸³ See Ehrensperger (2007) p.54 in which the goal of the 'brothers' was the furthering of the gospel and not domination.

⁸⁴ See Best (1988) pp.125-137 for a discussion of Paul's equality/inequality with his converts. This issue will also be discussed in chapter 5 on Paul's method of impartation.

⁸⁵ But I suspect that writers like Castelli could argue that this is a rhetorical strategy to assert control.

⁸⁶ Best (1988) p.69.

are examples in respect to maintenance by the churches (1 Cor. 9:5) though Paul does not follow their example. Israel can function negatively as an example (1 Cor. 10:1-12). **Paul therefore sees imitation as more than imitation of himself alone.**⁸⁷

If the discourse of imitation was meant for Paul to use as a means of controlling his converts, referring to others being imitated would weaken his personal position of power.

Though Castelli has brought to the discussion the issue of power and its abuses in Paul's work of imparting himself to his disciples, there are many holes if power is used as a key to reading Paul's texts. Paul has many places where he expresses his love for his disciples (2 Cor. 2:4; 5:14; 6:11-13; 7:3; Phil. 1:7; 4:1; 1 Thess. 2:17; 17).⁸⁸ Paul's disciples are his beloved (1 Cor. 4:14; 15:58; Phil. 2:12; Philm. 16). Seeing Paul's goal as one of power over his converts makes it difficult to reconcile the many references to his love and care for them. Our work will be more like that of Best, who sees Paul as desiring to care and help grow his disciples instead of control them.

This present work also explores how Paul related to his disciples and imitation is certainly an aspect of how Paul imparts himself to his disciples. But there is more than imitation in Paul's impartational work to help his disciples grow and it is these aspects, including imitation, which

⁸⁷ Best (1988) pp.69-70, bold mine. See also Ehrensperger (2007) pp.139-142.

⁸⁸ This aspect will be discussed more in the section dealing with the affective dimension of Paul's work of impartation in chapter 5, section 5.5.

we want to explore. I also challenge the notion that Paul's motivation was power over his converts; Paul's aim is pastoral over power.

1.2.4 Michael Gorman

Instead of power and control, Gorman reads Paul through the eyes of *Cruciformity*. His work, *Cruciformity: Paul's Narrative Spirituality of the Cross*, seeks to unravel Paul's religious experience or narrative spirituality defined as "a spirituality that tells a story, a dynamic life with God that corresponds in some way to the divine 'story.'" ⁸⁹ The narrative spirituality is called *cruciformity* — conformity to the cross of Christ, this life that allows Paul to experience God in the connection involving his daily life and the account of the crucified Christ.⁹⁰ Gorman writes that "Cruciformity is the all-encompassing, integrating narrative reality of Paul's life and thought, expressed and experienced in every human dimension of his being, bringing together the diverse and potentially divergent aspects of that existence."⁹¹ Cruciformity is the continual mold of living in Christ and dying with him.⁹² It is the polar opposite of Castelli's viewpoint on Paul. Controlling converts is replaced by conforming to the cross of Christ. Imitation is no longer a discourse of

⁸⁹ Gorman (2001) p.4.

⁹⁰ Gorman (2001) pp.4-5.

⁹¹ Gorman (2001) p.371.

⁹² Gorman (2001) p.48.

power, but “Christ’s formation in believers (Gal. 4:19), and the result, believer’s *conformity* to Christ, especially to the cross (Phil. 3:10).”⁹³

Gorman starts by revealing the junction of Paul's knowledge of the Trinity and his experience of the crucified Christ. Chapter one through four is his understanding of Paul's experience of the Triune God, first individually as Father, Son, and Spirit and then the Trinity as one unit. Gorman begins his discussion by stating that Paul’s experience of Trinity centers on the cross; the cross is the defining characteristic of Paul’s spirituality.⁹⁴ Hermeneutics should be seen through the cross: “it is the means of grace by which God is known.”⁹⁵

Cruciformity cannot be based only on human exertion; there is power at work within producing Christ-like character. The narrative of the cross can be relived and experienced by the Spirit of God.⁹⁶ Paul therefore has an experience of charismatic power and weakness, the Spirit connects Paul to the cross, the cross connects Paul to Christ in suffering and to others in love.⁹⁷ The Spirit’s work is that of “Christ-like love in the edification of others rather than oneself.”⁹⁸

⁹³ Gorman (2001) p.48.

⁹⁴ See Gorman (2001) pp.9-74.

⁹⁵ Gorman (2001) p.17.

⁹⁶ Gorman (2001) pp.19-49.

⁹⁷ Gorman (2001) pp.52, 57.

⁹⁸ Gorman (2001) p.60.

After establishing the cross as the central component of Paul's religious experience, Gorman sets out to explain what cruciformity to Christ will look like.⁹⁹ In Chapter five, Gorman deduces thirteen "narrative patterns" from the texts of Paul.¹⁰⁰ From these narrative patterns, Gorman construes that behavior under the influence of cruciformity will manifest in: cruciform faith (faithful obedience), cruciform love (voluntary self-giving), cruciform power (life-giving suffering and transformative potency in weakness) and cruciform hope (a requisite prelude to resurrection and exaltation).¹⁰¹

Cruciform faith is initial and continual cruciformity that has its foundation in the faithfulness of Christ, the Messiah. Christ lived a life of obedience and self-sacrifice, which lives out in believers' own initial and ongoing faithfulness.¹⁰² A life of cruciformity has as its goal transformation into the likeness of the already-glorified Christ.¹⁰³

Gorman accepts the Protestant concept of justification by faith as crucial to Pauline theology, but he places justification by faith within the

⁹⁹ Samra and Copan have also written about these issues. They will be reviewed next. Samra surveyed various scholars' thinking on Paul and maturity. After discussing Richard Hays and James Dunn, Samra (2006) p.23 writes that Gorman has advanced on "the work of Hays and Dunn by providing further definition to what it means to become like Christ."

¹⁰⁰ See Gorman (2001) pp.75-94, esp. pp.82-87.

¹⁰¹ Gorman (2001) p.93. Taken from Paul's 'master story' in Phil. 2:6-11, see Gorman (2001) pp.88-92. Gorman (2001) p.92 writes, "For Paul, to be in Christ is to be a living exegesis of this narrative of Christ, a new performance of the original drama of exaltation following humiliation, of humiliation as the voluntary renunciation of rights and selfish gain in order to serve and obey."

¹⁰² Gorman (2001) pp.95-121.

¹⁰³ Gorman (2001) p.323.

wider perspective of cruciformity.¹⁰⁴ Gorman argues that ‘the faithfulness of Jesus Christ’ should be the center.¹⁰⁵ Faithfulness is demonstrated through cruciformity, the life of a believer having its foundation upon Christ’s example of obedience to death.¹⁰⁶

Cruciform love is portrayed by the sacrificing of one’s individual will to the common good, repudiation of privileges and position, lawful conduct and giving up position as Jesus Christ had given up his.¹⁰⁷ Paul’s life personified this, and his pastoral care to his converts was motivated by cruciform love.

Then Gorman deals with the issue of Paul and power and writes,

Our analysis of Paul’s texts about love and power does suggest that, in the mind and experience of the apostle, his exercise of power is an expression of Christ’s love, and his exercise of love is an expression of Christ’s power. In other words, Paul’s desire to order community life according to his standards is, for him, an expression of the will of God and specifically of God’s desire to form cruciform communities faithful to the story of Christ.¹⁰⁸

Paul’s concept of power is a strength derived from weakness.¹⁰⁹ God’s power is mainly apparent and mainly effectual in Jesus Christ crucified

¹⁰⁴ Gorman (2001) p.152, also accepts “(2) participation in Christ’s death and resurrection, a twentieth-century alternative argued at the beginning of the century by Albert Schweitzer and in the latter part of the century . . . by E.P. Sanders; and (3) more recently, theocentric apocalypticism as a supplement, if not alternative, to both (argued, e.g. by J Christian Beker). Gorman (2001) p.153 states that all three are closely related to Cruciformity.

¹⁰⁵ See Gorman (2001) pp.120-121, 140-154.

¹⁰⁶ See Gorman (2001) pp.131-141.

¹⁰⁷ See Gorman (2001) pp.212-213.

¹⁰⁸ Gorman (2001) p.294. This also responds to writers like Castelli (1991).

¹⁰⁹ Gorman (1991) pp.275-303.

and mirrored in Paul's emptying of himself and appropriating Christ crucified.¹¹⁰ Evil powers in the world are defeated, and God's freeing and salvific work comes to fulfillment.¹¹¹

The final component Gorman discusses is the future of 'Cruciformity': cruciform hope. Gorman writes, "For Paul, hope is grounded in divine actions of reversal revealed in Scripture and known most fully in the death-resurrection, humiliation-exaltation experience of Jesus."¹¹² Christian hope's foundation is rooted in God's reversal of Jesus' death and in adulation of Christ, as described in Philippians 2:6-11.¹¹³ Eschatological reversal will vindicate this cruciform hope in the lives of believers; Cruciformity is the essence of community. The Church is the Body of Christ, and Christianity can be experienced completely in a community which embodies Christ's standard as definitively described in Philippians 2:6-11.¹¹⁴

Reaching his conclusion, Gorman writes in chap. 13 that for Paul, churches were created to display the death and resurrection of Christ.¹¹⁵ The church is a living story, a living exegesis of "God's master story of

¹¹⁰ Gorman (1991) p.303.

¹¹¹ Gorman (1991) pp.272-275.

¹¹² Gorman (1991) p.347.

¹¹³ See Gorman (1991) pp.312-321.

¹¹⁴ See Gorman (1991) pp.330-347.

¹¹⁵ Gorman (1991) pp.349-367.

faith, love, power, and hope.”¹¹⁶ And in chap. 14 he discusses the challenges of cruciformity in modern day living.¹¹⁷

Gorman makes a significant contribution to our understanding of how Paul helped his disciples grow. The ultimate focus is for Paul’s disciples to conform their lives to the cross of Christ, being part of and experiencing the life of Christ through living and dying with him. Gorman also helps scholars think through Paul’s spirituality and experience and not exclusively his theology.

This work seeks to build on Gorman, discussing the mechanism by which Paul sought to see cruciformity develop in their lives.¹¹⁸

I am in agreement with Gorman that Paul wanted to build communities of cruciformity. The focus in this work is the method he used to build his converts with one aspect being a community that stands out (1 Thess. 1:8-9). I am also in agreement that Paul had a focus on cruciformity in his own life and the life of his converts, but Gorman is more concerned with what cruciformity looks like instead of the process Paul used to build cruciformity into their lives. Gorman is also preoccupied with Christ crucified as the end result. Though we are in agreement with Gorman that cruciformity is important as an aspect to be built into his converts, Paul’s words in Gal. 4:19 “until Christ is formed in

¹¹⁶ Gorman (1991) p.367.

¹¹⁷ Gorman (1991) pp.368-401.

¹¹⁸ But it would be more accurate to use the word character over cruciformity for this work.

you” encompass more than just the crucified Christ, e.g., Christ is also resurrected (Phil 3:10).¹¹⁹

Gorman has laid a foundation, that Paul wanted his converts to be transformed into Christ by the ongoing pattern of living and of dying with Christ that produces a cruciform person.¹²⁰ But this work will also discuss other aspects of being a ‘cruciform person’ outside of entering into the experience of Christ crucified. The work of God is clearly a significant aspect and will also be discussed in this work but also aspects of human responsibility and Paul’s impartation of himself will also be discussed.

1.2.5 James Samra

James Samra’s work, *Being Conformed to Christ in Community*, focuses on the method of maturation and the function of Christian community in

¹¹⁹ Samra (2006) p.24 writes, “. . . he is never only the crucified Christ. He also is the incarnated Christ, the resurrected Christ, the sinless Christ, the glorified Christ, *et al.* Gorman’s formulation restricts his picture of Christ to those aspects associated only with the cross and he struggles to include aspects associated with the incarnation or resurrection.”

¹²⁰ But Gorman (2001) p.35 does state in relation to 2 Cor. 3:18, “On the surface this appears to contradict the claim that conformity to the cross — cruciformity — is the *modus operandi* of Paul’s spirituality in the present.”

assisting the maturation process.¹²¹ The goal of maturity¹²² is to be ‘conformed to Christ’ which Samra sees as “the actualization in the lives of believers of the attitudes and actions exemplified by Christ in his incarnation, life, death/resurrection so that the character of believers is aligned with or conformed to the character of Christ.”¹²³

Surveying Pauline scholarship, Samra deduces that the concept of maturity in Pauline studies has not adequately been studied and sets out to study Paul and maturity.¹²⁴

The methodology used for the study is based on: 1.) exegesis of the undisputed letters of Paul as the main sources, 2.) Paul’s language and thinking relating to maturity and community,¹²⁵ and 3.) synthesizing Paul’s thoughts on community and maturity.¹²⁶

Samra alerts us to the fact that Paul’s work was not only evangelistic but also pastoral, developing his converts to maturity at the

¹²¹ Samra (2006) pp.1-2.

¹²² Samra (2006) p.3 writes, “various terms have been used in the history of Christian thought . . . ‘spiritual growth/formation’ but none of these is ideal for discussing the concept of Paul.” Samra has chosen to use the terms ‘maturity/mature/maturation.’ I agree with Samra and will later argue that spiritual formation needs to be referred to as Christian Formation in chapter 2. Though the terms maturity/maturation/mature communicate the concept clearly of believers becoming more like Christ, it still is not distinctly ecclesial in its usage. For example, the animal kingdom as well as economics also uses terms like maturity and maturation. I will argue for Christian formation as a better term because it communicates the same essence as maturity but also has a distinctly ecclesiastical connotation and is not as broad as maturity. Until chapter 2, I will continue to use spiritual formation and related terms.

¹²³ Samra (2006) p.3.

¹²⁴ Samra (2006) pp.8-25.

¹²⁵ This is referred to as ‘theological.’

¹²⁶ Samra (2006) pp.26-27

eschaton which establishes the importance of maturity in Paul's life, ministry and thinking. Paul's letters¹²⁷ reveal that his 'apostolic commission' was not only to bring people to faith but to develop them to fullness of maturity.¹²⁸

Next, Paul's idea of maturing occupies an apocalyptic structure. Christ is the definitive standard of maturity, and conformity to the image of Christ is the essential theme of how Paul understands maturity.¹²⁹ What is already true of all believers in their position is at the same time the goal for Paul's converts to achieve in regards to character growth because perfection has not yet been fulfilled. Various character traits of mature believers are espoused: spiritual, holy, free, wise and strong.¹³⁰ Paul's ultimate standard for maturity is being like Christ – his attitudes, actions and life in regards to the kingdom of God.¹³¹ Paul wants believers to live according to their position of being in Christ, follow the example of Christ and imitate him, and obey the law of Christ.¹³² Christ's life, incarnation and death supersede the Law in regards to defining one's attitude and

¹²⁷ The specific texts are 1 Thess. 2:17-3:13; Phil. 2:12-18; Rom. 15:14-21; 1 Cor. 9:1-10:13, 12:27-30; 2 Cor. 1:12-14, 3:1-3, 10:8-11, 11:2-4, 28, 12:19-21, 13:10; Gal. 1:17-2:10, 4:8-20; Rom. 1:8-15 and Phil 1:22-26.

¹²⁸ Samra (2006) pp.34-53.

¹²⁹ Samra (2006) pp.54-82.

¹³⁰ Samra (2006) pp.55-72.

¹³¹ Samra (2006) pp.73-82.

¹³² Samra (2006) pp.73-82.

actions for life.¹³³ This Christ-like maturity is a process in Paul's thinking,¹³⁴ where he envisions followers of Christ to 'become' something; the language is prevalent in his letters, especially in Phil. 3:12-15.¹³⁵

Conformity to Christ is an expression of realized eschatology where believers, since they participate in Christ and the work of the Spirit, will and should become progressively more like Christ in their attitudes and deeds while waiting for the completion of maturity at the eschaton.¹³⁶

The five means of the process of being conformed to Christ¹³⁷ are introduced: identifying with Christ, enduring suffering, experiencing the presence of God, receiving and living out instruction from God, and imitating a Christ-like example.¹³⁸ Samra writes,

Identifying with Christ is an ongoing process of conscious self-categorization whereby the extent to which believers think of themselves as belonging to the world decreases and the extent to which they consider themselves a Christ-person increases . . . Enduring suffering is not only evidence that the process of transformation has begun, but is also a means whereby the process of transformation is made possible . . . Experiencing the presence of God transforms the believer into something more closely

¹³³ Samra (2006) p.168.

¹³⁴ But there are acknowledgments of aspects of Paul's thoughts that are also fixed and not fluid.

¹³⁵ Samra (2006) pp.82-94.

¹³⁶ Samra (2006) pp.95-111. The essential texts that present this pattern are Rom. 8, 12; 1 Cor. 15; 2 Cor. 2-4; Gal. 3-4; Phil. 3. The passages confirm Christ as the standard for maturity and that the maturity process is controlled by being formed into Christ's likeness. Related to realized eschatology, see chp.3, section 3.6.1 and chapter 5, section 5.3.1. See also Hoekema (1979) and Dunn (1998) pp.461-472. Thompson (2006) p.20 writes that central to Paul's letters is "God's work of transforming the community of faith until it is 'blameless' at the coming of Jesus."

¹³⁷ Or the five components which the Spirit uses to develop conformity to Christ.

¹³⁸ Samra (2006) pp.112-132.

resembling God . . . Wisdom and instruction from God imparts to believers how they are to live in order to please God and by doing so facilitate conformity to Christ . . . Imitating others who are further in the process of being conformed to the image of Christ, by which Paul is referring to a process in accordance with the wider Greco-Roman world whereby a person internalizes and recontextualizes the attitudes and actions exhibited for them, results in growing in conformity to Christ.¹³⁹

Building on the components of maturity, Samra argues that Paul assumed these components would be expedited by the community of believers. 1 Corinthians is the starting point¹⁴⁰ to present Paul's parameters for how the church would function regarding maturity. 1 Cor. 1:4-9 shows that fellowship with believers is a means of how God shows himself faithful to guarantee that believers will be perfected at the eschaton; therefore, unity of mind and common cause will help the believers achieve maturity. The letter presents a community that is not progressing in maturity or functioning the way Paul would have desired.¹⁴¹ Paul believed that the Corinthians' "failure to actualize the mind of Christ with regard to their inter-communal lawsuits was a 'loss' of opportunity to be conformed to Christ (6:1-11)."¹⁴² The Lord's Supper would also benefit them if the Corinthians did not abuse it.¹⁴³ 1 Cor. 12-14 illustrates that the community

¹³⁹ Samra (2006) pp.168-169. See also Thompson (2006) p.82.

¹⁴⁰ But later the other undisputed letters are used to illustrate the point that Paul saw the local church as crucial to the process of maturation for his converts and those who believe in Christ.

¹⁴¹ See 1 Cor. 3.

¹⁴² Samra (2006) p.169

¹⁴³ Samra (2006) p.169.

facilitates building up of one another.¹⁴⁴ The main argument is that Paul expected his converts' membership in the church to aid the maturity process. The local church is the sphere and means by which the five components of maturity were executed.

Samra has introduced the key element of community in the process of maturing, but Samra did not discuss thoroughly the interaction in the maturation process of the Spirit with humankind's free choice and the community. Only a slight mention of the Spirit occurs. Samra also does not thoroughly discuss how Paul, as a special member of the community, contributes to their "conformity to Christ." He does discuss imitating a godly example but he did not discuss in depth how Paul personally aids his converts' growth outside of imitation. This work does not discuss the role of community as thoroughly as Samra; rather, this study looks at how Paul and his associates, as members of the community, function in helping mature disciples. Samra has established, like Best, that Paul's goal was not only evangelistic but also pastoral, to see his converts come to maturity until the eschaton. We will look into Paul's theory and method of this pastoral work to supplement Samra's work of how people grow in community and to add new aspects of the components of maturity.

1.2.6 Victor Copan

¹⁴⁴ Samra (2006) p.169.

Victor Copan's *Saint Paul as Spiritual Director* seeks to examine the idea of imitation in Paul's undisputed letters to see how it can be used to help spiritual direction today.¹⁴⁵

Copan begins by gaining an understanding of the core of spiritual direction in modern day definitions to have a basic understanding of spiritual direction before researching the New Testament. If spiritual direction is happening in the New Testament, how is it happening?¹⁴⁶ Before surveying some of the leading practitioners of spiritual direction, Copan argues that the ethos and the concept of imitation play an important role in the spiritual growth of an individual.¹⁴⁷ In regards to Paul, a key strategy he used was an "appeal to examine his life and character and to follow his ways."¹⁴⁸

First, various terms related to spiritual direction are discussed to unlock spiritual direction's definition and whether or not ethos and imitation are part of spiritual direction.¹⁴⁹ Then, a discussion arises on the relationship between spiritual direction and psychotherapy/counseling.

¹⁴⁵ See Copan (2007) p.1.

¹⁴⁶ See Copan (2007) p.6

¹⁴⁷ Copan (2007) p.6.

¹⁴⁸ Copan (2007) p.6. So Copan's thesis encompasses more than imitation.

¹⁴⁹ Copan (2007) pp.7-17. But Copan himself creates a term "spiritual apprenticeship" (p. 265). Would not a corresponding term like 'spiritual master' be more comprehensive to what Copan is writing about than 'spiritual director'? I will later discuss the weakness of relying on the term spiritual director to describe what Paul was doing.

After surveying the various positions,¹⁵⁰ Copan concludes that the “diversity of approaches to spiritual direction and psychotherapies and their fundamental tasks make it impossible to posit a relationship between them that would be satisfactory to the majority of practitioners of therapy and spiritual direction.”¹⁵¹ But Copan writes that both impinge on each other and the relationship must remain fluid between them.¹⁵²

Then Copan surveys different spiritual directors and their practice of spiritual direction and concludes that ethos and imitation are not significant aspects of their thoughts on spiritual direction.¹⁵³ He ends the section by offering up a definition of spiritual direction as “the (variegated) means by which one person intentionally influences another person in the development of his life as a Christian with the goal of developing his relationship to God and His purposes for that person in the world.”¹⁵⁴

Chapter three surveys imitation language outside of the undisputed letters of Paul, focusing on Greco-Roman and Judaic usages; Copan states

¹⁵⁰ Copan (2007) pp.17-24, the relationships are: Therapy and direction are identical; therapy and direction are mutually incompatible; therapy and direction have differing content and intent; therapy is subordinate to spiritual direction; no common understanding of the relationship between psychotherapy and spiritual direction.

¹⁵¹ Copan (2007) p. 24.

¹⁵² See Copan (2007) p.24.

¹⁵³ See Copan (2007) pp.25-37.

¹⁵⁴ Copan (2007) p.39. Interestingly, this definition in part was based on the convergence of Paul and modern spiritual directors (p.38) but Copan had yet to engage Paul at this point in his discussion. It may have been better to have this definition after chapters 4-6 because these are the sections that deal with Paul’s thoughts.

that it “will become clear . . . that the shape of the life of any person in a position of influence is foundational for what they do.”¹⁵⁵

Chapters four to six study texts on the imitation of Paul “examining afresh the relevant imitation passages, seeking to understand the full breadth of the imitation of Paul: and then drawing interim conclusions and observations based on” the discoveries.¹⁵⁶ 1 Thess. 1:6 is a dynamic imitation of the “lifestyle, ethos, and message of Paul and his companions by the Thessalonian believers.”¹⁵⁷ The message is an integration of the “embodiment of truth lived out before them as well as the verbal communication of truth.”¹⁵⁸ 1 Cor. 4:14-16 leads to the understanding that imitation can specifically refer to

Living a life of humble, sacrificial service to others because of implications of the message of the cross of Christ, which should lead to the rejection of what the world considers to be wisdom, strength, and honor; generally it refers holistically to everything in Paul’s life (actions, virtues, emotions, and lifestyle) that flows out of his relationship to and service of Christ.¹⁵⁹

Next comes 1 Cor. 11:1. Arguing that the verse should be interpreted with 1 Cor.10:32-33 as a lens, Copan writes that Paul

is calling the Corinthian believers to imitate him in the way that he makes it his constant aim negatively not to cause anyone—believer

¹⁵⁵ Copan (2007) p.41.

¹⁵⁶ Copan (2007) p.3.

¹⁵⁷ Copan (2007) p.104.

¹⁵⁸ Copan (2007) p.104.

¹⁵⁹ Copan (2007) p.124.

or unbeliever—to falter in their relationship to God, and positively to intentionally seek the good of the many so that they may be ultimately saved.¹⁶⁰

Copan then discusses Phil 3:17 where the content of the imitation is found in Phil. 3:4-14. The main elements of the imitation are:

(1) One should put exclusive confidence in Christ as the source of value . . . (3:3-6). (2) One should reject all that society considers of value in light of that which is most valuable of all: knowing Christ (3:7-9). (3) One should intensely pursue that which is of ultimate value, which is described as knowing: (a) Christ’s resurrection power, (b) the fellowship of his sufferings in order to (c) attain to the resurrection from the dead (3:10-11). (4) One should humbly acknowledge one’s own imperfection and at the same time pursue relentlessly those things mentioned in the previous point—being fully cognizant that it is for these reasons that Christ has pursued us (3:12). (5) One should develop the mindset that has a singular focus as an athlete in pursuit of the ultimate prize, which is further characterized by letting go of things in the past and looking intentionally toward the future.¹⁶¹

Copan then does an in-depth response to Elizabeth Castelli’s work *Imitating Paul: A Discourse of Power*, critiquing her Foucaultian approach to interpreting the imitation of Paul. He challenges Castelli’s notion that authorial intent can be dismissed and her use of “perception of the superstructure to analyze what she sees as going on in the text.”¹⁶² Copan argues that reading texts of Scripture through the lens of authorial intent is

¹⁶⁰ Copan (2007) p.142.

¹⁶¹ Copan (2007) p.169. Also, Copan comments on pp.178-179 that Phil 4:9 is a call for a ‘global imitation’ of all that Paul did and acted, everything about his life is there to teach and serve as a model for people to learn from.

¹⁶² Copan (2007) p.195.

crucial. Castelli believes meaning is found in the ‘superstructures’ one brings to the text (Foucault’s understanding of relational power) but Copan counters with the fact that meaning is controlled by the intentions of the author who has inscribed the meaning in the act of writing a text.¹⁶³

Chapter eight summarizes the findings of chapter four through seven. Paul represents himself in four ways as a model: (1) without a self-designation and the designation “brother.” (2) Spiritual father. (3+4) Servant and steward.¹⁶⁴ The orientation of imitation is Christ and the gospel,¹⁶⁵ while the content was a global/holistic imitation: the totality of Paul’s life and imitation of Pauline virtues.¹⁶⁶

The final section discusses issues with reference to practicing the thought of imitation today and then addresses implications and functions of the findings to modern day spiritual direction. Paul felt transformation was a product of doing the truth with “full engagement” of one’s full faculties (heart, soul, mind, and strength). The work of spiritual direction should be based on the director’s

faithful, exemplary embodying of the model of Christ and the gospel in the life of the director . . . should be fundamentally informed by the director’s conversion to Christ, understood holistically as a Christocentric orientation that encompasses every

¹⁶³ Copan (2007) p.217. Copan discusses other issues but this issue of authorial intent is the “linchpin” to Castelli’s argument of the superstructures bringing meaning to the text.

¹⁶⁴ Copan (2007) p.221.

¹⁶⁵ Copan (2007) p.222.

¹⁶⁶ Copan (2007) pp.222-226. An example of a Pauline virtue would be “disciplining oneself for the sake of the gospel (p.226).

aspect of the human person—mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual. This would encompass both the private and public spheres of life.¹⁶⁷

Copan states that a key strategy Paul used to help people grow was appealing to ethos and imitation, to examine his life and character and to follow what he practiced in daily life.¹⁶⁸

Our work is most similar to that of Copan. Like Copan, we will study maturity from the perspective of the mentor and not the disciple. Also, we will look at how Paul actually went about discipling his protégés. But our work is also different. First, I agree that ethos and imitation play roles in Paul's strategy for helping his disciples grow, but Paul used more than the character of his life as a model in his method to help his converts grow. I will argue that Paul's strategy, which includes imitation and ethos, encompassed affective, relational, and cognitive aspects that overlap Copan but I will also discuss aspects that are not encompassed by imitation.

Second, I find Copan's use of Paul as spiritual director somewhat tenuous. In the practice of spiritual direction today, an individual will meet a spiritual director for a limited amount of time to discuss things

¹⁶⁷ Copan (2007) pp.254-255.

¹⁶⁸ Copan (2007) p.6.

related to the Spirit.¹⁶⁹ The modern day practice of spiritual direction reflects much more a psychotherapeutic application rather than one of mentoring or ‘spiritual apprenticeship.’¹⁷⁰ Though Copan argues that spiritual direction should model more Paul’s strategy of living among his converts and having them examine his life, in reality, many who practice spiritual direction may not be able to implement this in their practice. Their goal could simply be to help a person along their spiritual journey. So is Paul really a spiritual director or is spiritual direction even an aspect of what Paul is doing?¹⁷¹ Paul certainly does advise people in ‘theological questioning’ or anxiety matters¹⁷² but also gives advice that is practical and related to the physical realm.¹⁷³ Copan attempts to define the term of spiritual director to focus on the growth of a person.¹⁷⁴ Is a spiritual director today more of a guide rather than a “spiritual master” to have a “spiritual apprentice?” I will argue that spiritual direction was an aspect of

¹⁶⁹ Or they would go on a personal retreat, usually a weekend or a short period of time where they could talk to a spiritual director but mainly have time for personal reflection, meditation, and prayer. Also, see Copan (2007) pp.17-24 for discussion of spiritual direction’s relationship to psychotherapy.

¹⁷⁰ But this perspective is from a United States one. Other parts of the world, like the UK, etc., could have an entirely different perspective.

¹⁷¹ Copan (2007) p.3 writes, that Paul “sets himself up as a model to be emulated and because he simultaneously functioned as a “spiritual director” to the fledgling communities.” Copan looks at Paul as an individual and how Paul related to the recipients of the letter to help understand the question of whether or not Paul was acting as a spiritual director.

¹⁷² E.g., eschatological issues in 1 Thess. 4:13-18.

¹⁷³ E.g 1 Thess. 4:3-8 and the exhortation to be sexually pure.

¹⁷⁴ Copan (2007) p.25 writes that spiritual direction must focus on the relationship between the individual and God, anything less compromises the essence of spiritual direction.

what Paul was doing but that Paul's work can better be described as impartation¹⁷⁵ instead of spiritual direction. Paul gave advice and commands but also had other aspects of his work among the young believers. I will first look at what Paul thought was the mechanism for growth and how his understanding of the mechanism was applied into his work of helping converts grow.

The argument of being a 'spiritual apprentice' or just 'apprentice' could also apply to the discipline of psychotherapy. If imitation is so important to spiritual directors then should not the argument also apply to psychological counselors?¹⁷⁶ Would not the art of imitating a therapist be beneficial for mental health? Maybe a clearer argument would be Paul's view of helping disciples to maturity instead of Paul's view of spiritual direction. Our work will not discuss whether or not Paul is a spiritual director but will argue as Best, Samra, and Copan himself that Paul's goal was to help his converts grow in their Christian life and the manner by which he went about aiding the growth of his converts.

We have reviewed various writers' thoughts on how Paul related to his converts. Most see Paul relating to his converts in ways that are meant for their growth. We are now ready to examine Paul's perspective on

¹⁷⁵ See Chapter 2, sections 2.2.4-2.2.4.2

¹⁷⁶ Again, see Copan (2007) pp.24-25 where he acknowledges that there is a tension between spiritual direction and psychotherapy and that it would be difficult to establish clear boundaries between the two. Copan believes that the relationship between therapy and direction must remain "fluid since the nature of the human personality cannot be divided neatly into the isolated compartments of 'the spiritual realm' and 'the realm of self.'"

subjects related to spiritual formation, but before we look at Paul, let us see how the term 'spiritual formation' is understood today.

1.3 The Spiritual Formation Debate

For many, the term *Spiritual Formation* is a new and ambiguous term. Terms such as spiritual growth, sanctification, discipleship, and spirituality are more common. Yet the concept of spiritual formation is probably as old as any of these contemporary terms. The idea of spiritual formation has a long history in the Roman Catholic Church and has gained more prevalence in the Protestant churches after Vatican 2.¹⁷⁷ Father Benedict O'Cinnsealaigh comments on the term:

I would like to start off by saying that the term "spiritual formation" is relatively new while the concept and process is very ancient. Catholics would see spiritual formation as having Biblical roots even going back to the Hebrew Scriptures. In Catholic

¹⁷⁷ Hinson (1973) p.73.

spirituality, spiritual formation is often spoken of in descriptive images - i.e. as a form of journey.¹⁷⁸

In fact, the Protestant “reformation” in spiritual formation can be attributed to an ecumenical exchange with the Catholic Church after Vatican 2.¹⁷⁹ While there is a history of teaching spiritual formation in many traditions of the church,¹⁸⁰ the term spiritual formation has come to

¹⁷⁸ Personal interview, Father Benedict O’Cinnsealaigh, Director of Spiritual Formation/ Professor of Systematic Theology, Mount St. Mary’s Seminar of the West, Cincinnati, December 23 2005. O’Cinnsealaigh went on to say,

Later you have classical definitions (descriptions) of the stages of spiritual formation such as those of Saint Bonaventure 1221-1274 (Franciscan) who describes spiritual formation in terms of the inner journey of the individual: purgation, illumination, and sanctification/union.

Later again Saint Teresa of Avila 1515-1582 (Carmelite) describes spiritual formation with the image of the ‘Interior Castles’ while her companion in the reform movement Saint John of the Cross 1542-1591 speaks of the ‘Ascent of Mount Carmel.’ In all these cases there is the idea of journey, accompaniment, a dying to self, openness to God and a transformation into the image of Christ. In these spiritual masters the end of spiritual formation is union with God.

¹⁷⁹ See also Hinson (1986) p. 587.

¹⁸⁰ Past traditions have emphasized different aspects, for example, the Mendicant movement was a movement of being and doing in a community while being preoccupied with the crucified Christ and imitating him through a vow of poverty and preaching of the gospel while engaging the academia of the day to help make the message more understandable. It relied on cognitive faculties, relational skills, personal devotion, service, obedience and holiness.

The Modern Devotion movement wanted to rekindle devotion among believers and brought a focus on the Bible as the central aspect of formation accompanied by knowing Christ in his humanity and deity, serving God in the world, and living in a community of believers.

The Ignatian tradition of spiritual formation places a heavy emphasis on personal responsibility of the individual in his/her growth. With an aspect of the spiritual director guiding, it does offer a one-one component of mentoring unlike the others we have reviewed (I will highlight mentoring as a significant aspect of Paul’s understanding of spiritual formation later). The scriptures as well as a belief in God’s working are also in the Ignatian thought but the glaring difference between the Ignatian view and others is that it does not place a heavy emphasis on the community in spiritual formation; the emphasis is on the individual performing the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius. For a discussion of these groups and others, see Maas and O’Donnell (1990).

prominence in recent years as churches recognize the relative poverty and lack of progress people make in spiritual development. Others outside the Catholic Church are taking note of the newfound spiritual formation movement. Dallas Willard writes,

“Spiritual Formation” is a phrase that has rocketed onto the lips and into the ears of Protestant Christians with an abruptness that is bound to make a thoughtful person uneasy. If it is really so important, not to mention essential, then why is it so recent? It must be just another passing fad in Protestant religiosity, increasingly self-conscious and threatened about “not meeting the needs of the people.”¹⁸¹

Willard believes that the reason the term spiritual formation is now common is because the church has not done a good job with “the reality and the need.”¹⁸² Willard also writes,

We have counted on preaching, teaching, and knowledge or information to form faith in the hearer, and have counted on faith to form the inner life and outward behavior of the Christian. But, for whatever reason, this strategy has not turned out well. The result is that we have multitudes of professing Christians who may be ready to die, but obviously are not ready to live and can hardly get along with themselves, much less with others.¹⁸³

But on the other hand, spiritual formation has become “popularized.” A survey of the titles of some recent articles might suggest that spiritual formation is more of a trend than a significant movement towards deeper growth and maturity. There is spiritual formation of Christian College

¹⁸¹Willard (2000) p.254.

¹⁸²Willard (2000) p.254.

¹⁸³ Willard (2000) p.254.

students,¹⁸⁴ ordained ministry spiritual formation,¹⁸⁵ toddler spiritual formation,¹⁸⁶ spiritual formation for young children,¹⁸⁷ adolescent spiritual formation,¹⁸⁸ drama and spiritual formation,¹⁸⁹ psychology and spiritual formation,¹⁹⁰ motherhood and spiritual formation,¹⁹¹ and trauma and spiritual formation¹⁹² just to list a few.¹⁹³

Throughout history and in almost every age, people have developed patterns to help them understand the concept of spiritual formation,¹⁹⁴ even though the exact term was never really developed. We will see later that no agreed definition of spiritual formation has arisen; therefore, to define spiritual formation is an important task. This will help our understanding of both academic and applied theology.

Certain questions may arise. Is spiritual formation therefore a theme that becomes more prominent in certain periods of history? Is

¹⁸⁴ Ma (2003) p.321.

¹⁸⁵ Keely (2003), p.202.

¹⁸⁶ Yust (2003) p.133.

¹⁸⁷ Eaude (2003) p.151.

¹⁸⁸ Benson, Roehlkepartain, Rude, (2003) p.205.

¹⁸⁹ Grainger, Kendall-Seatter, (2003) p.25.

¹⁹⁰ Beck (2003) p.24.

¹⁹¹ Trudelle (2001) p.88.

¹⁹² Grant (2003) pp. 31-35 and Decker (1993) p.33.

¹⁹³ A further search will connect spiritual formation with other terms like nursing, social, courage, resistance, bereavement, storytelling, diocesan formation, and poverty. This is a wide range of topics and they do not necessarily all relate which can make the term spiritual formation sound like a “catch-all” phrase.

¹⁹⁴ See Maas and O’Donnell (1990).

culture an issue? Can a definition be found that can be contextualized in every age and culture?¹⁹⁵ Is it a surprise that the exact meaning of the term is in question? I will not try to answer all these questions directly but finding a definition that can be agreed upon can be an important step in answering them. I will provide a definition in chapter 2 from Paul. Before deciding on a definition for the purposes of this study, let us examine various ways in which spiritual formation has recently been defined. We will first look at related terms and then discuss the term itself.

1.3.1 Related Terms

Any definition needs to take into consideration variant terminology. Take for example the term ‘discipleship.’ Dettoni and Demarest would have differing views of the meaning of discipleship.¹⁹⁶ Dettoni describes the process which takes place within a believer while Demarast describes the ministry of making disciples, closer to ‘discipling.’

¹⁹⁵ In an article by G. Smutko (1992) pp.55-68, Smutko talks about how he and a team set out to provide lay ministers and deacons of the Miskito nation in Nicaragua the tools needed to discover the spiritual formation needs of the indigenous people there. This article poses a question—is spiritual formation dependent on culture, past history, etc.? The article discusses in depth about the need for them to heal the wounds of past wars in their model of spiritual formation. Smutko writes in the article on p.55,

Is there a model or paradigm that may be useful for missionaries and/ or local pastors to help people discern what spirituality they need to heal the wounds . . . Without presuming to offer a universally applicable “one size fits all” postwar spirituality, I can at least share . . . our efforts to help the Miskito pastors . . . discern what type of spirituality the Spirit is calling them. . .’

Smutko lays out a program they used to teach the indigenous leaders and hopes it can be used and contextualized by others. But the article does raise the issue of culture and spiritual formation and whether or not a model based on principles can be formed and used to adapt and contextualize to any situation, culture, etc.

¹⁹⁶ As we discussed earlier, Longenecker (1996) p.1 also discusses the issue of the term ‘discipleship’ having different meanings.

Dettoni defines discipleship as an active following of Jesus, a patterning of life after Christ's. A transformation must happen in which one is regenerated and continues to grow in the character of Christ.¹⁹⁷

Demarest sees the term discipleship in a much more applied fashion: "*Discipleship* is the ministry that seeks to teach new believers essential Christian beliefs, and also to train in practices that are normal in the unfolding spiritual journey. The essential message of discipleship is, 'Here is what you need to know, do, or become.'"¹⁹⁸

Demarest's view on discipleship is one of grounding a new believer in the basics of the Christian faith while Dettoni views discipleship as a life-long process. Demarest's definition of discipleship is too simplistic and incomplete; it does not allow an understanding of discipleship to be a life-long process. In Demarest's eyes, discipleship is for the new believer to be well grounded in the fundamentals of the Christian faith before growing to new levels of maturity.¹⁹⁹ Dettoni's definition, though also simplistic, takes into account that discipleship is not relegated to the initial stages of the Christian life but a life long process of patterning after Christ.

¹⁹⁷See Dettoni (2003) pp.15-16.

¹⁹⁸ Demarest (2003) p. 36. Also quoting from Biehl (1996) p.30.

¹⁹⁹ Demarest does talk about Biblical Discipleship and this term seems to coincide more with Dettoni but it is not defined and clearly demarcated so it is still unclear if this is his understanding.

Another term that has a very similar meaning to spiritual formation is 'Spiritual Theology.' Simon Chan quoting Jordan Auman's definition of Spiritual Theology defines it as, "that part of theology that, proceeding from the truths of divine revelation and the religious experience of individual persons, defines the nature of the supernatural life, formulates directives for its growth and development, and explains the process by which souls advance from the beginning of the spiritual life to its full perfection."²⁰⁰

Chan goes on to write,

Spiritual Theology seeks to understand spiritual growth from beginning to end, making use of biblical and experiential data. Thus many ancient spiritual writers trace the development of the spiritual life as stages of growth . . . Thomas has three classes of Christians: beginners, proficient and perfect. Bernard sees growth as four degrees of love and as twelve steps of humility . . . In traditional Protestant theology, the Christian life is understood as progressing according to a certain 'order of salvation' (*ordo salutis*): justification, sanctification and glorification.²⁰¹

Spiritual Theology as described here is very similar to the concept of spiritual formation. The terms are almost interchangeable in function. Both discuss the process of spiritual growth from conversion to glorification. Both discuss the development of the spiritual life. But spiritual formation is different in that its scope is much broader than just theology and personal experience; it takes into account other aspects of dealing with growth which we will later discuss.

²⁰⁰ Chan (1998) p. 18, quoting Aumann (1984) p.22.

²⁰¹ Chan (1998). p. 18

Terms relating to spiritual formation either express a similar idea, like Spiritual Theology, or are in question themselves, like discipleship; this illustrates the difficulty in having a precise understanding of spiritual formation. I will now look at how different people have understood and defined spiritual formation.

1.3.2 Definitions of Spiritual Formation

To decide on a specific definition will be necessary for future discussion, as Charles M. Wood writes, “no understanding of spiritual formation is innocent of theological implications. Even the term itself is not. It is important, then, to keep in mind that this one may set up the discussion so as to favor certain possibilities or emphasize certain issues while overlooking others.”²⁰² The first challenge is to come up with a definition that is commonly agreed upon because many, as we will soon discover, do not agree.

Bruce Demarest defines it as concerning “the shaping of our life after the pattern of Jesus Christ. It is a process that takes place in the inner person, whereby our character is reshaped by the Spirit.”²⁰³ Demarest puts the emphasis on the inner person of the spirit and soul growing into Christ by the Holy Spirit. This is a good definition in that it is broad enough to be applied in any culture, time, and so forth and easily contextualized in

²⁰² Wood (1991) p.552.

²⁰³ Demarest (2003) p. 36.

any setting, but the definition may not be inclusive enough to express the daily practice of spiritual formation as the emphasis is on the Spirit's role in shaping without reference to the individual's role in the process.

Ben Marshall describes it as a discipline that “draws an attention toward the affective, inner relationship with God.”²⁰⁴ This is a very incomplete understanding of the term, reducing spiritual formation to a relationship with God and not allowing for the forming process and individual participation in spiritual formation.²⁰⁵

Evan Howard writes that spiritual formation

speaks of a shaping process with reference to the spiritual dimension of a person's life . . . Spiritual Formation is the process by which believers become more fully conformed and united to Christ. Source of transformation is the spirit of Christ . . . [and] develops primarily in the context of relationship with Christ . . . [The] aim of formation is conformity to and union with Christ.²⁰⁶

Howard's definition, though similar to Demarest, introduces not only a conformity or forming into Christ-likeness but also a union with Christ,²⁰⁷

²⁰⁴ www.forministry.com accessed Dec.2 2003. Originally in *Leader in the Church School Today*, Spring 2000.

²⁰⁵ Marshall goes on to combine his understanding of spiritual formation with his understanding of Christian Education, which he describes as a process that “draws our focus toward cognitive learning, beliefs, concepts, theology and sometimes skills.” The two combine to form a term called *Christian Formation* . . . www.forministry.com accessed Dec.2 2003, originally in *Leader in the Church School Today* 2000. I will also argue for the use of Christian formation instead of spiritual formation in Chap.2.

²⁰⁶ Howard (2002) p.46. E. Howard is director of Spirituality Shoppe: An Evangelical center for the study of Christian Spirituality.

²⁰⁷ Also similar to Howard is Samra (2006) which he states that the essence of maturity is ‘conformity to Christ.’ This language will be discussed in the section 5.7.1.2 because I will use 1 Thessalonians as the foundation to understand Paul's view of spiritual formation and one question I will discuss is whether or not this ‘language’ of conformity to Christ is present in 1 Thessalonians.

similar to Marshall's emphasis on relationship with God. Still, no information is given for the individual responsibility in the spiritual formation process.

Stanley P. Saunders writes that spiritual formation is "the cultivation of practices, habits, and ways of seeing and knowing that make us both attentive and responsive to the presence of God's living Spirit."²⁰⁸

Saunders goes on to quote Bonnie Thurston's definition that it is,

What the early Christians did to put into practice what they believed. It was what they did to respond to a world filled with the presence of God and the risen Christ. Therefore, it included private prayer and public worship, devotion and fasting, almsgiving, art, and social action . . . encompassed practically the whole realm of human activity, because all of life was understood to be under the lordship of Christ.²⁰⁹

Saunders here gives us what we have been somewhat lacking in a few earlier definitions — a perspective of the process of spiritual formation from the individual and how humankind has individual responsibility in the spiritual formation process. The definition here emphasizes the practice of spiritual formation — actively engaging in pursuing spiritual disciplines as the working out of spiritual formation.²¹⁰ Saunders leaves out the working of the Spirit in the inner person and therefore cannot be considered a holistic definition, but he does give insight into what

²⁰⁸ Saunders (2002) p.156.

²⁰⁹ Saunders (2002) p.156 quoting Thurston (1993).

²¹⁰ Saunders (2002) pp.157-158 breaks it down into four categories—Lordship of Christ, Mission, Communal and Eschatological.

Demarest was lacking, highlighting the individual activity and participation in the spiritual formation process from a human perspective.

Dallas Willard describes spiritual formation as a “Spirit-driven process of forming the inner world of the human self in such a way that it becomes like the inner being of Christ himself.”²¹¹ Willard goes on to write:

Spiritual formation is not only formation of the spirit or inner being of the individual, though that is both the process and the outcome. It is also formation by the Spirit of God and by the spiritual riches of Christ’s continuing incarnation in his people—including, most prominently, the treasures of his written and spoken word and the amazing personalities of those in whom he has most fully lived.

Spiritual formation is, in practice, the way of rest for the weary and overloaded, of easy yoke and the light burden (Matthew 11:28-30), of cleaning the inside of the cup and the dish (Matthew 23:26), of the good tree that cannot bear bad fruit (Luke 6:43). And it is the path along which God’s commandments are found to be not “heavy” no “burdensome” (1 John 5:3). . . . But—I reemphasize, because it is so important—the primary “learning” here is not about how to act, just as the primary wrongness or problem in human life is not what we do . . . But this is an evasion of the real horror: the heart from which the terrible actions come. In both cases, it is *who we are* in our thoughts, feelings, dispositions, and choices—in the inner life—that counts. Profound transformation there is the only thing that can definitively conquer outward evil.²¹²

Willard has given a more comprehensive formulation of spiritual formation. Whereas Saunders emphasizes the practice and behavior of spiritual formation, Willard says that learning how to act is not the primary

²¹¹ Willard (2002) p.22.

²¹² Willard (2000), p.24

goal of spiritual formation, transformation of the heart is. Willard does not demean the importance of behavior and practices of spiritual formation but clearly does not put them as primary; it is the natural outflow of a heart that is right with God. Willard quoting Gerald G. May on spiritual formation writes, “Spiritual formation is a rather general term referring to attempts, means, instructions, and disciplines intended towards deepening of faith and furtherance of spiritual growth. It includes educational endeavors as well as the more intimate and in-depth process of spiritual direction.”²¹³ Willard goes on to write that spiritual formation is distinguished by three different meanings,

First, identifying certain activities as “spiritual” work or exercise, one can think of spiritual formation as training in these special spiritual activities . . . Secondly, spiritual formation may be thought of as the shaping of the inner life, the spirit, or the spiritual side of the human being. The formation of the heart or will (which I believe is best taken as the ‘spirit’) of the individual, along with the emotions and intellect, is therefore the primary focus, regardless of what overt practices may or may not be involved . . . Thirdly, spiritual formation may be thought of as a shaping by the spirit or by the spiritual realm, and by the Holy Spirit and other spiritual agencies involved in the kingdom of God, especially the Word of God . . . the means (or agency) that does the shaping of the human personality and life are spiritual.²¹⁴

Taking into account all that has been discussed by Willard, none of the previously discussed definitions of spiritual formation compares with

²¹³ Willard (2000) p.254 and May (1982) p.6. As was discussed when Copan was reviewed, spiritual direction is not synonymous with impartation but the two definitely have a close relationship.

²¹⁴ Willard (2000) pp.254-255.

Willard's thoroughness. Willard gives a clear relationship between the responsibilities of the individual to respond to God along with the inner working of the Spirit in transforming the inner person to become more mature. It also includes other agencies like the word of God in the shaping of an individual spiritually. With all this information, can we develop a holistic and complete definition of spiritual formation? Does Willard give us the complete definition or are there others? I will now look at some views of spiritual formation from an Anglican and Catholic perspective. Will they be similar or different?

From the Anglicans, there are differing worldviews. Starting with a more evangelical view, Carolyn Headley writes that,

'Spiritual formation' is used to express the growth in Christian faith, character and practice that develops as Christ is formed in us (Gal 4.19). This growth is evident in every area of a believer's life. Formation is the process of learning, changing and growing into Christian maturity and the likeness of Christ. It is the work of God, through Christ and by the power of the Holy Spirit. It results from being alive to God in Christ Jesus (Rom 6.1-14), growing in understanding and experience of encounter with God, and deepening of our relationship with him.²¹⁵

Headley emphasizes the role of spiritual formation being a work of God but also uses words like learning, changing, and growing which suggests human participation.

Another Anglican description defines it as "the work of the Holy Spirit transforming us by deepening our relationship with God and others

²¹⁵ Headley (1997) p.3.

in and through our daily lives. Spiritual formation is nurtured formally through spiritual disciplines, corporate worship, and informally through families, work, civic, and interpersonal experiences.”²¹⁶ This definition is similar to Headley, but it more clearly defines that spiritual formation is both a work of God as well as a process in which the individual participates.

From a more Anglo-Catholic perspective, Christopher Bryant writes,

An individual’s spiritual development means growth towards a fuller union with God through prayer and a growing conformity to God’s will in life. This growth in oneness with God will tend to bring about a growth in good will towards one’s fellow and in personal integration. This development is possible only through the action of God’s grace but it demands the individual’s deliberate co-operation. It thus resembles both the growth of a tree and the journey of a pilgrim. Like a tree spiritual life grows downwards and upwards. Its roots draw nourishment from the earth of God-created nature and its branch through prayer reach out to the air of communion with God. But it is also like a voyage in search of Eldorado. Indeed a decisive spiritual advance is made when one seriously resolves to seek a closer walk with God and to put God and his reign in the forefront of one’s aim. The nature of people’s spiritual development will be profoundly influenced both by their inborn temperament and childhood experience and also by the society in which they grow up.²¹⁷

Bryant expresses that spiritual formation is a work of God and a work of humanity in the growth process.

²¹⁶ Taken from <http://stpaulsparish.org/spiritualFormation.html>.

²¹⁷ Bryant (1986) pp.565-566.

This very brief survey of Anglican views shows less disparity of understanding than the previous discussion. The main differences are in length and expression.

From a Roman Catholic perspective, in relation to spiritual formation, much of the next comments will be in the context of forming priests, but the principles espoused will give us an idea of how the leaders of the Catholic Church view spiritual formation in general. An interview with Fr. Benedict D. O'Cinnsealaigh later in this section will give us a general perspective on spiritual formation and not just the priesthood.

Fr. William Fitzgerald, Novice Master Norbertine Order, Western Australia and Ireland, Seminary Professor and Director of Liturgy Pontifical College Josephinum, comments on spiritual formation from the perspective of the development of priests:

Spiritual Formation is one of the four fundamental areas of priestly formation alongside the human, academic and pastoral. Spiritual formation is absolutely fundamental because it is meant to foster growth in holiness. A future priest, who will be sacramentally configured to the person of Christ, needs to have a life of prayer, virtue and holiness which will be receptive to the gift of Holy Orders. Spiritual formation ought to provide assistance with methods of prayer, encouragement of death to sin and living for God, the increase of virtue and a real conformity with being a man of God.²¹⁸

A heavy emphasis on prayer, virtue and holiness, Fr. Fitzgerald leans heavily on humankind's responsibility in the process.

²¹⁸ Fr. William Fitzgerald's definition was given by Fr. Benedict D. O'Cinnsealaigh in the interview conducted Dec. 23, 2005.

One of the most important documents concerning the formation of priests in the Catholic Church in recent history is the document of Pope John Paul II, *Pastores Dabo Vobis* (I will give you shepherds).

Concerning the formation of candidates for the Priesthood, Pope John Paul II spoke of formation in the following terms:

And he appointed twelve, to be with him, and to be sent out to preach and have authority to cast out demons (Mk. 3:13-15). "To be with him": It is not difficult to find in these words a reference to Jesus' "accompanying" the apostles for the sake of their vocation. After calling them and before he sends them out, indeed in order to be able to send them out to preach, Jesus asks them to set aside a "period of time" for formation. The aim of this time is to develop a relationship of deep communion and friendship with himself. In this time they receive the benefit of a catechesis that is deeper than the teaching he gives to the people (cf. Mt. 13:11); also he wishes them to be witnesses of his silent prayer to the Father (cf. Jn. 17:1-26; Lk. 22:39-45).²¹⁹

Considering formation as a normal and permanent state for priests Pope

John Paul says:

I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you (2 Tm. 1:6). . . Paul asks Timothy to "rekindle," or stir into flame, the divine gift he has received, much as one might do with the embers of a fire, in the sense of welcoming it and living it out without ever losing or forgetting that "permanent novelty" which is characteristic of every gift from God, who makes all things new (cf. Rv. 21:5), and thus living it out in its unfading freshness and original beauty.

But this "rekindling" is not only the outcome of a task entrusted to the personal responsibility of Timothy, nor only the result of his efforts to use his mind and will. It is also the effect of dynamism of grace intrinsic to God's gift. God himself, in other words, rekindles his own gift, so as better to release all the

²¹⁹ Pope John Paul II (1992), # 42.

extraordinary riches of grace and responsibility contained in it. With the sacramental outpouring of the Holy Spirit who consecrates and sends forth, the priest is configured to the likeness of Jesus Christ, head and shepherd of the Church, and is sent forth to carry out a pastoral ministry . . . The sacrament of holy orders confers upon the priest sacramental grace which gives him a share not only in Jesus' saving "power" and "ministry" but also in his pastoral "love." At the same time it ensures that the priest can count on all the actual graces he needs, whenever they are necessary and useful for the worthy and perfect exercise of the ministry he has received.²²⁰

Pope John Paul II eloquently expresses the process as one of communing with God, being with God not only through the sacraments but in other ways also. In short, it is a process where God acts and humankind participates. Humankind must be 'with' God and God will 'act' on humankind to 'rekindle' growth in lives.

Fr. William Fitzgerald emphasized the role of the individual in the spiritual formation process but Pope John Paul II states that it is both the responsibility of the individual and of God. In the United States the document that governs the establishment and form of seminary formation is called the Program for Priestly Formation (PPF). It is essentially the architectural drawings for all seminary formation in the United States and was written by the US Catholic Bishops.

Every seminary must provide a milieu of human and spiritual formation in which seminarians are encouraged to grow continuously and progressively in their personal relationship with Christ and in their commitment to the Church and to their vocation. A well-rounded and effective program of spiritual formation presumes and builds upon continuing theological and personal

²²⁰ Pope John Paul II (1992) #70.

growth and character development consistent with a priestly vocation.²²¹

The final goal of spiritual formation in the seminary is the establishment of attitudes, habits, and practices in the spiritual life that will continue after ordination. Spiritual formation in the seminary is meant to set the foundation for a lifetime of priestly ministry.²²²

The PPF adds a new dimension: community. The PPF charges the seminary to establish an environment to foster the spiritual formation process in its students.

Fr. Marcial Maciel LC, founder of the Legionaries of Christ - a religious congregation in the Catholic Church - states that:

The formation of any man and therefore the formation of one preparing for the priesthood is an art. It is the art of helping a person grow from within to his personal ideal. Never a question of theories or empirical science, to form is to accompany the person in formation on the path of the everyday. It is the task we perform by paying attention to the present situation, the specific need of each moment and the varied details of daily life which can help the seminarian who is forging in himself the personality of Christ the priest . . . Formation is transformation . . . 'To form,' is not simply 'to inform' or to give a few ideas. It is rather to help the person acquire a new form. When the person at the outset does not possess the form that he seeks after, than he will have to be 'transformed.'²²³

This is a broader scope of spiritual formation, the key term being that spiritual formation is an 'art.' Not much has been given as far as the

²²¹ National Conference of Catholic Bishops (1992) p.264.

²²² National Conference of Catholic Bishops (1992) p.267.

²²³ Maciel (1992) pp.21, 36-37.

mechanism of spiritual formation, just the need for a transformation to happen.

Fr. Benedict D. O'Cinnsealaigh crystallizes the Catholic position on spiritual formation:

Spiritual Formation is the process by which an individual opens oneself up to the movement of the Holy Spirit in order to be transformed into the image and likeness of Christ according to the calling, vocation, or state of life, that the individual has been called to by God the Father.

The process of formation is fundamentally entered into through a personal relationship with God which is communicated directly, and sustained, by the grace of the Holy Spirit especially through participation in the life of grace and charity. At the same time, formation is informed by the content of God's word and the living tradition of the Church, especially through participation in her liturgical and spiritual life.

Spiritual formation requires that the individual not simply conform their exterior behaviors to the will of God but that they are transformed by internalizing the spiritual values of the Gospel in order to be transformed into the image and likeness of Christ.

At its core it is experiential, a complete embracing of God so that we are re-formed, molded, re-created, into the image God desires for us. This element of relationship is essential for spiritual formation but it is guided and tested and informed by the discerning and teaching spirit which has been entrusted to the faith community (Magisterium). At the same time it is sustained in grace through the spiritual life of the faith community (Sacraments).²²⁴

Thus, characteristics of a Catholic view of spiritual formation include an emphasis on relationship with God as well as a life of obedience. There is an emphasis on human responsibility to live a life for God, but also an emphasis on the life-changing power of God to change an individual's life to be more mature. It is viewed as a journey with God where the

²²⁴ Taken from an interview with Fr. Benedict on Dec. 23, 2005.

individual grows in their relationship with God and holiness as well as human responsibility in living out this life of holiness. We also see Catholic theology in Father Benedict's definition. This echoes Wood's words earlier of the term 'spiritual formation' being influenced by one's religious traditions.

Though most of Catholic thought about spiritual formation concerns the priesthood, there is a strand of lay spiritual formation thought. Father Benedict D. O'Cinnsealaigh defines Catholic lay spiritual formation in the following way:

The spiritual formation of the laity is derived from a sacred commission to build the Kingdom of God, received and conferred in baptism, animated and made efficacious by the gifts of the Holy Spirit, in order to transform all aspects of human endeavor and occupation, in order to build the Kingdom of God in time, culminating in its final fulfillment when all things will be gathered into one by the Lord and offered to the Father.

Lay spiritual formation is secular in character and sacramental by its nature. It is personal, calling for the conversion and self-giving of the individual to God, and apostolic, calling for the metanoia of all aspects of human life, through the proclamation of the gospel and the transformation through the making present of God's grace and love.

Lay spiritual formation is also essentially Eucharistic and priestly in character, because, as both a mediator and intercessor, the laity stands before man on behalf of God while at the same time, in the Eucharistic sacrifice, each person gathered in union with the great High priest, offers Christ the sacrifice to the Father on behalf of a people in need of forgiveness, grace, and blessing. In the Eucharist gathering the laity, the Body of Christ, in union with their priest, return to offer to the Father, their priestly work on behalf of the Kingdom, their struggles and hardships, their peace and joy, their triumphs and failures, along with the petition on behalf of their

brothers and sisters, these they offer as a priestly people, in communion with the sacrifice of Christ the Head.²²⁵

There is not a big difference between the essence of priestly and lay formation. Both emphasize human responsibility and a relationship with God while the PPF charges the seminary to foster an environment conducive to growth in spiritual formation.

1.4 Summary

We have surveyed many definitions of spiritual formation from different traditions of the Christian church. One thing that is evident is that the term is not consistently understood: some emphasize the work of God, some emphasize human responsibility, and others mention both. Some are more general, others are more specific, but we can see that there is a need to clearly define the exact meaning of the term spiritual formation in the light of the biblical text. We also see church traditions and beliefs integrated into the definitions. Taking all that we have discussed before, I will now propose a simplified synthesized definition of spiritual formation which we can use as a basis for comparison when we study Paul. Spiritual formation is *the maturing process where growth in holiness is accomplished by the interaction of God influencing humankind's growth (divine agency) and humankind's free choice to partake in the maturation*

²²⁵ Fr. Benedict interview (2005).

*process (human responsibility) within a community.*²²⁶ The great majority of definitions emphasized God working or humankind being responsible to enter into the spiritual formation process. Only the PPF discussed community. Also, few modern discussions give much attention to the role of impartation – which will be a key feature of our study.

So we will turn to Paul to see how his thoughts compare with our synthesized definition. Longenecker writes, “What is needed for most of our theories about Christian discipleship, however, is a firmer rootage in the **biblical materials**. And what is needed for our practice is a clearer grasp of the patterns of discipleship **set out in the New Testament**.”²²⁷ Though Longenecker is emphasizing the term ‘discipleship,’ his advice can also be applied to understanding and defining spiritual formation. Having highlighted a variety of definitions of spiritual formation, some more narrow while others more comprehensive, we are made aware of the possible range of the issues which spiritual formation touches on as we come to explore Paul’s thinking.

Some may ponder why a common definition of spiritual formation is necessary. First, it would aid communication between those who are studying and practicing spiritual formation. Different traditions

²²⁶ I did not include the instruments to this working definition. Both aspects (divine agency and human responsibility) have a characteristic which incorporates the use of the instruments in the process. This understanding of the instruments being within the aspects will keep our definition simple. This will also make our task of studying Paul easier.

²²⁷ Longenecker (1996) p.1, bold mine.

understand spiritual formation differently and tend to emphasize certain aspects over another. Dialoging between the two could pose difficulties. A common understanding based on an agreed definition would be helpful in understanding for those coming from different viewpoints.

Secondly, since the Bible is acknowledged both in the churches and in the academy as a foundational resource of Christian thought and life, a definition of Christian spiritual formation that is drawn from a close examination of Scripture – or at least a significant part of it (the letters of Paul) – is likely to be taken seriously.

Third, a definition of spiritual formation from St. Paul may illuminate and enrich contemporary thinking of spiritual formation.

And finally, within Paul himself, there is need to address issues in the areas of spiritual formation to which insufficient attention has been given by scholars.

1.5 Direction of the Study

In the second chapter, we will look at 1 Thessalonians as the foundation of our study. From the letter, we will formulate a definition from Paul. One significant concept that will arise from the rest of our study is the issue of impartation: Paul's and his associates' role in less mature believers' progress in spiritual formation. Chapter 3 will compare this definition with other undisputed letters of Paul. Chapter 4 will study the methods of

impartation used by the Epicureans and the rabbis as a foundation to study Paul's method of impartation. Chapter 5 will study Paul's method of impartation and offer a discussion in light of the issue of Paul and power. Based on 1 Thess. 2:8 and the verb **metadi,dwmi**, three dimensions of Paul's method of impartation can be derived: the cognitive dimension, affective dimension, and relational dimension. Paul did not view himself as the sole mentor; he also believed his associates could contribute to the growth of the Thessalonians. Chapter 6 will summarize our findings as well as apply the perspective of Paul's desire to impart himself to his younger believers to pastoral and practical theology.

Chapter 2

1 Thessalonians: Paul's Understanding of Concepts Related to Spiritual Formation

In chapter 1, I have demonstrated that there is a wide range of definitions of spiritual formation. There exists overlap as well as sharp distinctions between definitions, but all perspectives had growth and maturity as aspects of their understanding. What was not agreed upon was the means of achieving this growth. Some perspectives emphasized the work of God/Holy Spirit which we will refer to as the divine agency. Others tend to emphasize the work of the individual, where obedience and spiritual disciplines are emphasized (human responsibility). Others discuss both the divine agency and human responsibility as components while others also added instruments of spiritual formation to their definition. One brought up the idea of community. The range of understanding is broad. Taking all the definitions that were discussed earlier, we synthesized them into one simple definition from which we can work. Our working definition is: Spiritual formation is *the maturing process where growth in holiness is accomplished by the interaction of God influencing humankind's growth (divine agency) and humankind's free choice to partake in the maturation process (human responsibility) within a community*. From this definition, we will look to Paul to see if he can help us have a more refined definition.

The survey of different authors and their views on Paul and how he relates to people also led to the formation of some research questions that I will attempt to answer throughout the rest of our study.

I also observed that within Pauline studies there exists a deficiency of work dealing with issues related to spiritual formation.²²⁸ Since many of the writers implicitly appeal to Scripture as a basis of their teaching, it is important to look at what Paul, as a major New Testament writer, has to say about this issue. This chapter is about finding a Pauline definition of spiritual formation. I will introduce key elements in Paul's thinking and seek to establish a Pauline definition on the basis of 1 Thessalonians.

2.1 1 Thessalonians as Starting Point to Help Understand Spiritual Formation

2.1.1 The Situation in Thessalonica: Cults

²²⁸ See also Fee (1992) p.96 and Samra (2006) pp.5-25.

An idea of the situation the Thessalonians faced will help in understanding Paul.²²⁹ Donfried has written about the prominence of cults in the city of Thessalonica, “The cults in Thessalonica were closely interrelated and that is a fact which is important to stress.”²³⁰ The two political cults of note are the emperor cult and the cults of “Rome and Roman benefactors”—both well-known in Thessalonica.²³¹ Because Rome was increasing in its influence on Thessalonica, the Thessalonians needed ways to curry favor with their Roman benefactors.²³² As part of the ingratiation, the Roman benefactors would receive honor next to gods.²³³

²²⁹ Nicholl (2004) pp.12-13 states that the majority view of the situation in Thessalonica was a joyful community that is looking forward to the return of Christ. But Nicholl argues that the community was not joyful but was in need of hope. See also Nicholl (2004) pp.19-112; see chapter 5, section 5.7.1.1 on a response to Nicholl. See also Meeks (1983) and White, Yarbrough (1995) for good foundation for the overall social situation of Paul’s world. On the issue of using Acts to understand 1 Thessalonians, see Mattill (1978), Walton (2000), Hengel (1980), Jervell (1980), Gasque (1975), and Goulder (1986) p.97-112. On Acts as a credible framework for understanding 1 Thessalonians, see Eadie (1877) p.12-13, Milligan (1908) p.xxvii-xxx, Frame (1912) p.1-7, Rigaux (1956) p.3-11, 20, Bruce (1982) p.xxi-xxviii, Marshall

(1983) p.4-6. But though the account in Acts seems to imply that the church in Thessalonica was a largely Jewish congregation, Eadie, Frame, Rigaux and Bruce acknowledge that the congregation was predominantly Gentile given the account in 1 Thessalonians. Marxsen (1979), Richard (1995) and Best (1977) do not think Acts can be used. Richard (1995) p.5 writes,

Paul’s statements in 1 Thessalonians require (a) that he be in the city for more than three weeks, (b) that the community not be primarily Jewish in background, (c) that the content of his preaching was different from what Luke mentions in Acts 17, (d) that Timothy played an active role in the mission, and (e) community wanted and expected Paul to return.

But Luke is writing to Theophilus while Paul is writing to the Thessalonians, their motive and purposes are not the same. Luke could be writing a theological history and chronology may not be primary. Luke could also be emphasizing that the gospel went to the Jew first, which explains his emphasis on the synagogues.

²³⁰ Donfried (2002) p.22. The cults were political and religious and some were a syncretism of the two.

²³¹ See DeSilva (1996) p.60.

²³² See Donfried (2002) p.35-36. Donfried bases a lot of his research of the Roman cult aspect on Hendrix (1984).

²³³ See Donfried (2002) p.36

Hendrix writes, “Honors for the gods and Roman benefactors expressed a hierarchy of benefaction extending from the divine sphere into human affairs.”²³⁴

The change in the Thessalonians’ new found faith and turning from idols (1 Thess 1:8-9) was more than just a life change; it was basically leaving one set of loyalties for another. DeSilva writes,

Participation in cults of Rome, the emperor, and the traditional pantheon showed one’s *pietas* or εὐνοσε,βεια, one’s reliability, in effect, to fulfill one’s obligations to family, patron, city, province and empire. Participation showed one’s support of the social body, one’s desire for doing what was necessary to secure the welfare of the city and one’s commitment to the stability and ongoing life of the city.²³⁵

Leaving these cults could leave people with a sense of betrayal to the welfare of their city, and members of the cult could have retaliated against those who left, which could be the source of persecution in 1 Thessalonians.

Not only were the royal/political cults prominent, religious cults were also prevalent throughout Thessalonica. The cult of Serapis is linked with the cult of Isis and its presence in the city is confirmed by archaeology.²³⁶

The cult of Dionysus was also prominent in the city. Dionysus was the god of wine and joy and the cult proved to have a sensual emphasis as

²³⁴ Donfried (2002) p.36 from Hendrix (1984) p.336.

²³⁵ DeSilva (1996) p.61.

²³⁶ See Donfried (2002) p.22-23.

joy in the afterlife was symbolized by a phallus.²³⁷ Paul's mention of sexual purity in chapter 4 may be a response to the apparent cultic emphasis on sexuality.

Worship of traditional Greek gods such as Zeus, Aphrodite, and others was present, but the most prominent cult was the cult of Cabirus.²³⁸ Both the cult of Dionysus and the Cabirus cult were sponsored by the state; this is known because their deities were minted on coins.²³⁹ The Cabirus cult is celebrated as "the most holy ancestral god" of Thessalonica.²⁴⁰ Cabirus worship involved an initiation in special robes, confessing sins, cleansing through water baptism and symbolic immersion in the blood of the martyred god. Cabiric art (murals in Samothrace) portray dance that was "lighthearted, Bacchic, noisy . . . (and) grotesquely phallic."²⁴¹ This explains 1 Thess.1:9 which say the Thessalonians turned from idols to follow the Lord.

2.1.2 Situation in Thessalonica: Eschatological Issues

When the situation in Thessalonians is mentioned, there must be a

²³⁷ See Donfried (2002) p.23-24.

²³⁸ See Donfried (2002) p.25. Jewett (1986) p.127-132 is a good discussion of the details of the cult of Cabirus, its legends, rituals, etc.

²³⁹ See Wanamaker (1990) p.5

²⁴⁰ Jewett (1986) p.129.

²⁴¹ Jewett (1986) p.130.

dialogue with eschatology.²⁴² Paul refers to deaths which have occurred in the community. Various hypotheses have been proposed to explain the resulting confusion in the church. Schmithals thinks Paul is combating Gnosticism.²⁴³ Others believe that the Thessalonians possess an over-realized eschatology, which is causing them not to work and to wait on the Parousia.²⁴⁴ Some hold to the Thessalonians possessing an over-enthusiastic view that they had already experienced the Parousia and that resurrection was already experienced.²⁴⁵ While much of the focus of the discussion of eschatology is placed on Paul admonishing his disciples for improper behavior and answering their questions regarding those who have died, more discussion needs to focus on Paul's pastoral care and comfort of his disciples who may be experiencing a grief due to the death of those in the Thessalonian community as well as giving them needed encouragement to help them through persecution (1 Thess 1:6, 4:13-14, 18; 5:11).²⁴⁶

1 Thessalonians 1:2-10 begins with a positive tone in regards to eschatological views of the converts. Paul is thankful that the gospel has

²⁴² See Donfried (2002); Marxsen (1979) holds that eschatology dominates the letter. See also Dennison (2004) pp.31-35, Popkes (2004) pp.39-64, Harrison (2002), pp.71-96, Still (1999a) pp.195-210, Bridges (1999) pp.211-232, Gundry (1987) pp.161-178, Schnelle (1986) pp.207-224, Longenecker (1985) pp.85-95, Mearns (1981) pp.137-157, Kaye (1975) pp.45-57, Scott (1972) pp.133-153.

²⁴³ Schmithals (1972) pp. 139-140, 155-160, 164, 167-169, 212.

²⁴⁴ Jewett (1986) pp.161-178.

²⁴⁵ Lutgert (1908) p.80.

²⁴⁶ See Wanamaker (1990) p.62.

turned the converts' lives into examples of how they "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come" (1:9b-10). Paul writes an eschatological synopsis: Jesus has risen from the dead and will return again to rescue his people from the wrath of judgment.²⁴⁷ The converts are to 'wait' for the Lord as well as 'serve' until he returns, which echoes Paul's statement in 1:3, "work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ." Hays writes, "The future-directed hope is directly connected with a transformation of the Thessalonians' lives in such a way that they are, according to Paul, engaged in active works of love as a means of serving God."²⁴⁸

Paul's prayer in 3:12-13 also has pastoral overtones. Paul prays for God to increase the converts' love for one another and to make them holy before Christ returns, and repeats this again in 5:23-24; but there was a question regarding whether or not those who have already died in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 would be raised when Christ returns.²⁴⁹ Paul answers that they will be raised first and reassures his converts that those

²⁴⁷ See also Hays (1996) p.22

²⁴⁸ Hays (1996) p.22.

²⁴⁹ Donfried (2002) p.43 postulates that the afflictions and persecutions experienced by the Thessalonians could lead to occasional deaths. This is the most likely reason for the deaths as persecution is a theme in the letter (1:6; 2:2, 14; 3:3, 7). Another possibility is the weak, **avsqenh,j**, in 5:14 could be referring to those who are ill and deaths could be occurring due to weak physical conditions, either illness, old age.

who have died will be with Christ along with those who are still living.²⁵⁰

Paul's pastoral tone is emphasized by him telling his converts to "encourage one another with these words," and then moves from encouragement to exhortation in 5:1-11. His converts are to be awake and sober in preparation for Christ's coming using the triad of faith, hope, and love as the weapons of waiting for the eschaton. Paul returns to his caring focus²⁵¹ in 5:9-11, recapitulating to his converts what he has already written in 1:9-10, 3:12, and 4:13-18: "For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing." Paul's use of eschatology in the letter is for comfort and for the community to be involved in encouraging each other.²⁵² Hays writes,

²⁵⁰ Peterson (1930) pp.682-702 writes that rather than being caught up in the air to meet the Lord, the context should be understood as the people go up to bring the Lord into their earthly city. Peterson argues that Paul is modeling after a Hellenistic Parousia where citizens will go and greet the royal visitor and bring them into their city. This is also held by Holtz (1986) p.203 and Merklein (1992), pp.411-412, but Plevnik (1999) pp.545-546 argues for the traditional reading and understanding of the text as being caught up with the Lord and writes,

We observe that Peterson's image of *Einholung* does not fit the imagery and the theology of 1 Thess 4:13-18. A closer attention to the imagery and structure of 1 Thess 4:13-18 discloses that Paul's source of inspiration was Jewish rather than Hellenistic. This is also suggested by the expression "day of the Lord", used elsewhere by the apostle for the coming of the Lord. Hellenistic parousias depict the citizens making the royal visitor welcome in their city, whereas 1 Thess 4:13-18 depicts the effect of the Lord's coming on them. According to it, the deceased faithful are raised from the dead so that they can be taken up. The living faithful will then be taken up with them.

I am in agreement with Plevnik. The only other time Paul uses **ἀρπαζω** is in 2 Cor. 12:2, 4. Paul describes being taken or caught up to heaven.

²⁵¹ See also Bridges (1999) pp.211-232.

²⁵² See Hays (1996) p.23.

The eschatological hope should leave them, according to Paul, neither in a state of passivity nor in a state of fevered striving; instead, they should gladly acknowledge that God is at work among them preparing them for the day of the Lord precisely through the works of love that characterize their common life.²⁵³

Eschatology was pastoral in focus.²⁵⁴

2.1.3 Ideas of the Purpose of 1 Thessalonians

Scholars differ in their views of the purpose of 1 Thessalonians. Some base their conclusions on the overall theme while others rely on rhetorical and epistolary constructs to determine the letter's purpose. Questions will arise: Did Paul write the letter mainly to address concerns for the community of disciples, or to highlight his own personal concerns, or was it a mixture of both?²⁵⁵

²⁵³ Hays (1996) p.23.

²⁵⁴ Hays (1996) p.27 writes,

In sum, Paul's eschatology locates the Christian community within a cosmic, apocalyptic frame of reference. The church community is God's eschatological beach-head, the place where the power of God has invaded the world. All Paul's ethical judgments are worked out in this context. The dialectical character of Paul's eschatological vision (already/not yet) provides the critical framework for moral discernment: he is sharply critical not only of the old age that is passing away but also of those who claim unqualified participation already in the new age. To live faithfully in the time between the times is to walk a tightrope of moral discernment, claiming neither too much nor too little for God's transforming power within the community of faith.

Eschatology has had much work in the area of Paul, but it would be interesting to see from the perspective of Pastoral Theology how eschatology was used in light of the pastoral needs of the congregations Paul wrote to. There is a strong connection between hope and eschatology in Paul, given the issue of persecution in 1 Thess., Paul is likely using the eschatological teaching to help his disciples through a difficult time. A good study would be to see if this is true throughout Paul or if the main reason for this teaching is due to misunderstanding or is just part of Paul's teaching to his disciples.

²⁵⁵ A unique discussion is found in Cornelius (2001) pp.435-446. Cornelius divided the purpose of 1 Thess. into three categories—stated purpose, two implied purposes—one of a psychological texture and the other a social/cultural texture. This helps illustrate why there is not consensus on the purpose of 1 Thessalonians.

Boers states that the letter encourages the converts to live a life that is pleasing to God.²⁵⁶ Donfried, using epistolary analysis, sees the consolation aspect as the heart of the letter: consoling those who have suffered persecution.²⁵⁷ Chapa is similar to Donfried, seeing the letter as possessing both consolation and exhortation as major themes with an emphasis on consolation.²⁵⁸

Socialization is a theme proposed by Cornelius. Cornelius writes, “it seems as if the author mainly wants to socialize the readers—in other words to teach them and encourage them to accept new roles in society, to change their lives according to God’s will and to remain faithful to Christ.”²⁵⁹ Morris writes that the apostle’s concern is “for the spiritual well-being of his converts.”²⁶⁰ Marshall writes, “The whole letter is a masterly piece of pastoral encouragement based on the existing progress made by the readers.”²⁶¹ Bruce holds that the purpose of the letter was to respond to Timothy’s report. Paul was overjoyed by the evidence of their continued faith and acts of love, but personal issues like sexual purity (or

²⁵⁶ Boers (1975-76) p.158

²⁵⁷ Donfried (2002) pp.119-120.

²⁵⁸ Chapa (1994) pp.159-160.

²⁵⁹ Cornelius (2001) p.444. This is the main purpose; the stated purpose would be to live according to the will of God. See also Best (1972) p.11.

²⁶⁰ Morris (1991) p.11.

²⁶¹ Marshall (1983) p.10.

impurity), laxness, and eschatological misunderstandings were concerns that he was hoping to correct.²⁶²

But some believe Paul deals with his personal issues. Smith states that the letter is dealing with the grief Paul is experiencing due to the separation from the converts, and the letter is an aid to deal with his own grief.²⁶³ Frame says that Paul is defending himself against those who oppose him.²⁶⁴ Schmithals says that Paul is dealing with the Gnostics who are giving him problems.²⁶⁵

And others see Paul writing to the Thessalonians both out of concern for the community and as a way of processing his own personal issues. Beale writes, “Paul intended to build up his readers both by defending his integrity (e.g., 2:1-12) and appealing to them to follow his own ethical example and that of prior Christian tradition.”²⁶⁶ Malherbe sees the letter as parenetic and is similar to Boers, emphasizing 4:1-2 encouraging the converts to live a life pleasing to God.²⁶⁷ But he also writes, “It is more likely that Paul is referring to his own afflictions . . . [but] the letter demonstrates an awareness of the conditions of recent converts with whom he has a cordial relationship and whose ‘faith

²⁶² See Bruce (1982) pp.xxxv-xxxix.

²⁶³ Smith (1995) pp. 50-62.

²⁶⁴ Frame (1912) p.9.

²⁶⁵ Schmithals (1972) pp.128-218.

²⁶⁶ Beale (2003) p.15.

²⁶⁷ Malherbe (1983) pp. 238-241.

required completion rather than correction.’’²⁶⁸ Jewett writes that Paul is dealing with spiritual enthusiasts but these enthusiasts also became personal opponents.²⁶⁹

There are a lot of differing views about the letter, but the letter itself should alert us to its purpose.

2.1.4 Maturity/Growth/Holiness and 1 Thessalonians

1 Thessalonians is generally considered to be Paul’s first letter, possibly as early as A.D 50,²⁷⁰ so it would be a logical place to start.

²⁶⁸ Malherbe (2000) pp77-78.

²⁶⁹ Jewett (1986) pp. xiii, 161-178,

²⁷⁰ But Morris (1996) p.22 and Bruce (1982) pp.53-56, hold to Galatians being Paul’s first letter. See also Bruce (1982) p.55, n. 56 for a list of scholars who hold to Galatians being before 1 Thessalonians. See Riesner (1998) pp. 394-403 in which he argues that Galatians could be written before 1 Thessalonians. Studying Paul’s concept of maturity has made a contribution to this area of scholarship. I will later write in chapter 5, section 5.7.1.2, an implication that can be drawn from our study will be that the concept of ‘conformity to Christ’ is clearly developed in Galatians but is not as developed in 1 Thessalonians, which would be evidence that 1 Thessalonians was written before Galatians.

Acts gives an account of Paul being forced to leave Thessalonica under external opposition (Acts 17:1-9).²⁷¹ From the tone of the letter, Paul is concerned about his Thessalonian converts' well-being in their new life (1 Thess. 3:6-10).²⁷² With his concern for their well-being and the early date of the letter, 1 Thessalonians serves as a good starting point.

Chapter 1 of the letter (1:1-10)²⁷³ is predominantly one where Paul reminds his converts of how they changed from an old way of life to a new one. Paul prays with thanksgiving for their continued growth in faith,

²⁷¹ See Riesner (1998) for the use of Acts to understand Paul's early period. See also Mattill (1978) pp.95-97 for a discussion of the four positions on the use of Acts and the epistles in which Mattill says that only three are relevant for discussion: The first is the 'One-Paul View of the School of Historical Research (Mattill (1978) pp.78-83). Scholars in this area see Paul as one in both Acts and the epistles of Paul. They see congruence of thought in the law, Jew-Gentile problem, divine call and dealing with various kinds of individuals and circumstances (Walton (2000) p.2). The next school of thought is called the 'Lopsided-Paul View of the School of Restrained Criticism.' (Mattill (1978) pp. 83-87). This group holds that there is no deviation between the Lukan account and the Pauline corpus of Paul's representation, but an account based solely on either Acts or the epistles would be 'lop-sided.' (Walton (2000) pp.2-30. The third group is the 'Two-Paul View of the School of Creative Edification (Mattill (1978) pp.88-95). On this view, Walton writes,

These scholars see the Paul of the (authentic) Pauline epistles (at least, Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians and Galatians) as the historical Paul. The portrait found in Acts is the work of an admirer of Paul looking from some distance, both chronologically and theologically. Acts is only to be depended upon when it is corroborated by the epistles. Luke is not Paul's travel-companion, but an 'edifier' of the church of his day – which means that the primary significance of Acts is not as an historical record . . . The portrait of Paul thus created is virtually fictional. Miracles and events involving the supernatural are regarded as unhistorical, on the grounds that they are incredible. These speeches are seen as free compositions by the author (Walton (2000) p.3).

²⁷² Burke (2003) p.149 says that this section is part of "the most emotive pericopes in the Pauline writings . . . where he writes of his 'intense longing' to see his offspring." Burke's statement linking Paul with "emotive passages" leads to a further question about Paul's own emotional needs. Paul expresses positive emotive statements like joy (e.g. 1 Thess. 2:20) and negative emotive statements like fear (1 Thess.3:5). Can these passages unlock Paul's own emotional/inner needs?

²⁷³ Holtz (1986) pp.25-28 represents the dominant view that 1 Thessalonians is one literary unit with two main parts. Some like Richard (1991) pp.39-52 argue that the letter is really two missives. But we see that the themes of eschatology (1:10; 2:19; 3:13; 4:13-5:11) and holy living (1:3; 2:10-12; 4:1-2) are throughout the letter which would be evidence of one missive instead of two.

hope and love, which are “visible signs of a holy life that testify to their salvation in Jesus Christ” (1:3),²⁷⁴ that God has changed them through his choice (1:4), through his gospel (1:5-6). Their change was evident to those around them (1:7-10).²⁷⁵

In Chapter 2, Paul focuses more on himself and his associates and how they related to their converts. Paul reminds them of the difficult circumstances he and his associates faced in order to come to the Thessalonians (2:1-6), their care for the Thessalonians (2:7-12),²⁷⁶ the Thessalonians’ continued faith in persecution and acceptance of the gospel (2:13-16),²⁷⁷ and in turn, their desire to revisit the young church (2:17-20).²⁷⁸

²⁷⁴ Weima (1996) p.99. Also, this is the first of many references to work in the letter, see (1:3; 3:2, 5; 5:3, 12). See also Burke (2003) pp.148, 228-229. The theme of work throughout the letter is more evidence that 1 Thessalonians was one missive.

²⁷⁵ For Paul’s role in regards to the Thessalonians new faith and conversion, see Wanamaker (1995) pp. 46-55. See also Weima (1996) p.99.

²⁷⁶ On whether or not the pericope of 1 Thess. 2:1-12 is of an apologetic or parenetic genre see Weima (1997) and Malherbe (1983). I am in agreement with Malherbe that the section resembles more exhortation than personal defense. Paul had just commended his converts in the previous section about how their new faith was an example to those around them. He then describes his own experience of life as a believer when he was among the Thessalonians and Paul reminded his converts of how he focused on their growth in their new faith. Paul also appeals to himself as a model in the first part so he can exhort his converts to holy living in chapters 4 and 5 of the letter.

²⁷⁷ The question of the authenticity of 1 Thess. 2:13-16 has been discussed by many scholars. I am in agreement with Still (1999b) pp.24-45 that though it cannot be proven that the passage is authentically Pauline, there are no compelling arguments against the passage’s authenticity. For a bibliography on the pericope’s inauthenticity or the pericope as interpolation, see Still (1999b) pp.24-25 n 2. For bibliography concerning the authenticity of 2:13-16, see Still (1999b) pp.25-26, n 4. For 1 Thess. 2:14-16 as Paul exaggerating the suffering of the Judean churches in order to unify believers against their opponents see Schlueter (1994).

²⁷⁸ See Burke (2003) pp.149-151.

Chapter 3 continues his desire to see his converts. Paul is thinking about them (3:1) and dispatches Timothy to them in order to help them in their faith (3:2-5).²⁷⁹ Paul is then overjoyed by the report of Timothy that his converts are continuing in the faith (3:6-9)²⁸⁰ but Paul continues to emphasize that they still need to grow and prays for their growth and expresses a desire to see them himself (3:10-13).²⁸¹

Chapter 4 and 5 are dominated by Paul's exhortation to live a life pleasing to God as well as dealing with issues regarding the eschaton; the exhortation to holiness is very clear in these two chapters.²⁸² The holiness language is very strong in chapter 4 where Paul emphasizes that it is God's will for them to live a holy life (4:3), especially in the realm of intimate physical relations (4:3-8) and the area of work (4:9-12). Weima writes that the strong holiness/ethical purity language "suggest that holiness is the most important theme of 1 Thessalonians."²⁸³

²⁷⁹ See Donfried (2002) pp.209-219 on whether or not Timothy was dispatched from Athens. Donfried concludes that Timothy remained in Macedonia following Paul's travel to Athens and then eventually met Paul in Corinth. Reading Acts 16-17 supports this position as there is evidence that Timothy accompanied Paul and Silas to the "district of Macedonia" (Acts 16:12) and remained there with no mention of Timothy being imprisoned with Paul and Silas (Acts 16:19) or being with Paul and Silas while in Berea (Acts 17:10). Acts 18:5 states that Timothy rejoined Paul from Macedonia.

²⁸⁰ On the issue of whether or not Paul was responding to a letter or to the Thessalonians' question via Timothy see Nichol (2004) p.50 who states that it is not necessary to presume that his converts wrote a letter to Paul and that he was responding to Timothy's report. From 1 Thessalonians, the latter is more likely.

²⁸¹ Some see 3:11-13 as a transition from the *narratio* to the *probatio*. See Wanamaker (1990) p.50 and Richard (1991) p.211. But Winter (2005) pp.137-138, disputes whether or not Paul is using rhetoric at all and concludes that Paul is not.

²⁸² See Weima (1996) p.99.

²⁸³ Weima (1996) p.98. He also writes, "this concern for holiness comes to the fore most clearly in 4:1-12, where Paul deals with two specific problems that were apparently threatening the Thessalonian church: sexual immorality and idleness."

The importance of holiness is also clear in the eschatological section of 4:13-5:11. Weima writes,

In this section Paul reminds his converts that . . . they need not fear that day nor be caught unaware—for they are “children of the light and children of the day,” in contrast to those who “belong to the night or darkness. . . . The metaphors of light and day versus night and darkness, which are common to the literature of the Old Testament and Second Temple Judaism, are used here . . . to refer to holy living among believers. The return of Christ, which is also a key theme in the letter, is intimately connected with Paul’s preoccupation with holiness throughout 1 Thessalonians.²⁸⁴

This broad survey of the letter reveals a concern for his disciples to continue in the faith which prompts Paul to: write a letter, pray, dispatch Timothy, continue to teach them and exhort them, expressing a desire to be with them again. His converts’ growth in holiness is a key theme in the letter.²⁸⁵ We will now look more closely into the nature of the development Paul desires to see in them.

We have seen that 1 Thessalonians considers holiness important, but is the notion of holiness a consistent theme through the letter?²⁸⁶ If it is, then we have a good place to begin constructing a Pauline definition.

²⁸⁴ Weima (1996) p.100.

²⁸⁵ See Weima (1996) pp.98-118.

²⁸⁶ McCown (1977) p.31 writes, “The sanctification of his converts represents one of the chief concerns of the Apostle in 1 Thessalonians. He directs their attention to sanctification, and prays to God for the realization of holiness in their lives . . . Certainly the subject of sanctification in the Thessalonian Epistles is deserving of serious attention and further study.”

1 Thess. 1:3. In 1:3 Paul commends his converts in the Pauline triad of faith, hope and love. The triad²⁸⁷ is in the genitive case (tou/ e;rgou th/j pi,stewj kai. tou/ ko,pou th/j avga,phj kai. th/j u`pomoh/j th/j evlpi,doj tou/ kuri,ou h`mw/n Vlh sou/ Cristou/) and denotes the subject of the action. So the triad forms a verbal clause with their nouns of action; their faith produces works, their love²⁸⁸ produces labor and their hope makes them steadfast. There is not a big difference between the meaning and nature of the words used for work and labor but they do serve to link faith and love together. Paul here links faith and love as he does in 3:6-8.²⁸⁹ The triad reappears in 5:8; faith and love are again linked as a breastplate along with the confidence of hope as a helmet. Paul clearly has faith, hope, and love serving as a measure of maturation and as the evidence of a life that is growing. This change in their lives is further discussed in 1 Thess. 1:4-10.

²⁸⁷ Paddison (2005) p.170 writes, “The believer in Christ is distinguished by the triad.”

²⁸⁸ Burke (2003) p.168 notes that Paul was strategic concerning the locations in the letter where he inserts *love*. Love is the foundation for the brotherhood Paul is developing in the community. He also notes that **filadelfi,a** is used in 1 Thess. and in Romans 12:10 reinforcing love as a foundation in the ‘brotherhood’ of the Thessalonians.

²⁸⁹ Note how the Thessalonians’ continued faith brought comfort to Paul and described the news of their faith as allowing him to ‘live.’ See also Paddison (2005) p.171. This would be evidence against Nicholl (2004) who states that the Thessalonians were in a state of despair. For a brief discussion of Nicholl and his argument about the Thessalonians being in a state of despair, see section 5.7.1.1.

1 Thess. 2:10-13.²⁹⁰ Paul and his associates were living a life that was “holy, righteous and blameless” and a good example of Christian living.²⁹¹ The adverbs **o`si,wj**, **dikai,wj**, and **avme,mptwj** have an adjectival function describing the selfless life that the missionaries lived among the converts in 2:9. Paul appeals to the fact that the converts and God are witnesses to the missionaries’ lives. In 2:5, Paul only appealed to God as witness. By adding the converts with God as witnesses in 2:9, he adds an emphatic force to the worthiness of the life he has lived.

The phrase **u`mi/n toi/j pisteu,ousin** has been debated. Some say it is a dative of advantage and should be read like “to the gain or benefit of you believers.”²⁹² Others interpret it as “among you believers.”²⁹³ But because the converts are witnesses to the missionaries’ lives, they are benefited by the fact that the missionaries are among them and because the missionaries are among them and have demonstrated lives to be imitated, they are able to exhort the converts to “live a life worthy of

²⁹⁰ Burke (2003) pp.130-151 discusses Paul’s role as a father to the Thessalonians (later he discusses other aspects like mother, etc). As father to the disciples, there would exist a hierarchy, authority, moral instructor, model to be imitated. In regards to Castelli, Burke, pp.150-151, asserts Paul’s authority but also writes that the “authoritative claims Paul exercised over the Thessalonians cannot be separated from the obvious affection he felt for them. Rather the apostle’s superior role and his love for his converts must be held in tension and, as we have earlier demonstrated . . . are complimentary aspects of the stereotypical associations of a father’s role in the ancient world.” I agree with Burke that Paul is authoritative but compliments the authority with love. Also, the argument by Best (1988) pp.125-137 of equality/inequality, superior/inferior relationship with his converts is an example of how Paul’s higher goal was to help his converts grow and not maintain control.

²⁹¹ The importance of imitation will be discussed in the section pertaining to Paul’s method of impartation in chapter 5, section 5.4.1, as well as briefly in chap.3, section 3.5.

²⁹² Lenski (1937) p.252; Best (1977) p.105; Bruce (1982) p.36.

²⁹³ Rigaux (1956) pp.427-428; Marshall (1983) p.73; Wanamaker (1990) p.105.

God” (peripatei/n u`ma/j avxi,wj tou/ qeou/), so the dative of advantage reading is better.

peripate,w in this verse means how one conducts one's daily life and behavior (Gal 5:16; Rom 6:4; 2 Cor 5:7;Gal 5:25).²⁹⁴ The infinitive of **peripate,w** is in the present tense, communicating that this life is to be lived continuously worthy of God and adds an imperatival force to Paul's exhortation. Wanamaker writes, “Paul uses **peripatei/n** frequently to refer to “the walk of life,” qualifying it with some additional word or phrase that in the context reveals that moral conduct is in view (cf. 4:1, 12; 2 Thess. 3:6, 11; Gal 5:16; Rom. 13:13; and esp. Col 1:10).”²⁹⁵

Paul also commends the disciples for accepting the word of God which is still “at work” in the converts o|j kai. evnergei/tai evn u`mi/n toi/j pisteu,ousin. The verb **evnerge,w** is used by Paul often (Rom 7:5; 1 Cor 12:6,11; 2 Cor 1:6; 4:12; Gal 2:8; 3:5; 5:6; Phil 2:13) and has the meaning of *at work, be active, work, be at work in, be active in*. Bertram writes, “In Hellenism, as in Philo, the word group is used of cosmic or physical forces at work in man or the world around. . . . In the OT and NT **evne,rgeia . . . evnergei/n**, are almost exclusively used for the work of the divine or demoniac powers, so that we almost

²⁹⁴ See also Seesemann (1967) *TDNT* 5:940-943.

²⁹⁵ Wanamaker (1990) p.107. See also Seesemann (1967) *TDNT* 5:944-945.

have a technical use.”²⁹⁶ Here, the divine agency uses the instrument of the word of God that is working in the present to help mature the converts.

1 Thess 3:11-13. At the heart of the apostle’s prayer in 3:11-13 is a desire for God to bring about sanctification (**a`giwsu,nh**) foreshadowing the closing of the letter (1 Thess. 5:23-24). Paul was already encouraged in 3:1-6 that his disciples continue to persevere in their faith despite challenging circumstances. This is evidence of their growth. Paul prays for them to continue to grow.

Love and maturity are linked in the prayer and the divine agency is the source of appeal for their love to grow. Paul sees the divine agency’s role as significant in the maturation process. The result of God increasing the converts’ love is a life that is blameless and holy as they stand in God’s presence when the eschaton occurs.

There is ‘holiness’ language here and in 4:3, 4, 7, further emphasizing Paul’s desire to see his converts grow. **a`giwsu,nh** means “holiness, dedication, as a quality of life expressed in careful obedience to God (Rom. 1.4).”²⁹⁷ **a`giwsu,nh** reflects Paul’s view that the converts’ status in Christ is that of a state of holiness.²⁹⁸ But Paul does not stop there.

²⁹⁶ Bertram (1964) *TDNT* 2:652.

²⁹⁷ See Procksch (1964) *TDNT* 1:114-115.

²⁹⁸ See Porter (1993) p.398.

1 Thess. 4:1-12. Chapter 4 is where the theme is pronounced. The admonition of 4:1 echoes 2:12 and the infinitive of **peripate,w** appears again along with **a`giasmo,j** three times in the section (4:3, 4, 7) emphasizing living a life that pleases God. The noun **a`giasmo,j** is used five times in the undisputed letters (Rom 6:19, 22; 1 Co 1:30; 1 Thess 4:3, 4, 7) all with the meaning of holiness, sanctification, holy living.²⁹⁹ It also means “ the process of making holy *dedicating, sanctifying*; (a) as the operation of the Spirit *making holy, causing to belong completely to God, sanctifying work* (1 Peter 1.2); (b) as the careful moral behavior that expresses one's dedication to God, *pure way of life, upright behavior, holy living* (1Thess. 4.3, 4, 7).”³⁰⁰ The fact that Paul uses it three times here shows he is emphasizing holy living.

Paul highlights sexual purity as one characteristic of holy living. More broadly, Paul wants his converts to be separated from sin and live righteously. Abstaining from sexual immorality is at the heart of God's will for holiness of the converts (4:3, 4). God calls his children to lead holy lives (4:7)³⁰¹ and further classification of this holy life is described as loving each other, being at peace with each other, and working respectfully and diligently (4:9-12). It is not a surprise that Paul would write about

²⁹⁹ See Procksch (1964) *TDNT* 1:113.

³⁰⁰ See ANLEX p.31.

³⁰¹ See Donfried (1985) p.8 for his discussion of the ethical parentheses as Paul trying to mark a unique conduct he expected his converts to live out in contrast with the sexual conduct practiced by cults in Thessalonica.

love shortly after he uses **αἰσθησιμότης** three times in the pericope of 4:3-8. He linked a growth in love to holiness in 3:12-13 so love and holiness are linked here again.

1 Thess. 5:1-11. Paul discusses holy living in light of the hope of the eschaton (5:1-11, following on from 4:13-18).³⁰² He assures his converts that though the eschaton will happen like a thief in the night, there is no need for alarm or surprise. The metaphors of night/day and light/darkness are used by Paul as an exhortation to holy living.³⁰³ The Parousia is often connected with hope in Paul's thought, and the coming of Christ would not only end the persecution suffered on this earth but would also complete the maturation process.³⁰⁴

Thus the early date of 1 Thess. and its particular concentration on growth towards maturity make it the appropriate starting-point and main focus of our study.

2.1.5 Terms in 1 Thessalonians Relating to Spiritual Formation

³⁰² See also Paddison (2005) p.186. Paddison states that the central message of 1 Thessalonians is "Christ's defeat of the community-rending effects of death" and p.143, "those that believe in the death and resurrection of Jesus can be assured that, through God, they will be incorporated within the same power." But we have argued that growth in holiness is a significant theme of the letter and that the eschatological sections are Paul describing the culmination of growing in Christ, while also responding to their questions. The eschatological sections are meant for their comfort in time of grieving over those who have gone as well as to exhort them to continue in their faith.

³⁰³ Weima (1995) pp.190-191. Weima notes that this metaphor of day/night and light/darkness is especially seen in Rom 13:12-13. See also Rom 1:21; 2:19; 13:11-13; 1 Cor 4:5; 2 Cor 4:6; 6:14.

³⁰⁴ 1 Thess. 5:23-24 will be discussed in the section dealing with the 'letter closing.'

Within the letter there is frequent usage of holiness terms. **a`gia,zw** sanctify—5:23), **a`giasmo,j** (sanctification—4:3, 4, 7), **a[gioj** (holy—1:5, 6; 3:13; 4:8; 5:26), **a`giwsu,nh** (holiness—3:13). 1 Thess. 2:10 contains the New Testament’s only use of the adverb **o`si,wj** (holily). Let us look at the meaning of these terms.

a`gia,zw means “1.) set aside something or make it suitable for ritual purposes, consecrate, dedicate. 2.) include a person in the inner circle of what is holy, in both cultic and moral associations of the word, *consecrate, dedicate, sanctify*. 3.) to treat as holy, 4.) to eliminate that which is incompatible with holiness.”³⁰⁵ In 1 Thess. 5:23 Paul writes that he wishes for God to ‘sanctify [them] entirely (**o`lotelh,j**),’ communicating that Paul wants the converts’ entire essence (spirit, soul, body) to be changed by God.³⁰⁶

a`giasmo,j means personal dedication to the interests of the deity, *holiness, consecration, sanctification*.³⁰⁷ Procksch writes “The term ‘sanctifying’ fits better than ‘sanctification’, in accordance with its construction.”³⁰⁸ In regards to 1 Thessalonians, “**a`giasmo,j** is the will of God (1 Thess. 4:3), and it consists again in purity of physical life, so

³⁰⁵ BDAG pp.9-10.

³⁰⁶ This section will be discussed more when the section dealing with letter closings is discussed.

³⁰⁷ BDAG p.10.

³⁰⁸ Procksch (1964), *TDNT* 1:113.

that marital fellowship is fulfilled evn a`giasmw/| kai. timh/| (4:4).”³⁰⁹ The fact that it is used three times in 4:3-7 shows Paul’s emphasis to his converts that God desires a holy life, particularly in the sexual and matrimonial area.³¹⁰ Still says that this is an example of Paul wanting his converts to alter their lives to be holy.³¹¹

a[gioj means 1.) pertaining to being dedicated or consecrated to the service of God.³¹² In 1 Thess. 1:5, 6; 4:8 the usage of **a[gioj** pertains to the Holy Spirit; in 5:26, it is in reference to a greeting or ‘holy kiss.’ In 3:13 it is used in the plural as a reference to the saints or holy ones who will accompany Christ at his return.

a`giwsu,nh means holiness.³¹³ Paul’s use of **a`giwsu,nh** is a clear reference to his desire for his converts now as well as the ultimate goal of holiness at the eschaton. Paddison writes, “The Parousia, and the final judgement which Paul associates with it (3:13), are the definitive unveiling of who, in life, we are and were.”³¹⁴ But the Parousia, for Paul, is also definitive in unveiling who his converts will be: hearts without

³⁰⁹ Procksch (1964), *TDNT* 1:113.

³¹⁰ Donfried (1985) pp.337-342 places this exhortation with the background of the excessive sexual emphasis of the Dionysus cult as well as the cult of Cabirus. Ulonska (1987) pp.210-218 suggests that the Thessalonians were acting like participants in a fertility cult and Paul was responding to their actions.

³¹¹ Still (1999b) pp.238, 243.

³¹² BDAG p.10.

³¹³ BDAG p.11.

³¹⁴ Paddison (2005) p.173.

blame in holiness. Paul uses **a`giwsu,nh** in Romans 1:4 referring to the Holy Spirit and in 2 Cor. 7:1 as the outcome of cleansing from physical and spiritual defilement.³¹⁵ Procksch writes that **a`giwsu,nh** is a quality rather than a state.³¹⁶ He goes on to write in regards to 1 Thess. 3:13 that the “aim of God is strengthening of the heart in holiness. . . . holiness shows itself in purity of heart; it is the **a`giwsu,nh** which is completed in ethical dedication and the origin of which is found in the atonement.”³¹⁷

o`si,wj is used only in 1 Thess. 2:10 and means pertaining to a manner pleasing to God, devoutly.³¹⁸ Hauck writes that **o`si,wj** (related to **o[sioj]**) is “what is right and good before God and man.”³¹⁹ This strengthens the fact that Paul wants his converts to live a holy life and that 1 Thess. has it as an important theme of the letter.

2.1.6 The Letter Closing: 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24

Another aspect of 1 Thessalonians that may offer us an idea of its emphasis is the letter closing. The two prominent descriptions of 1 Thess.

³¹⁵ Some scholars like Best (1987) pp.65-68, see 2 Cor. 7:1 as part of a pericope that is out of place. For details see Furnish (1984) p.27. See also Heil (1996) pp.717-729. For the unity of the letter of 2 Cor., see Hall (2003).

³¹⁶ Procksch (1964) *TDNT* 1:114.

³¹⁷ Procksch (1964) *TDNT* 1:115.

³¹⁸ BDAG P.728.

³¹⁹ Hauck (1967) *TDNT* 5:492.

5:23-24 are that it is a wish prayer³²⁰ or a benediction.³²¹ Though the two are not synonymous, both can be attributed to 1 Thess. 5:23-24 and a demarcation between the two would not be necessary. It is clear that Paul is trying to express a wish and a blessing to his converts. A brief exegesis of the text should shed light on this.

1 Thessalonians 5:23, 24 Auvto.j de. o` qeo.j th/j
 eivrh,nhj a`gia,sai u`ma/j o`lotelei/j(kai. o`lo,klhron
 u`mw/n to. pneu/ma kai. h`yuch. kai. to. sw/ma
 avme,mptwj evn th/| parousi,a| tou/ kuri,ou h`mw/n
 Vlhsou/ Cristou/ thrhqei,hÅ pisto.j o` kalw/n u`ma/j(o|j
 kai. poih,seiÅ

Auvto.j is an adjectival intensive³²² modifying and giving emphasis to o` qeo.j. The phrase means “God **himself**.” The apostle is stressing to his converts how God will bring about sanctification to give them encouragement and understanding, since spiritual growth cannot be achieved purely by one’s own efforts. Paul brings reassurance that God is the one bringing about the growth.

³²⁰ Wanamaker (1990) p.205, Martin (1995) p.188, Richard (1995) p.288, Marshall (1983) p.161. For detailed discussion of the wish prayer, see Wiles (1974) p.30ff.

³²¹ Langevin (1990) pp.254-256. Malherbe (2000) p.461.

³²² See Mounce (2003) p.102 for a discussion on the adjectival intensive. “Adjectival intensive” is not the standard term used but it is the term used by *Gramcord*. It is usually just referred to as an intensive pronoun or an emphasizing pronoun.

Paul goes on to express this desire to them with *a`gia,sai* and *thrhqei,h*. The two verbs are in the optative mood expressing Paul's desire in the prayer to see his converts sanctified by God. The optative mood is used to denote possibility. The mood "may be used to appeal to the volition."³²³ When the optative mood is used without *a'n*, a wish is indicated.³²⁴ So it is used to express an "obtainable wish or a prayer" and is often "an appeal to the will."³²⁵ This clearly expressed Paul's desire to see his converts sanctified wholly and his confidence in God.

The totality of the sanctification is also expressed by *o`lo,klhron* *u`mw/n to. pneu/ma kai. h`yuch. kai. to. sw/ma avme,mptwj evn th/| parousi,a| tou/ kuri,ou h`mw/n* *Vlhsou/ Cristou/ thrhqei,h* By using spirit, soul, and body, Paul is communicating to his converts the entirety of the process, how his desire is for a complete and thorough growth on all levels — physical and metaphysical.

This complete sanctification also is expressed by the similar roots and similar meanings of the words *o`lotelei/j*, meaning complete in every way, and *o`lo,klhron*, meaning whole and complete. Paul has placed the cognates in close proximity as an alliteration to emphasize his

³²³ Wallace (1996) p.480.

³²⁴ Brooks and Winberry (1979) pp.113-115, Funk (1973) p.822.

³²⁵ Wallace (1996) p.481.

desire for their sanctification to be complete, wholly throughout their being, and not partial. He wants his converts to view growing into holiness as crucial in their life and that it will be complete at the Parousia. We already discussed earlier the eschatological aspect of the letter. Here, Paul connects holiness with eschatology.

Pisto.j o` kalw/n u` ma/j(o]j kai. poi h,sei³²⁶ Paul ends the section by repeating the essence of the prayer and placing the emphasis on God and assuring his converts that this process will be finished by Him in the future.³²⁶

It is clear that the heart of the prayer is for the convert's growth and maturation. I will discuss Pauline letter closings in general to see if there is a pattern of the closing reflecting a major theme of the letter, but before going more in depth with the closing, the phrase in 1 Thess. 5:23, kai. o` lo,klhron u` mw/n to. pneu/ma kai. h` yuch. kai. to. sw/ma, raises a question on whether or not the term spiritual formation is

³²⁶ Similar expression in Phil 1:6.

adequate. **sw/ma** can also have a metaphysical aspect³²⁷ along with the physical,³²⁸ but as was discussed before, used with soul and spirit, Paul is communicating a totality, physical and meta-physical. This holistic emphasis makes the term “spiritual formation” rather misleading from Paul’s perspective, since **sw/ma** focuses on physical aspects of a person. I would suggest the term **Christian Formation** as a better one because it

³²⁷ For **sw/ma** constituting the whole person, see Weiss (1910) pp.160-161. Bultmann (1952) pp.202-203 writes, “man is *soma* when he is objectivized in relation to himself by becoming the object of his own thought, attitude, or conduct; he is *soma* in that he can separate from himself and come under the domination of outside powers.” Käsemann (1964) p.133 writes, “As body, man exists in relationship to others, in subjection because of the world, in the jurisdiction of the Creator, in the hope of resurrection, in the possibility of concrete obedience and self-surrender.” Building off of Käsemann’s position, B. Byrne (1983) p.611 defines Paul’s use of *soma* as:

the vehicle of communication, so that Paul can conceive of a mode of communication—of presenting oneself and being acted upon in turn—that is very different from present physical existence but which remains, nonetheless, somatic existence. . . . In this sense the essence of *soma* would lie in being the possibility or vehicle of relationship, with the mortal physical body being the way in which that possibility is realized here and now.

So Käsemann and Byrne de-emphasize the meaning of *soma* as physical body and have turned *soma* into a relational term. Related to Käsemann and Byrne is J. Dunn’s understanding of the body. Dunn (1998) p.56 uses the word “embodiment” as a synonym for **sw/ma**. On embodiment, Dunn writes,

It is the means by which the person relates to that environment, and vice versa. It is the means of living in, of experiencing the environment. This helps explain the degree of overlap with the narrower sense “physical body,” for the environment means more than my physical body: it is the embodied “me,” the means by which “I” and the world can act upon each other.”

Dunn acknowledges that *soma* denotes physical body but not just physical body.

³²⁸ Gundry (1976) pp.79-80 writes,

Soma refers to the physical body in its proper and intended union with the soul/spirit. The body and its counterpart are portrayed as united and distinct—and separable, though unnaturally and unwantedly separated. The *soma* may represent the whole person simply because the *soma* lives in union with the soul/spirit. But *soma* does not mean ‘whole person’, because its use is designed to call attention to the physical object which is the body of the person rather than to the whole personality. Where used of whole people, *soma* directs attention to their bodies, not to the wholeness of their being.

denotes an ecclesial aspect of the term's meaning as well as encompasses Paul's totality communicated in 1 Thess. 5:23.³²⁹

We will now look at the Pauline letter closings in general to see if there is a pattern in the closing that can aid us in interpreting the content of Pauline letters.

2.1.6.1 Letter Closings

Until recently, the study of the letter closings has been largely ignored.³³⁰ More attention has been placed on studying the thanksgiving sections and the body of the letter and less emphasis on the closings.³³¹ Why the neglect? Is there a reason why so little attention has been paid to the letter closings? On this, Weima writes,

First, the lack of attention given to the closing sections may be partially explained by a natural tendency to focus on the perceived “weightier” sections of Paul's letters: the thanksgiving and the bodies. The closing (and opening) sections, however, are not without significance . . . Second, the widespread disinterest in the closing sections may also be attributable to a belief that the body of a letter contains the particular topic of concern whereas the closing . . . (is) primarily conventional in nature and serves only to establish or maintain contact . . . Third, the Pauline letter closings may also have been ignored out of a belief that the diverse formulae found within these final sections have been largely borrowed from the liturgical practices of the early Christian

³²⁹ As discussed earlier, Samra (2006) p.3 prefers ‘maturity/mature/maturation,’ but I think it is too broad as it can be used for physical/emotional affairs as well as ethereal matters. Christian formation is more spiritual/holistic/ecclesial in meaning.

³³⁰ Weima (1995) pp.178-179.

³³¹ Weima (1995) p.180.

church, and so any particular letter closing is assumed to be unrelated to the rest of the letter.³³²

There does appear to be neglect in the study of the closings. Is there a wider purpose for these closings or are they just there to end the letter?

Weima proposes a different outlook on letter closings. The letter closings relate to the major themes of the letter, sometimes even summarizing them, offering aids to help comprehend Paul's intention, point of view and exhortations.³³³ Weima writes,

Paul's letter closings consist of several epistolary conventions, all of which exhibit a high degree of formal and structural consistency, thereby testifying to the care with which these final sections have been constructed. The literary quality of Paul's closings and the skill with which these final sections have been written becomes even more clear from a comparison of his closings with those of ancient Hellenistic and Semitic letters.³³⁴

Jervis notes: "The opening and closing sections are where Paul (re) establishes his relationship with his readers and where the function of each of his letters is most evident."³³⁵

In Graeco-Roman speeches, the closing often expressed the main idea of the speech. Are letters similar? Aune points out, "the letter is a substitute for oral communication and could function in almost as many

³³² Weima (1995) pp.180-181.

³³³ Weima (1995) p.178.

³³⁴ Weima (1994) p.237

³³⁵ Jervis (1991) p.42, quoted by Weima (1995) p.180. Also argued by Jewett (1969) pp. 18-34.

ways as speech.³³⁶ Weima argues that the closings could shed light on the main issues of the letter.³³⁷

2.1.6.2 Hellenistic, Ancient Semitic and Other Pauline Letter Closings

In Weima's study of letter closings, he first analyzed Hellenistic letter closings, and found that there are many types of closings—farewell wish, health wish, secondary greetings, an autograph, an illiteracy formula, the date, and a postscript.³³⁸ It is rare that these closings occur concurrently. Weima writes, “This indicates that, other than the farewell wish, none of these epistolary conventions was considered essential to the closings of the ancient letters.”³³⁹ But Weima also adds that “What is clear, however, from even the more general links between the letter closings and their respective letter bodies, is that the writers did not end their correspondence in a careless manner but rather attempted to construct closings that were appropriate to each letter's contents.”³⁴⁰ So though the content may not have been summarized or the main purpose of the letter drawn out, there is evidence that closings were a part of the letter and had a functional purpose.

³³⁶ Aune (1987) p.158.

³³⁷ Weima (1995) pp.182-184. Weima discusses that in Graeco-Roman rhetorical theory, the ending of speeches will contain a summary of the main points of the speech (“recapitulation”). It is the one element common to all the rhetorical handbooks.

³³⁸ Weima (1994) pp.29-55.

³³⁹ Weima (1994) p.55.

³⁴⁰ Weima (1994) p.56.

Weima next turns to ancient Semitic letters. The closings are not as elaborate in ancient Semitic letters as they are in Hellenistic ones.

Weima writes, “In the primary letters, the closing consists of a farewell wish and often a signature of the letter sender. In the secondary or incorporated letters, the closing also has a farewell wish and occasionally includes the date.”³⁴¹ There is also evidence that the closing of the letter had a higher function than just ending the letter. Weima writes,

There is some evidence in the Semitic letters of a connection between the body and the closing sections. For example, a letter of warning or rebuke may omit the farewell wish so that the closing echoes the threatening tone of the body. Or letters from kings or government officials may include the date following the farewell wish so that the closing reflects the nature of the material of the body. Or again, a letter may end with the personal signature of the sender so that the closing legalizes, authenticates or personalizes the correspondence.³⁴²

But Weima goes on to say that the relationship between the closing and the body of the letter is a general one,

There does not appear among the Semitic letters to be any deliberate and careful adaptation of closings so that they summarize and echo key issues previously taken up in their respective bodies. The closings of Semitic letters are too short to allow for this degree of clever manipulation. Nevertheless, the few links that do exist between Semitic letter closings and their respective letter bodies indicate that their letter writers did not haphazardly end their letters but rather were sensitive in choosing closing epistolary conventions appropriate to the document’s contents.³⁴³

³⁴¹ Weima (1994) p.76.

³⁴² Weima (1994) p.76.

³⁴³ Weima (1994) p.76.

So far, the evidence suggests that letter closings do serve a function in ancient letter writing but may not necessarily summarize the essence of the body of the letter. Does that mean that Paul followed conventional letter writing style or did he adapt it to his own style? Let us now look at his letter closings.

2.1.6.3 Pauline Letter Closings

Looking at Paul's letter closings, it is clear that there is structure to them and that they are not haphazard words to end a letter. Weima writes,

The most common and uniform closing convention is the grace benediction. It is found in all of Paul's letter closings and, with one exception, always occupies the final position in keeping with its principal function of bringing a letter to a definitive close. A second convention typically present in a Pauline letter closing is the peace benediction. . . . For the peace benediction holds an earlier position in a letter closing and forms an *inclusio* with the opening salutation: the 'grace to you and peace' uttered in the letter opening is echoed in chiasmic fashion in the letter closing, first by peace benediction and then by the grace benediction. Thus these two benedictions not only convey Paul's concern for the spiritual welfare of his readers, they also serve to mark the boundaries of Paul's letter closings.³⁴⁴

Weima identifies a pattern of a characteristic letter closing to Paul's letters:³⁴⁵

1. Peace Benediction
2. Hortatory Section (can also come before a peace benediction)
3. Greetings

³⁴⁴ Weima (1994) pp.152-153.

³⁴⁵ Following diagram taken from Weima (1994) p.154.

- a. Greetings (first-,second-, or third-person types)
- b. Kiss Greeting
- c. Autograph Greeting
4. Grace Benediction

From Weima's research, Paul's letter closings show carefully created components rather than random words that would end a letter. But Paul was not bound to the Hellenistic or Semitic style. Though it is fairly certain that he was influenced by their clear units of ending a letter, Paul adapted and had his own style. Some of Paul's adaptations are obvious. I will now summarize Weima's findings on Pauline letter closing from Galatians, Philippians, 1 and 2 Corinthians and Romans. Weima contends that the closings reflect the important content of the body of the letter. Commenting on Gal. 6:11-18 Weima writes that this ending is "striking because of both its length and its emphatic introduction, serves to recapitulate Paul's attack against his opponents in Galatia and their errant gospel, which is the primary concern of the apostle throughout the Galatian letter."³⁴⁶

In Philippians, Weima argues that the closing is from 4:8-23 and not 4:21-23 that is most commonly held. The structure would be:³⁴⁷

- vv. 8-9a Hortatory Section
 - v. 9b Peace Benediction
- vv. 10-20 Joy Expression (Autograph)
 - v.10 Joy Formula
 - vv.11-13 Explanation 1
 - vv.14-16 Explanation 2

³⁴⁶ Weima (1994) p.156.

³⁴⁷ Weima (1994) pp.191-194.

- vv. 17-18 Explanation 3
- v. 19 Word of Encouragement
- v.20 Doxology
- vv. 21-22 Greetings
- v. 23 Grace Benediction

Weima writes,

A careful study of the letter closing of Philippians, therefore, reveals a series of striking continuities of subject matter and similarities of theme between this final section and the rest of the letter. The hortatory section (4.8-9a) recalls the letter's general concern for proper moral conduct and, specifically, the theme of imitation. Similarly, the closing joy expression (4.10-20) echoes at least five important themes of the letter: joy, fellowship, a correct mental attitude, suffering, and humility. Admittedly, the recapitulating function of the letter closing of Philippians is not as immediately apparent as it is in Galatians . . . Nevertheless, the cumulative effect of the many links that can be discovered supports the conclusion that Phil. 4.8-23 is no incidental appendix but is intimately related to the letter as a whole.³⁴⁸

In 1 Corinthians, we can see the closing from 16:13-24.³⁴⁹

- vv. 13-16 Hortatory Section
 - vv.13-14 Five seriatim imperatives
 - vv. 15-16 παρακαλέω unit
- vv. 17-18 Joy Expression
- vv.19-21 Greetings
 - vv.19-20a Greetings
 - v. 20b Kiss Greeting
 - v. 21 Autograph Greeting
- v. 22 Hortatory Section
 - v. 22a Curse formula
 - v. 22b Eschatological prayer formula
- v.23 Grace Benediction
- v. 24 Postscript: Word of Assurance

1 Corinthians as a whole covers a variety of issues. Weima writes,

³⁴⁸ Weima (1994) pp.199-200.

³⁴⁹ Weima (1994) p.203.

It would be too much to claim that this letter closing has a recapitulating function. Nevertheless, the evidence does show that the closing conventions of this letter reflect the tensions that existed between Paul and certain of his Corinthian converts—tensions that are evident throughout the rest of the letter. It need be recognized that in the letter closing of 1 Corinthians Paul has adapted and shaped the closing epistolary conventions of his day so that the final section better addresses his primary concern of reasserting his authority within the Corinthian church, thereby making it possible to change his converts' improper conduct and errant behavior.³⁵⁰

2 Corinthians displays a similar closing pattern as the other letters that have been discussed:³⁵¹

- v.11a Hortatory Section
- v.11b Peace Benediction
- v.12 Greetings
 - v. 12a Kiss greeting
 - v. 12b Third-person greeting
- v.13 Grace Benediction

On the letter closing of 2 Corinthians, Weima writes,

The letter closing of 2 Corinthians, therefore, is entirely appropriate to the concerns raised in the letter as a whole, particularly those of chs. 10-13. For every one of the closing conventions of this letter has been written and/or adapted in such a way that it relates directly to Paul's preoccupation in the letter for his Corinthian converts to reject the divisive influence of his opponents and to restore peace and harmony both within the church and with him. 2 Cor. 13.11-13, in fact, provides further evidence of Paul's concern to construct letter closings that recapitulate and reinforce the key theme(s) previously raised in their respective letter bodies.³⁵²

³⁵⁰ Weima (1994) pp.207-208.

³⁵¹ Weima (1994) p.209.

³⁵² Weima (1994) pp.214-215.

On the letter closing of Romans, Weima writes,

The letter closing of Romans, therefore, provides compelling evidence that this final epistolary unit has been deliberately constructed to support Paul's overall purpose in the writing of this letter. For just as Paul carefully adapts the epistolary conventions in the opening, thanksgiving and apostolic parousia of the Romans letter in order to win the acceptance of his apostleship and gospel by the Roman churches, so also the closing has been constructed to accomplish the same goal. This is most clearly seen in the lengthy greeting list of 16.3-16, but it is also evident in the letter of commendation, the hortatory section, and, if authentic, the doxology. The letter closing of Romans, in fact, plays an important role in reinforcing the overriding purpose of Paul that is at work in the letter as a whole, namely, to preach the gospel to the believers in Rome. Consequently, the letter closing serves as a hermeneutical guide for the modern exegete, leading us through the maze of proposed theories as to the purpose of Romans to the real intention of Paul in this letter.³⁵³

From this survey of the closings of letters, Weima finds a clear structure to them as well as a reflection of Paul's purposes in writing. Weima and others have brought to our attention the need to pay closer attention to the closings. Holiness is clearly mentioned in the letter closing of 1 Thessalonians.³⁵⁴ There is a good case that Paul was summarizing his

³⁵³ Weima (1994) p.230. The ending is uncertain whether it begins in 15:33 or the list in 16:3.

³⁵⁴ Weima (1995) pp.184-188 discussed the section as belonging to the epistolary convention known as the "peace benediction." There are four parts to a peace benediction. The *Introductory* element usually begins with the particle *de*, in the adversative sense to set apart the closing from what was immediately on paper. The *Divine Source* is next which is God followed by *The Wish* and then *The Recipient*.

main thoughts in the closing, but not all are in total agreement. Seifrid writes,

Yet in the end I think his thesis [Weima's] is only partially persuasive. He clearly shows that the usual view of the letter closings must be qualified. They do not simply serve to maintain personal contact between Paul and his congregations, but they transmit his theological concerns. As Weima points out, that is particularly evident in the closing to Galatians (6:11-18), where Paul contrasts himself and his gospel with the message of his adversaries. Elsewhere, however, it is harder to sustain his thesis, as Weima himself recognizes. Indeed, examination of the letter closings in my judgment leads away from his conclusion. Galatians, with its focus upon the "other gospel" of Paul's adversaries, is unique among Paul's letters in excluding secondary concerns from the closing, just as it lacks the normal prayer of thanksgiving. Elsewhere the Pauline letter closings partially reflect the primary theological themes of the body but also broaden to include other pastoral concerns.³⁵⁵

Watson writes,

Weima not only argues that Paul's letter closings echo major concerns and themes dealt with in the body of the letter, he also claims that the closings serve as a hermeneutical spotlight, enabling us to see clearly what Paul believed to be the central issue at stake between himself and his readers. Thus he finds it significant that in the closing of Galatians the theme that is picked up is not righteousness nor faith nor the Spirit—which are all important themes of the letter—but the cross of Christ, showing that this is what Paul believed to be the watershed between himself and his opponents. In all this, Weima does not seem to be aware of the danger of reasoning in a circle and thus assuming the very

³⁵⁵ Seifrid (1998) p.491. I have not found Seifrid's argument to be the standard thinking in regards to Weima's thesis on letter closings. Many do not contend with Weima. See Moo (1996) p.918; Thiselton (2000) p.1334; Harris (2005) p.937, 941; Keener (2005) p. 141; Martyn (1997) p.55; Beale (2003) p.176.

thing he wants to prove. With this qualification, however, his study can be recommended with confidence.³⁵⁶

Watson thinks that Galatians does not support Weima while Seifrid does. So among Weima's critics, there is disagreement. But neither Seifrid nor Watson holds to Weima's application in all the letters. This type of criticism is reflected by Davies, who argues that Weima's thesis would be difficult to defend when looking into 2 Corinthians. Davies writes, "Unfortunately, the endings are too diverse to make them sure guides for our readings. Nevertheless, this is a useful study."³⁵⁷ Sumney writes,

His thesis that a closing often reflects a Pauline letter's occasion and themes seems substantiated. His assertion that it can serve as an "interpretive key," however, fairs less well especially in practice. The danger involved is particularly evident in his treatment of 1 Thessalonians, where he uses a kind of "mirror reading" of some rather general expansions of closings conventions to find a problem with division in the church and then moves to use a "mirror reading" of material in the letter of the body to find such tensions there as well. Thus, Weima has claimed too much.³⁵⁸

But Sumney later writes, "Weima's other insights are not to be overlooked.

His contribution to the formal analysis of Pauline letters requires the

³⁵⁶ Watson (1996) pp.92-93. But Fitzgerald (1996) pp.782-783 argues that Weima's thesis supports the closing of Galatians. Fitzgerald questions Weima's argument that the closing 'recapitulate' the letter but suggests that based on Weima, the closings 'echo' the main concerns of the correspondence.

³⁵⁷ Davies (1995) pp.820.

³⁵⁸ Sumney (1996) pp.558-559.

attention of all who comment on these sections.”³⁵⁹ Both Sumney and Watson present strong arguments that Weima is using circular reasoning.

But in the case of 1 Thessalonians, I have demonstrated that the exhortations towards holiness/maturity are prominent in the letter, which is also well represented in the closing. In addition, we have written about the emphasis on eschatology in the letter and here in the letter closing, there is a link of holiness with eschatology. Evidence exists for the closing of the letter restating Paul’s purpose of the letter.

So we have seen that there are those who are not in agreement with Weima, but no one disregards his contribution. Weima’s critics do not dispute the importance of paying closer attention to the letter closing. As we have seen in our above study, the theme of holiness/growth is not only found in the letter closing but also throughout the letter making the letter a good choice to study Paul’s concepts of growth, holiness, and sanctification to aid us in a definition of Christian formation. With this foundation in place, we will then be able to unlock the keys of Paul’s understanding of the Christian formation process whereby he envisaged his disciples coming to maturity.

2.2 A Pauline Perspective on Christian Formation in 1 Thessalonians

³⁵⁹ Sumney (1996) p.559.

Our synthesized definition from chap. 1 was that Christian formation is *the maturing process where growth in holiness is accomplished by the interaction of God influencing humankind's growth (divine agency) and humankind's free choice to partake in the maturation process (human responsibility) within a community*. Is this how Paul would define the process? This is the question we will probe in this section. I have argued earlier that 1 Thessalonians addresses the issues related to Christian formation: growth, holiness, and sanctification. This offers an adequate starting point to construct a definition based on Paul. So the task is to find the primary agencies that define the essence of Christian formation. Understanding any instruments these agencies use in the forming process will also be helpful.³⁶⁰ The synthesized definition has offered us three agencies. I will label "God working" the divine agency and will label "humankind's free choice" as human responsibility.³⁶¹ Does Paul agree? Does he build on them?

³⁶⁰ The instruments of Christian formation are: the word of God and gospel taught by Paul, 1 Thess. 1:5, 8 prayer 1:2; 3:10-13 and suffering 1:4-6; 2:2, 14; 3:3-4. For an overview of Paul and suffering see Kruse (1992) pp. 260-272; (1993) p.18; Hafemann (1990); Fitzgerald (1999); Spencer (1989) pp.59-61; Gorman (2001) pp.199-301; Proudfoot (1963) pp.140-160; Bloomquist (1993). We will not deal with the instruments in this study. To call them instruments does not necessarily imply that they are inferior to the agencies. These instruments are indispensable in helping people grow and are not inferior to an agency. The function of an instrument is different than an agency as an instrument can be used by the agencies, hence the demarcation. This list of instruments is not exhaustive; more research can be done in the area of the instruments of Christian formation.

³⁶¹ Defining it as the human agency would provide more balance but I think 'responsibility' communicates even clearer the task humankind has in Christian formation.

2.2.1 Work of God: Divine Agency

As stated earlier, Christian formation is first a work of God. Paul expresses this to his converts by saying that God is the one who makes individuals complete. It is a work that is holistic, encompassing the individual at a spiritual and physical level.

1 Thessalonians 3:12-13 u`ma/j de. o`ku,rioj pleona,sai kai. perisseu,sai th/| avga,ph| eivj avllh,louj kai. eivj pa,ntaj kaqa,per kai. h`mei/j eivj u`ma/j(eivj to. sthri,xai u`mw/n ta.j kardi,aj avme,mptouj evn a`giwsu,nh| e;mprosqen tou/ qeou/ kai. patro.j h`mw/n evn th/| parousi,a| tou/ kuri,ou h`mw/n Vlhsou/ meta. pa,ntwn tw/n a`gi,wn auvtou/.

Paul saw the divine agency as a primary agent, able to form the individual through God's working. Paul petitions God in this section to grow his converts, trusting the divine agency in the formation process.³⁶²

The two optative verbs, **pleona,sai** and **perisseu,sai** give prominence to Paul's wish for his converts to grow by the work of God.

pleona,zw is used six other times in the undisputed letters (Rom 5:20 [2x]; Rom 6:1; 2 Cor 4:15; 2 Cor 8:15; Phil 4:17) all with the meaning 'to increase,' abound.³⁶³ In 2 Cor 8:15 **pleona,zw** carries the meaning of 'have too much.'

³⁶² Rigaux (1956) p.360 says the use of **proseuch,,** tends to be associated with prayers of petition.

³⁶³ See also ANLEX p.315.

perisseu,w is more common in Paul, appearing twenty-four times in the undisputed letters, and three times in 1 Thessalonians (Rom 3:5; 5:15; 15:13; 1 Cor 8:8; 14:12; 15:58; 2 Cor 1:5[2x]; 2 Cor 3:9; 2 Cor 4:15; 2 Cor 8:2; 8:7[2x]; 9:8[2x]; 9:12; Phil 1:9; 1:26; 4:12[2x]; 4:18; 1 Thess. 3:12; 4:1; 4:10). It also carries the meaning of increasing, abounding, having more than enough.³⁶⁴ In 1 Cor. 8:8 it means ‘to be better off’ and in 1 Thess. 4:1, 10 there is the notion that more can be done or to excel even more. Paul’s wish was for his converts to grow into maturity and he emphatically appeals to God to grow the disciples.

The prepositional phrase, **eivj to**, connects verse 12 to 13 so neither stands alone. The purpose of his prayer is for the converts to grow in their love for others, linking a growth in love with a growth in holiness. **sthri,xai** shares the subject **o` ku,rioj** with the two optative verbs linking the clauses together.³⁶⁵ Paul prays for his converts that their love for each other and all people will be increased by God (3:12). Not only does Paul pray for God to increase his converts’ love, but he also adds in the prayer for God to cause their hearts to be blameless and holy in regards to the eschaton of Christ. A result of a growing love is a heart that is pure. Love is a quality that measures progress. Paul believes that the divine

³⁶⁴ See Hauck (1968) *TDNT* 6:58-63.

³⁶⁵ See also Holtz (1986) p.145.

agency has a significant forming aspect in his converts.³⁶⁶ We see this elsewhere in the letter.

1 Thess. 5:23-24. Paul uses *αὐτοῦ* in the predicate position as an emphasizing pronoun drawing attention to *οὗ τοῦ θεοῦ* as the one who is doing the forming. God is described as the God of peace (also in Rom 15:33; 16:20; 2 Cor 13:11; Phil 4:9). Wanamaker writes, “For Paul divine peace ultimately refers to eschatological salvation, as is indicated by such passages as Rom. 2:10; 5:1; 8:6; 14:17; Phil 4:7. To describe God as the God of peace as 1 Thes. 5:23 does is to view God as the source of well-being for the people of God.”³⁶⁷ Paul appeals to this source of well-being to help the converts in the maturation process.

We have already seen that growth in holiness was at the heart of Paul’s prayer in 3:11-13 and at the heart of 5:23-24. The two sections taken together form a bracket around Paul’s exhortation in 4:1-5:22 for the converts to live in holiness.³⁶⁸ It is a continual process that has its ending at the eschaton (1 Thess. 5:23-24). So in two places, Paul links the divine agency with the eschaton in forming the individual.

³⁶⁶ Lightfoot (1980) p.49 writes, “The whole point of the passage requires that Christ should be regarded as the sole author of the spiritual advancement [development] of the Thessalonians.” But in 1 Thess. 3:10, Paul states that he and his associates pray for the disciples and desire to see them so that they can “complete what is lacking in their faith.” So according to Paul, the divine agency is not the “sole author” but Paul and his associates have a hand in the “spiritual advancement of the Thessalonians.

³⁶⁷ Wanamaker (1990) p.205.

³⁶⁸ See Wanamaker (1990) p.206.

Paul communicates the totality in 5:23. It is not just physical (to. sw/ma), or meta-physical (to. pneu/ma kai. h` yuch.). Paul is indicating that the totality of growth influences and forms the whole person. And the totality of maturation culminates at the eschaton; avme,mptwj evn th/| parousi,a| tou/ kuri,ou h`mw/n Vh sou/ Cristou/ thrhqei,h shows that Paul clearly desires the Lord Jesus to find his disciples complete and blameless in the totality of their being at the eschaton. Hence, Paul makes his appeal to the Lord to accomplish this.

1 Thess. 1:4-5; 4:7. God chose the converts. Though the concept of election is more commonly associated with justification than sanctification, it still highlights the supremacy of the divine agency in the formation process. Justification marks the beginning of the journey of Christian formation so the divine agency's supremacy in justification contributes to Paul's view of the supremacy of the divine agency in sanctification. 1:5 explains the dynamics of the election by stating that the Holy Spirit works together with the preaching of the gospel to bring about change in the converts.³⁶⁹

4:7 states the purpose of our calling: sanctification. It is clear from Paul that the divine agency is integral to the process of becoming holy and is consistent with our synthesized definition of Christian formation.

³⁶⁹ Note also how many times Paul calls on his converts to 'remember' here in 1:3-5 as well as in 1:2: 2:1, 2, 5, 9, 10, 11, 17; 3:3, 4, 6; 4:2, 4, 5; 5:12, 12.

2.2.2. *Human Responsibility*

Paul not only sees growing into holiness as a work of God, but he also places some obligation of responsibility on humankind. The specific relationship between the work of God and human responsibility is difficult to transpose.³⁷⁰ We see this tension in 1 Thessalonians 4:8 where Paul exhorts his converts to continue themselves in the process of sanctification. If they do not, they reject God. There exists a tension in Paul concerning the exact dynamics of how the divine agency and human responsibility function together. Are they independent or dependent on each other? The closest we come to an explanation in the Pauline corpus is Philippians 2:12-13, “work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and work for His good pleasure.”³⁷¹ Here we see the interaction between the divine agency and human responsibility in the same breath. Paul does not try to explain it logically. Barclay writes,

Some of Paul’s statements on the relation of divine to human agency strike us as paradoxical, if not downright incoherent (Phil. 2:12-13) . . . In statements such as this (cf. 1 Cor 15.9-10) we are perplexed by the juxtaposition of two agencies: that of the Philippians, the recipient of Paul’s exhortation, who are clearly responsible for their ‘work’, and that of God, whose ‘work’ is taken to be independent of theirs. . . . Hence these two agencies are not simply juxtaposed, as if they were independent contributors to a common effort, but brought into a logical relation to one another:

³⁷⁰ For a treatise on this subject, see Barclay and Gathercole (2006).

³⁷¹ This issue will be discussed more in chapter 3.

the human imperative (the exhortation to ‘work’) is based upon a divine indicative (‘God is at work’).³⁷²

But there is no tension with Paul’s paraenesis for his converts to take responsibility in obedience.

1 Thessalonians 2:12. parakalou/ntej u`ma/j kai.

paramuqou,menoi kai. marturo,menoi eivj to. peripatei/n

u`ma/j avxi,wj tou/ qeou/ tou/ kalou/ntoj u`ma/j eivj th.n

e`autou/ basilei,an kai. do,xanÅ There are three specific aspects

of walking in a manner worthy of God that Paul mentions in this verse: he

and his associates teach and exhort the converts, the converts have their

own responsibility to walk in a worthy manner, and God calls them into

his kingdom and glory. We have discussed the divine agency above and

will discuss Paul and his associates later. Here, we will focus on the

responsibility of the converts.

What specifically is this peripatei/n u`ma/j avxi,wj³⁷³ tou/

qeou/ referring to? Is it an appeal to obey the ethical implications of

Christian conduct or is there a deeper aspect of relationship involving

³⁷² Barclay (2006) p.1.

³⁷³ In ANLEX p.60 the adverb **avxi,wj** means *worthily, suitably, in a manner proper*.

experience of the glory of God, the Spirit?³⁷⁴ Dunn would favor the latter.³⁷⁵ Vang agrees with Dunn and writes,

The “worthy walk” is qualified and motivated by three essential experiences or theological foundations: Call, Kingdom and Glory. God remains at the center of Paul’s charge as the one calling and empowering for life in the Kingdom. The primary issue is one of relationship. The meaning of the word worthy (*axios*) receives its content from God who has called believers to a present tense participation in the life of his kingdom (*basileia*) and to a present tense experience of his glory or presence (*doxa*).³⁷⁶

Vang also writes, “In substance, therefore, Paul’s statement on the worthy walk fits well with the Old Testament conception of walking with God as expressing ‘intimate relationship.’”³⁷⁷ In a relationship there is a responsibility between multiple groups to each other, usually between two. If this is a relational term, then Paul charges his converts with the responsibility of maintaining an intimate relationship with the Lord.

But not all hold to the relational aspect. Wanamaker holds that it is an appeal to Christian conduct, “For Paul, this undoubtedly had great significance and was intended not only to demarcate or define Christian conduct over against non-Christian or pagan conduct, but also to

³⁷⁴ **Peripate,w** is used 18 times in Paul (Rom.6:4; 8:4; 13:13; 14:15; 1 Co 3:3; 7:17; 2 Co. 4:2; 5:7; 10:2,3; 12:18; Gal. 5:16; Phil 3:17,18; 1 Th. 2:12; 4:1 (2x); 4:12. In Romans, the usage of **peripate,w** is in the context of Paul exhorting his converts to live holy lives. The dominant usage in Paul is that of living a life that is honoring to God.

³⁷⁵ Dunn (1970) p.36.

³⁷⁶ Vang (1999) p.54.

³⁷⁷ Vang (1999) p.55.

distinguish the Christian convert from those who had not received the gospel.”³⁷⁸ Is a middle position possible?

Beale writes, “he expended himself for the readers in order that they would live in a manner pleasing to God. If God has truly called us into his kingdom and glory, then we will live in a manner delighting him in order to be qualified to enter into that ‘glorious kingdom.’”³⁷⁹ The motivation for Christian conduct is driven by the desire to please God. So it is not necessarily an appeal to conduct or relationship but could be both, a conduct driven by relationship.

The context of the letter would suggest that it is driven by a relationship with God. As in 1 Thess. 4:1-2, the context of the exhortation is to please God. This implies relationship within the context of obedience. So writers like Beale who argue that it is both relational as well as an exhortation to Christian conduct are right. Paul writes to his converts explaining to them that they have a responsibility to walk with God in a worthy manner which emphasizes human responsibility and relationship with God, but the encouragement to live a good Christian life does not end here.

In 1 Thess. 4, Paul makes his paraenesis of individual responsibility more clear. There were exhortations that Paul left his converts to obey which may or may not be the specific exhortations Paul

³⁷⁸ Wanamaker (1990) p.107. See also Jones (2005) p.29.

³⁷⁹ Beale (2003) p.75.

highlights in chapter 4, but it is clear that there are exhortations that have been taught to his converts with the expectation of their obedience. To please God means to obey him.

Does the *tou/to* in 4:3 link *ga,r evstin qe,lhma tou/ qeou/* (*o` a`giasmo.j u`mw/n* with 4:1-2?³⁸⁰ Usually, *tou/to* is thought of as part of the construct of 4:3 and linking it with 4:1-2 is not the primary thought on its usage. But to be sexually pure is a clear exhortation to obedience in a specific area of life; obedience and maturity are linked together.

Paul starts out by encouraging his disciples to maintain sexual purity. Given the circumstances of the society with its promiscuity and cultic practices based on sexual rituals, there was great temptation to engage in sexual relations outside the boundaries of Paul's exhortations.³⁸¹ Then Paul switches to a general commandment to love each other and humankind (4:9-12), and then Paul lays out a series of commandments that he expects his converts to follow (5:6-8; 12-22).

It is clear from Paul that he saw human responsibility in the process of growing in holiness. So far, there is no digression from what the synthesized definition stated earlier.

2.2.3 Community

³⁸⁰ See Richard (1995) pp.187, 195.

³⁸¹ Donfried (2002) pp. 21-48.

Paul places importance on right conduct and behavior in community. In Paul's letters, he deals with different situations that his converts face. In order to grasp what Paul sees as maturity, one must grasp Paul's views of how his converts should act and behave among each other. Obedience and love are central to Paul's teaching, and it is no different in 1 Thessalonians.³⁸² For the converts to grow, they needed to love each other and act in ways that were beneficial for others. Growth was not an individual experience for Paul but an activity that included others.³⁸³ Though our focus in this study is to see how Paul himself was used as an agent of growth in his disciples' lives, it is still helpful to show the importance he attached to community.

2.2.3.1 Formation of the Community

Paul knew his disciples faced challenges as they converted to a new life of following his teachings. It meant turning from an old life to a new one.

³⁸² We have already discussed that Paul felt the converts partake in their own growth and maturity by the choices they made on how they lived. This was labeled human responsibility. This discussion is very similar but we are discussing it from Paul's angle of what in his mind did he conceive of as maturity and how their 'human responsibility' was played out in their lives together.

³⁸³ Samra (2006) deals with Paul's conception of how the community is used in the Christian formation process. See his work for a more in depth study on the issues of Paul, community and growth. It is discussed here to understand Paul's overall conception of growth.

Surely the key reason for stress on community is that the ‘people of God’ is a community by definition. Paul simply could not conceive of people in continuity with Israel, God’s chosen people, as anything other than a community of people who belonged together and expressed their identity in community life and worship. The reasons which follow are all practical, tactical ways of keeping the community healthy so as to attain maturity and fulfill its purpose in the purpose of God.

The pressure and temptation to return to their old lives existed and Paul knew that his converts needed the support of a like-minded community to aid in their maturity and give encouragement during this transition into Christianity. An individual in isolation would be more vulnerable to digressing than they would if they are part of a community. One of Paul’s goals for his disciples was to form communities where his disciples could grow.³⁸⁴ These communities could be characterized as a ‘new family.’ With the exception of Judaism, the sense of community produced by Christianity—characterized by unconditional and exclusive faithfulness to Christ and its attention to all parts of its members’ lives—gave Christianity a clear advantage over other religions of its day.³⁸⁵

These communities could be observed and scrutinized, but unlike Judaism

³⁸⁴ Some works that deal with Paul’s idea of community are: Banks (1980); Sampley (1980); Holmberg (1980), and Martin (1980). We will not get into a discussion of the term **evkkhlhsia** but it is a very common term in Paul when referring to a community of believers, Roloff (1993), Roloff (1990) EDNT: 1.411-413; Schmidt (1967) *TDNT* 4:506. See also O’Brien (1993); Campbell (1965) pp.41-55.

³⁸⁵ See also Gager (1975) pp.129-140.

from which Christianity came, they embraced both Gentile and Jew in a remarkable inter-racial group of people.³⁸⁶

Paul began forming the community by giving his converts a new sense of identity from their old lives. Paul identifies his new converts as one entity, a new group. This is backed up by the language that is used. Paul sets up boundaries for his converts to see that they are part of something new. One can say Paul is using a 'language of separation' (1:9; 4:5,7,12,13; 5:5-9) as well as the 'language of belonging' (1:4; 2:12; 5:5, also in 2 Thess. 1:11-12; 2:6; 13-15; 3:16) to distinguish his converts from society.³⁸⁷ This separation/belonging language sets up a limit between those who are members of the new Christian community and those who are outside the community, fortifying this new identity.³⁸⁸

The language Paul uses to create 'separation' and 'belonging' also shows that Paul sees his Thessalonian converts as a family and tries to build this image in their thought process. The term **avdelfoj** occurs seventeen times in the letter in the plural form (1:4; 2:1,9,14,17; 3:7;

³⁸⁶ See Wanamaker (1990) p.15. In regards to the composition of the community, most agree that the church was predominantly Gentile along with a smaller group of Jewish believers (See Jewett (1986) p.119. Marxsen (1968) p.33 states that there were no Jews in the Thessalonian church. But he later gave to some extent an alteration in (1979) pp. 17-21). The size of the congregation was small, numbering possibly around a few dozen (See Suhl (1975) p.115). Or there could have been a few different house churches (See Nicholl (2004) p.112).

³⁸⁷ Meeks (1983) pp.84-96.

³⁸⁸ Meeks (1983) pp.74-110 Meeks looks at the household, voluntary association/club, synagogue, and philosophic or rhetorical schools and concludes that they do not capture Paul's thoughts on community. He proposes that baptism and the Eucharist emphasize the unity of the community. These rituals helped distance the community from the Jewish way of separating from the Gentile nation. They also possessed a dual identity with the local church as well as the church world-wide.

4:1,10(2x),13; 5:1,4,12,14,25-27).³⁸⁹ The familial imagery is also found in 1 Thessalonians 2:7-12. Verse 7 refers to a nurse or a mother, and 2:11 clearly refers to Paul viewing himself as a father figure to the converts. Paul saw his converts as a family with himself not only as being a member of the community, but also as having a maternal/paternal responsibility as well.³⁹⁰ Getting disciples into a community was crucial for their maturity and encouragement. These are some of the main reasons Paul tries to form a community among his disciples. Within these communities they could help one another grow. We will now look at how this took place.

2.2.3.2 Mutual Edification/Encouragement

The first aspect is that the community is to provide encouragement in building up the members. One could ask: Is encouragement an aspect of growth? If one of the goals of impartation is growth then one can argue that encouragement aids in growth, which can then link it to impartation.³⁹¹

Challenges abounded with their new faith as well as persecution.

The new converts needed a support group to continue on in their faith. We

³⁸⁹ See also Banks (1980) pp.52-61. For the community as the body of Christ, see Banks (1980) pp.62-70.

³⁹⁰ Again, this dichotomy of equality/inequality of relationship is displayed.

³⁹¹ In Romans 1:11-12, where Paul also uses the verb **metadi,dwmi**, Paul expresses that he wants to establish the Roman believers and describes it as a mutual encouragement by each other's faith. We will come back to this in our discussion of Romans.

see this illustrated in 1 Thess. 5:11-15. Paul expresses imperatively in 5:11 his desire for the disciples to encourage one another and build each other up. **parakale,w** is used a total of eight times in the letter. It is mostly used in the context of expressing approval and support, and offering a sense of hope to one another with a few other references to urge or persuade others to live a pure life.³⁹² The community already is engaging in this mutual encouragement of one another, but this does not dissuade Paul from reminding them of the need to continue in this act. **parakale,w** and its cognate, **para,klhsij**,³⁹³ are present in all of the undisputed letters except Galatians. They carry a meaning of comfort and consolation and can provide “a kind of formula to introduce pastoral admonition.”³⁹⁴ In 1 Thess, Paul desires an atmosphere of encouraging each other to live life well so they can support one another and infuse hope to each others’ lives.

The present imperative of **oivkodome,w** also communicates the sense of continually building one another up, encouraging, strengthening, and edifying the community.³⁹⁵ Coupled with **parakale,w**, **oivkodome,w** clarifies and strengthens the connotation of strengthening and supporting each other. Wanamaker writes,

³⁹² EDNT 3:23, “request, urge; comfort.”

³⁹³ EDNT 3:26 “1 Thessalonians shows the proclamation to be a contemporary, practical renewal of the appeal. “

³⁹⁴ Schmitz (1967) *TDNT* 5:799.

³⁹⁵ BDAG p.696.

Metaphorical use of [**oivkodome,w**] (“strengthen’ or “build up”) can be traced back to the LXX, especially to Jeremiah, where the prophets promises that God will “build up” Israel (Je. 24:6; 31 [38]:4; 33 [40]:7; 42[49]: 10) and even Israel’s neighbors if they call upon God (Je. 12:16). But Jeremiah also views his own role as one rebuilding the community after the destruction of the evil nation (Je.1:10). The idea of building up either the community or the individuals who form it is found frequently in 1 and 2 Corinthians, where the verb and its cognate noun **oivkodomh**, (“edification” or “instruction”) functions to express this idea. In 2 Cor. 10:8; 12:19; and 13:10 Paul describes his own apostolic role as one of building up the Corinthians rather than tearing them down. The connection with the call of Jeremiah seems unmistakable. But the apostle also speaks of the need for members of the community to build each other up (1 Cor. 8:1; 14:4, 17).³⁹⁶

It is used six times in 1 Corinthians, all in the context of edification of the body (1 Cor. 8:1, 10; 14:4[2x], 17). 1 Thess. 5:1-11,³⁹⁷ and especially 5:11, give us a glimpse into how the community was to help one another through encouraging and building each other up.

Paul envisions and shapes a community that would be a place of love for one another. In 3:10 Paul’s prayer is for their love for one another to grow. In 4:9-10, Paul exhorts the converts to love one another and continue in the love they have for the believers in Macedonia. He acknowledges their love for their fellow-believers in Macedonia already, but exhorts them to love them more than they are presently doing. Paul

³⁹⁶ Wanamaker (1990) pp.189-190.

³⁹⁷ Nicholl (2004) p.73 writes that “Paul’s primary purpose in 5:1-11 is to reassure the community that they are not destined to wrath, but rather to salvation on the Day of the Lord.”

wants his disciples to love each other as well as all people. It is a loving community that can bring encouragement and edification.³⁹⁸

He goes on to exhort them to live peacefully with each other (5:13), encourage and care for those who are weaker (5:14),³⁹⁹ and to always do good to each other (5:15). The tone in this section is for a community engaged with one another to help each other. The fellowship in the community allowed for a building up of one another that Paul alone could not do.

Members of the community are also asked to remind each other of Paul's teachings on themes such as the eschaton. Paul is encouraged by their attitude of waiting for the eschaton (1:10), but encourages them to use the thought of the eschaton as a way to build up and encourage one another (4:18).

It was necessary for them to share life with those who had a common set of circumstances—who could relate to the trauma of converting to a new life. Being around those who were experiencing similar feelings and dealing with similar issues brought strength and encouragement to continue in the newfound faith, but this was not the only function of community.

2.2.3.3 Admonition/Correction

³⁹⁸ See also Burrige (2007) pp.103-105; 116-138.

³⁹⁹ See Jewett (1986) pp.104-105 for discussion of **α;τακτο;ι**.

The second aspect in the communities' function is to provide mutual admonition/correction. While the first function was for encouragement and support, the second function was meant for improvement and constructive criticism, pointing out deficiencies in members' lives and exhorting them to improve. Few possess a self-awareness enough to scrutinize their life themselves; most need the observations from fellow members of the community to be aware of areas in one's life that need attention for growth.

Again, chapter 5:11-15⁴⁰⁰ gives us a glimpse into these interactions.⁴⁰¹ The leaders, in 5:12-13, have charge over the community and offer instruction to them but in 5:14, there is a communal admonition/correction tone where everyone has responsibility and not just the leaders.⁴⁰² The lazy are to be prompted, *nouqetei/te tou.j avta,ktouj*. Paul uses **nouqete,w** in 5:12 to describe the 'instruction' the leaders offer the community. **nouqete,w** usually conveys a sense of admonishing or exhorting adding to the mutual admonition/correction

⁴⁰⁰ Jewett (1986) pp. 103, 175-176, 178 believes Paul is only addressing the weak. But Nicholl (2004) p.105 writes that Jewett's thesis cannot be plausible as it is based on many dubious propositions like: the problem of the 'unruly,' lack of respect of the pastors rooted in eschatological falseness, the leaders being anti-charismatic, and those submitting to them were charismatic. See also note 93 and note 121.

⁴⁰¹ Harnisch and Schmithals argue that Gnosticism is the driving force behind this section. Still (1999) p.144 points out that these are the only two scholars that hold to this view. Gnosticism would not have been as developed then and there is no evidence that "Christian interlopers" were present in Thessalonica. See also Yamauchi (1983) for a discussion of Gnosticism during the time of Paul.

⁴⁰² Some argue that the crux behind 5:14 is to help those who are struggling with their new way of life in Christ. See Black (1982) pp.307-321; Bruce (1982) p.123; Richard (1995) p.277. See also Still (1999b) pp.270-271.

language.⁴⁰³ Paul comes back with **nouqete,w** in 5:14 to describe the members' responsibility to 'admonish, exhort, instruct' the lazy.⁴⁰⁴ Paul and his associates modeled hard work and expected the converts to live a life of work and production (also 4:11-12). **nouqete,w** is used two other times in the undisputed letters (Rom. 15:14; 1 Cor. 4:14) and three times in the disputed letters (2 Thess. 3:15; Col. 1:28; 3:16) all being used with the idea of admonishment for improvement.⁴⁰⁵ Paul wanted his disciples to mildly and kindly but earnestly reprove one another. Cautionary advice and warnings were good things for the community members to have in their development. There were clearly stronger and weaker members of the community. The stronger ones were to strengthen the weaker ones.

The terminology shifts in 5:14 from **nouqete,w** to

⁴⁰³ BDAG p.679.

⁴⁰⁴ Smith (1995) p.55 argues that Paul is urging his disciples to 'console' each other. But 5:14 does not have a tone of consolation. The tone is quite the opposite, one of encouragement and admonition of those who need help. Smith (1995) argues that 1 Thessalonians was a letter in the Greco-Roman genre of letter of consolation. This genre was chosen to sustain the community through persecution. But Winter (2005) pp. 135-150 argues that Paul was using his own style and not those of the Greco-Roman genre. See also Kern (1998) on the issue of how the ancient rhetorical handbooks were not tools of literary criticism and cannot help the quest for a unique Pauline rhetoric. But Thrall (2000) pp.595-596 states that Paul was using rhetorical devices in 2 Cor.10-13. Others like Deming (1995) pp.130-137; Stowers (1988) pp.71-83 state that Paul was using the diatribe method. There is evidence that Paul did not rely on rhetoric like many scholars claim but did use the methods for his own uses. For issues pertaining to Paul and rhetoric see Hughes (1990) pp.94-116, Hughes (2000) pp.194-204, Hughes (2000) pp.241-254, Fairweather (1994) pp.1-38, Kennedy (1984), Classen (1993) pp.265-291, Stowers (1986), Lambrecht (2000) pp.163-178, Chapa (1994) pp.150-160, Schoon-Janben (2000) 179-193, Watson (1997) pp.398-426, Wanamaker (2000) pp.45-52, Krentz (2000) pp.287-318, Olbricht (1990) pp.216-236, Walton (1995) pp.229-250, Weima (2000) pp.114-131, Porter (1993) pp.100-122, Deming (1995) pp.130-137, Malherbe (1980) pp.231-240.

⁴⁰⁵ BDAG p.679, "to counsel about avoidance or cessation of an improper course of conduct, admonish, warn, instruct."

paramuqe, omai. Again, a member is displaying issues that are in need of assistance from other community members. The members interact with one another on such a level that awareness of less desirable traits is more easily observed and can be improved on from the encouraging or **paramuqe, omai** of another community member. **paramuqe, omai** can also mean to console someone,⁴⁰⁶ but the other occurrence is in 1 Thess. 2:12 also carrying a sense of exhortation to improve. Paul uses both **paramuqe, omai** and **parakale, w** in 2:12. It can be difficult to distinguish the two terms. Both can convey an aspect of admonition and comfort. Stählin suggests that **parakale, w** carries the ‘exhorting’ aspect and **paramuqe, omai** has the connotation of comfort but the contexts of the usages in 1 Thessalonians suggest a more encouraging/admonitional usage over consolation.⁴⁰⁷

It is clear from 5:14 that members are asked to comfort and encourage those who are timid/faint-hearted. Who are the fainthearted? The precise reference of **ovligoyu, couj**⁴⁰⁸ is unspecified but could have aspects of worry, fear, and discouragement displayed by members.⁴⁰⁹ It could have been those who were discouraged by the suffering (2:14) or those who were mourning the dead (4:13). Paul demonstrates a concern

⁴⁰⁶ BDAG p.769

⁴⁰⁷ Stählin (1967) *TDNT* 5:821

⁴⁰⁸ BDAG p.703, “faint-hearted, discouraged.”

⁴⁰⁹ See Best (1977) p.230.

for those who may have been affected negatively by the suffering, persecution, doubt and worry with a new faith and wants the less fearful, stronger members to help the more timid ones persevere.

Next are those who are weak, **avsqenw/n**. These weak could be those who are ‘suffering from a debilitating illness, sick, ill,’ or “experiencing some incapacity or limitation.”⁴¹⁰ Best understands the weak as believers who desired guiding principles on how to express their rejection of paganism.⁴¹¹ Marshall suggests that the weak are those more susceptible to temptation and sin.⁴¹² Wanamaker writes that it could be intentionally vague, but those reading the letter would be clear as to who the weak were, and the whole community would have a sense of pastoral responsibility toward them.⁴¹³ The weak are clearly exhorted by Paul to have the community care for them. So Wanamaker’s assessment would be the one most agreeable to the context of community helping each other in their new faith.

Since there are weaker members in the community, then logically there should also be stronger members. Paul writes that they are to be

⁴¹⁰ BDAG p.142.

⁴¹¹ Best (1977) pp.230-231.

⁴¹² Marshall (1983) p.151.

⁴¹³ Wanamaker (1990) p.198.

esteemed (1 Thess. 5:12-13).⁴¹⁴ Holtz acknowledges that Paul distinguishes the leaders in the community:

bestimmte Funktionsträger sollen anerkannt werden. Benannt werden sie mit drei Partizipien, die durch den Artikel vor dem ersten zu einer Gruppe zusammengefasst sind. Sie alle sind durch das hinzugefügte Personalpronomen der 2. Pers Pl (εὐν ὑμῶν, ὑμῶν, ὑμῶν) der Gesamtgemeinde zugeordnet, werden von ihr aber als an ihr Handelnde unterschieden. Benannt werden sie nur durch die Partizipien, die verbalen Charakter haben. Ein zusammenfassender technischer Begriff taucht nicht auf; sie sind gänzlich von ihrer Funktion her definiert.⁴¹⁵

Paul highlights these people with three participles denoting their work:

kopiw/ntaj, proi?stame,nouj, nouqetou/ntaj.⁴¹⁶ The participles indicate the leaders' function in the community: to labor for, protect, and morally guide the community.⁴¹⁷ Paul had already singled out the 'weak' so he may have distinguished specific groups of people within the community.

⁴¹⁴ See also Nicholl (2004) pp.104-106.

⁴¹⁵ Holtz (1986) pp.241-242.

⁴¹⁶ Nicholl (2004) p.104 n.62 writes, "Note the single article covering three participles. Whether the last two explain the first or whether all three are coordinate is difficult to determine." Granville Sharp's rule could aid Nicholl, see Moule (1959) pp.109-110. Sharp's rule states that in a series of words, a single article denotes conceptual unity whereas the repetition of the article denotes particularity. Since there exists one article for the three participles, Sharp's rule would state that the three participles constitute a unified concept instead of three particulars. See also Wanamaker (1990) for a detailed discussion of the participles in relation to the leaders.

⁴¹⁷ Nicholl (2004) p.104 n61 writes that the usage of **proi<sthmi** combines its two meanings of caring for in Rom. 12:8 and 'authority over. But in Rom. 12:8, the sense is more of leading than caring in the usage of **proi<sthmi**.

Paul empowered some individuals to labor in and admonish the community,⁴¹⁸ and may have empowered them with a responsibility of leadership or these leaders may have emerged and were affirmed by the community. Since the Thessalonian church was young,⁴¹⁹ the time span that people would have believed is similar. One thing is clear, Paul did acknowledge that, within the community, there are those who are further along and have the responsibility of providing leadership to the community.⁴²⁰ These stronger members or “leaders” carried a status of authority in the community to care, labor, and protect the community.

Members of the community offered another perspective on individuals’ lives and provided a means for deficiencies to be noticed.⁴²¹ Encouragement to improve on these deficiencies could be employed. The community was not just to be encouraged, but community members needed to accept constructive criticism from other members, with a special

⁴¹⁸ Frame (1911) pp.191-192, 195 proposes that the leaders incited antagonism by being insensitive and overbearing, seeing 13b in light of 12-13a. This is an unsteady interpretation. The leaders were likely not that old in their faith as well and were establishing themselves among the community. Nicholl (2004) pp.105-106 writes, “It is notable that the eschatological problems would have made this problem of lack of respect/recognition of the leaders more critical, for a lack of deference to the leaders would have obstructed an important potential avenue of encouragement and correction.”

⁴¹⁹On the issue of the place of women in the community, see: Plummer (1918) p.viii; Jewett (1986) p.120; Malherbe (2000) p.63; Bridges (1999) p.222; Ascough (2000) pp. 324-325.

⁴²⁰ Nicholl (2004) p.112 writes that these bands of leaders could have been Jewish people who had not yet commanded the respect of the community. This cannot be proven based on the textual evidence but could be an explanation, given that the church was young. The Jewish leaders would have had a greater command of the scriptures and in turn could pass on the knowledge to those who converted from a more pagan background.

⁴²¹ See also Banks (1994) pp. 67-76.

responsibility of moral guidance from appointed leaders in the community.

2.2.3.4 Paul's Community Behavioral Expectations

2.2.3.4.1 Faith and Love

We will now look into what Paul wanted to see in his disciples' outward lives in relation to each other and the admonitions he gives.⁴²²

Paul starts off in 1 Thess.1:3 by stating that the Thessalonians "work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ" brought thankfulness to Paul when he prayed for them.⁴²³ Parallelism exists between the phrases; in each case work/labour/steadfastness is produced by and characterized by faith/hope/love.

pi,stij is used eight times in 1 Thessalonians. The first appearance of **pi,stij** is in 1:3. Work of faith (**tu/ e;rgou th/j pi,stewj**) begins the triad with faith denoting the subject of the action: their work is a product of their faith. The converts' faith is producing action, offering proof of their commitment to Christ.

⁴²² Hays (1996) p.19 states that Paul has "three interlocking theological motifs that provide the framework for Paul's ethical teaching: eschatology, the cross, and the new community in Christ." Williams (2003) sees the cross as the foundation of Paul's ethics in 1 Corinthians.

⁴²³ See also Green (2002) pp.89-90.

The actual nature of the work done is unknown. Malherbe thinks the nature of the work has to do with the preaching of the gospel.⁴²⁴ This is certainly a possibility; the context of the pericope is how the gospel has impacted the converts' lives and how it is impacting others from their witness. But the exact nature of the "work of faith" is unknown at this point in the letter.⁴²⁵ It could have been manual labor, ministerial works, works of charity like helping the poor and visiting the sick.⁴²⁶

This faith is beyond just an intellectual assent, it also involves volitional and emotive aspects where the converts exhibit a true life change or genuine works after believing the gospel (1 Thess. 1:5-6; 2:13). This acceptance brought about a change in their lives where they turned from idols as a result of their faith in God and became a visible witness to those who were around them (1:4-10).⁴²⁷ This fits well with Galatians 5:6 where the faith/works link is also expounded on, but genuine works are not the only facet of *πίστις*.⁴²⁸ In 3:10 Paul talks about filling in the gaps

⁴²⁴ Malherbe (2000) p.108. Malherbe writes, "The context here . . . deals with the preaching and reception of the word, and the three terms stressing the effort of the Thessalonians describe the strenuousness with which they preached . . . The three terms thus describe the preaching of the gospel in an ascending order of intensity, culminating in *hypomone*."

⁴²⁵ See also Martin (1995) p.56.

⁴²⁶ See also Green (2002) pp.89-91.

⁴²⁷ It also brought a confirmation of their election by God. *εὐκλογῆς*, is used four other times by Paul in Romans (Rom.9:11; 11:5, 7, 28) all with the aspect of His electing people. Nicholl (2004) p.86 writes, "There is no reason to deny that here also Paul is referring to the pre- (or a-) temporal election of God, inferring that from the events of the mission (1:3, 5-10)."

⁴²⁸ Morris (1996) p.158 n13 writes "It would be possible to take *energoumenē* as passive with the sense 'faith wrought by love', i.e. faith brought about by love, i.e. the love of God. But the middle is much more likely."

of their faith. Another characteristic is that faith can grow. It is not inert but mobile. Witherington writes, “Faith is something that can be weakened or strengthened. It is not a static quantity or entity but rather a living and developing (or atrophying) thing.”⁴²⁹

Love denotes the character of their labor (tou/ ko,pou th/j avga,phj). The specific type of labor is uncertain.⁴³⁰ So we have a similar issue here as we did with the “work of faith.” Paul talks about their hospitality in 1:9 toward him and his associates and how this hospitality was an example to those who were hearing the word of God throughout the region and beyond.⁴³¹ Their rejection of idols and turning to God is also an example of their new found love for God. Could this be what Paul meant by “labor of love”: hospitality and serving God?

In 3:12 Paul desires his converts’ love to grow for one another and for all people.⁴³² In 3:6 their continuing in faith and **love** brought relief to Paul and the missionaries as they were concerned about whether or not their converts would continue to believe.⁴³³ Love served as a confirmation

⁴²⁹ Witherington (2006) p.93.

⁴³⁰ See Clark (1986) p.7.

⁴³¹ Green (2002) pp.90-91 writes, “Paul and his associates also remembered the Thessalonians’ *labor prompted by love* . . . most likely refers to any kind of self-sacrificing labor the believers engaged in as they served those both inside and outside the community.

⁴³² See Burke (2003) pp.108, 245-247 for a discussion on Paul’s concern for outsiders, and his expectations for proper behavior towards them. See also section 2.2.3.4.2ff.

⁴³³ Burke (2003) p.143 notes how here in 3:6 as well as 1:2-5; 2:1-2,5,9,10,11,17; 3:3-4,6; 4:2,4,5:5:2,12 “Paul’s educational role is intellectually oriented (as well as morally focused), evident by the many times he calls them to remember . . . and reflect on what he had taught them when he was in their midst.”

of possessing a genuine faith. Their love may have been expressed toward Timothy when he was there as the converts were described as longing to see the missionaries and thinking kindly of them.⁴³⁴ Timothy may have also observed them continuing in love of each other, seeing them serve one another and doing good deeds toward each other and those outside the community. This is close to what we find in the other early Pauline letter, Galatians (Gal.6.10).⁴³⁵ Paul has a similar emphasis here, as the object of love is *eivj avllh,louj kai. eivj pa,ntaj*, a focus on the community, and those outside the community.⁴³⁶

In 3:12-13, Paul prays for their love for each other and all people to grow, linking it with having a blameless heart before the Lord at the Parousia. To grow in love is to grow in holiness.⁴³⁷ Like faith, love can

⁴³⁴ Paul is also overjoyed that the feelings he has for his converts are reciprocal (3:6) and that the converts also longed to see Paul. This opens up an area of study that has not been highly researched is Paul's inner/emotional needs. Best (1988) has already stated that there has not been a great deal of research done on Paul as pastor, but there is also a need, that is, to study Paul's personal pastoral needs.

⁴³⁵ See Witherington (2006) p.103.

⁴³⁶ Hansen (1989) pp.50-51 holds to Gal. 6:10 being the conclusion of the pericope of 5:13-6:10. See also Fung (1988) p.243. Most hold to the pericope encompassing 5:13-26 or 5:16-26; see Guthrie (1969) p.143, Bruce (1982) p.239, Morris (1996) p.166, Matera p. 198. Betz (1979) p.253 has the pericope from 5:1-6:10.

⁴³⁷ Burke (2003) p.161 associates 3:12 with mimesis. Burke writes "Mimesis involved following Paul's personality lifestyle—including the imitation of his example of holiness and love . . . and his evangelistic methods." Though I do not argue that Paul has this desire for his disciples, I do question Burke associating 3:12 with the concept of imitation. The verse reads "and may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you," which is more an expression of his love and affection for his disciples rather than a call to imitate him.

grow and Paul's goal is to see the converts' love grow. This fuels his use of the incorporeal instrument of prayer in an appeal to the divine agency for a growth in love.

Not only does Paul challenge the community to love everyone in 3:12; in 4:9 he also challenges them to specifically love those in the community. **filadelfi,a** is a specific emphasis on loving those in the community of believers. **filadelfi,a** is narrower than **avga ,ph**.⁴³⁸ **filadelfi,a** has a connotation of love of a brother/sister⁴³⁹ while **avga ,ph** continues to all of humankind.⁴⁴⁰ Witherington writes,

Paul exhorts them not to “brotherly love in general” but rather to love of their Christian brothers and sisters, as is made clear with “love one another” at the end of the verse. The term *‘philadelphia’* unlike *adelphoi*, constitutes an example of ancient inclusive language, since it was applied to both brotherly and sisterly love. It is equally interesting that Paul deliberately refrains from using the friendship language of *philos* and *philia* and chooses rather to use family language, probably because he is trying to encourage treating fellow Christians not merely as friends, but rather in a more intimate way as family.⁴⁴¹

⁴³⁸ Witherington (2006) p.118 writes, “Love of fellow believers is shown by not sponging off them when one can work and by not relying on patronage situations to take care of one’s material needs. Brotherly love sets up parity of relationships, not dependencies, and tends in the context of Christian community to break down some of the social stratification found in that highly stratified society.”

⁴³⁹ BDAG p.1055.

⁴⁴⁰ BDAG pp.6-7. See also Lightfoot (1980) p.59.

⁴⁴¹ Witherington (2006) p.119. See also Lightfoot (1980) p.59; Marshall (1983) p.114; Wanamaker (1990) p.160.

So by using **filadelfi,a**, Paul appeals to a love among the community.⁴⁴²

But as we saw in 3:12, the scope for Paul's commandment to love is not just those in the community but all people.⁴⁴³ Why the emphasis here on the community and the emphasis on all people in 3:12? It is possible that Paul wants the community to be balanced, loving each other and loving those outside. There may have been a concern that they would be too focused on the community and neglect those outside it or the opposite of being too focused on others outside that the community is neglected.⁴⁴⁴ But within the letter, Paul is balanced, encouraging both love of those in the community and those outside it.

In 1 Thess. 5:8, faith, love and hope are linked as pieces of armor that will protect against the attack of evil. Faith and love are again linked as they are in Gal. 5:6. Used together, they are to protect the heart.⁴⁴⁵ Love here is defensive against the challenges a believer must face.⁴⁴⁶

⁴⁴² BDAG p.1055, "in our literature in the transf. sense of affection for a fellow Christian."

⁴⁴³ See also Malherbe (2000) pp.242-245.

⁴⁴⁴ Or as Burke (2003) raises the question, "Does Paul by employing this compound term (4:9) wish, in some way, to doubly underscore for his readers the fraternal feeling that exists within the brotherhood?"

⁴⁴⁵ For Romans 13:12 as a parallel to 1 Thess. 5:8, see Thompson (1991) p.143.

⁴⁴⁶ The eschatological influence of this section must be briefly noted. For 5:8 as a Pauline expression of the Christian life as a battle, see Lincoln (1981) pp.164-166. See also Thompson (1991) pp.148-149 for discussion of day/night imagery and p.151 for discussion of spiritual weaponry and LXX.

In 5:13, Paul wants the converts to love their leaders.⁴⁴⁷ Paul here highlights a specific group of people to love, the leaders. He was more general in 4:9 but specific here.⁴⁴⁸

Love is important to Paul in the letter and he stresses this importance by referring to it seven times (1:3; 3:6; 3:12; 4:9-10; 5:8; 5:13.). It is linked with faith, expressed toward others, and can increase. Paul desires them to love each other as love will strengthen their community but to also have a focus of loving all people. Paul associates a growth in love with a growth in character; therefore, love can be used as a measure for progress in the converts' goal towards maturing.

2.2.3.4.2 Aspects of Expressing Distinctiveness of the Community in Regards to the Surrounding Society: Living to Please God

We have seen Paul's desire for his converts to act and live rightly. The heart of Paul's exhortation to living well is communicated in 4:1-2. Paul wants his disciples to follow and obey what was taught to them by the missionaries.

⁴⁴⁷ Burke (2003) p.240 writes that this command is born out of the disrespect of the **a;taktoi** towards the leaders. The **a;taktoi** have been linked to issues of misunderstanding Paul's eschatological teachings as well, but with Paul's heavy emphasis in his writings on unity, it is more likely that he is writing a general command for the converts to live in harmony and addresses potential issues; one could be not acknowledging authority Paul established.

⁴⁴⁸ Paul uses **avga,ph** instead of **filadelfi,a**. One would have expected **filadelfi,a** given the emphasis on love within the community. This maybe evidence that **filadelfi,a** is not as strong as **avga,ph** as Paul could be emphasizing the importance of loving their leaders with **avga,ph** love being a stronger emphasis than **filadelfi,a**.

After praying that the divine agency will bring the converts to maturity (3:13), Paul shifts back to human responsibility and the converts' need to live an obedient life. Paul emphasizes the cognitive dimension of impartation⁴⁴⁹ in reminding the converts that he and his associates expected them to continue in what they had been taught in regards to how to walk and please God. *i[na perisseu,hte ma/llon* can be translated as “that you increase, abound, exceed more and more.” **perisseu,w** means to “to be in abundance, abound, cause to exist in abundance, ” and is used here and in 4:10 to emphasize Paul’s desire that his converts continue to increase/abound/excel in love.⁴⁵⁰ In 4:1,⁴⁵¹ the focus is on their responsibility toward God, while in 4:10 it is on their responsibility towards people.⁴⁵² Paul wants his converts to grow in relationship to God and people echoing the great commandment in the gospels. The infinitives **peripatei/n** and **avre,skein** modify **evrwta,w** and **parakale,w**, communicating to his disciples the heart of Paul’s ethics: to

⁴⁴⁹ We will go into this more when we discuss impartation from Paul’s perspective.

⁴⁵⁰ BDAG p.805.

⁴⁵¹ On 4:1 translated as “therefore, then” instead of the more common translation of “finally, then” see Thrall (1962) pp.25-30.

⁴⁵² On the issue of the Thessalonians coming under Paul’s authority and 4:1 as a proof of the converts coming under Paul’s authority see Burke (2003) pp.137ff. See also Collins (1984) p.306.

walk and to please God.⁴⁵³ He goes on to be more specific on what this pleasing looks like.

2.2.3.4.2.1 Sexual Purity

After he exhorts his converts to walk and please God, Paul shifts to “this is the will of God” (1 Thess.4:3). It is clear that Paul emphasizes sexual purity. There are several reasons why it might be important for Paul to focus on this issue. Timothy may have reported to Paul that there were problems in the community⁴⁵⁴ or the disciples could have asked a question to Paul. It simply could be a specific reminder as he implied in 4:1, that this is nothing new, but needs stating because of the immorality that was in Thessalonica when Paul was there.⁴⁵⁵ Or, because of the converts’ pagan past (1:9), where sexual morality was not important, Paul could be reminding them of the importance of remaining sexually pure so as to stand out from those who are not in the community.⁴⁵⁶ Paul’s tone about

⁴⁵³ Bruce (1982) p.78 writes that “*parakalou/men* is somewhat more emphatic or formal than *evrwtw/men*. . . Paul tends to use *parakalw/* at turning points in his argument, especially when he is launching into a parenetic phase in his correspondence.”

⁴⁵⁴ See Wanamaker (1990) p.150.

⁴⁵⁵ Malherbe (1987) p.51 thinks that Paul is giving marriage advice and exhorts holiness and purity as his main counsel. This is certainly an aspect based on 1 Thess. 4:6 but this precludes that every one of the members of the community was married. It is more likely that 1 Thess. 4:3-5 is a general command aimed at everyone in their stage of life, married and single, then v.6 would be a specific command to those who may be engaged in adulterous behavior.

⁴⁵⁶ Burke (2003) pp. 196-200 adds on an addition to the issue of sexual immorality. He holds that the verses address more the issue of commerce where people in the community were trying to swindle others in the community out of money in business or inheritances. For the sake of unity in the community, Paul wants them to handle such issues in a way that is honorable and consistent with their new faith and preserves the unity of the community.

the community's condition was positive as he used **parakale,w** in 3:7 to describe his reaction to Timothy's report.⁴⁵⁷ Paul would likely not say he was comforted/encouraged by the report if there were serious issues of sexual immorality in the community; but on the other hand, Paul does specifically exhort the converts not to transgress and wrong their fellow community member in this matter, and then emphasizes the vengeance of God on those who do transgress a fellow community member (1Thess. 4:6). So there could have existed sexual issues in the community. But Paul is clear that he wants his converts to abstain from sexually immoral behavior and control their body in a way that is holy and honorable.⁴⁵⁸ As was discussed earlier, many of the cults of Thessalonica had sexual promiscuity as part of their practice.⁴⁵⁹ Paul's call to sexual purity would also demonstrate a true faith and Christ-like love to those around them as they would stand out from the cultural norm.⁴⁶⁰

⁴⁵⁷ Contrast Nicholl (2004) who argues that the Thessalonians were progressing into a state of hopelessness. See also section 5.7.1.1.

⁴⁵⁸ Barclay (1993) pp.512-530 emphasizes that the Thessalonians were facing conflict from non-Christians and the situation resembled societal aggravation rather than physical persecution. This societal aggravation may have tried to incite the young converts back into old pagan habits of being sexually immoral. But as Burke (2003) p.178 writes one cannot be sure of this. With responding to those who have died in 4:13ff, there is evidence that some may have died due to persecution.

⁴⁵⁹ See Weima (1996) p.106 on the issue of the temples of the cults being places of sexual immorality.

⁴⁶⁰ Still (1999b) p.237 writes that the purpose of the pericope of 4:1-8 "appears to be preventative, not corrective. In fact, the affirmative tone of the letter suggests that Paul is guardedly optimistic that his converts will continue to live in the light and not revert to a nocturnal lifestyle." Contrast to Wanamaker (1990) pp.158-159 who holds to the position that Paul was dealing with a problem in the community that was already present among the Thessalonians. Given the issue of cults and their previous way of life (1:9) as well as the specific focus 4:6 on marriage and purity, Wanamaker is likely correct.

2.2.3.4.2.2 *Loving One Another, Example to Outsiders*

Paul repeats a very common exhortation in his letters: love one another (4:9).⁴⁶¹ As we discussed earlier, Paul had two entities he wanted the converts' love to be focused on: the narrow scope and the wider scope. Here, the narrow scope would be the community of believers.⁴⁶² In 4:10, Paul includes the brethren of Macedonia, so within the narrow scope, there exists two tiers, the community of believers that is local and the community of believers that is beyond the local one. In 3:12, Paul wanted their love to be toward all people, the wider scope.⁴⁶³ Paul in 4:10 uses *perisseu,w* as he did in 4:1. *perisseu,ein* is the first of four infinitives that modify *parakalou/men* which continues the emphasis on love and to grow in love. Just as Paul communicated in 3:12-13 that love could grow, he also reiterates that point here in 4:10. But the focus in 3:12-13 was the divine agency being the means for the converts' love to grow. Here in 4:10, Paul emphasizes more the aspect of human responsibility.

⁴⁶¹ Some see this section as proof that Paul was responding to a previous letter; see Faw (1952) pp.217-235. But Wanamaker (1990) p.159 and Richard (1995) p.213 argue that this pericope alone cannot support the argument of Paul responding to another letter and argue that they are responding to Timothy's report or these are issues that Paul himself wants to discuss.

⁴⁶² For the concept of 'brotherly love' as a prevalent trend in the ancient world that lead to special treatment, see Burke (2003) pp.36-59.

⁴⁶³ Burke (2003) p. 206-207 calls this love "bi-directional" both to community members and outsiders. Within the community, it is a call not to take advantage of one another and without the community, being a good witness to non-believers. For the love of believers in other locations, see Burke (2003) pp.210-213.

So from 3:12-13 and 4:10, Paul displays the relationship of the divine agency and human responsibility as the agents for the converts' love to grow.⁴⁶⁴

Three infinitive phrases follow in 4:11. *filotimei/sqai h`suca,zein kai. pra,ssein ta. i;dia* are the first two followed by *evrga,zesqai tai/j îivdi,aijÐ cersi.n u`mw/n* that modify *parakalou/men*. Earlier in 2:9, Paul reminded the converts about how hard he and his associates worked among them so they would not be a burden to them. Coupled with the exhortation in 5:14 where those who are idle should be admonished not to be, Paul clearly wants his disciples to be engaged in fruitful activity.⁴⁶⁵

Paul uses the *i[na* clause in 4:12 to give the reader the purpose of the infinitival phrases. Here Paul draws attention to the fact that living the way he exhorted in 4:10-11 would give them good standing with

⁴⁶⁴ The section on Romans will discuss the relationship between the divine agency and human responsibility in greater depth.

⁴⁶⁵ Wanamaker (1990) pp.163-164 holds to 2 Thessalonians being written before 1 Thessalonians and points to 2 Thes. 3:6-12 as evidence of idleness being an issue to be addressed in the community. But idleness is also an issue in 1 Thessalonians 5:14 and the issue could be expounded more in 2 Thess. based on continual idleness in the community.

outsiders.⁴⁶⁶ Paul recognizes that the converts' lives are being watched (i.e. 1:8-9) and non-believers would see a testimony of the validity of their faith through a life that is fruitfully engaged. So Paul again communicates the scope of love which is directed towards believers, the narrow scope, as in 4:9-10a and those who are outside the community, the wider scope, as in 4:12.⁴⁶⁷

2.2.3.4.3 *Final Exhortations*

We will now look at the final part of the letter, 5:12-22.⁴⁶⁸ The aspect of community impartation is brought out here as there is a clear designation

⁴⁶⁶ Burke (2003) pp.216-223 argues that Paul is responding to people in the community who are not working and are over zealous in their evangelistic efforts. Many scholars hold to the fact of Paul dealing with those who misunderstood Paul's eschatological teaching effecting their ordinary lives, see Bruce (1982) pp.90-91, Jewett (1986) p. 161-178, Best (1977) pp.174-176; Rigaux (1956) pp. 519-521; von Dobschütz (1909) pp. 180-183. It is hard to see how Burke derives lazy people who are overzealous in evangelistic efforts in the pericope. In 1 Thess. 1:7-10, there is clear reference to the converts' life-change witnessed by those around as the vehicle for their faith to be propagated. Verse 8 does hint at evangelistic efforts but the emphasis in the pericope is the clear life change witnessed by those around the converts but I do not see the support for evangelistic efforts strictly from 4:9-12. See also Barclay (1993) pp.520-525 and Still (1999b) pp.245-246.

⁴⁶⁷ See also Burke (2003) p.224. Burke writes, "**filadelfi,a** not only relates to those inside the brotherhood but should also impact favorably upon those not connected to it."

⁴⁶⁸ Rigaux (1956) p.575 believes that the pericope of 5:12-22 is really an illumination of verse 11. But Nicholl (2004) p.105 writes, "while verses 12-13a and 19-22 and perchance verse 14 might fit this hypothesis, verses 13b, 15 and 16-18 suggest that verses 12ff. are not primarily an expansion of verse 11." It is not uncommon for Paul to end his letters with moral exhortations (Romans 12-16; Gal. 5-6; Phil 4) a pattern into which 1 Thess. 5:12-22 would fall.

of leaders in the community.⁴⁶⁹ Paul reminds the community that they are one unit and that there is a responsibility to improve areas in the community which are in need of improving so he exhorts them to admonish those who need it. Paul here models a community responsibility for the stronger to admonish the weaker.⁴⁷⁰ This also gives us an idea of what proper behavior is not: weak, lazy and fainthearted.

Paul moves on with a general exhortation to everyone: they are not to repay evil for evil, which reflects love. Again, the narrow scope of “one another” compliments the wider scope of “all people.” Marshall writes, “It was at the heart of Christian morality, and we find the sentiment repeated in Rom. 12:17, 19-21 . . . Behind it lies the teaching of Jesus about refraining from taking vengeance and about loving one’s enemies. . . . It is related to the ‘Golden Rule.’”⁴⁷¹

⁴⁶⁹ See our previous discussion on 5:11-15. These leaders did not likely hold a specific ‘office,’ see Burke (2003) pp.230-231. Meeks (1983) pp.85-90 thinks that the early composition of churches did not have a rigid structure but over time, they developed into a clear ‘patriarchal’ structure. See Burke (2003) pp.235-241 for a good exegetical discussion of verses 12-13. Note the beginning of a long string of imperatives in 1 Thess. 5. There are four in 5:14, two in 5:15 and all verbs in 5:16-22 are in the imperative. It is clear that Paul placed great emphasis in ch.5 to live a good life. See also Malherbe (1987) pp.61-109. On the structure of the leadership, see also Meeks (1983) pp.114-115 on how dealt with conflict in Thessalonica. See also Black (1982) pp.307-321. For Paul referring to those who are morally weak, see Frame (1912) p.198 and Bicknell (1932) p. 59.

⁴⁷⁰ Jewett (1986) pp.104-105,175-176,178 writes that the pericope’s of 5:12-13 and 5:19-22 are written specifically to deal with the **a;taktoi**, contra Still (1999) p.277 who believes that Paul’s admonition is to the whole congregation and not just to counter those who are ‘weak’ that states that this interpretation is not possible based on Paul’s use of **avdelfoi**, in 5:12; 14. Still also writes, “Additionally, it does not appear that the activity of **a;taktoi** was opposed by the church or that their behavior had undermined congregational relations.”

⁴⁷¹ Marshall (1983) p.153. But Marshall goes on to say that it “it is not obvious that the Golden Rule is the source of Paul’s principle here.”

Then more commands follow in verses 15-18.⁴⁷² Paul does not make clear distinctions between ethics, spirituality and worship because his understanding of Christian living is holistic. Holiness is the response of our whole lives to God in every way.⁴⁷³ These commands that follow are part of the holy living Paul wants for his converts. The first is to rejoice always. Witherington writes, “This injunction to rejoice is not uncommon in Paul’s letters (see especially Phil. 2.18; 3.1; 4.4). He is not asking his converts to rejoice because of their circumstances but it has to do with one’s relationship with God and the adoration and praise and sheer joy that arise out of that communion with God.”⁴⁷⁴

It follows logically that a life of joy because of one’s relationship with God will be a prayerful life; hence the second command to pray without ceasing. Is this a life where an individual is constantly speaking with God? Witherington writes, “It is not the moving of lips, but in the elevation of the heart to God that the essence of prayer consists. Thus amidst the commonest of duties and recreations of life it is still possible to be engaged in prayer. And in this sense the command to pray without ceasing must receive its noblest and most real fulfillment.”⁴⁷⁵

⁴⁷²See also Marshall (1983) p.153.

⁴⁷³ Roetzel (1972) p.374 states that 5:16-18 is 1 Thessalonian’s “central purpose and intent.”

⁴⁷⁴ Witherington (2006) p.166.

⁴⁷⁵ Witherington (2006) p.166.

Give thanks in all things is the final of the three and reflects faith. Here, Paul again says that this is the will of God. Rather than having a critical attitude, Paul wants his disciples to display one of being thankful as in Philippians 2:14.

Verses 19-22 continue Paul's string of imperatives giving his converts guidance on how to live their life.⁴⁷⁶

Paul wanted his disciples to display a behavior that shows they are different from those around them, showing a changed life, and urged members of the community to help one another.

So far, Paul has agreed with our synthesized definition. He sees the divine agency, human responsibility and community in the framework of growth, holiness and maturity. But in this section, Paul goes deeper with the aspect of community; Paul would add to the definition, **the shared life of the Christian community**, instead of just stating the word community as in our synthesized definition.

⁴⁷⁶ For verses 19-22 as life in the 'pneuma' see von Dobschütz (1909) p.215 and Wanamaker (1990) p.191. Nicholl (2004) pp.107-108 responds to those who hold the section that Paul is addressing as a problem of "prophets spreading eschatological excitement and/or enthusiasm and so causing or contributing to the problems of 4:13-5:11 and or 4:9-12." See Jewett (1986) pp.100-102 and Dunn (1990) p.326. Nicholl writes, It is unnecessary to suppose that the apostle in verse 21-2 is doing anything other than establishing the alternative to outright rejection of the phenomenon of prophecy. Certainly if Paul had thought that prophets were proclaiming a false message which was confusing the community or that an opposition party was interpreting spiritual manifestations as evidence of the coming of the new age, we would have expected some fiery polemic and an explicit treatment of the deception at this point, or at least a direct textual connection between Paul's treatment of the eschatological problems and his treatment of prophecy.

2.2.4 Paul and Associates' Personal Responsibility in the Converts' Growth

Reading the text of 1 Thessalonians, one can notice that Paul places responsibility for his converts' growth not only on the divine agency, the converts themselves and the community members but also on himself and his associates. 1 Thessalonians 2:8 reads *euvdokou/men metadou/ nai u`mi/n ouv mo,non to. euvagge,lion tou/ qeou/ avlla. kai. ta.j e`autw/n yuca,j*. We have come across the verb **metadi,dwmi**.⁴⁷⁷ Paul uses it in 1 Thess. 2:8 to describe how he wanted to teach them the gospel as part of imparting his life because he had great affection for the Thessalonians. Moore writes on its use in 1 Thess. 2:8,

To share with you: some scholars regard the Greek word used here (*metadidōmi*) as a synonym for the simple verb *didōmi* used with 'own self' (as here) in e.g. Mk.10:45. But the compound verb actually introduces an idea of mutuality into the giving, which RSV 'share' helps to translate. (One is reminded of the mutuality of ministry, somewhat laboriously expressed, in Rom. 1:11f.)⁴⁷⁸

I will label Paul's work in young believers' lives for the purpose of their growth as **impartation** based on the verb **metadi,dwmi**. There are not many instances of **metadi,dwmi** in the New Testament (5x: Luke 3:11; Romans 1:11; 12:8; 1 Thess. 2:8; Eph. 4:28) so before looking at the New

⁴⁷⁷ Lampe (1961) p.851: Accusative- 1.) Impart; 2.) hand over; 3.) hand down; 4.) communicate an order; 5.) give.
BDAG p.638, "give (a part of), impart, share.

⁴⁷⁸ Moore (1969) p.39.

Testament, it would be good to see how it is used in Paul's contemporary, Philo.

2.2.4.1 **metadi,dwmi** in Philo.⁴⁷⁹

2.2.4.1.1 *Various Entities Sharing, Giving or Not Sharing and Not Giving*

Unlike the New Testament where **metadi,dwmi** only appears five times, Philo uses it sixty times in his writings. It is used in various ways. The main two usages are in sharing/imparting oneself to the benefit of others and sharing material things with those who have need, but it can also be used in other ways. We will highlight the two dominant uses but first, we will mention the less frequent usages. In *Leg* 1:40, the mind shares qualities received from God with the soul. Philo uses **metadi,dwmi** in the context of not receiving, not giving, denying: In *Fug* 84, no pardons are given to blasphemers; in *Mos* 2:236, women are deprived of their inheritance; in *Spec* 3:112 parents deny their children blessings; in *Virt* 94 it is used in the context of bad people who do not share; in *Virt* 226, Philo advises people not to give to those who want to take.

Philo also uses **metadi,dwmi** in *Her* 159 to describe that God is not a god of partiality. God has given all materials (creation) an equal share of his skill, which does not create a clear hierarchy in his creation,

⁴⁷⁹ For studies discussing Paul and Philo, see: Andrews (1934) pp.150-166, Winter (1997), Chadwick (1966) pp.286-307, Seland (2002).

but the two dominant usages are God imparting Himself to humankind for their benefit and humankind sharing with one another, mainly those who are more fortunate like masters of slaves or those who have more are to share with those who are less fortunate, like slaves or the poor.

2.2.4.1.2 *God Imparts/Shares/Gives*

Philo often uses **metadi,dwmi** to describe the process of how God blesses his creation. In *Opif* 44, God imparts to humankind his eternal existence; in *Opif* 77, God made humankind a partaker of all kinship; in *Cher* 86 God imparted himself “to all particular beings from the fountain of beauty—Himself.”⁴⁸⁰ In *Det* 124 God gives to Abraham a share in his own title;⁴⁸¹ in *Post* 28 God shares his nature with those who are virtuous. *Ios* 85, God blesses Joseph with liberty and security. *Mos* 2:190, God gives power to Moses; 2:192 God gives Moses replies to his questions, a part of God. *Mut* 57, God gives people the opportunity for a relationship with him; *Somn* 2:223, God imparts to chosen natures a share of His steadfastness to be their richest possession. *Spec* 1:49, God gives the gift of beholding;

Spec 1: 97 God makes his creatures a partaker of His own kindly and merciful nature. In *Spec* 1: 294 and *Spec* 2:15 God imparts to humankind a share in His gracious power.

⁴⁸⁰ Taken from LCL.

⁴⁸¹ Also used contra: God does not share his blessing with Cain in *Det* 156.

So the main use of **metadi,dwmi** with God as subject usually has a beneficial effect of blessing those who have been imparted something by God.

2.2.4.1.3 Humans Sharing With Each Other

The next main usage is in the context of humankind sharing with one another. In *Opif* 156, Eve shares with Adam the fruit. In *Fug* 30, one with a good name shares it with other worthy people. *Ios* 144 has a general call for people to share with others. In *Mos* 1:315, it is sharing material things; in *Spec* 1: 120, one shares with those who would be beneficial to receive; *Spec* 2: 71, 107, 115 refer to sharing with the poor and needy.

In *Spec* 2: 119, the blessings of being in a good community should be shared with new comers. In *Spec* 2:141, there is a general call not to be selfish. In *Spec* 4:74, those who are rich should share with those who are less fortunate. Slaves should have good food, freedom of speech, kindness and humanity: *Spec* 1:126; 3:196; *Her* 5; *Vir* 121.

There is one passage that needs to be highlighted. Philo uses **metadi,dwmi** in *Vir* 168 to describe how we are to be a spiritual blessing to others by sharing God's blessing (specifically strength) with others. Yonge translates *Vir* 168 starting from XXXII, "Since then you have received strength from a being who is more powerful than you, give others a share of that strength, distributing among them the benefits which

you have received yourself, in order that you may imitate God by bestowing gifts like his.”⁴⁸² This is the only reference to one person or persons imparting themselves to others for the purpose of their spiritual benefit but the verb is largely used in the context of one human imparting or sharing themselves for the betterment/benefit of others.

2.2.4.2 New Testament Usage

Philo has given us a good foundation to launch into the New Testament.

Liddell-Scott-Jones-McKenzie lexicon writes that **metadi,dwmi** means to give part of, give a share.⁴⁸³ Jewett writes,

The basic meaning of **metadi,dwmi** is “give part of, give a share . . . Michel, 82 refers to the collaborative nature of this communication, referring to the parallel in the use of **metadi,dwmi** in 1 Thess. 2:8. The translation “impart to you” . . . implies a one-way form of authoritative communication that Paul avoids here.⁴⁸⁴

Hoehner writes that **metadi,dwmi**:

Means “to give part of, to give a share,” as Greek cities shared in the use of a temple or shared in the benefits of the constitution. It can also mean “to communicate,” which is the sharing of information. This word is used seven times in the LXX (only twice in the canonical books) meaning “to impart” (Job 31:17; Prov. 11:26; Wis 7:13; 2 Macc 1:35; Bar 6:27) or “to communicate” (Tob 7:10; 2 Macc 8:12). In the NT the word appears five times . . . It can be used of sharing spiritual things, as when Paul shared a spiritual gift to strengthen the Romans (Rom.

⁴⁸² *PHILO* (1993) p.657.

⁴⁸³ LSJM (1996) p.1111.

⁴⁸⁴ Jewett (2007) p.124 n.80. Jewett cites Michel (1978) p.82.

1:11) or of sharing the gospel (1 Thess. 2:8). Also, it can be used of sharing material goods. For example, a person with two coats is to share with one who has no coat (Luke 3:11; cf. also Rom 12:8).⁴⁸⁵

We find the five occurrences of **metadi,dwmi** once in Luke 3:11, three times in Paul's undisputed letters (Rom. 1:11; Rom. 12:8; 1 Thess.2:8) and once in the disputed letters (Eph. 4:28), meaning to share, impart or to give. In all the uses, **metadi,dwmi** has an aspect of giving or sharing something with someone else. On its usage in 1 Thess. 2:8, Rigaux states that the sharing was to give, preserving a share for oneself.⁴⁸⁶ Rigaux stops the explanation there so we are left to interpret whether or not this was a deep sharing or something not so vigorous. Marshall sheds a little more light on the nature of the sharing,

From this affection sprang the longing of the missionaries to **share with** the Thessalonians **not only the Gospel of God but also their own selves** . . . The missionaries who had experienced the blessings brought by the Gospel wanted the Thessalonians to have their share of them . . . since in general people regard their own lives as their most precious possession, he expresses the depth of his longing to share the highest gifts with the Thessalonians by saying that the missionaries would have given their lives as well.⁴⁸⁷

⁴⁸⁵ Hoehner (2002) pp.626-627. Referring to Hoehner's comment on 1 Thess.2:8 being that Paul only shared the gospel, it is clear that the meaning of **metadi,dwmi** communicates a similar feeling as Rom. 1:11. So Paul is sharing with the converts both the gospel and himself: "to share with you **not only** the gospel of God but also our **own selves**."

⁴⁸⁶ Rigaux (1956) p.422.

⁴⁸⁷ Marshall (1983) p.71, bold mine. Also, Chrysostom (ad loc.) writes putting himself in Paul's place: "It is true that I love you with so great a love that I would have been ready to die for you. That is the perfect model of sincere, genuine love. A Christian who loves his neighbour should be inspired by these sentiments. He should not wait to be asked to give up his life for his brother; rather, he should offer it himself."

Marshall here offers more insight than Rigaux by acknowledging that Paul is communicating to his converts that he will give his life for their benefit. This explanation expresses the depth of the sharing of their life, which extended so far as to lay down one's life for the other. Sharing one's life implies that Paul and his associates gave their all, every aspect of themselves not just a part.

Bray's *Ancient Christian Commentary on Romans* has patristic fathers commenting on Romans 1:11, one of three times **metadi,dwmi** appears in the undisputed letters of Paul.

Origen, imparting some spiritual gift: "First of all we must learn that it is an apostolic duty to seek fellowship with our brothers for no reason other than to share some spiritual gift with them if we can."

Ambrosiaster: "But he wants to come to them as quickly as possible in order to take them beyond tradition and bestow on them a spiritual gift . . . that they might be perfect in faith and behavior."⁴⁸⁸

Luke 3:11 uses **metadi,dwmi** for sharing material possessions.

⁴⁸⁸ Bray (1998) pp.22-23. Others like Theodore of Mopsuestia and Chrysostom are also mentioned. Also, Fitzmyer (1993) p.248 writes,

The *charisma pneumatikon* is not to be understood as one of those gifts mentioned in 12:6 or in 1 Cor 12:4-10 (gifts granted to members of the church for special functions in it), but more generically as the *pneumatika*, "spiritual blessings," of 11:29 and 15:27. Paul is aware that he comes to Rome not as a church-founding apostle, but as an evangelist who may be able to strengthen the faith that already exists among the Christians there.

See also Jervis (1991) p.103 and Wedderburn (1988) p.98 for discussion of Paul feeling responsible for the betterment of the Romans' life.

In Romans 12:8 it is used with someone who has the gift of giving.⁴⁸⁹ Eph. 4:28 also conveys sharing material possessions.⁴⁹⁰

So we have seen from Philo, and the New Testament that the most dominant foundational meaning of **metadi,dwmi** is for one entity to share something with another. We have also seen that it is used for one entity to impart to another with the goal that the receiving entity be benefited or blessed by the other. Hence, when Paul uses **metadi,dwmi** in Romans 1:11 and 1 Thess. 2:8, it is for the purpose of blessing them, helping them grow. I will call this act whereby Paul helps his disciples grow the act or work of **impartation**.

Not only himself, Paul sees others' involvement in their lives. These others are members of the community as well as his own associates such as Timothy. Impartation is part of Paul's thought in the growth process. 1 Thess. 3 begins with Paul's concern that his disciples may have weakened in their faith, and as a response to these negative thoughts and concerns, sends Timothy with the idea of strengthening and encouraging the converts. Upon Timothy's report, Paul is encouraged and continues to express his care and concern for his disciples by letting them know that he prays for them constantly, and lets them know that he and his associates want to see them again so they can 'fill the gaps' in their faith (3:10). Paul

⁴⁸⁹ See Reasoner (1999) pp.206-207 on whether or not this, and Rom. 12:13 is evidence that there exist different class levels within the church.

⁴⁹⁰See also, Arnold (1989) pp.118-119.

uses the aorist active infinitive form of **katarti,zw** to express his desire to complete their faith. BDAG lists the meaning of **katarti,zw** as: “1.) to cause to be in a condition to function well, put in order, restore. 2.) to prepare for a purpose, prepare, make create, outfit.”⁴⁹¹ So from the lexicons there is an aspect of filling and making an entity whole.

katarti,zw is found four other times in Paul’s undisputed letters: Romans 9:22, 1 Corinthians 1:10, 2 Corinthians 13:11, and Galatians 6:1. In Romans 9:22 the usage is not the same as 1 Thess 3:10; it has a meaning of preparation rather than completeness. Paul writes that those in sin were ‘prepared’ for destruction. The usage in 1 Cor 1:10 is used similarly to 1 Thess 3:10, talking about being complete in unity. 2 Cor 13:11 resembles 1 Thess 3:10 in that the **katarti,zw** is in conjunction with growth. Paul writes to the Corinthians that they are ‘made complete.’ **katarti,zw** in Galatians 6:1 has more to do with restoring a sinner back to a more acceptable state, which is similar to growth and maturity. So the uses of **katarti,zw** in Paul’s letters are not in unison, but it is mostly used in the context of spiritual growth and maturity. Paul here in 1 Thess 3:10 desires to help his converts grow and “fill in their gaps” and provide what is lacking in their faith. **u`ste,rhma** is found six other times in Paul’s undisputed letters and once in a disputed letter: 1 Corinthians 16:7, 2 Corinthians 8:14 (2x), 2 Corinthians 9:12, 2 Corinthians 11:9,

⁴⁹¹BDAG p.526.

Philippians 2:30 as well as Colossians 1:24. It has a meaning of lack, need, want—a word that communicates deficiency. The use of **u`ste,rhma** coupled with **th/j pi,stewj u`mw/n** communicates to the converts Paul's desire to form them by helping them grow through his presence among them. Wanamaker writes,

Paul shows here a profound awareness of the need to continue the process of resocializing the Thessalonians into the Christian way of life . . . Although he desired to do this in person, his letter to the Thessalonians was intended to serve as a substitute for his presence, just as Timothy had substituted for him when he had visited them. In the light of this, we may understand 4:1-5:22 as an attempt by Paul to make good the deficiencies in his converts' understanding of their new faith and its requirements with respect to their ethical conduct.⁴⁹²

From 1 Thess 3:10 we can see that Paul considers himself and his associates as significant aspects of the growth process and wants to complete/fill what is deficient in the converts' faith.

1 Thess. 2:10-12. u`mei/j ma,rturej kai. o` qeo,j(w`j o`si,wj kai. dikai,wj kai. avme,mptwj u`mi/n toi/j pisteu,ousin evgenh,qhmen(kaqa,per oi;date(w`j e[na e [kaston u`mw/n w`j path.r te,kna e`autou/ parakalou/ntej u`ma/j kai. paramuqou,menoi kai. marturo,menoi eivj to. peripatei/n u`ma/j avxi,wj tou/ qeou/. We see the missionaries doing their work of impartation expressed by the participles 'exhorting,

⁴⁹² Wanamaker (1990) p.139.

encouraging and imploring.’ The *ei vj to*, structure links the participles with the exhortation to walk in a manner worthy of God. This is one way the missionaries formed their disciples.

Paul uses the imagery of a father encouraging his children. Just as parents exhort their children to become better, the missionaries here resemble very much a parent’s exhortation. The converts were able to witness the missionaries’ lives (2:10-11), and saw an example of how to live a life that pleases God. The imagery resembles a family. The role of parent is evident in 2:7-12 as Paul uses both father and mother in the section to describe the relationship bond between him and the converts.⁴⁹³

2.3 Conclusion and Definition

I have demonstrated how the three elements of the divine agency, human responsibility and community, which were included in our synthesized definition, are important also to Paul, who expounded them in some detail in his treatment of growth and holiness in 1 Thessalonians. But Paul also adds the process of impartation. From these insights we can develop our own expanded definition. Christian formation can be defined as **the maturing process where growth in holiness is accomplished by:**

1.) The divine agency (the power of God);

⁴⁹³ 1 Cor.14:20 contains a good summary of his attitude about the heart of his parenthood. He wants them to be mature but in evil be infants. Also, see Burke (2003) for a deeper discussion of familial metaphors in 1 Thessalonians.

- 2.) *Human responsibility (the disciples' active participation and free choice to participate in the Christian formation process);*
- 3.) *the shared life of the Christian community, and*
- 4.) *The agency of impartation; which has a one-to-one aspect (Paul imparting to younger believers), and an aspect of a multiplicity of mentors (his associates).*

Of the aspects which have been discussed, impartation may be the one that stands out the most as it is not common in the discussion of Christian formation and was not discussed too much in Chapter 1. The other agencies are often more prominent.

In chapter 1, we surveyed various definitions of spiritual formation and found that there was discontinuity in its understanding. Therefore, a definition from which to work for the rest of the research is important. In our discussion in Chapter 1, we established that impartation does not play a significant part in most of the current definitions. Few would deny that impartation is helpful to spiritual growth but few actually make impartation an integral part of their study of Christian formation. This reflects a discernable pattern in church history. Historically, impartation has often not been as significant as other aspects such as the divine agency and human responsibility but there have been some traditions that have taken it seriously.

The monastic movement has taken seriously community as well as master-disciple mentoring, and the Wesleyan movement has highlighted the importance of small groups as well as one-to-one mentoring, but in church history as a whole the kind of impartation that Paul models in 1 Thessalonians has remained relatively underdeveloped. This is not to say it did not exist. For many, impartation has taken place in an informal way, but for Paul it was a key part of his understanding of Christian formation. But before we discuss Paul's work of impartation, we will examine the other undisputed Pauline letters to see if the definition compiled in this chapter is consistent with the other undisputed letters of Paul.

Chapter 3

Christian Formation in Other Undisputed Pauline Letters

In chapter 1, I showed that there is no common agreement on a definition of the essential elements in spiritual formation, and therefore proposed to

establish a definition based on Paul. In chapter 2, on the basis of 1 Thessalonians, a definition of spiritual formation was formulated. In this definition, impartation stood out as an aspect that was uncommon in the definitions of chapter 1. I also began to use the term Christian formation instead of spiritual formation because Paul's perspective on holiness and growth, which are related to spiritual formation, showed that he was holistic in his view of growth, not just spiritual (1 Thess. 5:23-24). Now, we will look at parts of the other undisputed letters of Paul⁴⁹⁴ to see the extent to which the aspects of Christian formation found in 1 Thessalonians are also present in other letters of Paul, and see if these aspects are further developed from their inception in 1 Thessalonians. A special section will look at the letter to the Romans because of its deep exposition of Paul's theological thought.⁴⁹⁵ I will be following the same categories of description which were used in the study of 1 Thessalonians beginning with the divine agency.

3.1 Divine Agency

⁴⁹⁴ Corinthian Correspondence, Galatians, and Philippians. Paul addressed different communities at different times experiencing different social situations. We are not able to isolate each letter like we did with 1 Thessalonians so further research treating each letter, in light of Christian formation, with the thoroughness of 1 Thess. is needed. But we can still see if Paul's thought is the same in these letters.

⁴⁹⁵ It will be interesting to note whether there is a different perspective on impartation in Romans from 1 Thessalonians based on the fact that Paul did not establish the church in Rome and is only going to visit them. I will be discussing Romans in light of the categories established in chapter 2 so it should be easily discernible whether this had an effect on his perspective on impartation.

1 Corinthians 1:1-2 Pau/loj klhto.j avpo,stoloj Cristou/ Vlhsou/
 dia. qelh,matoj qeou/ kai. Swsqe,nhj o` avdelfoj th/|
 evkklhsi,a| tou/ qeou/ th/| ou;sh| evn Kori,nqw|
 (h` giasme,noij evn Cristw/| Vlhsou/(klhtoi/j a`gi,oij(su.n
 pa/sin toi/j evpikaloume,noij to. o;noma tou/ kuri,ou h`mw/
 n Vlhsou/ Cristou/ evn panti. to,pw|(auvtw/n kai. h`mw/n\

The divine agency is prevalent in this verse. Paul attributes to the divine agency the work of purifying the converts.

Aspects of the divine agency are more explicitly described in 1 Cor. 1:2; Paul uses the verb **a`gia,zw**, perfect passive participle, which means to “set aside something or make it suitable for ritual purposes, consecrate, dedicate; include a person in the inner circle of what is holy, in both cultic and moral associations of the word, consecrate, dedicate, sanctify; to treat as holy, reverence; to eliminate that which is incompatible with holiness.”⁴⁹⁶ The perfect tense denotes a completed action but with continuing results. Hence, Paul sees his converts as already sanctified by the divine agency. In this case, the Corinthian converts are being sanctified through the work of the divine agency as the use of **a`gia,zw** is also a divine passive where God sanctifies the

⁴⁹⁶ BDAG pp.9-10.

converts.⁴⁹⁷ Paul refers to them as **a[giój**,⁴⁹⁸ the cognate adjective of **a`gia,zw**. Designating them as saints has certain implications: they were saints as Paul was an apostle, they are set apart to serve God's purposes, called to a specific lifestyle because of the holiness of God, and in a corporate sense, they are saints within a community of saints with responsibilities to fellow saints and God.⁴⁹⁹ Paul emphasizes the fact that the divine agency has brought about spiritual purity by using two cognates: **a`gia,zw** and **a[giój**. The word play of verb and noun adds significance to the fact that the Corinthian converts are made holy by the divine agency even though the tone of the book has Paul thinking otherwise.

Despite the tone of Paul's agony over the behavior of the Corinthians, he continues to emphasize the divine agency in helping them grow. Again in 1:8-9, Paul writes that the divine agency sustains the believer not only at the beginning of the Christian life but throughout it as

⁴⁹⁷ Contrast Blomberg (1995) p.36, " 'Sanctified' in verse 2 does not mean 'made holy,' as often in Paul, but separated apart for God. It is virtually synonymous with the next phrase, 'called to be holy.' Paul is reminding the Corinthians of their overarching purpose in the Christian life." Collins (1999) p.52 says that the community described as "holy" designates the people of God as belonging to God. But Thiselton (1995) p.76, Bruce (1971) p.30, Barrett (1968) p.32, Fee (1987) p.32 emphasize the divine agency in making the saints "holy." But both Thiselton and Fee also mention being 'set apart' so it is more an issue of shades of meaning rather than opposing views. The use of the divine passive would support Thiselton, Bruce, Barrett and Fee.

⁴⁹⁸ Or **a[giói**.

⁴⁹⁹ See Garland (2003) pp.27-28. Garland acknowledges the divine agency but brings out the implication of being a saint: that with the work of the divine agency in sanctification, there is an inherent responsibility.

well.⁵⁰⁰ In 1:30,⁵⁰¹ Paul writes that “He is the source of life in Christ Jesus, whom God made our wisdom and our righteousness and **sanctification** and redemption.” Christ’s work is the basis of the sanctification. Thiselton states that almost no translation in English follows the precise structure of Greek, and he defines sanctification in 1:30 as a term of bringing one near to God by the divine agency’s work.⁵⁰²

Elsewhere in the Corinthian Corpus, Paul mentioned that the converts were “sanctified, [and] justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of God (6:11).” In 2 Cor. 1:21-22 Paul acknowledges it is God who establishes believers in Christ and in 2 Cor. 3:18 Paul writes that it is the divine agency that is transforming into the image of Christ.⁵⁰³

Galatians 5:18, 22-23 eiv de. pneu,mati a;gesqe(ouvkv evste. u` po. no,mon . . . Å~O de. karpou.j tou/ pneu,mato,j

⁵⁰⁰ See also Orr and Walther (1976) pp.145-146.

⁵⁰¹ Much has been written about the issues of the church in Corinth. Hall (2003) pp. 78-79 states that Paul’s primary purpose in 1:30 and other parts of the letter (e.g. 1:4-7; 4:8; 7:22) was not primarily to teach the Corinthians about the divine agency but to remind the Corinthians that their spiritual status had caused them to become “puffed up with pride in their own wisdom” which Hall argues is what lead Paul to rebuke them. This is clearly an aspect in the Corinthian correspondence, especially in 2 Cor. 10-13 which Paul pleads to them not to be boastful. But being ‘puffed up’ is not the only factor for Paul writing the letter, there was clear disunity among the church (1 Cor. 3:4-5; unlawful lawsuits (1 Cor. 6:1-8); sexual immorality (1 Cor.5:1-13; 6:13-7:40).

⁵⁰² See Thiselton (1995) pp.188-189, 193.

⁵⁰³ Thrall (1994) p.282 points out that some scholars think this verse only refers to Paul and other apostles and missionaries. She counters by saying “But there is no indication in 3:7-18 that he has any other ministers of the gospel in view. Why, moreover, should transformation be regarded as an apostolic prerogative? The sense is all believers.” See also Hall (2003) p.142.

evstin avga,ph cara. eivrh,nh(makroqumi,a crhsto,thj
avgaqwsu,nh(pi,stij prau<thj evgkra,teia\ kata. tw/n
toiou,twn ouv k e;stin no,moj

a;gw in 5:18⁵⁰⁴ is in the present tense, passive voice, again, emphasizing the divine agency's continual role in producing maturity in the disciples. In this case, Paul is a little more specific about the exact characteristics (fruit/harvest) that the divine agency will produce: growth in love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.⁵⁰⁵ The characteristics are in contrast to the sinful characteristics Paul describes in Gal.5:19-21.⁵⁰⁶

Philippians 1:6 pepoiqw.j auvto. tou/to(o[ti o`
evnarxa,menoj evn u` mi/n e;rgon avgaqo.n evpitele,sei a;cri
h` me,raj Cristou/ Vhsou/\

⁵⁰⁴ Elliot (2003) p.290 writes, "The integral connection between Flesh and Law, most obvious at Gal.5:18, is masked when Flesh is associated with libertinism as something opposite the Law." See also Elliot (2003) p.290 n. 10 for the views of flesh and law. But Elliot does not discuss the divine agency in regards to the Flesh and how Paul states that the Spirit prevents from being under the Law.

⁵⁰⁵ See also Fung (1988) p.262; Matera (1992) pp.210-211; Betz (1979) p.286; Bruce (1982) pp.251-256; Longenecker (1990) pp.259-260; for a discussion of Gal. 5:19-23 as an ancient virtue list see Matera (1992) pp.207-212 and chapter 4, section 4.4.4.

⁵⁰⁶ See also Longenecker (1990) p.259. Elliot (2003) p.310 writes, "The Flesh has works, catalogued as vices in 5:18-21, while the Spirit gives fruit, catalogued as virtues in 5:22-23."

Consistent with Paul's thought in his other letters; Paul attributes the duty of responsibility in the formation process to the divine agency.⁵⁰⁷ The verb **pei,qw** is in the perfect tense which communicates completed action with continuing results. The perfect tense can also be used for emphasis when another tense is expected.⁵⁰⁸ Here Paul is emphasizing his confidence in the certainty that the divine agency will complete the Christian formation process until the eschaton. It is not surprising that Paul would use the future tense (**evpitele,sei**) here as he wants his converts to be aware that God will complete the formation at the eschaton, which has not yet happened.⁵⁰⁹ On the use of **evpitele,w** Silva writes,

Paul uses the verb **evpitele,w** . . . six other times. One of those speaks of the need for "perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Cor. 7:1), while four of them (Rom. 15:28; 2 Cor. 8:6, 11[twice]) occur in the context of finishing the task of raising an offering for the saints in Jerusalem . . . The Philippians . . . also needed to hear that their growth in sanctification, already evident through their participation in the gospel, was really God's work, and he would not fail to bring it to completion.⁵¹⁰

⁵⁰⁷ Holloway (2001) p.45 writes, "ο` evnarxa,menoj evn u` mi/n e;rgon avgaqo.n should be translated "he who began a good work among you" and understood referring to Paul's mission begun by God at Phillipi." Holloway (2001) pp.89-90 writes that the 'good work' could refer to the Philippians' partnership in the gospel ministry or the gospel mission itself. But I would argue that it is a reference to the Philippians' sanctification as 1:6 and 1:10 both end with the reference to the eschaton (until the day of Christ Jesus). 1:10 talks about the disciples being 'sincere and blameless' before the eschaton which would be a reference to sanctification over the gospel mission.

⁵⁰⁸ See also O'Brien (1991) p.63.

⁵⁰⁹ Thurston and Ryan (2005) p.50 write, "The implication of the phrase is also that God's "work" in them is not complete, but ongoing; it is "begun" and will be, but is not yet complete."

⁵¹⁰ Silva (2005) p.46.

responsibility.⁵¹² Witherington writes, “What he asks of others he does first.”⁵¹³

He tells his converts that it is a strict discipline of putting his body under control;⁵¹⁴ **u`pwpiā,zw** is present active indicative.⁵¹⁵ Paul wants to communicate to his readers that their responsibility for growth is a continuous action. It can be argued that the use of the present tense is either descriptive, where the present tense is used to depict an action in progress for vividness, or it is conative, where the present is used for an action which is attempted but still incomplete. It is most likely descriptive; Paul is communicating his responsibility towards right living by telling his converts that a strict disciplining of the body is necessary for right living. Even though Paul emphasizes the role of the divine agency in acting upon the converts, he is equally emphatic when it comes to human

⁵¹² Many believe Paul is referring to athletic games in this pericope, but Pfitzner (1967) pp.92-96 infers that Paul is not thinking of athletic games here. Pfitzner argues that Paul changes the idea to a theological one of his preaching the gospel. The *agon* motif would have a different meaning when used in a different context and therefore did not have to mean games in this context. Pfitzner (1967) p.6 writes “wherever these terms are to be found isolated and outside of complexes where the occurrence of other terms clearly suggests the athletic image, it is quite possible that the original reference to the games has been lost.” However, reading 1 Cor. 9:24-27 and terms like prize, run, race, win, compete, games, wreath, it would be hard to imagine that Paul was thinking about anything other than athletic games. Butarbutar (2007) p.196 writes, “Their familiarity with the things of the games would have helped them to perceive Paul’s intended meaning. Paul uses the language of his readers to assist him in conveying his message.”

⁵¹³ Witherington (1995) p.214. Butarbutar (2007) p.193 writes, “In 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 he speaks of a point with which he can (a) encourage his church members to carry out his exhortation (vv.24-25) and (b) express how he himself does it (vv. 26-27).”

⁵¹⁴ For a discussion of the phrase “I beat my body and make it my slave,” see Johnson (2004) p.151.

⁵¹⁵ For a discussion of the meaning of **u`pwpiā,zw** in its context, see Thiselton (2000) p.715 but the end result is that Paul “enslaves his life to larger apostolic purposes.”

responsibility. Paul has communicated the priority of the divine agency in 1 Cor. 1:1-2 but then he also communicates his focus of beating his body and disciplining it so he is not ‘disqualified from the contest.’

1 Corinthians is filled with exhortations from Paul for this right living: in 1:10-17⁵¹⁶ and through chapter 3, Paul exhorts his converts to be unified and have their divisions healed; he exhorts them not to associate with immoral persons (5:11),⁵¹⁷ not to take each other to court (6:1-11),⁵¹⁸ to shun fornication (6:18); in chapter 8 Paul encourages those to not eat food offered to idols because it makes the weaker in faith stumble (8:1-13);⁵¹⁹ chapter 10 is a warning on idolatry; Paul addresses right

⁵¹⁶ See Butarbutar (2007) p.41 for the issue of conflict within the congregations primarily involving social status.

⁵¹⁷ Gooch (1993) p.72 writes that Paul’s elucidation in 5:9-13 shows that Paul has himself provoked the Corinthian concern over food offered to other Gods . . . presented with this the Corinthians would have asked how one could associate with these proscribed persons, and apparently came up with a disturbing range of ways that such an exhortation could be understood - disturbing enough that in response to the Corinthians’ letter Paul is obligated to clarify his own earlier letter (5:10, 11).

⁵¹⁸ It would seem like this section is a digression from the main issue of chap. 5-7 of 1 Cor. that of sexual immorality as Hall (2003) pp.36, 124 suggests. But 6:9-10 shows that Paul still has sexual immorality on his mind as the list in 6:9-10 is similar to 5:10.

⁵¹⁹ For the alleged inconsistency between 8:1-13 and 10:1-22 and them belonging to two different letters, see (Hall 2003) pp.46-50. Hall argues that there is coherent unity and follows an a-b-c-a pattern:

- (a) The main principle (8:1-13). In deciding one’s attitude to food sacrificed to idols, love for other Christians takes precedence over knowledge of one’s rights.
- (b) Illustration of the main principle (9:1-27). Paul has the right to financial support, but has renounced it in order to help other people.
- (c) Ancillary argument (10:1-22). It is spiritually dangerous and logically inconsistent for Christians to associate themselves with idolatry.
- (d) Application of the main principle to a variety of situations (10:23-11:1).

worship and spiritual gifts in chapters 11-14, and his conventional final instructions, in 16:12-18.⁵²⁰

In 2 Cor. Paul encourages his converts in 2:5-11 to forgive those who have caused pain;⁵²¹ in 5:9-10 Paul urges his converts to live a life to please God for they will be judged someday;⁵²² in 8:1-9:15 Paul encourages his converts to give generously;⁵²³ in 10:3-6 not to walk according to the flesh by not accepting anything that is contrary to the knowledge of God and taking thoughts captive to obey Christ. And in the final chapter, he warns the Corinthians against the risk of falling away from Christ if they fail to persist in faith (13:5).⁵²⁴ Witherington writes, “Therefore, he [Paul] sees his job not merely to soften them with an appeal to pity the defendant, the usual defensive move, but rather to rouse them to vigilance about their own spiritual status. They must examine themselves to see if they are ‘in the faith.’”⁵²⁵ Throughout the Corinthian Correspondence, Paul exhorts his converts to right disciplined living, insisting that their spiritual growth and health depends on it.

⁵²⁰ See also Witherington (1995) p.318.

⁵²¹ See also Thrall (1994) pp.170-181.

⁵²² See also Witherington (1995) p.391.

⁵²³ Witherington (1995) pp.411-414 sees Paul using the deliberative argument of rhetoric here but Winter (2005) pp.135-150 argues that Paul was not using Greco-Roman rhetoric in his letters.

⁵²⁴ Furnish (1984) p.31 believes that contrasting 13:5 with 1:24 in 2 Cor. proves that there is inconsistency within the letter. Furnish does not take into account that Paul was being accused by opponents in 13:3. On the issue of 2 Cor. 1-9 being inconsistent with 10-13, see Hall (2003) pp.92-100.

⁵²⁵ Witherington (1995) p.472.

Philippians 3:12-14⁵²⁶ Ouvc o[ti h;dh e;laboron h' h;dh
tetelei,wmai(diw,kw de. eiv kai. katala,bw(evfV w-| kai.
kateih,mfqhn u`po. Cristou/ ÎVhsou/ÐÅ avdelfoi,(evgw.
evmauto.n ouv logi,zomai kateilhfe,nai\ e]n de,(ta. me.n
ovpi,sw evpilanqano,menoj toi/j de. e;mprosqen
evpekteino,menoj(kata. skopo.n diw,kw eivj to. brabei/on
th/j a;nw klh,sewj tou/ qeou/ evn Cristw/| Vhsou/Å

Throughout his missive to the Philippians, Paul is exhorting his converts to live good lives. His desire to see his converts live a responsible life can be summed up in Phil. 3:12-14; Paul shares his desire for them to strive to live a life of holiness that honors God. He knows he has not attained perfection and has earlier stated that God would complete it at the eschaton.⁵²⁷ It does not hinder his desire to press on to be like Christ before the eschaton. He calls this attainment his 'goal' and views it as part of his calling in the Lord. Paul saw that he himself had a responsibility to attain a level of growth and shared this with his disciples. Paul shares this perspective so his converts can also pursue holiness with the same

⁵²⁶ On whether or not Paul is responding to opponents, Oakes (2001) p.119 writes, "I doubt whether we need to read opponents into 3:12-16. Paul seems basically to be modeling day-by-day perseverance to the very end."

⁵²⁷ Oakes (2001) p.120 writes that v. 12 implies to the hearers that Paul may have attained the state of perfection. Oakes writes, "Paul says, No, I need to keep chasing towards the goal. The hearers are likely to respond by thinking that even Paul needs to do that, then they certainly do." On the issue of perfectionism, see Koester (1961-1962) pp.317-332 and Jewett (1970) pp.372-376.

importance. **tetelei,wmai** in v.12 is used only here in Paul.⁵²⁸ Fowl states that this verb should be understood to express Paul's thinking of not having attained his desired state or not being perfect yet.⁵²⁹ He may be responding to opponents who use this word to suggest they have attained full maturity.⁵³⁰ Paul then would be using this as an opportunity to express that he is not at this state of maturity or perfection but is striving for it. Paul is clearly acknowledging that the Christian is on a path from beginning to the end.⁵³¹ Verse 13 sounds like an athletic picture of a runner who should not be distracted by what was behind and should keep focus on what is ahead.⁵³² Verse 14 makes clearer Paul's inspiration but

⁵²⁸ Holloway (2001) p.141 writes,

It is often noted that **tetelei,wmai** is a Pauline hapax, from which it is concluded that the term derives from Paul's opponents, the "dogs" of 3:2, or from a new group appearing (without explanation) in 3:12-16. It is just as likely that term derives from the Philippians themselves, if in fact it is not Paul's word. The exhortation of 3:15, where the same root appears (**te,leioi**), it is clearly not directed to the opponents in 3:2, but to certain of the Philippians, most likely, Euodia and Syntyche and others who shared their sense of accomplishment in the Pauline mission. Many ideologies used this terminology in the ancient world, including Stoicism. Stoics like Epictetus and Seneca readily and repeatedly denied that they had attained the perfection of the sage. . . . What is perhaps most revealing is that the introduction of perfectionism serves to advance Paul's argument from his devaluing of accomplishments in Judaism to accomplishments in Christianity. Paul's reference to perfectionism has all appearances of being a foil to this argument.

⁵²⁹ See Fowl (2005) p.160.

⁵³⁰ See also Martin (1976) pp.136-137.

⁵³¹ See also Martin (1976) p.138.

⁵³² See also Martin (1976) p.139. Holloway (2001) pp.50, 130 holds to the phrase **e]n de** in 3:13 referring back to the phrase in Philippians 3:8 "the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ." But it is more likely that **e]n de** is referring back to the hapax **tetelei,wmai** in 3:12 or the phrase in 3:13, "forgetting what *lies* behind and reaching forward to what *lies* ahead." Paul is forgetting his past which involved rebellion against God and mistakes and focuses on the future, which is growth in holiness. The 'one thing' seems to focus more on the act of becoming perfect instead of knowing Christ, which is the focus of 3:8.

the ‘prize’ is not clear. Does Paul regard maturity and obtaining the goal as the same? From v. 12 Paul’s use of *tetelei, wmai* can communicate that he has not achieved his desired state. Is Paul expressing his pursuit of the intermediate goal of growing in holiness in light of the ultimate goal of being perfect? Martin writes,

Is Paul thinking of ‘the crown of life’ . . . familiar from the Greek games? Or is it Christ’s recognition of him at the last day and his assurance of being accepted . . . Or, more simply, it may be Christ himself who is the prize, so that in reaching the end of his course Paul is grateful to anticipate the fulfillment of the desire ‘to gain Christ’ (v.8) that first drew him.⁵³³

The “upward call of God in Christ” in 3:14 is likely that of growing in Christ. Throughout the letter to the Philippians, Paul has expressed his desire for Christ (1:20; 3:7-8) and the ultimate goal of perfection being fulfilled at the eschaton (1:6, 10). Paul is expressing his desire here to strive for the intermediate goal in light of the ultimate goal, and exhorts his disciples to do the same.⁵³⁴

Just as in the Corinthian church, there appear to be issues of unity in the body and Paul exhorts his converts that disunity is not the way

⁵³³ Martin (1976) p.140.

⁵³⁴ See also Oakes (2001) p.203. See also chapter 5, section 5.3.1 for a detailed discussion of the intermediate and ultimate goals.

believers in Christ should live. Earlier in 1:27-30,⁵³⁵ Paul broaches the subject of unity and prepares his converts in 1:20-26 about how for him, to live is Christ and that he knows Christ will not take his life away because his converts still need him.⁵³⁶ He wants his converts to have the same purpose statement as he does; living for Christ will take their focus off of themselves and onto Christ and others in the community.⁵³⁷ In 2:1-4, Paul encourages his converts to be unified and to consider others' interests more important than one's own.⁵³⁸ He then challenges them in 2:5-11 to have the same attitude as that of Christ and gives them Christ as an example to follow.⁵³⁹ O'Brien writes that it "is the most important section of the letter to the Philippians and provides a marvelous description of Christ's self-humbling in his incarnation and death, together with his

⁵³⁵ Oakes (2001) p.82 writes,

The specific evidence of suffering in 1:27-30, and the link there between Paul's suffering and that of the Philippians, suggests that, of the various possibilities for the reason behind the insistent theme of suffering in the letter, the correct one is the most straightforward, namely, that the Philippians were actually suffering. The insistence of the theme suggests that Paul saw there being some problem in the church in connection with it.

But Paul may also be preparing the Philippians as he does the Thessalonians in (1 Thess. 3:3-4) because he does not want these opponents to cause the faith of the Philippian church to apostatize.

⁵³⁶ See also Oakes (2001) pp.114-115.

⁵³⁷ See also O'Brien (1991) pp.38, 144-188.

⁵³⁸ There is some debate on whether or not **para,klhsij** has a meaning of exhortation or more of a meaning of comfort in this section. O'Brien (1991) p.169 writes that the majority of scholarship supports **para,klhsij** as being parenetic rather than comforting. Holloway (2003) p.23 argues that the letter of Philippians was a letter of consolation to console them in the midst of suffering. But Holloway also acknowledges the parenetic use of **para,klhsij** Phil. 2:1-4.

⁵³⁹ O'Brien (1991) p. 188 states that this is the most difficult passage in the letter to interpret.

subsequent exaltation by God to the place of highest honour.”⁵⁴⁰ Paul exhorts his converts to live as Christ did, considering others more important than oneself.

Elsewhere, Paul exhorts the Philippians to take responsibility for their own growth in respect of living in a manner worthy of the gospel (1:27).⁵⁴¹ In 2:14-16 Paul exhorts to do things without complaining or questioning, to hold fast to the word of life, living as blameless children of God.⁵⁴² The imperative verbs underline the importance of human responsibility. Throughout the letter, Paul exhorts his converts to right living as their responsibility.

Galatians 5:25 Εἰς ζω/μεν πνευ,ματι(πνευ,ματι και. stoicw/men. The dative πνευ,ματι points to the necessity of the divine agency in walking with God. πνευ,ματι can communicate that the believer lives by the “means of the Spirit,” or “by the power of the Spirit.”⁵⁴³ **stoice,w** is a hortatory subjunctive to exhort others to join someone in a specific action. Matera writes, “Here it has the sense of “follow.”⁵⁴⁴ Bruce writes, “walking by the Spirit is the fruit, and that fruit

⁵⁴⁰ O’Brien (1991) pp.186-187. For a detailed discussion of the issues surrounding 2:1-5, see O’Brien (1991) pp.188-202.

⁵⁴¹ The gospel is a crucial subject matter in Phil. 1:12-26. Paul is pleased if the gospel is being preached (Phil. 1:12-18) and Paul believes he has lived out his life well if the gospel is proclaimed by him (1:18-21). Paul would like the gospel to be central in the Philippians’ lives as well.

⁵⁴² See also O’Brien (1991) pp.289-301 and Thurston and Ryan (2005) p.95.

⁵⁴³ Matera (1992) p.204.

⁵⁴⁴ Matera (1992) p.204.

is nothing less than the practical reproduction of the character (and therefore the conduct) of Christ in the lives of his people.”⁵⁴⁵ Paul encourages his Galatian disciples to walk by the Spirit which he describes in Gal.5:13-26.⁵⁴⁶ The section begins and ends with exhortations to love one another and in v.26, Paul specifically exhorts them not to be conceited, provoke one another or be jealous of others.

Elsewhere, Paul in Gal.6:7⁵⁴⁷ reminds his converts that they will reap what they sow and then in Gal.6:8-10 Paul goes into more detail by stating that living for the sinful nature will lead to decay but living to please the Spirit will lead to eternal life.⁵⁴⁸ The Galatians need to not tire of doing good, especially to the household of faith.

3.3 The Divine Agency/Human Responsibility Tension

Philippians 2:12-13 {Wste(avgaphtoi, mou(kaqw.j pa,ntote u` phkou,sate(mh. w` j evn th/| parousi,a| mou mo,non avlla.

⁵⁴⁵ Bruce (1982) p.257.

⁵⁴⁶ For the issue of the ‘Two Ways Tradition,’ see Elliot (2003) pp.291-322. Elliot (2003) p.322 writes,

Paul’s use of the Two Ways form also explains why the parenetic section is not pure exhortation. As a type of paraenesis, the Two Ways form includes the element of exhortation, but it constructs a larger metaphorical framework. It does not simply exhort the audience about behavior but poses a clear choice. Paul uses the Two Ways form not so much to exhort the audience about their behavior and warn them against ‘libertinism’ as to show them what a choice for circumcision would mean.

⁵⁴⁷ Elliot (2003) p. 307 states that Gal. 6:7 is a ‘summary warning,’ which is a good description of the verse as 6:8-10 is list more specific in how Paul wants his converts behaving. For the issue of Gal. 6:7 and Greco-Roman maxims, see Bruce (1982) pp. 264-266, Dunn (1993) p.329, and Longenecker (1990) p.280.

⁵⁴⁸ **sa,,rx** and **pneu/ma** are contrasted in Gal. 6:8 as well as in Gal. 3:3; 4:29; 5:16-26. It is a key hermeneutical and theological issue in understanding Galatians.

nu/n pollw/| ma/llon evn th/| avpousi,a| mou(meta. fo,bou
kai. tro,mou th.n e` autw/n swthri,an katerga,zesqe\ qeo.j
ga,r evstin o` evnergw/n evn u` mi/n kai. to. qe,lein kai. to.
evnergei/n u` pe.r th/j euvdoki,aj

Paul deals with a tension: the divine agency and human responsibility are working together. We saw this in Gal. 5:25 but the interplay is clearer here in Phil. 2:12-13. In 2:12, Paul exhorts his converts to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling and then in 2:13, states that it is God who works.⁵⁴⁹ Paul uses the indicative and the imperative to illustrate this relationship.⁵⁵⁰ In 2:12 he uses the imperative of **katerga,zomai** and in 2:13, **qeo.j ga,r evstin o` evnergw/n evn u` mi/n** is in the indicative.⁵⁵¹ For the reader, this tension can be difficult

⁵⁴⁹ Holloway (2001) p.124,

The key term here is “salvation.” . . . The Philippians no doubt conceived their salvation, as they did Paul’s, in quite literal terms: the cessation of their difficulties, including the physical return of Paul. But Paul has already defined this important term in his earlier discussion of his own suffering in 1:19-20, where he equates it not with physical deliverance but with moral victory in the face of threatening circumstances. The Philippians are to seek a similar “salvation” in their current hardship, which by definition must be pursued with a proper reverence toward God . . . They will be helped in this pursuit by seeing in their present circumstances the hand of God, who is producing in the Philippian community both the desiring and the doing of his will.

Holloway gives an adequate explanation from the perspective of the Philippians but does not support the later part of the Philippians being helped by God with equal reference to the text but says that the hand of God is producing a desiring and doing of his will. But it is God working in the Philippians, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

⁵⁵⁰ This will be discussed in more detail in the section dealing with Romans, section 3.6.1.

⁵⁵¹ Bockmuehl (1998) pp.153-154 writes,

The characteristically Pauline dimension of verses 12-13 emerges in eschatological balance between the theological ‘indicative’ and the moral ‘imperative’: the accomplished fact or ‘indicative’ of new life by God’s grace gives rise to and empowers its practical realization (the ‘imperative’) in the demand to live out that new life.

but for Paul, there is no difficulty. He sees both the divine agency and human responsibility working together and makes no effort to resolve the tension. The divine agency works with and is in relationship with human responsibility but the exact mechanism as to how the two interact with each other is uncertain.⁵⁵²

Many have argued that if there is human responsibility, is the divine agency autonomous? The converse is true as well: if the divine agency is doing the formation, is human responsibility autonomous? Paul makes no effort to bring resolution to this tension, he only mentions them as aspects of the Christian formation process and that they are not a contradiction against each other.⁵⁵³ The relationship is a mystery. Murray gives some insight into the working relationship between the two:

God's working in us is not suspended because we work, nor our working suspended because God works. Neither is the relation strictly one of cooperation as if God did his part and we did ours so that the conjunction or coordination of both produced the required result. God works and we also work. But the relation is that because God works we work. All working out of salvation on our part is the effect of God's working in us.⁵⁵⁴

Murray basically restates what Paul wrote, but his statement illustrates the tension that God and humankind work together without answering the

⁵⁵² Thurston and Ryan (2005) p.94 write that human responsibility is placed 'under the umbrella' of the divine agency. Bruce (1983) pp.56-57 acknowledges human responsibility in 2:12 and the divine agency in 2:13 in formation but does not attempt to reconcile like Thurston and Ryan.

⁵⁵³ See also Fowl (1990) p.96 where he states that working out your salvation in v. 12 is a reference back to 1:27 and following the way of suffering for Christ.

⁵⁵⁴ Murray (1961) pp.148-149.

question of one superseding or nullifying the other. The exact mechanism remains a mystery in Paul's writings. It is likely that Paul is thinking pastorally and that he wants his converts to have a balanced view of formation: they can rest in the work of the divine agency to form them but also must be responsible to obey and live a holy life themselves and to honor God.

We have seen that Paul mentions the divine agency and human responsibility outside of 1 Thessalonians, and now we have been introduced to the interplay between the divine agency and human responsibility in Christian formation. Now we will see if the third aspect is present.

3.4 The Shared Life of the Christian Community

1 Corinthians. From the tone of the letter, the church as a whole is struggling. Paul acknowledges that the converts need to be sensitive to the needs of the weak.⁵⁵⁵ In regards to food sacrificed to idols in 1 Cor. 8:1-13,⁵⁵⁶ Paul advises the community to “take care that this right of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak.” Paul goes on

⁵⁵⁵ Also found in Romans and 1 Thessalonians. For the strong and the weak in Romans, see Reasoner (1999), 1 Thessalonians, see Burke (2003) pp.225-249.

⁵⁵⁶ See Thiselton (2000) pp.617-620 for a detailed discussion of the meaning of **eivdwlo,quton**.

to advise in 8:9-13 not to do something (eat meat sacrificed to idols) that would cause a weaker believer to stumble in his or her faith.⁵⁵⁷

Paul wants the community to be sensitive to the fact that others are weaker and need special care in their faith.⁵⁵⁸ In this case, sensitivity to food sacrificed to idols needs to be considered as those weaker in faith would have their faith affected in a negative manner.

The unit of 1 Cor. 12-14 sheds light on community.⁵⁵⁹ Paul wants the Corinthians to know that they are dependent on each other and need each other to grow.⁵⁶⁰ Because of the problems in the church, like disunity, Paul needed to refocus his converts on their need for one another. The essence of the pericope's contribution to community can be summed up in 1 Corinthians 12:7 "But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good."⁵⁶¹ Each member must be allowed to express their gift for this to occur. Romans 12:6-8 also has this tone,

⁵⁵⁷ Hall (2003) p.192 writes, "Insistence on one's personal rights can prove hurtful to other Christians, and thus be a sin against Christ. He illustrates this by describing his approach to his own rights. As an apostle, he has the right to claim support from the church, but has chosen not to exercise that right for fear it should become a hindrance to the gospel (v.12)."

⁵⁵⁸ See also Hall (2003) p.47.

⁵⁵⁹ Thiselton (2000) p.900 writes, "Too many writers treat 12:1-14:40 as if it were simply an ad hoc response to questions about spiritual gifts (or spiritual persons) rather than as an address to this topic within the broader theological framework of 11:2-14:40 in deliberate continuity with 8:1-11:1, and indeed ultimately with 1:1-4:21." Hall (2003) p. 74 writes, "The whole of 1 Corinthians is an attempt to turn the Corinthian mindset from an individualistic, competitive assertion of one's own gifts and rights into an ethic of consideration for others." I am in agreement with Hall and feel Thiselton should extend his pericope to include chapters 15 and 16 of 1 Corinthians.

⁵⁶⁰ See Thiselton (2006) p.197.

⁵⁶¹ There is a strong tone of the divine agency as well. See Thiselton (2000) pp.935-936 for good discussion of the grammar of the verse and the divine agency. Taken from NAS version as well as Romans 12:6-8.

Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, *each of us is to exercise them accordingly*: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

Paul illustrates the Corinthians' dependence on one another in 1

Corinthians 12:12 comparing the Corinthian church to the human body.

Though the members of the church are many, they should see themselves

as one body like the human body is one and Christ is one.⁵⁶² Thiselton

writes,

To drive home this principle Paul borrows, but also then reverses, an application of the imagery of the body long known and used in Greco-Roman politics and rhetoric. From the fourth and fifth centuries B.C. through the first century up to the second, Plato, Plutarch, and Epictetus. . . . used the image of the body to promote the need for harmony where there was diversity of status. . . All Christian believers constitute a single body (v.12); to suggest otherwise is to denigrate or tear apart the very limbs of Christ (v. 12b).⁵⁶³

In 1 Cor. 12:14, Paul tells the Corinthians that the body is not just one

member but many. There may have been an overemphasis on one or more

members and Paul wants the church as a whole to see everyone as

important. 1 Cor.12:15-25 goes into this dependence by comparing the

⁵⁶² Martin (1995) p.94 writes, "Paul's use of the body analogy in 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 stands squarely in the Greco-Roman rhetorical tradition." Martin comments on how Paul uses status terms and that Paul relates the body analogy to a hierarchy of high and low status believers but he is not using them as they are but, in Pauline fashion, sought a reversal of the way they were used. Martin (1995) p.103 writes, "He identifies with the strong and calls on them to consider the weak."

⁵⁶³ Thiselton (2006) pp.208-209.

church to specific body parts and illustrating the foolishness to overemphasize one member over others but to communicate that everyone in the church body has a gift and value and contributes to the community's growth.⁵⁶⁴ Paul again communicates this interdependence on one another by stating that if one part of the body suffers, they all suffer and the converse is also true that if one member is blessed, this is good for the church as a whole. Paul emphasizes again in 1 Cor. 12:27 that the church is part of Christ's body. 1 Cor. 13 moves away from gifts and focuses on the primacy of love over gifts.⁵⁶⁵ Though gifts are important, Paul wants his converts to do what is most important, loving each other. Gifts are to be used for the edification of the church. **oivkodome,w** in 1 Cor. 14:4⁵⁶⁶ can mean "(a) literally *building, construction*; (b) figuratively, of spiritual encouragement *making more able, edifying, building up*."⁵⁶⁷

⁵⁶⁴ See also Thiselton (2006) p.209-210.

⁵⁶⁵ On the issue of Isis followers and 1 Cor. 13, see Witt (1971) pp.255-268. Witt (1971) p.263 writes, "The triad of Christian virtues, Faith, Hope and Love, so eloquently praised in *Corinthians*, is introduced in such a way as to suggest that the writer of what is obviously an aretalogy is taking a close look at contemporary cults. He mentions the gift of tongues, a gift on which much stress is laid in the New Testament. The followers of Isis held that she controlled the various tongues, "dialects," that prevailed in the world." There is no other section in the undisputed or the disputed letters of Paul that deal with this issue so thoroughly. Maybe the closest comes in 1 Thess. 5:19-21. But it is also clear that the main issue Paul was addressing was orderliness in worship 1 Cor. 14:20-33 and the cult of Isis, if it is on Paul's mind, was not a huge issue in the pericope but a side issue at best.

⁵⁶⁶ Derrett (1997) p.130 writes,
 No one doubts, in the context, but that Paul is using foundation-laying not only as a metaphor (as at 1 Cor. 14:4) for the commencement of a religious community, but also the better-known metaphor of introductory teaching, a "foundation-course." Philo talks of an introductory exegesis upon which one can raise a structure by means of allegory as a master-builder's work, and such metaphors are acceptable.

⁵⁶⁷ ANLEX p.278.

Though specifically dealing with the gift of prophecy, it still communicates the essence of each one using their spiritual gifts in the church: to build up the body and spiritually encourage one another.

The issue of spiritual gifts is much more wide-ranging than this brief discussion suggests, but in relation to Christian formation, it is very clear that spiritual gifts are for the building up of the community. Spiritual gifts also affirm the value each member has to the community for each other's benefit.

Galatians 6:1-2⁵⁶⁸ Paul exhorts his converts to help those who are living in sin but to be careful as they may fall into the same temptation.⁵⁶⁹

Fung writes,

In carrying out the task of restoring an offender, the spiritual ones are to note two things: (a) They are to set him right again “very gently”—more literally, “in a spirit of meekness” or “gentleness” . . . Since gentleness is an aspect of the fruit of the Spirit, those who walk by the Spirit will naturally show this quality. Here the emphasis is clearly on a spirit of considerateness towards the sinner, over against a censorship spirit. (b) They are to be watchful against falling into temptation themselves.⁵⁷⁰

⁵⁶⁸ On the issue of **Cristo,j** here in Gal. 6:2 and elsewhere in Galatians retaining “the titular sense of Israel’s Messiah,” see Cummins (2001) pp.198-200; contra Hengel (1983) pp.65-77, 179-188 who asserts that **Cristo,j** is not a title.

⁵⁶⁹ See also Matera (1992) pp.213-214 and Betz (1979) pp.295-298.

⁵⁷⁰ Fung (1988) p.286.

Philippians 4:3 In 4:3 Paul appeals to the community to aid in a feud between Euodia and Syntyche.⁵⁷¹ He wrote earlier in 2:1-11 the need for the community to live in unity and made a strong appeal to live as Christ lived among each other. Unity is a theme in the letter and Paul urges the Philippians here to contribute to the unity by helping mend a broken relationship between two people.⁵⁷²

We have seen that Paul's undisputed letters have a consistent thought with 1 Thessalonians on the divine agency, human responsibility and the shared life together in Christian community. Now I will see if impartation is mentioned in a manner consistent with 1 Thessalonians.

3.5 Impartation

Galatians 4:19 te,kna mou(ou]j pa,lin wvdi,nw me,crij ou-morfwqh/| Cristo.j evn u`mi/n\

Paul's goal is expressed here: until Christ is formed in you. The language in Galatians is different than Thessalonians. In 1 Thessalonians, words like blameless and holy are used but in Gal. 4:19 Paul is more specific, he wants Christ formed in them. There is clearer development of Paul's goal from 1 Thess. and here in Gal. 4:19 is his purpose statement for his

⁵⁷¹ But Peterlin (1995) p.51 sees the letter as the Philippian community divided on whether Paul's imprisonment was a compromise of his Christian mission due to a triumphalism form of believing. Jewett (1970) pp.362-371 sees Paul facing prideful missionaries who think Paul being in prison is incompatible with what a true missionary should be. Winter (1994) p.99 thinks the central issue at hand is rivalry for position and honor within the believing community.

⁵⁷² See O'Brien (1991) pp.479-483.

converts.⁵⁷³ Paul's language here is maternal much like 1 Thessalonians 2:7; he describes himself as a mother in labor desiring to birth.⁵⁷⁴ Again, Paul emphasizes his desire to impart something to his disciples by using the image of a mother. Paul's goal as a 'mother' is to see Christ formed in them.

1 Corinthians 3:6-9 evgw. evfu,teusa(VApollw/j evpo,tisen
(avlla. o` qeo.j hu;xanen\ w[ste ou;te o` futeu,wn evsti,n ti
ou;te o` poti,zwn avllV o` auxa,nwn qeo,jÅ o` futeu,wn
de. kai. o` poti,zwn e[n eivsin(e[kastoj de. to.n i;dion
misqo.n lh,myetai kata. to.n i;dion ko,pon\ qeou/ ga,r
evsmen sunergoi,(qeou/ gew,rgion(qeou/ oivkodomh,
evsteÅ

For the first time in this study, we find a passage where the divine agency is explicitly paired with impartation.⁵⁷⁵ Paul communicates that the divine agency uses impartation as an instrument for formation. Though Paul acknowledges the work he and Apollos have done in impartation, he

⁵⁷³ Again, since Galatians and 1 Thessalonians are often thought of as Paul's first letters, 1 Thessalonians being more dominant, the issue of the 'conformity to Christ' language espoused by Samra (2006) can add insight into the discussion. Conformity to Christ language is in Galatians but not in 1 Thessalonians. See chapter 5, section 5.7.1.2 for further discussion of the conformity to Christ language and possible evidence for 1 Thessalonians being written before Galatians.

⁵⁷⁴ See Gaventa (1990) pp.189-201 on the issue of maternity and Paul.

⁵⁷⁵ Most commentators on these verses stress that in them Paul is responding to factions that are developing in Corinth. See Johnson (2004) pp.72-77 for good discussion on how this section is Paul trying to deflate the factions in Corinth and exalt God. Impartation is not a common topic that is brought up in discussion of this pericope.

attributes all the results of the work to the divine agency.⁵⁷⁶ The two verbs **futeu,w** and **poti,zw** are in the aorist indicative while **auvxa,nw** is in the imperfect indicative.⁵⁷⁷ The use of the imperfect tense is to denote continuous action in the past while the aorist tense is often used to denote unspecified kind of action that is neither continuous nor completed and is concerned with the fact of the action and not how it is conceived to have taken place. When analyzing an imperfect tense, there should be careful consideration as to its function especially since Paul changes tenses from aorist, to imperfect.⁵⁷⁸ Is the imperfect here communicating a sense of duration for vividness? Does Paul use it to highlight the work of the divine agency in impartation? Or is Paul trying to communicate that at the inception of the action of impartation, the divine agency is the controlling factor? Or is it an axiom of impartation that the divine agency is what produces its efficacy and that impartation is just an instrument used by the divine agency in Christian formation? Paul's use of the imperfect tense clearly highlights the fact that Paul saw the divine agency as paramount in impartation. But the imperfect tense also communicates that the action is not perfected or completed, leaving open to debate the question of how

⁵⁷⁶ Notice Paul's insistence that he and Apollos are colleagues and not rivals, both serving God and blessed by God. From 1 Cor. 16:12, there is no animosity between the two. Those who assert that Paul's motivation was power over his converts rather than care must contend with this issue of Paul not having a rivalry with Apollos because Apollos would clearly be a threat to Paul's power over the Corinthians.

⁵⁷⁷ Notice the agricultural tone Paul uses to describe the interaction between the divine agency and impartation. The society was an agricultural one, so Paul's word choice would make perfect sense here as well as 1 Cor. 9:7-11. See also Meyer (1892) p.257.

⁵⁷⁸ See also Thiselton (2000) p.302.

exactly the divine agency uses impartation. Paul could have used the perfect tense to communicate the totality of the divine agency's influence on impartation, but the imperfect tense coupled with two verbs in the aorist does not offer syntactical finality. Still, it is clear Paul is using the imperfect to highlight the divine agency in impartation but due to the imperfect tense, impartation is not entirely a subset of the divine agency but an entity of Christian formation on its own.⁵⁷⁹ The context of the pericope has Paul addressing divisions in the church and not Christian formation directly, but it communicates the attitude Paul has that the divine agency has great importance in the process of impartation.

Paul goes on to say the same thing in 3:7, only this time, all three verbs are in the present tense, communicating a continuous action or an action repeated over time. Paul again highlights the continuous work of the divine agency using the continuous work of impartation as an aspect of formation; it is not an action that happens one time but constantly, over time. Paul's main aim in this pericope is to emphasize that one should not attribute to Apollos or Paul the effectiveness of impartation, but to God himself.⁵⁸⁰ Though Paul does use the impartation language, his main goal is to refocus his converts onto God in hopes of bringing about unity and heal the divisions created by associating with Apollos or Paul.⁵⁸¹ Still, it

⁵⁷⁹ See also Barrett (1968) pp.84-86 and Collins (1999) pp.145-146.

⁵⁸⁰ See also Bruce (1982) p.43.

⁵⁸¹ See also Fee (1987) p.132.

gives an insight into Paul's understanding of impartation. He does not divide impartation from the work of the divine agency; the two are at work together, much like the divine agency and humankind interaction. But unlike the interaction between the divine agency and human responsibility, Paul clearly states that it is the divine agency causing the growth, not he or Apollos. Hence, Paul takes some of the onus of responsibility of the impartation process off him and transfers it to God, but he has a different tone in other pericopes.

In 2 Cor. 13:7-9 he says to the Corinthians that he and his associates failed in teaching them to do what is right but they are still praying for their restoration.⁵⁸² In 1 Cor. 2:1-5,⁵⁸³ Paul highlights his own personal influence on the Corinthians.⁵⁸⁴ He talks about how he lived among them as an example of a life that rests in the power of God and not on human wisdom. The cognitive dimension⁵⁸⁵ of impartation is expressed in 2:1-2 as Paul emphasizes that he “did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.” The

⁵⁸² Paul seems to use the first person plural as a writing technique when referring to apostolic policy but when he states a threat about his coming visit; he uses the first person singular. See Hall (2003) pp.86-128 for Paul's use of the singular and the plural.

⁵⁸³ See Lim (1987) pp.137-149

⁵⁸⁴ Lim (1987) pp. 145-146 writes, “Paul in this passage employs terminology which traditionally belongs to rhetoric and appears to be distinguishing himself from the other preachers who were circulating in the Corinthian church.”

⁵⁸⁵ See chapter 5, section 5.3.

relational dimension is mentioned in 1 Cor. 2:1-5.⁵⁸⁶ Paul writes that he was with the converts “in weakness and in fear and much trembling, and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.” Paul was among his converts, sharing his life with them. They could see him in his weakness as well as observe his example of dependence on the power of God rather than on the wisdom of humankind. It is clear that Paul sees the divine agency as paramount in relation to mentoring here in the Corinthian Correspondence. Paul clearly emphasizes the divine agency as the means of producing growth by impartation, but here in 2:1-5, impartation is mentioned without reference to the divine agency.⁵⁸⁷ In 1 Cor. 4:15,⁵⁸⁸ Paul acknowledges that he is the father to the converts. While acknowledging that there are others who help in their growth, Paul separates himself by attaching the paternal label here in 4:15.⁵⁸⁹ He does this also in 1 Thessalonians, but there is also a mention of them being peers, while in the Corinthian Correspondence there is mention of Paul

⁵⁸⁶ See chapter 5, section 5.4. Chapter 5 is a detailed discussion of Paul’s method of impartation which includes the cognitive and relational dimensions explained.

⁵⁸⁷ But 2:4-5 with references to ‘demonstration of the Spirit’ and ‘the power of God’ communicate a relationship with the divine agency.

⁵⁸⁸ See Hall (2003) pp.10-12 for a discussion of who the **paidagwgoi**, are. Hall (2003) p. 12 writes, “The pedagogues were people currently living in Corinth. But they are unlikely to have been members of the local church. In the metaphor, the church members are compared to children, and are distinguished from the pedagogues who are their guardians. These pedagogues should be identified . . . as the visiting teachers to whom Paul has been alluding in a disguised fashion throughout chs. 1-4.”

⁵⁸⁹ See also Keener (2005) pp.44-45.

and Apollos as equals to each other but no specific reference to equality with the Corinthian converts themselves.

Paul goes on in 1 Cor. 4:16 to encourage the converts to imitate him.⁵⁹⁰ Sanders writes,

- 1) . . . Timothy will remind the Corinthians not only by words, but he will represent in his own personal conduct the ways he has learned from Paul (cf. Phil 2:19–22) and thus the patterns of behavior which can overcome the divisiveness in the church.
- 2) Since divisiveness in the Corinthian church is caused by the high regard for the apostles as teachers of wisdom, Paul . . . speaks as a father to his children. As their father, he does not shame them or instruct them; rather, he urges and encourages them to imitate him and his example which is present among them in Timothy who is Paul's beloved child and, as it were, their older brother.⁵⁹¹

A similar tone is found in 1 Cor. 9:1 where Paul refers to the converts as his “workmanship in the Lord.”⁵⁹² Again, Paul acknowledges his significance in the formation process of the converts.

Also, the call to imitate in 1 Cor. 11:1 is in a similar context to 1 Cor.4:16. Paul strengthens his teaching by using the substance of the life he is living.⁵⁹³ Within the context of 1 Cor.8–10, the prevailing subject matter is one

⁵⁹⁰ Imitation will be discussed more in-depth in chapter 5, section 5.4.1.

⁵⁹¹ Sanders (1981) p.363.

⁵⁹² See also Collins (1999) pp.334-335.

⁵⁹³ See also Clarke (1998) pp.342-347. Richard (1995) p.67, argues that 1 Cor.11:1 “provides the background and probably constitutes an expanded form of [1 Thess. 1:6] ... for imitation of Paul is in fact imitation of the Lord.” Belleville (1996) pp.122-25 offers a brief analysis of major commentators' perspectives on 1 Cor. 11:1.

not of declaring or protecting privileges, but rather of putting them down for the greater advantage of building up the 'weaker' associates of the community.⁵⁹⁴ Clarke writes, "This perspective is to be adopted by those who want to exercise their rights regarding meat which has formerly been sacrificed to idols (1 Cor. 8:9-13; 10:23-33), just as it is adopted by Paul on the question of the right to support from those to whom he is ministering (1 Cor. 9:12b-23)."⁵⁹⁵ Paul urges his disciples not to imitate the Israelites of the wilderness period (1 Cor. 10:1-11) because they were left as examples not to follow (1 Cor. 10:6, 11). 1 Cor. 11:1 is a contrast to 10:1-11 as Paul and Christ are worthy to be followed.⁵⁹⁶ Copan writes,

⁵⁹⁴ See Belleville (1996) p.126.

⁵⁹⁵ Clarke (1998) p.346. On the issue of whether or not Paul's call to imitation involved missionary activity, see Plummer (2001) pp.219-235. Plummer responds to those who hold that missionary activity may not be an important aspect of Paul's call to imitation. Other scholars say that if the call to evangelism is important, it is of passive nature, see Plummer pp.219-220, and n.2, 3, 4 and p.234 n.61. Plummer argues that it is an evangelistic command and active in nature.

⁵⁹⁶ Castelli (1991) pp.112-113 charges Paul with using this parallelism as an attempt to take up authority by being Christ's intermediary and create a hierarchy in the community because Paul is confusing his identity with Christ; contrast Clarke (1998) p. 347 who points out that this is inconsistent with the essence of Chapters 8-10. Also, Thiselton (1995) p.142 n.31 cites many 'specialists' who are at issue with Castelli (and Moore and Foucault). Thiselton writes,

Paul's call to the community to imitate a pattern of humility and servant hood is not for the purpose of "conformity" or "control". It is precisely to protect those who might otherwise be despised or considered socially inferior; in other words, precisely to *protect* the "social deviants" for whom Foucault shows concern.'

Imitation in 1 Cor.11:1 refers most immediately to the context of the directly preceding verses (10:32–33), which in turn functions as a lens through which Paul wishes the Corinthians to look at the preceding discussion for the personal references to Paul's actions. Paul is calling the Corinthian believers to imitate him in the way that he makes it his constant aim negatively not to cause anyone—believer or unbeliever—to falter in their relationship to God, and positively to intentionally seek the good of the many so that they may be ultimately saved.⁵⁹⁷

Since Christ was no longer on the earth while Paul was writing to the Corinthian believers, he was a noteworthy stand-in.⁵⁹⁸

In 2 Cor. 7:8-10, Paul mentions the letter he wrote to them and how it grieved the Corinthians.⁵⁹⁹ Paul demonstrates how he continually has his converts on his mind and his commitment to their growth even when he is not in their presence. His comments were harsh and brought grief to them.⁶⁰⁰ Paul was not afraid to say things to them that would make them uncomfortable. Much like the Epicureans and their emphasis on harsh criticism, Paul's words in the letter were also harsh as it produced grief but his goal of causing the repentance of his converts was achieved.⁶⁰¹

⁵⁹⁷ Copan (2007) p.142.

⁵⁹⁸ See also Barrett (1968) p.116.

⁵⁹⁹ See also Harris (2005) pp.534-538 and Crafton (1991) p.159. See also Crafton (1991) p.161n1 on the discussion of the sub-patterns of negative to positive states.

⁶⁰⁰ See also Harris (2005) p.536.

⁶⁰¹ See chapter 4, section 4.3.2.1.

Philippians 1:7-11 Paul expresses his love and deep feelings for his converts in Philippians 1:7-8,⁶⁰² saying that he holds them in his heart and yearns for them with the affection of Christ Jesus.⁶⁰³ Paul clearly displays the affective dimension of mentoring,⁶⁰⁴ where his love induces a deep affection in his heart for his converts.⁶⁰⁵

His affections are also expressed through his persistent use of prayer. Paul viewed prayer as an instrument to aid his disciples' growth and an expression of the affective dimension of impartation. He prays for his converts regularly and over time.

The letter continues to communicate Paul's belief that his life is efficacious for their growth. In Phil 1:20-26, after Paul writes that to live for Christ is the reason to live and that it is far better to be with Christ, Paul tells his converts that it is not his time to depart the earth.⁶⁰⁶ His life

⁶⁰² Oakes (2001) pp.77-78 states that 1:7 is evidence of suffering in the letter to the Philippians. But Paul does not state that he is suffering; only that he is in prison. But what he does share is that he has the Philippians in his heart while he is in prison and that they are 'partakers of grace' with him. In 1:12-18, Paul states that he 'rejoices' that the gospel is being preached while he is in prison and that his imprisonment has caused 'greater progress for the gospel.' Though it would not be wrong to infer suffering in verses like 1:7, it is clear that Paul is experiencing joy in the midst of his less than desirable circumstances.

⁶⁰³ One theme in the letter Paul stresses in regards to his relationship with the Philippians is 'their partnership in the gospel.' See 1:7-8,24-26, 27; 2:2, 12, 16, 19, 24, 28; 3:1, 17-18; 4:1, 3, 9 10-11.

⁶⁰⁴ See chapter 5, section 5.5.

⁶⁰⁵ See also Thurston and Ryan (2005) p.50.

⁶⁰⁶ As well as affirming the Philippians that he will see them again. Holloway (2001) pp. 82, 111-112, 115-116, 126, 135 states that verses like 1:25-26 is a form of consolation Paul uses to console his converts in the midst of suffering. But Paul could also be affirming them that he is doing well despite his circumstances as he would know that the converts would be concerned about his imprisonment and Paul is updating them of how he is doing.

is necessary for the sake of the Philippians' growth. Paul writes in Philippians 1:25-26, "I know that I will remain and continue with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith, so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus, because of my coming to you again." Paul knows that he still has work to do and sees himself as integral to the growth and formation of the lives of his converts.⁶⁰⁷ Therefore, he affirms to his converts his ongoing presence to help them.

Elsewhere, in 2:16, Paul exhorts his converts to hold fast to the word of God so he can be proud at the eschaton and that his work was not in vain.⁶⁰⁸ In 3:17,⁶⁰⁹ Paul encourages his converts to imitate him and echoes that thought in 4:9 where he writes that "What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me - practice these things and the God of peace will be with you" (ESV). Paul clearly saw himself as integral to his converts' growth by praying for them, loving them, and being part of their lives.

⁶⁰⁷ Some commentators like Martin (1976) pp.79-80 focus too much on Paul's thinking of the future and his potential martyrdom. Certainly with verses like 1:10 expressing the eschaton, it is understandable why eschatology would be a focus but equally important is Paul's content in 1:9 where he desires their love to grow. O'Brien (1991) pp.137-141 and Oakes (2001) p.104 focus more on this aspect of Paul.

⁶⁰⁸ See also Martin (1976) p.106

⁶⁰⁹ Holloway (2001) p.143 writes,

summimhthj here conveys the sense of becoming "imitators together" and indicates that Paul wants the Philippians to adopt his single-minded pursuit of Christ as a community ideal. In the larger context, this implies the replacement of the old ideal which overvalued one's accomplishments in the gospel ministry with the new ideal of knowing Christ. The effect of this will be twofold. Most obviously, it will insulate the community from the "dogs" of 3:2. But it will also challenge the hegemony of people like Euodia and Syntyche whose undue emphasis on accomplishment and status in the mission and its resulting competitiveness was causing them to fall short of Paul's standard, which included the ability to overlook personal rivalry (1 :15-17).

We have seen that Paul saw himself as important to the growth of his converts; I will now discuss whether or not others were important to the formation process.

3.5.1 Multiplicity of Mentors

1 Corinthians 3:10 “According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it” (ESV).

Paul has stated in the letter that he is a father to the Corinthians and they are his workmanship.⁶¹⁰ But Paul did not stop there; he also mentioned the contribution of others. In 3:10 Paul acknowledges his partnership in the formation of the Corinthians with other mentors. Fee states that scholars like Lightfoot, Weiss, Lietzmann, Mare think Paul is referring to Apollos; others like Moffatt, Craig, Barrett and Bruce believe Peter is referenced, and commentators such as Grosheide, Senft, and others believe Paul is referring to people who will follow Paul in Corinth.⁶¹¹ Apollos is much more likely than Peter, given that Paul wrote that Apollos was continuing Paul’s work (1 Cor.3:6) and that he will come

⁶¹⁰ Other images that Paul portrays himself, along with father are: nurse/mother, farmer, master-builder, slave/servant, athlete, and farmer. 1 Cor.3:1-2, 5-9, 10-11; 4:1, 14-15; 9:19, 24-27.

⁶¹¹ See Fee (1987) p.138.

when he has opportunity to (1 Cor.16:12). All together, Apollos is referenced seven times in 1 Corinthians (1:12; 3:4, 5, 6, 22; 4:6; 16:12). The reference to others who will follow Paul is consistent with how Paul thinks as he sent Timothy to check on the Thessalonians (1 Thess. 3:1-6).⁶¹²

Multiplicity of mentors is also found in 4:17, when Paul sent Timothy to them to remind them of the ways of Christ,⁶¹³ and in 2 Cor. 8:16-24 when Paul commends Titus for his ministry with the Corinthians. 2 Cor. 8:16 reads, “But thanks be to God who put into the heart of Titus the same earnest care I have for you” (ESV). Again, Titus is described in 2 Cor. 8:23 as Paul’s “partner and fellow worker for your benefit.” In 1 Cor 16:12, Apollos⁶¹⁴ is mentioned as coming when an opportunity arises.⁶¹⁵ There is also mention of Fortunatus and Achaicus being associated with Stephanas, though their roles are not clearly defined (16:15-17). In 2 Cor. 13:7-9 Paul acknowledges that he and his associates

⁶¹² The antithesis of this thinking is found in Romans 15:20 where Paul desired not to build on another’s foundation but to preach Christ where no one has preached (Rom. 15:20) but the principle is the same where others can continue in building on someone’s work.

⁶¹³ See also 1 Cor. 16:10. Titus was also sent to Corinth to help organize and help out (8:6, 10; 9:2; 12:18). See also Crafton (1991) p.51.

⁶¹⁴ Apollos, who was native to Alexandria, also had ministry in Ephesus as well as Corinth (Acts 18:24; Acts 19:1; 1 Cor. 16:8-12).

⁶¹⁵ See Thiselton (2000) pp.1332-1333 for discussion of Apollos and Corinth and the challenges faced due to the popularity of Apollos. Though Apollos did have popularity, it did not cause any rivalry between him and Paul due to the positive tone of 1 Cor. 16:12. Not only was there no evidence of rivalry, but Paul refers to Apollos’s status as equal to his own in 16:12. Again, addressing writers who operate from the perspective of power (e.g. Castelli, Moore), would Paul be so pleasant towards Apollos if his motive was power and would Paul acknowledge Apollos as equal?

failed in trying to teach the converts to do what is right. Paul knows that others need to be a part of the impartational process.

Philippians. Paul also affirms in Philippians, that others can make a contribution to the Philippians' lives. In 2:19-30, Paul draws attention to two of his associates, Timothy and Eraphroditus, as individuals who should be respected because they have contributed to the lives of the converts.⁶¹⁶ O'Brien writes, "2:19-30 does not simply inform the Philippians about the apostle's plans for Timothy and Epaphroditus; the section also has a parenetic purpose by pointing to them as models of a selfless attitude that Paul wants the community to follow."⁶¹⁷

In 3:17, after Paul exhorted his disciples to imitate himself, he also exhorted them to "keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us."⁶¹⁸ Paul continues his view that his associates and others have a place in the impartation process.

We have looked at other Pauline letters and have seen consistency with 1 Thessalonians with a little development, now we will take a special look at Romans.

3.6 Romans

⁶¹⁶ See also Holloway (2001) p.120.

⁶¹⁷ O'Brien (1991) p.315.

⁶¹⁸ Imitation has already been discussed and will be addressed again in chapter 5; for a good discussion of imitation in the context of 3:17 see O'Brien (1991) pp.444-450.

When Romans is talked about, topics like justification by faith, the Gospel, and Jew/Gentile relationships are often mentioned.⁶¹⁹ Christian formation is not a common topic in discussions of Romans.⁶²⁰

1 Thessalonians gave us the definition and foundation. We will now see if there is consistency within Romans. The divine agency and human responsibility are first in the discussion.

3.6.1 Divine Agency and Human Responsibility

Paul sees both the divine agency and human responsibility as significant aspects of Christian formation in Romans. Passages such as Romans 1:1-7, with its emphasis on God's grace and call and on the work of Christ, affirms the divine agency. Similarly, the *ordo salutis* in Rom 8:30 affirms the divine agency in predestining and then calling and then justifying with the final outcome being glorification. Meanwhile, humankind has a choice to make and that choice is either to walk in the Spirit or walk according to the flesh (Rom. 8:4); the sanctification process is not completed but the tyranny of sin is over and it no longer needs to be

⁶¹⁹ Byrne (2004) p.252 writes, "Romans will never lack interpreters—or debate." The purpose of Romans is not as clear as one may think, e.g. Dahl (1977) and Stendahl (1995) see Romans through the theme of Paul's missionary activity while Keener (1993) p.412 sees Romans through the issues of Jews and Gentiles in community together. See also Morris (1988) pp.8-16. Morris states there are at least ten different reasons why Romans could have been written.

⁶²⁰ Thompson (2006) pp.150-156 argues that transformation is at the heart of Paul and not justification by faith.

humankind's master (Rom 6:14). Passages like Romans 2:7-8⁶²¹ affirm human responsibility: "to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury." Just as Philippians 2:12-13 introduced the topic of the interplay between the divine agency and human responsibility, Romans has a longer treatment of this interplay. This is especially seen in Romans 6-8.⁶²²

Romans 6:1-14.⁶²³ The dynamic between the divine agency and human responsibility is made evident by Paul's use of the indicative and the imperative mood.⁶²⁴ The indicative highlights what has been accomplished by the divine agency and the imperative highlights what humankind is commanded to accomplish.⁶²⁵ This is a significant characteristic of chapter 6 of Romans.

Paul begins the pericope by responding to 5:20-21. Because the law increased sin, grace abounded more. But should humankind continue in sin for grace to thrive? Paul says no because the Romans are dead to

⁶²¹ ESV; on the issue of honor and shame language in the letter, see Bryan (2000) pp. 72-75.

⁶²² See also Bryan (2000) pp.133-159. For the rhetorical situation of 6-8 within the letter, see Elliot (1990) pp.225-275.

⁶²³ See also Guerra (1995) pp.131-133.

⁶²⁴ See also Dunn (1998) pp.626-631.

⁶²⁵ More specifically, the indicative mood indicates actuality. The writer considers the action as a fact. The imperative mood is used for a command or a prohibition.

sin. They are dead to sin because of the divine agency's work through Christ's death and resurrection. Paul writes here that Christ has set them free from not only sin's punishment but also sin's control. Justification is being set free from the penalty of sin and sanctification allows a believer freedom from sin's power. Both are products of the working of the divine agency, but more focus is on sanctification in Chapter 6.⁶²⁶ Paul wants to communicate to the Romans that sin's rule is over and believers possess freedom in Christ to live holy lives. The indicatives permeate the chapter and in verse 11, the imperatives begin.

Paul emphasizes the divine agency's work in verses 1-11 by describing how believers are set free by the work of Christ.⁶²⁷ Four verbs in the indicative— **bapti,zw**, **sunqa,ptw**, **sustauro,w**, **avpoqnh,|skw**— highlight the divine agency's work. The believers benefit and participate in Christ's death and resurrection, nullifying sin's power over them.

Paul begins by telling the Romans that the act of baptism is not just a physical act, but a spiritual one where people are baptized into Christ's death. Baptism is a moment of divine activity, though Paul presupposes

⁶²⁶ Moo (1996) p.350 writes, Justification—acquittal from the guilt of sin —and sanctification—deliverance from sinning —must never be confused, but neither can they be separated. The Westminster Larger Catechism puts it like this: Question: "Wherein do justification and sanctification differ?" Answer: "Although sanctification be inseparably joined with justification, yet they differ, in that God in justification imputeth the righteousness of Christ; in sanctification his Spirit infuseth grace, and enableth to the exercise thereof; in the former, sin is pardoned; in the other, it is subdued."

⁶²⁷ See also Dabourne (1999) p.36.

that it is accompanied by the commitment of faith (Rom 10:9-13). Hence, baptism focuses the relation between divine activity and human responsibility.⁶²⁸ Paul is likely referring to baptism as their acknowledgment of faith in Christ as Savior as well as the act of immersion in water. This faith is what allows them to experience Christ's work.

Because of being baptized in Christ, his burial is also experienced. And because Christ died and was buried and was raised from the dead, believers will walk in newness of life. Baptism unites in the death and resurrection of Christ and since Christ's death and resurrection nullified the power of sin, this power is true for those who have believed in Christ. The use of burial and baptism are highlighting the fact that the divine agency has allowed humankind to ontologically experience the efficacy of Christ's own burial and resurrection through their faith in Christ.

After baptism and burial, Paul uses crucifixion.⁶²⁹ It was Christ who experienced crucifixion but it is the divine agency that allows humankind to have its old nature crucified with Christ (6:6).⁶³⁰ Again, Paul is highlighting the crucifixion of Christ and the divine agency using

⁶²⁸ See also Bornkamm (1969) p.85, Cranfield (1980) p.300 and Guerra (1995) pp. 131-132.

⁶²⁹ But before this, Paul uses the perfect indicative active form of **gi,nomai** with the adjective **su,mfutoj** which is often translated as 'become united.' So Paul wants the Romans to think that not only are they buried with Christ and baptized into his death but this burial and baptism unites them to Christ's experience as they will be united with him in his death and resurrection.

⁶³⁰ See Käsemann (1980) p.167 on Paul repeating the main thrust of the argument in 6:2-4 of denying antinomianism.

the Christ-event to free the believer from the tyranny of sin. And because Christ's death conquered sin, those who believe in Christ have also died to sin's effects. So Paul uses four verbs in the indicative tense to communicate that believers experience Christ's crucifixion, burial, and resurrection personally so that sin is no longer their master.

Paul uses the first of many imperatives in 6:11, telling the Romans that they must consider themselves dead to sin and alive to God because of the work of the divine agency. Paul switches his focus from the divine agency to human responsibility by his use of the imperatives. Because of what the divine agency has done, the Romans must not let sin reign in their bodies (v.12).⁶³¹ They must present the members of their body as instruments of righteousness to God because of what the divine agency has accomplished (v.13).⁶³² Paul is exhorting the Romans to holy living. The work of the divine agency elicits a response from humankind. Human responsibility is therefore an act of responding to the work of the divine agency because sin has no more dominion due to the work of the divine agency.

⁶³¹ See also Byrne (1996) pp.198, 221-222.

⁶³² See Cranfield (1975) p.317; Käsemann (1980) pp.176-177; Schreiner (1998) p.323, Moo (1996) p.384; Osborne (2004) p.157. Are the members of the body specifically a reference to body parts? Most say that it is not a reference to body parts alone. Some say it refers to the whole person, which would include the physical body. Some are vaguer, stating it is the whole person and not specifically stating whether or not members refer to body parts.

Romans 6:15-23.⁶³³ Paul again uses a question to guide his next thought on sanctification. It is similar to the question he asked in 6:1-2; is it acceptable to sin since a believer is under grace and not the law? Paul answers ‘no’ again and shifts from emphasizing righteous living because of Christ’s work (divine agency), to righteous living based on being a slave of Christ (human responsibility). Before the divine agency worked through Christ, humankind was enslaved by sin. The divine agency’s work is emphasized in 6:16-18 by transferring their slavery from sin to righteousness.⁶³⁴ **evleuqerwqe,ntej** in 6:18 is a participle in the passive voice, which communicates that the divine agency has set the Romans free from sin’s tyranny coupled with another verb in the in the passive, **evdoulw,qhte** emphasizing the divine agency freeing the Romans from sin and allowing them to become slaves of righteousness.⁶³⁵ Paul comes back with the imperative of **pari,sthmi** in 6:19.⁶³⁶ Just as he emphasized in 6:12-14 of presenting the members of one’s body to righteousness, he comes back with the same imperative here. Again, Paul

⁶³³ See also Guerra (1995) pp.133-134. Guerra p.134 writes, His response to the clearly annoying legalist and libertine objections urges that the hearer take into account other elements of his teaching and not view the doctrine of justification out of context and in isolation. Paul urges that if his admonitions to Christians to combat power of sin are not conveniently forgotten then a “blasphemous” (3:8) interpretation of his teaching on grace is wholly untenable.

⁶³⁴ See also Schreiner (1998) pp.333-338.

⁶³⁵ Guerra (1995) p.134 writes, “Paul does affirm that Christians are freed from the power of sin (6:18), but this freedom demands that they willingly submit as slaves to righteousness!”

⁶³⁶ See also Black (1973) p.92.

sees Christian formation as a work of the divine agency and human responsibility. The divine agency works on humankind but humankind has a choice to live under the power and freedom of the divine agency or not.

Much like the 'holiness' language in 1 Thessalonians, the noun **a`giasmo,j** is used here and in verse 22 and is translated as sanctification.⁶³⁷ In verse 19, sanctification was a product of human responsibility while in verse 22, **a`giasmo,j** is a product of the divine agency as Paul uses the passive participles of **evleuqero,w** and **doulo,w** to emphasize how the divine agency acted on humankind to set humankind free from sin and become a slave of God.

There is a strong relationship between the work of the divine agency and human responsibility in chapter 6 of Romans in the work of Christian formation.

Romans 7:1-25. In chapter 7:1-6,⁶³⁸ Paul shifts from the imagery of slavery to marriage. Paul writes that through the work of the divine agency, the Romans are severed from sin because they are no longer under the law.⁶³⁹ It is like widowhood from the law and a new marriage to Christ.⁶⁴⁰ This new marriage is also called the 'new life of the Spirit.'

⁶³⁷ See also Morris (1988) pp.264-265, 266.

⁶³⁸ Paul uses analogy rather than biblical materials, for use of analogy in Paul, see Gale (1964).

⁶³⁹ See also Dunn (1988) pp.358-374.

⁶⁴⁰ Aune (1991) p.293, "Christians have died to the law through Christ and are now free."

Paul has already contrasted the old covenant and the new in 2:27-29. The law cannot solve the problem of sin, only the new life in the Spirit which is based on the new covenant can. Paul uses the rest of the chapter to describe the issue of law and sin and in chapter 8 goes deeper into the new life of the Spirit.⁶⁴¹

Paul does not want the Romans to equate the law with sin. It is not sin but in fact the law is a good thing, holy and righteous (7:7-12); Aune writes, “The law is not sinful but rather reveals sin.”⁶⁴² The real problem is not the law but the flesh. The law is not evil but sin which dwells within humankind is evil (7:14-25).⁶⁴³ So Paul acknowledges that the flesh wars against the mind to make people do what they do not want to do.⁶⁴⁴ This brings balance to chapter 6. Paul says that believers are dead to sin but even though they are dead to sin, they are not dead to sin’s ability to influence. The members in 7:23 are associated with the flesh. Members were discussed in 6:12-14 and 6:19. The section of 7:14-25 falls right in the middle of Rom 6-8, which is a good representation of Paul’s thinking of how humankind is purified and illustrates how Paul sees

⁶⁴¹ Campbell (1991) p.256 writes, “Paul’s emphasis in ch.8 is not simply on the safe conduct of believing (or elect) individuals to their eventual glorification. What prompted Paul in the first instance is more likely to have been a concern to stress the actualization in the church composed of both Jews and Gentiles of the promises given to Abraham.”

⁶⁴² Aune (1991) p.293.

⁶⁴³ Dunn (1991) p.307 argues that “an important hermeneutical key” to 7:14-25 and others “is precisely the recognition that Paul’s negative thrust against the law is against the law taken over too completely by Israel, the law misunderstood by a misplaced emphasis on boundary ritual, the law become a tool of sin in its too close identification with matters of the flesh, the law sidetracked into a focus for nationalistic zeal.”

⁶⁴⁴ See also Dunn (1988) pp.378-412.

the divine agency and human responsibility interacting in regards to Christian formation.

There have been many different ways to interpret the meaning of 7:14-25; Cranfield sums it up this way:

The first person singular used in it has been variously explained as referring (i) to Paul's own experience as a Christian; (ii) to his pre-conversion experience as he saw it at the time; (iii) to his pre-experience as seen by him later in the light of his Christian faith; (iv) to the experience of the non-Christian Jew as seen by himself; (v) to the experience of the non-Christian Jew as seen through Christian eyes; (vi) to the experience of the Christian who is still living on an inferior level which could have been left behind; (vii) to the experience of Christians generally.⁶⁴⁵

Of these seven, Cranfield holds to number one and seven as the most likely meaning for the pericope.⁶⁴⁶ Cranfield prefers vii over i and comprehends Paul to be referring to "Christians generally but to recognize that his use of this vivid and forceful way of speaking reflects his deep

⁶⁴⁵ Cranfield (1998) p.36.

⁶⁴⁶ Cranfield (1998) pp.36-37 writes,

Of these (ii) seems to be ruled out by the verdict which, according to Philippians 3:6b, Paul, before his conversion, passed on his own life. And (iv) may be set aside as being inconsistent with the picture of Jewish self-complacency in chapter 2. The use of present tenses throughout the passage is against both (ii) and (iii), and the order of the sentences in vv.24-25 is an objection to (ii),(iii), (iv), (v) and (vi); for v. 25b is an embarrassment to all who see in v. 24 the cry of the unconverted person (or of a Christian living on a low level of Christian life) and in v. 25a an indication that the desired deliverance has actually occurred, since, coming after the thanksgiving, it seems to imply that the condition of the speaker after the deliverance is just the same as it was before it. Moreover, v. 24 would be highly melodramatic, if it were not a cry for deliverance from present distress.

Essentially, similar conclusions are reached by Nygren (1949) pp.284-297; Dunn (1988) pp.387-389, 403-412; Murray (1965) pp.256-259; Morris (1988) pp.284-288; Barrett (1957) pp.151-153. But there are others who do not agree with this view, e.g. Moo (1996) pp.447-451 believes Paul is referring to someone who is unregenerate. For arguments for other views see Kümmel (1974), Seifrid (1992) p.317; Bultmann (1967) pp.198-209; Bornkamm (1969) pp.87-104.

sense of personal involvement in what he is saying.”⁶⁴⁷ With the personal pronoun **evgw**, present nineteen times in the pericope, it would support Cranfield’s (i) that Paul is writing about his own personal experience. Paul communicates in chapter 6 and 7 that sin has no power and that a believer is free from sin, and yet sin’s influence is not totally eradicated and human responsibility is important in sanctification. But after discussing the law and the fact that sin can still influence, Paul shifts again to Christ and the freedom the divine agency produces through Christ.

Romans 8:1-2 Ouvde.n a;ra nu/n kata,krima toi/j evn Cristw/| Vlhou/\ 2 o` ga.r no,moj tou/ pneu,matoj th/j zwh/j evn Cristw/| Vlhou/ hvleuqe,rwse,n se avpo. tou/ no,mou th/j a` marti,aj kai. tou/ qana,touA

These verses are a summary of Paul’s teaching of the divine agency in Romans. Rom 1:18-32⁶⁴⁸ is the antithesis of what Paul desires to see in his converts. It is sin that has not been dealt with by faith in Christ that causes this “anti-formation.” Rom 8:1⁶⁴⁹ states those who are in Christ are free from the condemnation and wrath of God (See also Rom

⁶⁴⁷ Cranfield (1998) p.38.

⁶⁴⁸ Aune (1991) pp.287-289 considers 1:18-32 as part of 1:18-3:20 and thinks that this section is a digression. Guerra (1995) p.43 writes, “Perhaps this is a reasonable construal if the audience of Romans is understood to be composed entirely of Gentile Christians. But if, instead, Paul is addressing Jewish as well as Gentile Christians with the primary intention of promoting harmony between these two groups of Christians, then this section of Romans is both appropriate and even essential for accomplishing his purpose in Romans.”

⁶⁴⁹ See Guerra (1995) pp.138-139 for discussion of chp.8 following Paul’s arguments in 7:1-6.

3:21-26; 4:25; 5:6-9,10) and points us to the heart of the good news that this grace from God precedes faith in Jesus' death and resurrection for the liberation from the law of sin and death.⁶⁵⁰

Before going deeper into Rom 8:1-2, we must revisit our discussion of 7:14-25: though believers are dead to sin's power, they are not completely free from sin's ability to influence. This will affect how Rom 8:2 is interpreted. So the 'set free' is not a complete sanctification but a statement that sin is no longer the master over one's soul, the setting free is in process but not finished.⁶⁵¹ It is completed at the eschaton (Rom 8:18-39).⁶⁵²

How are they set free? The answer is in 8:3, the divine agency set them free through the work of Christ, reiterating what Paul said in Chapter 6 and 7:1-6.⁶⁵³ Cranfield writes, "Paul is saying that 'in Christ Jesus', that is, on the basis of what God has done in Christ, the authority exerted by the Holy Spirit has freed the believer from the authority of sin and death."⁶⁵⁴ Does what Paul said in previous chapters shed light on the meaning of 'set free/life of the Spirit' before 8:3? Chapter 6 of Romans

⁶⁵⁰ See also Moo (1996) pp.472-477.

⁶⁵¹ Aune (1991) writes, "For Paul, on the other hand, freedom from sin and death is impossible for the natural person and is a possibility only for those who have been justified by faith."

⁶⁵² Eschatological elements are present here and in Rom.5:1-11; Rom. 8:1-17. See also Dabourne (1999) p.66.

⁶⁵³ See also Byrne (1996) pp.242-243.

⁶⁵⁴ Cranfield (1998) p.34.

talks about humankind no longer being a slave to sin (Rom 6:1-11), and because Christ has set humankind free, a response is to present the members of one's body to God as instruments of righteousness (Rom 6:12-23). Though God has set humankind free, there is still a response from humankind to participate in God's process (Rom 6:19). Because of the struggles people have in their own strength, to present their members as instruments of righteousness in 7:14-25, humankind has been 'set free' by the divine agency from the condemnation that would come from presenting members of one's body to impurity. Though the actual process of sanctification is progressive, the forgiveness is complete and there is no condemnation from God when believers struggle with sin because there is a freedom from sin given by Christ at his death and resurrection. Because sin carries with it a legal punishment, being set free by God is freedom from all the ramifications of sin.

But this being set free is not just characteristic of life here on earth, it is freedom from sin's condemnation after death and the privilege of entering into life eternal by the divine agency. Believers have been united with Christ in his death and resurrection by the divine agency (Rom 6:5),⁶⁵⁵ but have yet to actually die and be raised by him; therefore, the life of the Spirit is not just applicable to life on earth but continues throughout eternity after one leaves the earth. This is seen in Rom 6-8 (6:4, 8, 11, 13,

⁶⁵⁵ See Guerra (1995) p.132.

22, 23; 7:10, 24-25; 8:2, 6, 10, 11, 13) and in other parts of the letter as well (1:17; 2:7; 4:17; 5:17, 18, 21; 11:15; 12:1). This life after death gives the believers hope.

Paul affirms the divine agency in Rom. 8:3⁶⁵⁶ saying that God sent his Son to set humankind free from sin.⁶⁵⁷ But human responsibility is not far behind. Paul asserts in Rom. 8:5-8⁶⁵⁸ that humankind must walk according to the Spirit and set their minds on the things of the Spirit and not on the things of the flesh.

The Holy Spirit is in all believers (Rom 8:9) and is described as the ‘Spirit of life’ meaning that the Spirit gives life, likely eternal life, contrasting it with ‘the law of sin and death’, which gives the opposite of the Spirit (Rom 8:6, 10, 11, 13).⁶⁵⁹

As in chapter 6, we see a shift in the work of the divine agency with human responsibility but unlike chapter 6, there is not a shift from the indicative to the imperative. In 8:1-4⁶⁶⁰ Paul reiterates the divine agency condemning sin through Christ; 8:5-8 contrasts two kinds of lives, those who live by the flesh set their minds on the flesh and those who live by the

⁶⁵⁶ Guerra (1995) p.139 writes, “The impotence of the Law is contrasted with the central efficacy of God’s sending his own Son in 8:3. Christ is fully human but it is without sin and by his death he empowers Christians to fulfill the Law “according to the Spirit.”

⁶⁵⁷ See also Moo (1996) pp.477-481.

⁶⁵⁸ See also Thompson (1991) p.82.

⁶⁵⁹ See also Moo (1996) pp.489-491.

⁶⁶⁰ Keesmaat (1999) p.125 holds that this pericope is rooted in the exodus event. But the language in 8:1-4 is not specific to Romans. Paul uses law, spirit, flesh, sin and death elsewhere in his letters.

Spirit set their minds on the Spirit. Paul writes that they must set their minds on godly things, previewing 12:1-2. 8:9-11 shifts back to the divine agency stating that the Spirit is already in the Roman Christians;⁶⁶¹ 8:12-14 shifts back to human responsibility; Paul writes that believers should live according to the Spirit.

This freeing from sin allows humankind to be adopted by God. Believers can now call him Abba father (Rom 8:14-15)⁶⁶² and believers can have a relationship with God through prayer which is aided by the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:26-27).⁶⁶³

There exists a tension between having freedom from sin and still experiencing the disadvantages of sin in 8:17-30. Though the world is imperfect and causes groaning to those who live in it, there is the hope that it will not be an eternal state and that a day will come when the state of the earth will be made new by the divine agency. Until then, God will sustain and cause all the things, good and bad, to work out for his purposes. Chapters 6-8 talk about Christian formation and emphasize that the divine agency and human responsibility work together in the formation process.

⁶⁶¹ See Wright (1991) pp.204-216 on the issue of the narrative structure of 8:1-11.

⁶⁶² For the Spirit determining the Christian life, see Cranfield (1975) p.395, Käsemann (1980) p.226, contrast Morris (1988) p.313. See also Dunn (1988, I) pp.450, 459.

⁶⁶³ Thompson (1991) p.94 questions if the groaning of the Spirit in 8:26-27 are related to the groaning of Gethsemane. But it is more likely Paul being consistent with his thought from 8:22-23 where the verb **sustena,zw** is used. **stenagmo,j** in 8:26 would be related to the verb in 8:22-23.

Romans 12:1-2. The pattern continues in Romans 12:1-2;⁶⁶⁴ when Paul discusses the divine agency, human responsibility is close by. Rom 12:2 contains the verb **metamorfo,omai** which is in the passive voice.⁶⁶⁵ The passive voice has the subject receiving the action, while also using the verb **suschemati,zomai** that is likely middle voice.⁶⁶⁶ The middle voice expresses the subject participating in the action. One could argue that both verbs are middle or passive voices but the language Paul uses for transformation elsewhere in his letters is passive (2 Cor 3:18; Gal 4:19; Phil 3:10). The use of the voice communicates an involvement from the participants and acting upon them from an outside source. The process has both the divine agency and human responsibility acting together.

Paul again in 12:2 uses the aspect of the indicative mood (e.g. 6:1-11, 14-18, 23; 7:1-8:14), which communicates that the author conceives of the action as a fact, with the imperative mood (e.g. 6:12-13, 16), which is used for commands or prohibitions as both **metamorfo,omai** and **suschemati,zomai** are in the imperative

⁶⁶⁴ Furnish (1968) pp.98-106 has shown that 12:1-2 is connected with Romans 1-11 challenging the old view held by Dibelius (1934) pp.238-239 that 12:1-2 are not connected with 1-11. It seems odd that Dibelius's view held so long being that 1-11 is clearly referring to the gospel and that 12:1 is a clear reference to Paul's previous expounding of the gospel. See also Aune (1991) p.295.

⁶⁶⁵ See also Thompson (2006) p.23.

⁶⁶⁶ We should note Moule's (1959) p.24 warning against being too ambitious to delineate meaning from the voice of the verb, "and, as a rule, it is far from easy to come down from the fence with much decisiveness on either side in an exegetical problem if it depends on the voice." Voice does not always delineate meaning. But we cannot ignore the voice of the verbs and must consider them significantly when passages are exegeted.

mood. Paul believes it is the Spirit who transforms but also acknowledges human responsibility to conform while the Spirit transforms.⁶⁶⁷

Paul expects an active response to the Spirit's transforming power and specifically addresses this in many places.⁶⁶⁸ As we discussed in Rom 6:13 (ESV), "Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness." **pari,sthmi** is present tense, active voice and imperative mood. Paul commands/exhorts the Romans to **mhde. parista,nete**. Paul sees the Romans' participation in the formation process as continuous, with the converts participating in the action. So the converts are to live a life of purity as their part in the process.

Paul exhorts the Romans to present (**pari,sthmi**) their bodies as holy/well-pleasing living sacrifices **qusi,an zw/san a`gi,an euva,reston**. **za,w** is a present active accusative participle in the verse; the present tense communicates the continuous nature of the Romans' responsibility to be an active participant. The pericopes of 6:12-23 and 12:1-15:13 also discuss the suitable presentation of the body to God. Chapter 6 (as well as 7) talks about overcoming the passions of sin;

⁶⁶⁷ See also Moo (1996) pp.748-758.

⁶⁶⁸ See also Byrne (1996) pp.361-367.

12:1-15:13 give a more specific picture of what this overcoming looks like in the everyday life of the believer. Paul focuses on “the surrender of individual identity for the sake of others. . . . The reorientation of the self includes a redirection away from the body’s passions and self-centeredness and toward a concern for others.”⁶⁶⁹

Romans 12:3-13:14. In 12:3-21 Paul charges the Romans with the responsibility of living in a harmonious way within their community and beyond it.⁶⁷⁰ The essence of what he is trying to communicate is 12:10, be devoted to one another with love. 12:18-21⁶⁷¹ shifts from the focus on community to humankind in general as Paul exhorts the Roman church to be at peace with all. This is a good transition, in 13:1-8a, Paul instructs them on how to be good citizens, and then switches back in the passage of 13:8b-14 to love and putting on Christ so as not to live a life of lust. The paraenesis to live well continues through to 15:13.⁶⁷² Paul placed a heavy emphasis on the ethical behavior of those who claimed to be believers.

It is clear that Paul had clear goals for the Romans’ conduct and expected them to participate in the forming process through obedient living of the standards that reflect the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul saw both

⁶⁶⁹ Thompson (2006) p.111.

⁶⁷⁰ See also Moo (1996) pp.758-790.

⁶⁷¹ See also Thompson (1991) pp.90-110.

⁶⁷² See also Keesmaat (1999) p.152.

the divine agency and human responsibility working harmoniously together.

3.6.2 The Shared Life of the Christian Community

Again, as in Thessalonians, Paul refers to the fact that there are weaker members in the community (Rom 14:1-2), and that they are not to be treated unfavorably because they are weak.⁶⁷³ Paul associates himself with those who are strong in 15:1 and says that they should help the weak.⁶⁷⁴ This is the essence of Paul's view of community, that the strong help the weak but that all help each other as each member in the community is to live for the good and building up of others (Rom 15:2).⁶⁷⁵ Paul encourages the Romans to pursue peace and what builds up others in the community (Rom 14:19) while also praying for the Romans to be unified (Rom 15:6-7).⁶⁷⁶

Paul is also encouraged by the fact that the converts are full of goodness and knowledge and have the ability to instruct one another (Rom

⁶⁷³ See Reasoner (1999) for a thorough discussion of the "strong" and the "weak" in Romans. Reasoner (1999) p.133 writes, "The supporting dichotomy between faith and opinions or behavior cannot be made, for the "weak in faith" are immediately described in terms of behavior, and behavior has been and continues to be definitive in describing Jewish faith."

⁶⁷⁴ Reasoner (1999) p.192 writes, "When the obligation of the "strong" is summarized in 15:1 as one of support, the basis is again not the horizontal relationship between "strong" and "weak" but the vertical relationship between Christ and humanity (v.3)."

⁶⁷⁵ **oivkodomh**, often refers to something that happens within the Christian community: 1 Cor. 3:9; 14:3, 5, 12, 26; 2 Cor. 5:1; 10:8; 12:19; Rom. 14:19;15:2. See also Reasoner (1999) p.134.

⁶⁷⁶ This prayer maybe due to the Jew and Gentile composition, which may have posed problems in the Roman church.

15:14).⁶⁷⁷ Paul clearly believed that the community was able to help each other through instruction and were told by Paul to help each other in their spiritual growth.

nouqete,w means to admonish, warn, instruct, as giving instructions in regard to belief or behavior.⁶⁷⁸ Paul expected the community to participate in spiritually appealing to one another for the purpose of change in their lives. Each member could benefit from the faith of another. There was also a protective aspect of the community as they were to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to what was taught to them before (Rom. 16:17);⁶⁷⁹ so not everyone in the community was entitled to fellowship within the community.⁶⁸⁰ They were encouraged not to associate with those who were divisive and taught contrary to sound teaching.

In 12:3-8, Paul encourages everyone in the community to use their spiritual gift to serve each other and build each other up.⁶⁸¹ Paul

⁶⁷⁷ What does knowledge refer to? Is it the gospel, Cranfield (1979) p.753; or a more general, comprehensive understanding? See Schreiner (1998) p.765. It is likely the gospel, because Paul says in 15:15 that he has written on some points to **remind** them.

⁶⁷⁸ ANLEX p.273, also found in 1 Thess 5:12, 14.

⁶⁷⁹ On the issue of these false teachers as the antinomians, see Schmithals (1972) p.222ff and Käsemann (1980) p.418 contrast Watson (1991) p.212.

⁶⁸⁰ See also Watson (1991) p.212.

⁶⁸¹ Reasoner (1999) p.59 argues that this pericope (12:3-8) suggests two or more layers in the social structure of the church in Rome. Paul's call to humility is not uncharacteristic of his letters (e.g. Phil. 2:1-5) and his references to gifts being used in the community are also mentioned elsewhere (see 1 Cor.12), so the pericope of 12:3-8 suggesting multiple social layers is not as strong as Paul exhorting the Romans to use their gifts and live in unity.

recognizes that certain individuals in the community could think more highly of themselves than they should, thus hurting the community. The inflated view of oneself could be due to social standing, race, wealth, or spiritual gifts. Some gifts would be more public in function, thus attracting more praise to the individual. But Paul knows that one with an overly inflated view of oneself would hurt the community and challenges them not to think too highly of themselves but to see themselves as a member of a body. Each member has a different function in the community, so each member should use their gift in the community for the benefit of the community. As members use their gifts for the good of the community, a milieu for growth will occur.

3.6.3 Impartation in Romans

3.6.3.1 Paul

Romans 1:11-13 evpipoqw/ ga.r ivdei/n u`ma/j(i[na ti metadw/ ca,risma u`mi/n pneumatiko.n eivj to. sthricqh/nai u`ma/j(tou/to de, evstin sumparakhqh/nai evn u`mi/n dia. th/j evn avllh,loij pi,stewj u`mw/n te kai. evmou/Å ouv qe,lw de. u`ma/j avgnoei/n(avdelfoi,(o[ti polla,kij proeqe,mhn evlqei/n pro.j u`ma/j(kai. evkwlu,qhn a;cri tou/ deu/ro(i[na tina. karpou.n scw/ kai. evn u`mi/n kaqw.j kai. evn toi/j loipoi/j e;qnesinÅ

Paul longs (**evpipoqw**) to see (**ivdei/n**) the Roman believers in order to give a share of himself and impart (**metadw/**) a spiritual gift to establish or strengthen (**sthricqh/nai**) the believers of Rome.⁶⁸² Though Paul has never met them, he thinks that he can be used to grow the Romans in their faith.⁶⁸³ Paul uses emotive and affective language to describe his desire to meet the Romans. Fitzmyer holds that Paul wants to meet up with “old friends.”⁶⁸⁴ Could Paul be referring here to the people he knows in chapter 16? Certainly Paul would have in mind renewed fellowship with these people he already knows but it is also clear he is addressing people that he has not yet met. Paul had no developed relationship with the church apart from individuals greeted in ch.16, but he possessed affection for young believers that allowed him to care and love them immediately without having to be ‘old friends.’ Paul could not help but share with them. Morris writes, “The longing is there—a deep and strong desire. . . . He longs to see his Roman friends, not primarily to get something out of

⁶⁸² See also Byrne (1996) p.55.

⁶⁸³ Many discuss this pericope in terms of missionary activity (e.g. Stuhlmacher (1991) pp.233, 237). But as we have shown earlier, the use of **metadi,dwmi** often has more of an impartational aspect than evangelistic, as it is often used in the context of giving of oneself to another and not necessarily sharing a message. Paul would also have used language like ‘the gospel’ if he was thinking strictly missionary. But as in 1 Thess. 2:8, the gospel was not all Paul wanted to impart; he wanted his own life to be imparted which also fits well in this section as he states that he would like to impart a spiritual gift, that they be mutually encouraged by each other. In addition, **karpoj** in Romans is associated more with sanctification. In 1:13, Paul is already writing to those who believe; in 6:21, 22 **karpoj** is linked with **a`giasmoj**. In 15:28 **karpoj** is associated with the believers in Macedonia and Achaia.

⁶⁸⁴ See Fitzmyer (1993) p.248.

them, but in order to impart something to them.”⁶⁸⁵ Paul has developed affections for them by longing to meet and impart himself to them expressed in the verb **evpipeq,w**. The verb is used in other places (2 Cor. 5:2; 9:14; Phil 1:8; 2:26; 1 Thess. 3:6) all in the context of longing: both Paul and his associates’ longing to be part of the converts’ lives. So we see here Paul’s affections for converts coming through as an expression of the affective dimension of mentoring.

Paul’s desire is to share (**metadi,dwmi**) a spiritual gift with the Romans. Paul uses **metadi,dwmi** in 1 Thess. 2:8 to express his own and his associates’ desire to share their lives with the Thessalonian converts. The sentiments in the two letters are similar. Paul has a desire to be with the Romans and spend time with them because he thinks he can impart some of himself into their lives which will help them grow more mature as he did with his Thessalonian disciples. So we see here again the affective and relational component of impartation where there is a deep emotive affection as well as a desire to develop a deep relationship with the convert for the purpose of impartation.

The spiritual gift Paul wants to impart is not likely related to the list of gifts in Rom 12 but the gift of a deepened faith. Dunn writes,

ca,risma denotes an embodiment of grace . . . the concrete expression of God’s generous and powerful concern for his human creation, so that it can be used of any act or utterance which is a means of divine grace, a medium through which God’s

⁶⁸⁵ Morris (1988) p.60.

graciousness is experienced, whether the thought is of totality of what God has given by means of Christ (5:15-16; 6:23; cf. 11:29; 2 Cor. 1:11), or more often a particular ministry, occasional or regular (12:6; 1 Cor. 1:7; 7:7; 12:4, 9, 28, 30-31).⁶⁸⁶

In speaking of this gift, Paul discusses a key feature of impartation, a desire to impart for their benefit.⁶⁸⁷ This gift is described as a spiritual one (*pneumatiko,n*). Paul may use this to distinguish between the gift he wants to impart to the Roman believers, which is spiritual, and the gift he is delivering to the Jerusalem church, which is physical. There is no specific word in Romans used to describe the monetary gift. *Charis* is used in 1 Cor. 16:3. It also can be “regarded as adding emphasis—‘a truly spiritual gift,’ some act of ministry which is both of the Spirit and a means of grace.”⁶⁸⁸

The imparting of the spiritual gift is meant to strengthen or establish the converts. **sthri,zw** means strengthen, make firm, establish; fix, set up. The Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament writes, “Literally, as setting up something so that it remains immovable *fix (firmly), establish, support.*”⁶⁸⁹ **sthri,zw** is also in the passive voice so the subject is receiving the action. Paul further communicates his desire to mentor the Romans by strengthening them. Could this also be a use of the

⁶⁸⁶ Dunn (1988) p.30.

⁶⁸⁷ See also Byrne (1996) p.55.

⁶⁸⁸ Dunn (1988) p.30.

⁶⁸⁹ ANLEX p.356.

divine passive where the name of God is not used out of reverence? If it is a divine passive, then God is using Paul to strengthen the Romans.⁶⁹⁰ But the use of the passive here further reflects Paul's view of himself as being part of the Christian formation process in new or less mature believers' lives. He believes he can act on believers in Christ to bring about growth in their lives. The divine passive is not likely here.

Paul also uses **sthri,zw** in 1 Thessalonians 3:2, 13 in the same context of being established or helped by an outside entity (Timothy and divine agency) for the purpose of growth. There is a desire in both letters for younger believers to grow.

He qualifies what he means in Rom. 1:12 and is consistent with his pattern of being paternal but equal in relationships. Paul is consistent with his desire to be a mentor but an equal as well by qualifying the statement and saying that he will be encouraged by their faith and they will be encouraged by his.⁶⁹¹ Again, there are similarities with the Thessalonian correspondence. He also spells out more clearly his purpose and equates encouragement with Christian formation which would be an outcome of the relational dimension.

Paul goes on to say "I do not want you to be unaware," **ουv qe,lw de. u`ma/j avgnoei/n**. It is not uncommon for Paul to use this

⁶⁹⁰ See Jeremias (1971) pp.9-14 for a deeper discussion on the divine passive.

⁶⁹¹ See also Romans 15:32. But this is likely more a reference to personal rest rather than impartation.

phrase when he wants to communicate something important (1 Cor. 10:1; 12:1; 1 Thess 4:13; Rom 11:25). Paul had in mind to come to the Romans in the past, but for some reason, he was withheld from coming, but his desire to come never waned and his letter to them preparing them for his arrival gives proof that he has planned to come to them.⁶⁹² Maybe they had sent many letters to Paul and Paul had promised to come only to be held up by another issue in the church. Maybe Paul told them he would come but never came. Paul emphasizes that he has wanted to come and reminds the Romans of his great affection for them.

Paul also states that he wants to obtain some fruit/harvest (**karpō,j**) among them.⁶⁹³ The nature of this fruit/harvest is not discussed by Paul. Is it more people who are receptive to the gospel? Is it the fruit of the Spirit mentioned in Galatians 5:22-23? Because Paul earlier in Rom 1:12 talked about mutual encouragement by each others' faith, and in the accounts of Acts there is often mention of Paul strengthening the churches on his visits, it is likely a reference to the encouragement of the believers by Paul's faith and strengthening their faith, but it could also be a reference to new converts entering in the community through evangelism.⁶⁹⁴

⁶⁹² See also Moo (1996) p.60.

⁶⁹³ See also Moo (1996) pp.60-61.

⁶⁹⁴ See also Klein (1991) pp.34, 36 and Stuhlmacher (1991) p.237.

The English Standard Version translates **karpo,j** as harvest, not fruit.⁶⁹⁵ Harvest has more of a tone of evangelism but the pericope is not specific to evangelism. Moo writes about **karpo,j** in 1:13:

Karpos must refer to the product of his apostolic labors (cf. Phil. 1:22), including here probably both an increase in numbers of Christians through evangelization “among” the Romans and a strengthening of the faith of the Roman Christians themselves (cf. v.11b). As in vv.5 and 6, *ethnē* must mean “Gentiles,” not “nations” (e.g., Dunn). Paul’s forthright reaffirmation of his intention to bring spiritual benefit to the Roman Christians demonstrates that the mutuality of v.12, while genuine, takes nothing from Paul’s view of the importance of his apostolic labors in Rome.⁶⁹⁶

I have argued that Paul saw himself as part of the Christian formation process in his converts. Paul desires to impart a spiritual gift to the converts in order for them to be strengthened. He longs to come to them, wanting to see fruit or gather a harvest from their lives. Here we see more of the component of impartation where Paul imparts himself or desires to impart himself to the believers. Paul saw himself as an agent in forming people into maturity.

⁶⁹⁵ Klein (1991) p.39 writes,
The usage of *karpos* in a missionary theological context is related to the motif of harvest, which was originally used in connection with the eschatological judgment (compare Isa. 27:12; Joel 4:13; 4 Ezra 4:28ff; Mark 4:29; Matt. 3:12; 13:30, 39), and then was transferred to the Christian mission (see, for example, Matt. 9:37ff; John 4:35ff.) The biblical character of *karpos* is still present in John 4:36, but has already disappeared with Paul in favor of a more technical usage of the concept.

But other translations like NRSV, KJV translate it as fruit.

⁶⁹⁶ Moo (1991) pp.55-56.

3.6.3.2 *Multiplicity of Mentors*

What has been seen in Romans is that Paul thinks he can help the Roman believers grow. There is not a mention of Paul's associates in the beginning of the letter.⁶⁹⁷ It may be due to the fact that Paul did not establish the church in Rome himself, and he usually wrote letters after an initial visit, but he had neither established nor visited the Roman church. He is only planning and may not know whether anyone will accompany him. If there is accompaniment, Paul probably does not know who that individual would be. So from the beginning of the letter, there appears a lack of emphasis on a multiplicity of mentors.

But in Romans chapter 16,⁶⁹⁸ Paul does acknowledge those who are laboring for them, like Mary in 16:6.⁶⁹⁹ In fact, the list could be a list of those who are already leading the church.⁷⁰⁰ It is not as clear as the other letters where Paul acknowledged his associates early on in the letter, but it would not be an incorrect hypothesis to suggest that many of the individuals in chap. 16 were giving spiritual help to the Romans.⁷⁰¹ Prisca and Aquila are likely Priscilla and Aquila of Acts 18:2, 18, 26 and 1 Cor.

⁶⁹⁷ But Timothy does give his greetings in 16:21.

⁶⁹⁸ See Reasoner (1999) p.62 n79 on the list of scholars who see chp.16 as integral to the reading of Romans. Also, Phoebe, who may have delivered the letter, is described by Paul as someone who has helped many and Paul himself. Phoebe is likely a leader in Cenchrea.

⁶⁹⁹ Byrne (1996) pp.450-451 states that as many as nine of them could be women. It is clear that women were also involved in the work of building up the community.

⁷⁰⁰ See Reasoner (1999) p.207 n35 on discussion of some in chp.16 having servile origins.

⁷⁰¹ See also Moo (1996) pp.913-927.

16:19. We know the two possess a level of maturity as they instructed Apollos more accurately (Acts 18:26). Paul describes Andronicus and Junia as fellow kinsmen and fellow prisoners and are of exceptional quality. Clearly, these two individuals possessed a spiritual maturity that stands out in the community. Urbanus is described as a fellow worker in Christ. Both he and Prisca and Aquila have received this designation, **sunergoj**. **sunergoj** is often a designation of those who are deeply involved in serving God [Timothy (Rom. 16:21), Paul (1 Cor. 3:9), Titus (2 Cor. 8:23), Epaphroditus (Phil. 2:25), Euodia and Syntyche (Phil 4:3), Philemon (Philemon 1)].⁷⁰² They may have been individually leaders in different house-churches. Paul can refer to people in the Roman community whom he regards as mature and gifted. It is plausible that they would have been involved in helping others grow.

3.7 Conclusion

We have looked at Paul's undisputed letters and can draw an overall conclusion that Paul's understanding of Christian formation in his later letters is consistent with the pattern established in 1 Thessalonians. Comparing 1 Thess. to the other letters, excluding Romans initially, all four aspects of Christian formation are present: the divine agency (e.g. 1 Cor. 1:1-2; 2 Cor. 3:18; Gal. 5:18, 22-24; Phil. 1:6), human responsibility

⁷⁰² See Schreiner (1998) p.794.

(e.g. 1 Cor. 9:26-27; Phil. 3:12-14; Gal. 5:25), the shared life together in Christian community (Gal. 6:1; 1 Cor. 12:7; Phil. 4:3) and impartation (e.g. Gal. 4:19; 1 Cor. 3:6-9; Phil 1:7-11; multiplicity of mentors: Phil 2:19-30).

Galatians introduces enrichment in the terminology used (e.g., the 'formation' of Christ within the believer, Gal. 4:19). The Corinthian Correspondence sheds light into a new aspect of impartation: linking it with the divine agency (1 Cor.3:6-9). The aspect of spiritual gifts for mutual building up the community in 1 Cor. and Romans is something only found in embryonic stage in 1 Thess. In 1 Thess., there is exhortation not to quench the Spirit and to examine prophetic utterances but not as developed as the lists of spiritual gifts in Romans and 1 Corinthians. 1 Corinthians offered the best illustration of how spiritual gifts contribute to the benefit of the community (1 Cor.12-14).

We are also introduced to the interplay of the interaction between the divine agency and human responsibility in Gal. 5:25 and Philippians 2:12-13. Paul does not describe how they interact with each other, only that they interact and we are left with a tension. In Romans 6-8 he offered a more sustained treatment of this interplay but using verbs in the indicative and imperative but there was still no resolution but an acknowledgement that both interact without contradiction. The divine agency has been linked with human responsibility and impartation.

On the topic of impartation in Romans, Paul believes he himself can help the Romans grow by his coming to them, even though he did not found the church (Rom. 1:11-13). There is also evidence that some in chapter 16 serve as mentors to the community. Paul gives the same charge to the Roman community as he did the Thessalonians to love each other, for the strong to help the weak and for the community to help each other grow through instructing each other. The essence of impartation discussed in 1 Thessalonians is the same in Romans.

There is a clear consistency and continuity in the understanding of impartation between 1 Thessalonians and the later letters, but there is also an enrichment in the variety of terminology used (e.g., the ‘formation’ of Christ within the believer, Gal. 4:19), more extended exposition of some themes (e.g. of the interaction between divine agency and human responsibility in Rom. 6), and an increasing emphasis on mutual support and impartation between members of a church community (1 Cor 12-14; Rom 12).

Chapter 4

Impartation Methods That May Have Influenced Paul

Our discussion of Paul's view of Christian formation has led us to the issue of impartation. Though no one would argue impartation's benefit, we have seen from chapter 1 that it is not normally included in the definitions of Christian formation. In 1 Thessalonians and other undisputed letters, Paul saw himself and his associates as part of his disciples' growth along with the divine agency, human responsibility and the shared life together in Christian community. In this section, we will discuss entities that may have influenced Paul's practice of impartation. The Epicureans⁷⁰³ and Jewish Rabbis will be our focus. Understanding how they went about producing disciples will give us a basis for comparison with Paul. We will be able to see if he borrowed what he liked and discarded what he did not, or indeed whether he was influenced by them at all.

4.1 Justifying Use of Hellenistic and Rabbinic Models of Impartation

Before looking into how the Epicureans and the Rabbis made disciples, we must discuss why these two are used to help us understand how Paul helped his converts grow.

⁷⁰³ I will also discuss the Stoics and the Platonists but it is mainly for the reason of helping us understand the Epicureans.

There are many different views among scholars about Paul's attitude to Judaism, especially to the Torah. No one doubts Paul's Judaism (Rom 11:1).⁷⁰⁴ And especially since W. D. Davies' seminal work *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism* (1948), his indebtedness to what may loosely be called Rabbinic Judaism, for example, in his styles of argument and his use of scripture, has often been noted. One might group them into 'maximalist,' those who consider Judaism to be the primary influence, 'minimalists,' those who believe Judaism is no longer Paul's main influence and those who hold that there was a balance between Judaism's influence and that of others.

From a maximalist viewpoint, Davies writes, "The gospel of Paul was not an annulling of Judaism but its completion, and as such it took up into itself the essential genius of Judaism."⁷⁰⁵ The *New Perspective* on Paul is founded in the view that understanding Judaism in and around Paul's day will help understand his writings.⁷⁰⁶

Minimalists such as Hagner and Schoeps state that Paul was indifferent to Torah and Judaism.⁷⁰⁷ Hagner writes,

⁷⁰⁴ The two other important studies in this area were by Stendahl (1976) and Sanders (1977).

⁷⁰⁵ Davies (1948) p.323.

⁷⁰⁶ For a good summary of this perspective, see Dunn (1983) pp.95-122. For a list of scholars who are sympathetic and a list of scholars who are opposed to the New Perspective, see Bird (2007) pp.194-211. See also Rosner (1994) pp.7-8, 188-189, for the influence of the Old Testament on Paul's ethical teachings. But Rosner understands that there are many scholars that argue that the Old Testament was not a significant source for Paul's ethics; see Rosner (1994) pp.3-9. See also Bockmuehl (1995) pp.72-101 for the Noachide Commandments influencing Paul.

⁷⁰⁷ See Schoeps (1961) pp.197-200 and Hagner (2007) p.113.

Paul regards himself as no longer “under the law,” since he “obeys it now and then. Paul thus feels free to identify with the Gentiles and not to remain an observant Jew. Incidentally, how remarkable it is that the Jew Paul can speak of himself as an outsider: 'To the Jews I became as a Jew!'" This implies a "break with Judaism," and "it is clear, furthermore, that observing or not observing the law is an unimportant issue before God. The position taken by Paul is one of complete expedience: he will or will not observe the law only in relation to its usefulness in the proclamation of the gospel. Before God the issue of obeying the commandments is in the category of *adiaphora*.”⁷⁰⁸

Betz and Watson state that Paul’s goal was to create Christian

communities that favored being Gentile over Jewish.⁷⁰⁹ Betz writes,

Paul draws a line between being a Jew and being a Christian. Of course, this line of demarcation is polemical, but, as Romans shows (Rom 9—11), it was in no way intended to establish a new religion. Yet the establishment of a new religion is in effect what happened. If the validity of the Jewish Torah ends for the Jew when he becomes a Christian, there is no point or basis for Gentiles as well as for Jews to adhere to the Jewish religion. Since those Christians no longer regard themselves as pagans, a new religion has *de facto* come into existence.⁷¹⁰

From a more balanced viewpoint, Young argues that though Paul was no longer committed to the synagogue, he never left Judaism and challenges the notion that the influence of Hellenism was the primary influence on Paul’s communication of the Gospel. Seeing Paul through these eyes leads to a highly complex understanding of Paul’s writings. Young argues that understanding Paul’s ‘Jewish-ness’ and his training as a Pharisee will

⁷⁰⁸ Hagner (2007) p.113

⁷⁰⁹ See Betz (1979) p.179 and Watson (1986) p.19.

⁷¹⁰ Betz (1979) p. 179.

lead to correctly understanding Paul's writings.⁷¹¹ Segal thinks that Paul is a Jew among a Gentile Christian community.⁷¹² The main argument of Nanos is that the groups of people Paul focuses on in Galatia and Rome are functioning as subgroups inside the communities of Jewish people.⁷¹³ Hvalvik also expresses this and writes,

The undisputable fact that he was raised as a law-observant Jew makes it reasonable to assume that he often observed Jewish customs in his daily life—as long as they did not blur the gospel. For the historical Paul, traditional law observance was certainly subordinated to the preaching of the gospel and his concern for the salvation of mankind.⁷¹⁴

I hold to the view that Paul held in creative tension his relationship with Judaism and with the Gentile mission. In places like Rom. 9:3, Paul identifies himself with the Jewish people but in other places like Gal. 1:13-2:21, there is differentiation; Paul considers himself Jewish (Rom. 11:1) with distinction (Phil 3:1-10).

Of course, it would in principle be possible for Paul to remain indebted to Jewish theology and yet adopt different methods of impartation from his rabbinic contemporaries, or to turn his back on Jewish theology and yet continue to value and use Jewish methods of impartation. But if his relationship with Judaism was as I have argued

⁷¹¹ Young (1997).

⁷¹² Segal (1990) pp.6-7. See also Baumgarten (1987) pp.63-77

⁷¹³ Nanos (1996)

⁷¹⁴ Hvalvik (2007) p.153.

here, it is inherently likely that his approach to mentoring his disciples will manifest some influence of early rabbinic methods. It will therefore be illuminating to observe any similarities between Paul's approach and the rabbis – and also to see if there are differences which may be attributed to his understanding of the distinctive nature of a Christian's relationship to Christ. We will look into the rabbinic practices of impartation, and then compare them with Paul.

We will also look outside of Judaism into the Greco-Roman world. There is a school of thought that divorces Paul from his Jewish roots in favor of an entirely Hellenistic approach. Schoeps observes, "The talk of Paul's acute Hellenization of Christianity which has sprung up in consequence of the Tübingen school must, however, be rejected, for this phenomenon is post-Pauline only, and its first signs are to be found in the Deutero-Pauline writings."⁷¹⁵ However, knowing that the world of Hellenism was Paul's world, it would be good to see how impartation was practiced within Hellenistic thought. Gaining an idea of Hellenistic impartation would be a good comparison with the rabbis to aid in the discussion of whether or not Hellenism or Judaism was the greater influence on Paul's ideas. It will also serve as a good foundation to compare with Paul to see if his practice of impartation was more similar to a Hellenistic point of view.

⁷¹⁵ Schoeps (1961) p.48.

Paul was in a world under Roman rule; he had a Roman name, and being well educated, knowledge of the Hellenistic world.⁷¹⁶ Furnish, commenting on the influence on Paul's ethics, writes, "One must conclude that Paul's Jewish background does not fully account for the manner, or even the substance, of his ethical teaching. That teaching is in various ways dependent upon Hellenistic forms and concepts."⁷¹⁷ On the evidence of Hellenistic thought in Paul's letters, Burrige writes,

Both the idea and the word 'conscience,' *sunei,dhsij(* are Greek, with no equivalent in Hebrew. However, Paul uses it here, as well as regularly in the Corinthian correspondence, which is further indication of its Greek background (see 1 Cor. 8:7-12; 10:25-29; 2 Cor. 1:12; 4:2; 5:11). Other Hellenistic concepts include 'freedom,' *evleuqeri,a* (1 Cor. 10:29; Gal. 5:1, 13), and 'self-sufficiency,' *auvta,rkeia* (2 Cor. 9:8) . . . He tells his readers to think upon virtue and praise, *avreth. kai. . . . ev,painoj(* again developing typical Greek concepts.⁷¹⁸

The New Testament mentions that Paul had dialogue with Stoics and Epicureans in Acts 17. Malherbe writes, "Paul was thoroughly familiar with the teaching, methods of operation, and style of argumentation of the

⁷¹⁶ See also Hengel (1974) pp.103-104 who states that Hellenism also influenced Judaism; see also Maccoby (1991) and Furnish (1968) pp.44-51, 228-230.

⁷¹⁷ Furnish (1968) p.49. But Furnish (p.50), goes on to acknowledge that though Paul was influenced by both Judaism and Hellenism, they take a back seat to his conversion to Christianity.

⁷¹⁸ Burrige (2007) p.96. He also writes on p.97, "The impact of his Graeco-Roman setting on Paul is crucial and contributes much."

philosophers of the period, all of which he adopted and adapted to his own purposes.”⁷¹⁹

I have also chosen the Epicureans to represent Hellenistic impartational methods. Why focus on the Epicureans and not the Cynics, Stoics, or Platonists? The reason is that there are similarities between what the Epicureans did for impartation and what other schools of philosophy did, so in this sense, the Epicurean Model would give a representation of Hellenistic philosophic mentoring in general. Paul also likely possessed a thorough knowledge of the philosophic traditions of Hellenism and would likely be familiar with the Epicurean impartational method.⁷²⁰ Though Malherbe has argued elsewhere that Paul relates closer to Cynics, the Epicureans possessed a remarkable impartational method that Paul would likely have been familiar with and they may have had the most developed mentoring method among Hellenistic philosophic schools.⁷²¹ Malherbe writes,

It was the Epicureans who had developed the system of psychagogy, but what Philodemus says in the first century BC is reflected in the writings of Seneca, Paul’s Stoic contemporary, and a generation later by the Platonist Plutarch. In short, the concerns

⁷¹⁹ Malherbe (1989) p.68. For Paul being influenced by the Stoics, see Engberg-Pedersen (2000), for Paul linked with the Sophists, see Winter (1997), for Paul influenced by the Epicureans, see Glad (1995). For the influence of Hellenism on Judaism, see Hengel (1974).

⁷²⁰ Malherbe (1989) p.8.

⁷²¹ Glad (1995) pp.4-6 argues that the “Epicurean practice is the closest comparison available when we focus on Paul’s psychagogy and nurture of the proto-Christian communities.” The major difference according to Glad is that the Cynics were preoccupied with individual concerns whereas the Epicureans were more concerned with community affairs.

and techniques that interest us were widespread at the time Paul wrote. The Epicureans, however, are of special interest, for, like Paul, they formed genuine communities that engaged in mutual exhortation.⁷²²

DeWitt argues that Epicurean philosophy deeply influenced Paul's thinking;⁷²³ therefore, Epicurean philosophy's influence can be read in Paul's letters.⁷²⁴ DeWitt sees Epicurean influence in Paul's knowledge of philosophy, religion, education, and the nature of things.⁷²⁵ Paul's knowledge of Epicureanism is evidenced by his use of the word *kenodoxia* (Phil. 2:3) which is not used by any other writer in the New Testament and may have been coined by Epicurus.⁷²⁶ Also, teachings on the deceitfulness of riches are widespread in the writings of Epicurus and are taught by Paul.⁷²⁷ DeWitt and Glad have linked Epicurean philosophy with Paul's teaching.

⁷²² Malherbe (1987) p.84.

⁷²³ DeWitt (1954) p.v writes, "Nevertheless the merit of this ethic was so superior and so widely acknowledged that Paul had no alternative but to adopt it and bless it with the new sanction."

⁷²⁴ See DeWitt (1954) pp.21-166. One weakness is that DeWitt does not deal with is the issue of disputed and undisputed letters of Paul so Colossians and Ephesians are part of his discussion. Also, related to the former, DeWitt holds to Pauline authorship of Hebrews (e.g. p.184) which weakens his thesis of Epicureanism's influence as few scholars hold to Pauline authorship of Hebrews. It is clear that DeWitt's knowledge of Epicureanism is the major contribution and in his mind, he clearly sees these teachings in Paul. A better grasp of Pauline scholarship will strengthen his argument.

⁷²⁵ DeWitt (1954) pp.167-177.

⁷²⁶ DeWitt (1954) pp.177-179. But it is only used once in Paul. DeWitt does not comment on the adjective **keno,doxoj** in Galatians 5:26, which is also a hapax legomenon in the NT.

⁷²⁷ DeWitt (1954) pp.179-182.

After a look at the methods of the Stoics and Platonists, we will study the Epicurean method, and then study the rabbis. We will be able to discuss whether or not Paul was aware of the Epicureans' and rabbis' methods and if he drew from them what was useful and discarded what was not.

4.2 Stoics and Platonists

4.2.1 Converting to a Philosophic Lifestyle

Before discussing the Platonists and Stoics' method of impartation, I will do a broader discussion of how one goes about changing from a normal life in society to life in the philosophic schools. It was not easy to just enter into a new community; it was often a radical break with a previous lifestyle, and careful mentoring was important. Just as converting to Christianity brought challenges to new converts, there was a similar experience by those who entered into schools of philosophy.

Understanding how people entered into a new community will aid in the understanding of Paul's challenges to grow his converts, as Paul's converts would face similar challenges to those entering into a philosophic lifestyle.

Speeches were a common tool used by philosophers in making converts; it was not uncommon for a philosopher to speak before a crowd of people. Within these speeches were different techniques, such as the diatribe. The diatribe was a type of dialogue that was developed by the

Cynics but later used by all types of philosophical schools.⁷²⁸ The diatribe pattern had three elements:⁷²⁹

A statement of fact is given in the form of a rhetorical question. This is often in the direct address of the second person singular. Next, an imperative follows, the main purpose of this imperative being to deny that the 'statement of fact' has any significance for a person's life. Finally, an explanation is sometimes added as to why the statement of fact should be treated with such indifference.⁷³⁰

The goal of these speeches was to convert people to a life of philosophy.

The diatribe was not just for public speeches but was also a technique used in the classroom for teaching and philosophical elucidation.⁷³¹ Frequently, the converts would come from the artisan class.⁷³² Philosophers had a belief that people could change and the change agent would be through the speeches of the philosophers, but they realized that not all would change and some could not.⁷³³

The philosopher is in the company of Zeus when delivering a message and receives power from him.⁷³⁴ The philosopher's speech is

⁷²⁸ Malherbe (1987) p.10. For a discussion on Paul's use of the diatribe in making converts see Bultmann (reprint, 1984).

⁷²⁹ Some hold that the pattern only has two elements so the exact nature of the pattern is not in total agreement but to mention three elements will offer an accurate picture. Deming (1995) p.130.

⁷³⁰ Deming (1995) pp.130-131.

⁷³¹ Stowers (1981).

⁷³² Malherbe (1987) p.19.

⁷³³ Hadot (1969) pp.151-152.

⁷³⁴ Dio Chrysostom 12.12; 32.21.

advantageous, speaking not just to minds but also to souls,⁷³⁵ and the content of speeches was aimed at reforming human imperfection often due to unawareness, beginning by stating human vices so as to enlighten the listener to their present condition and their need for reform, and then going about correcting the human condition.⁷³⁶

The beginning of the new philosophic life involved acknowledging one is at fault and imperfect and then, because of the imperfection, entering into a new life.⁷³⁷ Generally, conversions were slow and gradual processes but conversions due to speeches were often an instantaneous event.

Converts often experienced bewilderment and depression due to the radical transformation of their life; helping them through this adjustment period was crucial for their continued progress in the philosophic life. Taking up this new life involved discarding one's friends and social structure, accompanied by a low public opinion of the philosophic life; this brought about depression in new converts.⁷³⁸

⁷³⁵ Dio Chrysostom 32.12, 18-19; 38.2.

⁷³⁶ Dio Chrysostom 32.33; 33.13.

⁷³⁷ Seneca 28.9; 53.8.

⁷³⁸ Malherbe (1987) p.38.

New converts in some schools were encouraged not to have any association with the world outside the philosophic milieu until they were secure enough in their new philosophic identity.⁷³⁹

Because there was so much emotional trauma experienced by the new convert, impartation was crucial to keep young converts involved in the school. In 1 Thessalonians, converts also experienced trials that accompanied their new faith. We will now look at how these converts to philosophy were helped.

4.2.2 Stoic and Platonist Method of Impartation

Now that we have an idea of the turmoil experienced by those who converted to a life in a philosophic school, we will look at two schools that are contemporaries of the Epicureans—Stoics and Platonists—before going into a deeper discussion of Epicurean impartation. Discussing these schools will give a general idea of how philosophic schools operated and give us a foundation to understand the Epicureans.

For the Stoics, there is a high place for formal learning through lectures but there is also evidence that these times also had portions where the lecturer would deal with students' problems on a more informal basis.⁷⁴⁰ Teachers would prescribe spiritual exercises and meditations to

⁷³⁹ Malherbe (1987) pp.38-39. But in Epicureanism, one was encouraged to be part of society. This will further be discussed later.

⁷⁴⁰ See Stowers (1981) pp.53-58.

help them grasp the philosophic lifestyle as well as give advice on making ethical progress by developing good practices and assessing their lives. Exercises included fasting, enduring cold, and eliminating physical comforts to gain mastery over self as well as not becoming attached to material possessions.⁷⁴¹ The assessment was a routine of introspection throughout the day where philosophic principles were applied to every condition and occurrence of the day.⁷⁴²

Though the classroom was highly valued, private conferences between teacher and student were still used in the teaching process but were not as prevalent as in other philosophical schools.

The Stoics emphasized reading the philosophers; this reading would help the disciples reach a higher level of growth.⁷⁴³ More experienced members of the group could point out to younger members of the group which readings were more beneficial.⁷⁴⁴ Students were encouraged to write moral texts and read them to fellow students, and have students evaluate the texts with personal comments.⁷⁴⁵ Reading, writing, and constructive comments on personal works were parts of the Stoic impartational process.

⁷⁴¹ Hadot (2002) p.190.

⁷⁴² Malherbe (1987) p.82

⁷⁴³ Epictetus 1.4.9; 2.16.34; 4.4.11

⁷⁴⁴ Epictetus 3.26.3; 4.5.36.

⁷⁴⁵ Epictetus 3.26.3; 4.5.36.

The Platonists similarly emphasized discipline and community. As for discipline, disciples were encouraged to renounce the pleasures of the world and have a strict dietary regime, with the purpose of weakening the body through fasting and sleep deprivation so that a more spiritual and less earthly life could be achieved.⁷⁴⁶

Platonists were part of what was called the “Academy,” a school that formed students to have a deeper knowledge of politics and other disciplines while research took place in an environment where one’s views had freedom of expression.⁷⁴⁷ The members of the Academy lived as a community of liberated, alike people, insofar as their objective toward goodness equaled their desire to pursue collective research.⁷⁴⁸

But the Academy was not just for scholarly pursuits; Platonists valued an encouraging community in aiding ethical development. There was an emphasis on forming communities for the betterment of ones’ soul. Teachers were encouraged to offer constructive criticism to their students.⁷⁴⁹ The learning was in a community, group, or ring of friends in which an ambiance of sublimated love existed.⁷⁵⁰ The community was

⁷⁴⁶ Hadot (2002) pp.189-190.

⁷⁴⁷ Hadot (1995) p.106.

⁷⁴⁸ Hadot (2002) p.59.

⁷⁴⁹ Malherbe (1987) pp.83-84.

⁷⁵⁰ Hadot (2002) p.60.

comprised of older members who focused on teaching and research and younger members who comprised the student body.⁷⁵¹

For the Stoics and Platonists, impartation occurred in a community centered on personal growth and intellectual development, though it appears that there was more personal interaction between members of the Platonists than among the Stoics.

This brief survey of the Stoics and Platonists gives us a foundation to discuss the Epicureans.

4.3 Epicurean Impartation

4.3.1 Conversion and Epicureanism

Although the methods of the Epicureans overlap significantly with those of the Stoics and Platonists, Epicureanism is distinctive in that the founder, Epicurus, focused more on the individual interaction rather than public speeches and did this by winning the intellectual consent of the individual through a personal relationship and intellectual dialogue, with the goal of showing by reason the validity of the Epicurean lifestyle.⁷⁵² Asmis writes, “Philosophical doctrines must be firmly rooted in each individual’s own understanding in order to have the appropriate effect, and this comes about

⁷⁵¹ Hadot (2002) p.60.

⁷⁵² Asmis (2004) p.134.

through reasoning, not through momentary enthusiasm.”⁷⁵³ It is likely that this practice continued in the Epicurean school after his death.

4.3.2 Methods of Impartation

Glad uses a technical term to describe the impartation process during the Hellenistic period: Psychagogy. Psychagogy was a form of care that involved “spiritual exercises, psychotherapy, and psychological and pastoral counseling.”⁷⁵⁴ It has also been discussed as “‘the guidance of the soul’ to describe a mature person’s leading of neophytes in an attempt to bring about moral reformation by shaping the neophyte’s view of himself and of the world.”⁷⁵⁵ The mentor would try to reorient the disciple morally, socially and intellectually. Psychagogy was thus a habitual or established practice where a relationship between a more mature individual would guide a less mature individual who acknowledged his/her direction in a mentoring relationship.⁷⁵⁶ The essence of psychagogy is guidance for the renovation of individuals. So the term is similar to impartation.

⁷⁵³ Asmis (2004) p.134.

⁷⁵⁴ See Malherbe (1987) p.81.

⁷⁵⁵ Glad (1995) p.2. One basis Glad uses to build his understanding of psychagogy is applying the rhetorical genres of epideictic and deliberative to his understanding of psychagogy. We have already discussed that there are those, especially Weima (2000) and Winter (2005) pp.135-150 that hold to the fact that Paul was not influenced by Aristotelian rhetoric when writing his letters.

⁷⁵⁶ Glad (1995) p.58. The evidence suggests that the vast majority of these mentors were male.

4.3.2.1 Frank Criticism/Speech

The most common technique of Epicurean psychagogy was the use of frank speech. The essence of frank speech can be summed up in two phrases: constructive criticism and self-disclosure. Constructive criticism was either from a friend in the community or from a mentor or wiser person. Frank speech started out in the political realm expressing the right of freedom of speech of one who had full public eminence in Athens, but later it became a way of interaction between close personal friends and a part of the Hellenistic philosophic society as a technique for maturing disciples.⁷⁵⁷

Different people viewed it differently. Isocrates viewed it as concise speaking without reservation, having maximum frankness without raising fury.⁷⁵⁸ Musonius Rufus saw it as an inner autonomy and freedom, specifically a freedom from fears.⁷⁵⁹ Cynics used daring and disturbing words as an illustration of their ethical freedom from rule.⁷⁶⁰ Philodemus situated frank speech in the social context of friendship and felt that the one who speaks frankly is performing the office of a friend.⁷⁶¹ The main goal was for the healing of the disciples' souls, but later became related to

⁷⁵⁷ Konstan, et al (1998) pp.3-5.

⁷⁵⁸ Fredrickson (1996) p.168.

⁷⁵⁹ Fredrickson (1996) p.166 and Fiore (2004) p.272.

⁷⁶⁰ Fredrickson (1996) p.166 and Fiore (2004) pp.271-272.

⁷⁶¹ Sampley (2004) p.295.

instruction as a nurturing or therapeutic use, because the frank speech could show individuals where they are weak and begin healing their souls as they improve in their weaknesses.⁷⁶² The teacher was compared to a doctor:

[he will be discovered not] to have erred. For it is like when a doctor assumes because of reasonable signs that a certain man is in need of a purge, and then, having made a mistake in the interpretation of the signs, never again purges this man when he is afflicted by another disease. This, [judging] by this very thing {i.e., the analogy}, he will again [speak frankly]. . . . and [having accomplished] nothing he will again employ {frankness} toward the same man. If, although he has erred, he {the student} did not heed the frank criticism, he {the teacher} will criticize frankly again. For although a doctor in the case of the same disease had accomplished nothing through a clyster, he would again purge {the patient}. And for this reason he will again criticize frankly, because before he accomplished nothing, and he will do this again and again, so that if not this time then another time.⁷⁶³

Mentors believed that their disciples needed honest and constructive criticism in a way that was neither too harsh that might dishearten their moral development or too lenient, which may produce laxness:

In most instances he {the teacher} will practice the art in such a way. But at times he will also practice frankness [simp]ly, believing that it must be risked [if] otherwise they {the students} do not pay heed. {[And]} those who are exceedingly strong, both by nature [and] because of their progress, {he will criticize} with all passion and <[blame] and >. . . rather to rejoice even in the watchfulness that will also set forth difficulties that accompany and will be attached to those who are such, <saying> again < and again, “You are doing [wrong],” and >. . . and [in this way] he will make this [clear] to him who encounters frankness. [If] not, his

⁷⁶² Konstan, et al (1998) pp.4-5.

⁷⁶³ Konstan, et al (1998) p.71; translated from fragment 63 and 64 of *On Frank Criticism*.

[labor] will accomplish nothing further, and furthermore will dishearten {the student}. And surely he will always fashion his words without anger <[so as] not [to wrong] [further?] those who are treated roughly [by him]>. And [in general] in this case he will censure him when he [maligns], and [on the contrary] in the case of offenses that [irritate] the one who is being admonished he {the teacher} will also make this clear to him as well. For it happens, on the one hand, that one is alienated intellectually, since the one [who talks back] does not say [sound things] . . . so as to employ the quality against [what is vehement], but it is not possible [to see] the individual character even well disposed [if they are concealed].⁷⁶⁴

At the center of this development was life among a community.

Frankness was a natural language of friendship and believed to be the most powerful technique to aid one's friend in mutual reformation.⁷⁶⁵ It is the basis of friendship that a fellow disciple/friend could approach others in the community with frank criticism. The correction of faults by friends was seen as an integral part of character improvement. So members of the group reprove one another in friendship.

<[for, on account] of {our} good {qualities}, we shall [reform the] character of [friends]> as it will come to be <by means of {our} conversation>. But if {on account} of {our} good {qualities}, how not also of {our} bad ones? For, just as it is suitable on account of the good cheer of the former, so too thanks to sympathy for the latter, through which we are helped. <For in fact if it is possible for you, having spoken frankly, to stay in the same {condition}—if you will withhold nothing—[you will] save a man [who is a friend]⁷⁶⁶

⁷⁶⁴ Konstan, et al (1998) pp.33-35, translation of fragment 10-14.

⁷⁶⁵ Konstan, et al (1998) p.5.

⁷⁶⁶ Konstan, et al (1998) p.57. This was translated from fragment 43 of the work titled in English *Philodemus On Frank Criticism*.

Reforming character was one of the highest aims of the Epicureans and was obligatory for progress in wisdom, which required correction of faults and obsessions.

Frank criticism was not only for the mentor to use for the disciple but it was also dependent on the active participation of the community;

we shall admonish others with great confidence, both now and when those {of us} who have become offshoots of our teachers have become eminent . . . he {the teacher} hurt the one who was being admonished [wholly] unbeknownst to those nearby, and {they said?} that, {admonished} cheerfully, he would not even have been pained straightaway on account of the statement. Sometimes when well-being has been restored, and often even when it has become clear to others, it has escaped the notice of a teacher. If something not impersonal that has been brought in will not escape notice . . . that [the one being reproached] {thinks that they} envy or scorn {him} or are experiencing some such thing; and that {he} says that it is more painful even to seem to be corrected by them, as they are contemptible, except for the fact that even wise men has at times spoken frankly when they have not erred, because he has reasoned falsely and perhaps [applies] frankness [wrongly for many] reasons.⁷⁶⁷

Personal faults were expected to be self-disclosed to the community and encouraged to be openly confessed and brought to the attention of the community for correction.⁷⁶⁸ Hiding one's faults was regarded as dangerous. The Epicurean model of fellowship expected input of members in the assessment and reproof of each other. Members are expected to be forthcoming with respect to their weaknesses; concealment is discouraged;

⁷⁶⁷ Konstan, et al (1998) pp.57, 69. Translation of fragment 45, 61,62.

⁷⁶⁸ Konstan, et al (1998) p.8

rather, those in the community are encouraged to confess their faults to others.⁷⁶⁹ Concealment was considered an affront to the friends in the community.⁷⁷⁰

For it is necessary to show him his errors forthrightly and speak of his failings publicly. For if he has considered this man to be the one guide of right speech and [action], whom he calls the only savior, and {to whom}, citing the phrase, “with him accompanying {me}, he has given himself over to be treated, then how is he not going to show to him those things in which he needs treatment, and [accept admonishment]? . . . <but to act in secret is necessarily most unfriendly, no doubt. For he who does not report {errors} is clearly covering up these things too from the most outstanding of his friends, and there will be no advantage for the one who hides {things}; for not one thing escaped notice.”⁷⁷¹

Self-disclosure was not only meant for rectification and development; it also guarded against discord within the community, but not everyone in the community may be trustworthy, so there is a balance between self-disclosure and feeling safe enough to self-disclose. Secrets should only be made known to faithful, reverent and reliable people; but what about those who are less willing to self-disclose?⁷⁷²

With regard to those who are less forthcoming with their faults, reporting by another disciple in the community was suitable.⁷⁷³ Even if the member has no trouble with self-disclosure, reporting of another

⁷⁶⁹ Glad (1995) p.124.

⁷⁷⁰ Glad (1995) p.128.

⁷⁷¹ Konstan, et al (1998) p.55, translated from fragment 40 and 41.

⁷⁷² Glad (1995) p.126.

⁷⁷³ Glad (1995) pp.124-125.

member to a wiser mentor is an acceptable practice. Other associates are on occasion in a better position to notice their fellow disciples' mistakes. They should either correct the fellow student or report them to the teachers.⁷⁷⁴

The four facets of Epicurean improvement practices are: "self-correction, correction administered by others, members reporting errors to teachers to be corrected, and the wise correcting each other."⁷⁷⁵

The teachers in the community are responsible for knowing how to relate frank criticism to the student.

The person to whom he has become devoted is sociable [and he] touches upon this one in accord with his character. For some are treated more pleasantly and more easily when their teachers are ignorant [of the conditions on which] they {the students} come together for what they do. There are times when he {the teacher} will say that some of the friends are speaking {about him} and he encourages {him?} {to guard} . . . and [in this way] he will make this [clear] to him who encounters frankness. [If] not, his [labor] will accomplish nothing further, and furthermore will dishearten {the student}. And surely he will always fashion his words without anger.⁷⁷⁶

Students in the community vary in their temperament. There are those who can accept frank criticism courteously, those who cannot bear to hear it, those who imaginarily accept it, those who strongly oppose it, and those who become resentful or become estranged intellectually when

⁷⁷⁴ Glad (1995) p.129.

⁷⁷⁵ Konstan, et al (1998) p.11.

⁷⁷⁶ Konstan, et al (1998) pp.31, 35. Translation of fragment 8 and 12.

criticized.⁷⁷⁷ “There are references to strong students, weak ones, tender ones, confused ones, those who are either too shy or too intense, sociable ones, and those of lesser intellectual ability.”⁷⁷⁸

Epicurus had three categories for students: “1.) Students who work their way to the truth on their own, 2.) students who need a guide to follow, and 3.) those who are not dependent on a guide but need someone to support and encourage them to achieve.”⁷⁷⁹ A wise mentor will be able to grasp what level the disciple is at in their development and offer the necessary amount of frank criticism that will be tolerable by the student. This is called the “philotropeic method.” The method recognizes the varied nature and state of people and will affect its degree of implementation.⁷⁸⁰ Though this would lead to pain for the disciple to hear how he/she falls short, it was believed to be the pathway that leads to real pleasure.⁷⁸¹ The mentor must speak openly, and listen with sympathy, with no sarcasm or malice.⁷⁸² The ultimate goal is for the disciple to understand the true purposes of life; philosophers practiced many forms of

⁷⁷⁷ Konstan, et al (1998) p.11.

⁷⁷⁸ Konstan, et al (1998) p.11.

⁷⁷⁹ Glad (1995) p.67.

⁷⁸⁰ Glad (1995) p.86.

⁷⁸¹ Glad (1995) p.85.

⁷⁸² Hadot (2002) p.214.

discourse—exhortations, warnings, consolation and lessons—all for the healing of the soul.⁷⁸³

The degree of harshness in criticism was debated among the Epicureans. Some advocated a very strict, harsh criticism to the disciple while others preferred a more gentle approach. Harshness in criticism was generally discouraged by Philodemus; he believed in humans and believed even more that they could be improved. Philodemus preferred the gentler form of treatment over a more offensive approach to correction.⁷⁸⁴

Konstan, et al write,

One should not revile, scorn, or treat those who err spitefully, but, should be pitied and forgiven, and the teacher should apply frank speech opportunely and cheerfully in order to increase the goodwill between him and those who are being prepared. If the young are ridiculed or inopportunely reprov'd, they become downcast, accept criticism badly, and cannot endure to listen to the teacher with goodwill.⁷⁸⁵

Harshness is apparent when a disobedient member was dealt with; it was thought that the best way to deal with hard, obstinate, disobedient people was to speak harshly and frankly to the individual, but there is still no agreement on the proper amount and kind of harshness in the transformation ethic.⁷⁸⁶ Though the degree and application of harshness is not agreed upon, frank speech was an integral part of friendship among the

⁷⁸³ Hadot (2002) pp.215, 217.

⁷⁸⁴ Konstan, et al (1998) p.11.

⁷⁸⁵ Konstan, et al (1998) pp.11-12.

⁷⁸⁶ Glad (1995) p.88.

Epicureans and was used in the practice “of exhortation, edification, and correction.”⁷⁸⁷

4.3.2.2 Other Aspects

Turning from our discussion of frank speech, we will now explore other facets of Epicurean mentoring.

Community was an integral part of the mentoring method.

Students and teachers lived among each other. As discussed above, these close living conditions allowed for self-disclosure of personal imperfections to happen in a community setting as well as to receive constructive criticism from those who are living with the individual.

These communities were highly organized and functionally democratic.⁷⁸⁸

The communities were not concentrated in one area but spread out by immense sections of land and water. Despite the distance, documents for teaching were exchanged. These document exchanges helped bring unity in the community and were memorized and shared among the various communities. Letters would be written and distributed by the master scholars of the school.⁷⁸⁹

⁷⁸⁷ Glad (1995) p.105.

⁷⁸⁸ Obbink (2004) p.76.

⁷⁸⁹ Obbink (2004) p.76.

The Epicureans form a close community but were not disengaged from society; they adjust to the organizations of the larger society.⁷⁹⁰ For example, Epicureans were permitted to participate in religious festivities as long as they were kept pure from incorrect beliefs that could be gained from these festivals.⁷⁹¹ The community of mature people aids in keeping an individual continuing in the purity of Epicureanism.

Though not disengaged from society, there is evidence that the Epicureans lived in close personal quarters with one another. There is record of Epicurus purchasing a house where “companies of friends” would be housed as well as the purchase of grounds outside the city that would be called the “Garden” which would be associated with the school of philosophy.⁷⁹² The properties would be passed from one head of the school to the next. The house may not have housed everyone in the school but clearly it was a residence to the head of the school and close associates,⁷⁹³ and also a place of community activities like meals and philosophic gatherings.⁷⁹⁴ The Garden was a place of learning, eating, talking and community.⁷⁹⁵

⁷⁹⁰ Asmis (2004) p.135.

⁷⁹¹ Asmis (2004) p.135.

⁷⁹² Asmis (2004) p.135.

⁷⁹³ Asmis (2004) p.137.

⁷⁹⁴ Asmis (2004) p.137. It was estimated that the amount of food could feed one to two hundred people.

⁷⁹⁵ Asmis (2004) p.140.

The close contact with the teachers allowed for the disciple to emulate the life of the teacher. This did not happen automatically; usually the emulation would be fueled by an admiration of the teacher. But regardless of admiration, the closeness of teachers to disciples allowed the disciples to watch how their teachers lived everyday life. They could see how they ate, studied, interacted personally and interpersonally, how they kept their bodies healthy.⁷⁹⁶ The closeness allowed the teacher's lives to be models to disciples.

The Epicureans did impartation by focusing on teaching, frank speech, community, imitation/emulation of mentor with an emphasis on frank speech or criticism.

The similarities with Stoic/Platonic impartation are evident. All three schools had a central body of knowledge that espoused the ideals of their individual philosophic schools. This central body of knowledge was passed on to those joining the schools. All three involved personal interaction within a community where members of the community could help other members improve. But of the three, the Epicureans emphasized community involvement in an individual's growth more than the Platonists and Stoics. All three had more mature members and masters from whom younger students could learn and grow. But the Epicureans, with their emphasis on frank speech and self-disclosure, had an emphasis of a master

⁷⁹⁶ Clay (2004) p.66.

helping out a younger student more so than the Stoics and Platonists. The Epicureans had a stronger slant towards community involvement in a member's maturity, but all three had aspects of community involvement and philosophic teaching. In Epicureanism, men who were designated as teachers and members who had done more reading and who had worked through much of their weaknesses through frank criticism were in positions to help less mature members. Now that I have discussed Epicurean impartation, I will turn our attention to the rabbinic way of making disciples.

4.4 Rabbinic Impartation

Strictly speaking, the whole of 'rabbinic literature' dates from a later time than Paul. But it is possible cautiously to identify within it elements from the first century, and practices which are likely to have remained fairly consistent through the early centuries of the Common Era.⁷⁹⁷ The characteristics of rabbinic impartation evident in the literature are: centrality and study of Torah, community, serving the masters, having clear characteristics to be developed in a disciple, and wise reproof.

4.4.1 Centrality of the Torah

⁷⁹⁷ Rabbi Richard Sarason of Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, Ohio advised me in the writing of this section.

Jewish people believe the Torah was given to the nation of Israel by Moses who received it from God. The concept of Torah can be understood from the treatise Avot in the Mishnah: “Moses received the Law from Sinai, and delivered it to Joshua, and Joshua to the Elders, and the Elders to the Prophets, and the Prophets delivered it to the Men of the Great Synagogue.”⁷⁹⁸ The Jewish people would see Torah, which means ‘instruction,’ as sometimes referring to the Pentateuch, sometimes to the Written law and Oral law, and sometimes to the entire body of traditional Jewish teachings.⁷⁹⁹ Torah in the comprehensive sense is the laws and decrees in addition to all the understandings and intensifications sealed in Mishnah, Midrash, and Talmud.⁸⁰⁰

Studying Torah was paramount in Judaism. To understand Torah’s pre-eminence in Judaism, we may compare its significance among the basic values of Judaism which are: the Torah and its study, divine service (sacrifice, prayer), charity (good deeds); the Torah has priority over service and charity.⁸⁰¹ Though service and charity were important, Torah study was more. The treatise Avot in the Mishnah also states, “make a hedge for the Torah.”⁸⁰² The rabbis’ ‘hedge for the Torah’ is:

⁷⁹⁸ m.Avot 1:1 translation by Herford (1930) p.2.

⁷⁹⁹ Lerner (1983) p.66.

⁸⁰⁰ Lerner (1983) p.2.

⁸⁰¹ Lerner (1983) p.6.

⁸⁰² m.Avot 1:1 translation by Herford (1930) p.2.

the precaution taken to keep the divine revelation from harm, so that the sacred enclosure, so to speak, might always be free and open for the human to contemplate the divine. So far as the Torah consisted of precepts positive and negative, the 'hedge' consisted of warnings whereby a man was saved before it was too late from transgression.⁸⁰³

The study of Torah was primary in Rabbinical thought/practice.

Because of the preeminence of studying Torah, it was considered a life long event: "Until what period in life ought one to study Torah? Until the day of one's death, as it is said, 'And lest they (the precepts) depart from thy heart all the days of thy life' (Deut. 4:9). Whenever one ceases to study, one forgets."⁸⁰⁴ Rabbinic thought praised the study of Torah and its merits; those who studied it were held in high esteem among the sages.

Torah was the guiding force of life:

"The commandment is a lamp, and the teaching is light" (Prov. 6:23). A parable of one who stands in a dark place. No sooner does he start walking than he stumbles over a stone or comes to a gutter and falls into it, striking the ground with his face. Why does this happen? Because he has no lamp in his hand. So, too, is the unlearned man who possesses no Torah. When he comes upon a transgression, he stumbles into it and dies. But they who study Torah give light wherever they are. A parable of one who stands in the dark with a lamp in his hand. When he comes upon a stone, he

⁸⁰³ Commentary on m.Avot 1:1 Herford (1930) p.21.

⁸⁰⁴ Hyamson (1981) p.58a. Notes and English translation by Hyamson.

does not stumble [over it]; when he comes upon a gutter, he does not fall into it. Why not? Because he has a lamp in his hand.⁸⁰⁵

Recognizing the desire humankind has for status and honor, power, avarice, Torah study was thought to combat these desires because its intrinsic value was to study it “for its own sake” and ultimately “for the sake of God who created them and commanded them.”⁸⁰⁶ Torah study was central in Rabbinic thought and was central to their lives, a spirit of learning and erudition would be created among their students. It was this centrality that rabbis would impart to their disciples.

Torah study was not only meant for one’s personal knowledge and growth but also for one to teach it to others:

And what a man learns, let him practice himself and then teach others that they may practice it, as it is said, *That ye may learn them, then observe to do them* (Deut. 5:1). And so too of Ezra it says, *For he had set his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and afterward, And to teach in Israel statutes and ordinances* (Ezra 7:10).⁸⁰⁷

Disciples were needed to propagate the study of Torah. Because Torah study was so important, rabbinic thought/practice was desirous to spread

⁸⁰⁵ Book of Legends 434:305. The Book of Legends is a compilation from the Talmud and Midrash; first published in 1908-1911. Rabbi Richard Sarason, comments in an interview that the Book of Legends:

(In Hebrew, "Sefer HaAggadah") is a modern compilation and adaptation by Hayyim Nahman Bialik and Yehoshua Hana Ravnitsky of traditional midrashic and talmudic narratives, homiletical, and exegetical materials. The work was done as part of the modern Hebrew/Jewish cultural/Jewish national renaissance in Eastern Europe at the end of the nineteenth-beginning of the twentieth centuries. It was first published in Odessa between the years 1908-1911. The English-language translation was done by Rabbi William G. Braude (Temple Beth El, Providence, RI) in the 1980's and was published posthumously in 1992.

⁸⁰⁶ Lerner (1983) p.11.

⁸⁰⁷ b.Avot de-Rabbi Nathan A (ARNA) 13, translated by Goldin (1955) p.72.

the importance of its study to the Jewish people, which became one of the reasons for disciple-making:

To make disciples, in the sense of imparting knowledge of the Torah, has always been both the aim and the practice of Rabbinism, as the Talmud bears ample witness. In the larger relation the minor one of discipleship to a particular teacher held but a small place. The Rabbi was enjoined not to make followers of himself, but to impart to all whom he could influence such knowledge as he possessed of divine truth.⁸⁰⁸

The centrality of the Torah had a component of teaching as well as learning.

4.4.2 Community

There are two entities in the literature: an academy and a disciple circle.

An academy resembled a college or conservatory for higher rabbinic studies.⁸⁰⁹ It is uncertain how significant the academy was during Paul's time but it should be mentioned. Loewe writes,

The academies in which these studies were carried on were numerous. The seat of the Sanhedrin was in the 'Chamber of Hewn Stone' in Jerusalem. When the fall of the city was imminent, Johanan b. Zakkai obtained leave from Vespasian to found an academy at Jamnia. . . . After the defeat of Bar Kokba in 135, the scholars moved to Sikhnin. . . . The removal of the Judean schools to Galilee (Jamnia to Usha) was due to the persecution under Hadrian.⁸¹⁰

⁸⁰⁸ Commentary on m.Avot 1:1 Herford (1930) p.21.

⁸⁰⁹ Lerner (1983) pp.47, 63.

⁸¹⁰ Loewe (1974) p.695.

So there is evidence of the existence of the academy prior to A.D. 70 because Johanan b. Zakkai is listed during the Tannaitic I period which is from A.D. 10-80.⁸¹¹ But Strack and Stemberger write,

Almost nothing is known about the precursors of the rabbinic school system in the Temple period. . . . The description of the *bêt ha-midrash* on the temple mount in t.Sanh 7.1 (Z. 425) probably contains some anachronisms. . . . It is often claimed on the basis of p.Shab 16.8, 15d that Yohanan ben Zakkai directed an academy before 70 . . . but this is not explicitly asserted in the text.⁸¹²

So it is uncertain how prominent the academy was prior to A.D. 70 but it is clearly more prominent afterwards.

The ‘disciple circle’ is more likely what Paul experienced.⁸¹³

Cohen writes, “A single master has around him a handful of apprentices who attend their master like servants in order to learn his every action.”⁸¹⁴ Cohen also writes, “Disciples would live, eat, sleep, and travel with their masters. They would listen to his discussions with other rabbis and watch him decide legal cases. Those who did not actually live with their master would at least visit him on Sabbaths and holidays.”⁸¹⁵ Even the first night of marriage was not private for the master; a disciple could be with the master during this time.⁸¹⁶

⁸¹¹ Dates from Loewe (1974) p.696.

⁸¹² Strack and Stemberger (1991) p.11.

⁸¹³ See Cohen (1999) p.951.

⁸¹⁴ Cohen (1999) p.951.

⁸¹⁵ Cohen (1999) pp.952-953.

⁸¹⁶ Cohen (1999) pp.952-953.

During Paul's time, the disciple circle was likely more common than the academy and was common in the Tannaitic Period (A.D. 70-220).⁸¹⁷ Rubenstein writes,

Rabbinic schools of tannaitic times are more accurately characterized as "disciple circles" than academies. There were no school buildings, hierarchies of positions, administrative bureaucracies, curricula, or requirements. . . . A few disciples gathered around a rabbinic master and learned traditions from him in his home or in some other private dwelling that could serve as a school.⁸¹⁸

Rubenstein also writes, "As opposed to an academy, the disciple circle was not an institution in that there was no ongoing life or continuity of the group beyond the individual teacher. The school was essentially the master himself."⁸¹⁹ These disciple circles allowed the student to serve the master.

4.4.3 Serving the Masters

A disciple circle had the aspect of 'serving the master' built in as the disciples were already around their master constantly. A great emphasis in learning Torah was that the disciple should serve the master:

If a man reads Scripture but does not study Oral law, he is still standing outside [Torah's inner mysteries]; if he studies Oral Law but does not read Scripture, he is still standing outside; if he reads

⁸¹⁷ Others like Loewe (1974) p.696 list the period differently. Loewe has Tannaitic I (A.D. 10-80) all the way to Tannaitic VI (A.D. 200-220).

⁸¹⁸ Rubenstein (2007) p.59.

⁸¹⁹ Rubenstein (2007) p.59.

Scripture and studies Oral Law but does not attend upon the sages, he is like one from whom the inner mysteries of Torah remain hidden.⁸²⁰

In doing so they could learn Torah through experience.

It is in this service that a disciple received personal contact with the master so this allowed disciples another form of learning.⁸²¹ Jewish literature also writes: “A disciple attending upon a sage in Torah is more valuable than the sage’s direct teaching. For Scripture says, ‘Here is Elisha, the son of Shaphat, who poured water on the hands of Elijah.’”⁸²² Study alone did not make a disciple; one had to minister to their teacher.

The type of service resembled a slave serving a master and a son serving his father.⁸²³ Masters would sometimes address pupils as sons and would love them like their own children.⁸²⁴ In fact, the disciple was expected to favor his master over his very own father.⁸²⁵

Because of this relationship that supersedes allegiance to one’s own father, the disciple was expected to serve the master. Students would not pay a fee to be part of these schools, unlike some of the later Hellenistic schools of philosophy. Serving the master was considered part of the reparations given to a master. This allowed the disciple to be in

⁸²⁰ Book of Legends 429:272.

⁸²¹ Lerner (1983) pp.51-53.

⁸²² Book of Legends p.429:268.

⁸²³ Lerner (1983) p.67.

⁸²⁴ Aberbach (1967) p.1.

⁸²⁵ Aberbach (1967) p.1.

constant contact with the teacher. This steady link resulted in finely tuned humility of the student and an amplified admiration and love, compliance and fellowship, in which the disciple served as a container for the entire world of the master. This deepened the disciple's knowledge making the disciple a spiritual offspring of his master.⁸²⁶

Such close contact allowed disciples to observe and study the masters' daily conversations, the masters' habits—which included highly intimate activities.⁸²⁷ The serving of the masters often took place in small groups where masters would travel, study, eat, and sleep with their disciples. Different festivals and Sabbaths allowed for different disciples to take turns in serving their master.⁸²⁸ Everything from table manners, to bathing, conversations with others, learning respect for the wise, was reformed by being with the master.⁸²⁹ In essence, the masters imparted their lives to their disciples teaching them how to live out the Torah. Such close personal contact allowed the cognitive study of Torah to be blended and crystallized by the disciple to see the Torah lived out and applied by the master.

The exact length of service is unknown but there is record of disciples serving their masters for up to forty years.⁸³⁰ Some scholars

⁸²⁶ Lerner (1983) p.67.

⁸²⁷ Aberbach (1967) p.5.

⁸²⁸ Lerner (1983) p.68.

⁸²⁹ Aberbach (1967) pp.10-24.

⁸³⁰ See midr.Sifre Deut. 357, translated by Hammer (1986) p.382.

view this as forty years of age and some see this as a reference to divisions of the life of Moses and his one hundred twenty years of life divided into three periods of forty.⁸³¹

In the disciples' lifetime of study, it is not uncommon for the disciple to serve multiple masters. Masters felt disciples needed to experience differing views. Different teachers with different viewpoints and methods could stimulate the student and lead them to the type of thought that was most suited to them. It is uncertain whether the multiplicity of masters happened concurrently or sequentially but likely it was not uncommon for a disciple to have more than one master at one time, given that they may have served some masters for as long as forty years.⁸³²

4.4.4 Characteristics of Disciples

The rabbis had an idea in their minds of the characteristics of a fully formed disciple. Before going into the characteristics of a fully formed disciple, the Pirke Avot mentions the four types of disciples: "Quick to learn and quick to lose, his gain is cancelled by his loss. Slow to learn and slow to lose, his loss is cancelled by his gain. Quick to learn and slow to

⁸³¹ Lerner (1983) p.54. See also Hammer (1986) p.382.

⁸³² See Lerner (1983) pp.53-56.

lose, this is a good portion. Slow to learn and quick to lose, this is an evil portion.”⁸³³

The book of Legends has several excerpts that list characteristics of disciples, or a disciple that is formed. They are largely characteristics of how one should act and behave as a disciple:

Fifteen characteristics are mentioned of a disciple of the wise. He is pleasant when he comes in and pleasant when he departs. He is unassuming in his academy, resourceful in bringing about the fear of God, prudent in awareness, wise in his ways. He collects [words of Torah] and remembers them well, takes pains to reply properly, makes his questions relevant and his replies to the point, listens carefully before replying, adds something novel of his own to each and every chapter, goes to a sage [to minister to him], and studies in order to teach and practice.⁸³⁴

Another excerpt:

A disciple of the wise should be modest at eating, at drinking, at bathing, at anointing himself, at putting on his sandals; in his walking, in dress, in the sound of his voice, in the disposal of his spittle, even in his good deeds. A bride, while still in her father’s house, acts so modestly that when she leaves it her very presence proclaims: “whoever knows anything to be testified against me, let him come and testify.” Likewise, a disciple of the wise should be so modest in his actions that his ways proclaim what he is.⁸³⁵

⁸³³ m.Avot 5:15, Herford (1930) p.135.

⁸³⁴ Book of Legends 434:307. Are the lists by the rabbis similar to Paul’s in Galatians 5:19-23? The lists differ in that Paul compares and contrasts a list of ‘vices’ versus ‘virtues’ while the rabbinic lists are mainly behavioral and attitudinal without a stark contrast. Also, it is interesting to note that Paul does not have a list of vices and virtues in any of his other letters but does have a list of spiritual gifts twice (Rom. 12 and 1 Cor. 12). One could argue that Paul’s exhortations in his letters were influenced by the rabbis’ lists, but these exhortations in his letters do not reflect the list of vices and virtues in Galatians 5:19-23.

⁸³⁵ Book of Legends 434:309.

The way of a disciple of the wise: humble, meek, eager, full of goodwill, submissive to discourtesy, loved by all people, undemanding even with the people in his own house, fearful of sin, appraising each person according to his deeds, ever saying, “All that is in this world I have no desire for, because this world is not mine.” He keeps studying and is ever ready to throw his robe on the ground and sit on it at the feet of other disciples of the wise. And no man ever espies in him anything evil.⁸³⁶

Rabbinic thought possessed a clear picture of what they thought a disciple should look like and behave. These and other lists of characteristics can be found in rabbinic literature but what these lists allow us to know is that rabbinic thought had clear goals in forming their disciples which involved how they lived and behaved.

4.4.5 Reproof

Wise correction was a high value in Rabbinic thought:

R. Yose bar Hanina said: Reproof leads to love, as is said, “Reprove a wise man, and he will love thee”(Prov. 9:8). Such is the opinion of R. Yose bar Hanina, who on another occasion said: All love that has no reproof with it is not true love. Resh Lakish said: Reproof leads to peace. Such is the opinion of the sage, who on another occasion said: All peace that has no reproof with it is not peace.⁸³⁷

R. Yose bar Hanina was an older student of Yohanan, who died in 279

A.D;⁸³⁸ Resh Lakish was in the Tannaitic period. Reproof was encouraged

⁸³⁶ Book of Legends 435:310.

⁸³⁷ Book of Legends 693:33.

⁸³⁸ Strack and Stemberger (1991) pp.67, 95, 96.

by Rabbinical thought and even though the master-disciple relationship had many characteristics that favored superiority of the master over the disciple, reproof was encouraged within the relationship in an equal application: “Rava said: “Thou shalt surely reprove” (Lev.19:17)—reprove even a hundred times. I might suppose that only the master must reprove his disciple. But how do I know that a disciple must reprove his master? From Scripture’s saying, “Thou shalt surely reprove”—under all circumstances.”⁸³⁹

4.5 Summary of Rabbinic Impartation and Comparison with Epicureanism

Because there is little literature on impartation from the time of Paul, the conclusion on rabbinic impartation during his time must be stated with caution. From this analysis of rabbinic thought/practice, which unavoidably relies on sources from a period later than the first century, we may cautiously state that in the time of Paul the training of disciples by scribes or rabbis included the following elements: a focus on studying, understanding and applying the Torah; study in association with other disciples, serving the master; reproof. Since the main purpose of impartation was to learn from the Torah, the desirable characteristics of a

⁸³⁹ Book of Legends 694:35.

disciple which are described above would no doubt remain fairly constant through time.

I will now compare the Epicureans to the rabbis. Epicurean and Rabbinical thought both used reproof in forming their disciples. Though the Epicureans had a more elaborate system of reproof, frank speech, both schools valued it in the impartational process.

Not only do they share the practice of reproofing their disciples, they both encouraged spending time with masters, though the rabbis do not seem to have made peer impartation as common as the Epicureans. Rabbinic thought/practice emphasized the master-disciple relationship, with the disciple having more than one master and not as much community development as the Epicureans. However, the interactions between members of the Epicureans are better documented than rabbinic thought. There could have been significant impartation happening between the members of the disciple circle and academy, but we do not have the evidence to demonstrate this.

Rabbinic thought was also more exclusive to the Jewish people while Epicureans freely went about to make converts of whomever they could. Both emphasized a central body of knowledge; rabbinic thought emphasized Torah study while the Epicureans relied on Epicurus' writings as well as other significant philosophic thinkers. But rabbinic thought held a higher view of knowing their central teachings while the Epicureans

valued the acquisition of knowledge but emphasized the community and frank speech in their maturing process.⁸⁴⁰

The main difference is that rabbinic practice involved the opportunity to experience a multiplicity of mentors. Though not as formal, the Epicureans also would have this component of multiple mentors with a multiplicity of teachers living with the disciples. We will now study Paul's method of impartation and then compare him with these two schools of thought. We can then infer which had more influence on Paul or if Paul did his own thing.

Chapter 5

Pauline Impartational Method in 1 Thessalonians

I have just discussed two models of impartation in chapter 4 that may have influenced Paul's method, now I will discuss Paul himself.⁸⁴¹ Christian formation can be defined as the maturing process where growth in holiness is accomplished by:

⁸⁴⁰ A study like this is helpful and we can glean significant insights from it. On the other hand, we must be cautious not to ascribe too much to similarities and attribute too much to the similarity. See Sandmel (1962) pp.1-13.

⁸⁴¹ The terms mentoring and discipling have a synonymous relationship in meaning with impartation.

- 1.) The divine agency (the power of God);
- 2.) human responsibility (the free choice of the disciple to participate in the Christian formation process);
- 3.) the shared life of the Christian community, and
- 4.) impartation, which has a one-to-one aspect (Paul imparting to younger believers), and an aspect of a multiplicity of mentors (his associates).

Of the aspects which have been discussed, impartation may be the one that stands out the most as it was not common in the discussion of Christian formation surveyed in chapter 1. What I have argued is that impartation should be part of the definition of Christian formation because it will offer a more complete understanding of Christian formation's mechanism.

Why is the term impartation used and not another? Glad has used the word Psychagogy.⁸⁴² Other terms, like apprenticeship, communicate a similar idea. Ultimately, a word that communicates the fact of people helping people in the process of maturation was desired. Impartation communicates this.

I will discuss how Paul disciplined the converts and develop a

⁸⁴² See Glad (1995) p.58. See also section 4.3.2.

foundation for impartation using 1 Thessalonians, and more specifically, the pericope found in 2:7-12.⁸⁴³ But first we will discuss letters.

5.1 Letters

The majority of what is known about Paul and his thinking is through letters. So everything that will be discussed in this section will be derived from one of Paul's letters (1 Thessalonians). It is very appropriate in a discussion about his methods of impartation to begin by discussing letters. Paul stayed in contact with his disciples through letters.⁸⁴⁴ We know that he would think of his disciples when he was in another city, as he demonstrated in 1 Thessalonians 2:17-3:10. While in Athens, the concern for the Thessalonian converts was of high importance to Paul. Paul used letter writing as a means of helping his disciples grow.⁸⁴⁵ The letters show his commitment to helping disciples grow when he is not present with them. Roetzel writes, "Paul's message informs and even transforms his medium. Although the letter was for Paul the only mode of conversation

⁸⁴³See section 2.1.4 n.40 on the issue of the pericope of 1 Thess. 2:1-12 being parenetic or apologetic. See also, Schmithals (1972) pp.128-318, Jewett (1986) pp.142-178), Weima (1997) pp.73-99, von Dobschutz (1909) pp.106-107, Dibelius (1937) pp.7-11 Donfried (2000) p.60 states that in no way can one read the pericope as an apology. Wanamaker (1990) p.91 and Richard (1995) pp.88-89 also believe that rhetorical criticism has shown that the pericope cannot be an apology. See Vos (2000) p.88, and Winter (1993) pp.73-74 for other views on the continuum of apologetic and parenetic genre.

⁸⁴⁴ And other means like reports from associates like Timothy in 1 Thessalonians 3.

⁸⁴⁵ For a more general discussion of Paul and letters, see Murphy-O'Connor (1995), Marrow (1986), Puskas (1993), Stirewalt (2003), Keck and Furnish (1984), Doty (1973), Stowers (1981) and (1986) and (1988), Trobisch (1994), Deissmann (1973).

between separated persons, it was more: it was an extension of his apostleship.⁸⁴⁶ The letter enabled Paul to speak despite his absence.⁸⁴⁷

O'Brien writes:

They were occasional, contextual writings addressing particular situations . . . and were substitutes for Paul's personal presence. He was concerned with the life situation of his readers, but never in the impersonal way characteristic of many Hellenistic letters. Paul treated each situation as unique and important. At the same time his letters set forth significant theological teaching and express a Christian understanding of life which reaches beyond the particular historical situation.⁸⁴⁸

So when Paul was not with them physically, he still wanted his disciples to know that he was thinking about them and used letter writing to continue his work of impartation when he was absent from them. Within the letters were reminders of his time with them, his teachings and his response to their questions.

The contents of his letters were vast:

Personal greetings, thanksgivings, blessings, and other prayers, reviews of the relationship between Paul and the recipients, and of their experience of the gospel, summaries of basic beliefs, quotations and explanations of Scripture texts, practical explanations of theological concepts, moral instructions and admonitions, sometimes with reasoned argument, criticisms and warnings, autobiographical statements, travel plans.⁸⁴⁹

⁸⁴⁶ Roetzel (1991) p.70. See O'Brien (1993) pp.551-552 for a good introductory discussion of the form of Pauline letters.

⁸⁴⁷ See also Gorman (2004) pp.74-97.

⁸⁴⁸ O'Brien (1993) p.551. See also Gorman (2004) p.75 and Funk (1967) pp.249-268.

⁸⁴⁹ Gorman (2004) p.75.

Paul saw the letter as a way to continue his teaching and ministry to his disciples that was a substitute for his personal presence.

Paul was not the sole writer of the letters; it is likely that he had a secretary/amanuensis to help him.⁸⁵⁰ There is evidence that Paul used them: in Romans 16:22, the amanuensis makes his/her presence known, “I Tertius, who wrote this letter, greet you in the Lord.” Galatians 6:11 and 1 Corinthians 16:21 could also provide clues that an amanuensis is used when Paul says that he is writing the greeting with his own hand.

Not only is there evidence of the help of a secretary, Paul also wrote letters in association with others (1 Cor. 1:1; 2 Cor.1:1; Gal. 1:2; Phil. 1:1; 1 Thess.1:1). They are mentioned in the beginning of the letters and may have contributed in a substantial way to the content, tone, and focus of the letters.⁸⁵¹ So the letter process could have looked like Paul and his co-authors discussing what needs to be written to the churches and dictating it to the secretary under Paul’s guidance.⁸⁵²

The letters were targeted for communities though there are occasional remarks addressed to individuals (e.g. Phil 4:2-3). Even

⁸⁵⁰ See Bahr (1966) pp.465-477, Murphy-O’Connor (1995) pp.6-15, Richards (1991). There were also professionals that could have written for Paul but it is more likely that the writers came from his team or were part of the communities that Paul founded.

⁸⁵¹ See also Murphy-O’Connor (1995) pp.6-15.

⁸⁵² There are other issues regarding letters that I cannot discuss adequately here. For the structure of the letter, see Weima (1994), Cousar (1996) pp.26-33, Gorman (2004) pp. 79-85. For social and literary settings of Paul’s letters, see Finlan (2008) pp.1-10. For characteristics of ancient letters, see Puskas (1993) pp.6-20, Stirewalt (2003) pp.1-56, Roetzel (1991) pp.59-82.

Philemon is written not only to Philemon himself, but also to Apphia, Archippus and to the church in his house.⁸⁵³

Paul's letters more specifically sought to encourage his disciples to faithfully continue in following Jesus as well as to exhort others to turn from their incorrect ways and return to living in correct ways.⁸⁵⁴ In 1 Thessalonians, for instance, Paul specifically instructs the disciples to encourage one another in light of the eschaton (4:18, 5:11) and exhort the weak and wayward to live rightly (5:14). He expresses his concern over the converts' spiritual condition and dispatches Timothy and was delighted to hear that the converts remained faithful (3:1-6). He reminds them of his time with them and how he and his associates were good examples to follow (2:9-11). These are a few examples from 1 Thess. of how Paul wrote to his converts about his desire for their well-being.⁸⁵⁵

Paul's letters are our primary evidence of his commitment to mentoring his disciples, and precisely because they are 'a substitute for his personal presence', they provide an invaluable indication of the approach he would have used in guiding and instructing his disciples when he was present with them. He would remind his disciples that he and his associates were still thinking about and praying for them. If he and his associates could not be with them in person, they still let them know that

⁸⁵³ See also Gorman (2004) p.77.

⁸⁵⁴ See also Gorman (2004) pp.77-78.

⁸⁵⁵ See also Puskas (1993) pp.99-114, Marrow (1986) pp.59-82.

they were on their mind (affective dimension), that they wanted to be with them (relational dimension), and that they wanted to teach something to help them in the Christian formation process (cognitive dimension). It is these aspects and others derived from his letter to the Thessalonians that we will now investigate.

5.2 Multiple Mentors

Paul did not see himself as the only contributor to the development of his disciples; others were also involved. 1 Thess. 2:8 “**We** were well-pleased to impart.” The letter to the Thessalonians has the names of Timothy and Silvanus along with Paul as those giving greetings to the converts.⁸⁵⁶

Looking at the pericope of 1 Thessalonians 2:7-12, the personal pronoun *h`meij* occurs eleven times. This would show that Paul was not just an individual in his discipling but Paul realized that the impartation process was more effective in working along with others. The apostle Paul often ministered with others and was seldom alone. Acts reports numerous occasions when Paul served with others.⁸⁵⁷ In the undisputed letters, only Galatians and Romans do not list another associate in the opening

⁸⁵⁶ There is evidence that Timothy and Silvanus (Silas) were more than just colleagues. Paul refers to Timothy as his beloved and faithful child in 1 Cor. 4:17. Acts lists Silas as a common companion with Paul on missionary journeys in the book of Acts (Acts 15:40; 16:19; 17:4, 10; 18:5) which would have given Paul much opportunity to be with Silas and help him grow.

⁸⁵⁷ Some works that deal with Paul and his co-workers are Schille (1967), Ellis (1971), Ollrog (1979).

greeting.⁸⁵⁸ The endings of Paul's letters also are filled with those with whom he associated. In Romans 16,⁸⁵⁹ Paul associates himself with Phoebe who is a deacon and a great help to Paul while Priscilla and Aquila are referred to as 'co-workers' in the ministry of Christ Jesus. Mary is credited with working hard for the benefit of the Roman believers. Urbanus is also referred to as a co-worker in Christ. The language found in Romans 16 goes on to describe many more who work and labor in the Lord. This illustrates the principle that impartation is more effective when shared with others rather than in isolation.⁸⁶⁰

It is clear from the passage and other parts of the Pauline corpus that Paul was not an individualist but valued others working with him in the missionary effort. He also realized that the impartational process involved more than just one person forming another, but that others also have a significant place in the formation process. Discipling where mentors are too possessive of their protégés and view them as off limits to other potential mentors is not what Paul modeled; Paul modeled ministry

⁸⁵⁸ But the greeting in Galatians does have Paul attributing part of the greeting to those who were with him at the writing of the letter (Gal.1:2). Also, Tertius in Rom.16:22 is acknowledged as writing the letter for Paul. Though Tertius is not necessarily a pastor/missionary, Paul still is working with others.

⁸⁵⁹ Paul has never been to Rome so these people would be different than someone like Timothy, who is Paul's co-worker. Paul's coming would be to help build up the Romans before he travels to places that have not heard the gospel.

⁸⁶⁰ See also Murray (1998) p.326.

with others and having others share in the discipling of protégés.⁸⁶¹ We will now move on to the different dimensions of the impartation process.

5.3 Cognitive Dimension

By the word cognitive, we would mean first, knowledge based, and second, pertaining to the mental process of Paul. Arguably the most emphasized aspect in the present-day practice of mentoring is the transferring of knowledge from one to another. In fact, mentoring is often misunderstood as strictly the teaching of content to a protégé. Though impartation is more than teaching, teaching is indispensable in the process. The essence of Paul's teaching consisted of understanding the new faith and how to live in a way that pleases God. The first teaching to the Thessalonians was an impartation of the Gospel message.⁸⁶² In 2:8 Paul writes, "We were well pleased to impart to you . . . the **Gospel** of God." The core to the Gospel is the meaning of God's redeeming work in Christ Jesus.⁸⁶³ After receiving the Gospel and accepting it (1:5-7) the Thessalonians entered a new life and needed to learn how to function in it. Paul proceeds from imparting the Gospel to other aspects of Christian

⁸⁶¹ In the section on impartational methods dealing with rabbinic thought, we see that the rabbis encouraged their disciples to serve various masters because they felt their disciples could acquire skills that might not be acquired if they served only themselves.

⁸⁶² For a different perspective on teaching and the Gospel see Dodd (1980, reprint) pp. 7-8.

⁸⁶³ Luter (1993) p.369. Also Fitzmyer (1979) p.341 writes that **euvagge,lion** can "express his activity of evangelization. . .but in the vast majority of passages euangelion denotes the content of his apostolic message—what he preached, proclaimed, announced, or talked about."

living. In 2:1-12 Paul describes his ministry experiences and gives them a model to follow; 3:3-4 talks about continual suffering for their faith;⁸⁶⁴ 4:1-12 focuses on living to please God through sexual purity, love of fellow believers and hard work; 4:13-5:11 reinforces eschatological issues and answers their questions; in 5:12-19 Paul continues his discussion on ethics and the Christian life. Paul taught his disciples (4:2). In fact, throughout his letters, Paul was teaching his disciples.⁸⁶⁵ One could argue that the central motivation of Paul's letter writing would be to teach content to those to whom he wrote. All of his letters deal with aspects of the Christian faith and Christian behavior that are meant for the formation of his disciples.

Teaching content is nothing new in the current discussion on impartation, and is the most common attribute found in discipling methods

⁸⁶⁴ Still (1999b) p.17 carries out a full discussion of the term *qli/yij* and argues that it is "best conceived as intergroup conflict between Christians and non-Christians in Thessalonica. . . Paul and the Thessalonian Christians had discordant relations with outsiders." Still enhances this study with an assessment of the original causes of the difficulty with the help of social-scientific research on deviance and discord. Still (1999b) p.289 writes, "Specifically, I have discovered that Paul and his Thessalonian converts were viewed as dangerously different by their respective compatriots and that Jewish and Gentile outsiders pressured Paul and the church to conform to the accepted conventions of the day." Still has given a definitive study of suffering in 1 Thessalonians as well as having made a contribution to understanding Pauline suffering in general. But his conclusions themselves are not strikingly original to the study of the letter. Interjecting the Galatian conflict (pp.170-190) is problematic given that the social situation of 1 Thessalonians is in debate, but the one area that is not debated is its lack of congruence with Galatians.

⁸⁶⁵ More specifically, Dunn (2003) p.1 writes, One of the chief reasons why we still have so many letters is that his teaching was quickly challenged by varying opponents from both within and without the churches established; it was characteristic of Paul that he did not hesitate to respond vigorously to such challenges. Similarly when his churches proved restive under his tutelage he saw it as part of his continuing apostolic vocation to write to further instruct, encourage and exhort them.

today. In fact, survey the literature on discipling methods and one will find that they are focused on the teaching of content to the disciple.⁸⁶⁶

5.3.1 Intermediate and Ultimate Goal

Now Paul's mental process will be discussed. We saw in chapter 3 that there was overlap of the dimensions and impartation overlapped with the divine agency (1 Cor. 3:6-9). Paul has in mind the divine agency's role in forming the disciples. In his mind, Paul can picture the ultimate goal of perfection at the eschaton while exhorting his disciples to grow and experience some of the maturing process before the eschaton.

1 Thessalonians 3:12 - 13 u`ma/j de. o`ku,rioj pleona,sai kai. perisseu,sai th/| avga,ph| eivj avllh,louj kai. eivj pa,ntaj kaqa,per kai. h`mei/j eivj u`ma/j(eivj to. sthri,xai u`mw/n ta.j kardi,aj avme,mptouj evn a`giwsu,nh| e;mprosqen tou/ qeou/ kai. patro.j h`mw/n evn th/| parousi,a| tou/ kuri,ou h`mw/n Vlhsou/ meta. pa,ntwn tw/n a`gi,wn auvtou/Å

This section of Paul's wish prayer gives us insight into Paul's thinking about goals for his disciples.⁸⁶⁷ There is clearly a **final/ultimate** goal of perfection at the eschaton expressed by "hearts to be established

⁸⁶⁶ E.g. Macchia (2004); Howington, McEachern, and Pinson (1976).

⁸⁶⁷ We saw in chapter 4, section 4.4.4. that the rabbis had lists of characteristics they wanted to see in their disciples. Paul had a list in Galatians 5:19-23 of vices and virtues.

without blame” in v.13.⁸⁶⁸ **sthri,zw** conveys the idea of reaching a level of maturity with the hope of not falling back from it. Harder defines **sthri,zw** as “to strengthen, make firm, establish; fix, set up (Lk 16.26); to. **pro,swpon**, make a firm resolve (Lk 9.51).”⁸⁶⁹ Paul desires the divine agency to establish the ultimate goal in his converts. Paul prayed for the divine agency to ‘establish’ the converts holy and blameless till the eschaton. **sthri,xai** shares the subject **o`ku,rioj** with the two optative verbs linking the clauses together.⁸⁷⁰ The work of God involves causing humankind to grow in love for each other. Paul prays for his converts that their love for each other and all people will be increased by God (3:12). Not only does Paul pray for God to increase his converts’ love, but he also adds the prayer that God will cause their hearts to be blameless and holy in regards to the eschaton of Christ. Paul wants the ultimate goal established by the divine agency.

The ultimate goal of complete perfection is also expressed using **a;memptoj** (blameless) and **a`giwsu,nh** (holiness, consecration).

This is what Paul hopes will happen at the eschaton. But before the eschaton, there is an **intermediate/interim/mobile** goal that is a means to

⁸⁶⁸ On the issue of the already and the not yet, see Dunn (1998) pp.461-472.

⁸⁶⁹ *TDNT* 7:656.

⁸⁷⁰ See also Holtz (1986) p.145.

progress towards the ultimate goal of being perfect.⁸⁷¹ Paul writes in v.12 that he wishes for the divine agency to increase his disciples' love for people. **pleona,sai** is in the optative mood. The optative mood is used to denote possibility. **pleona,sai** communicates that love has the possibility of increasing and used without **av,n**, expresses Paul's wish that his disciples' love increase.⁸⁷² Paul's goals for his disciples' growth can be thought of on two planes: complete perfection at the eschaton as the final goal, but in the interim, progressing in growth towards the final goal.⁸⁷³

Paul also expresses the intermediate and ultimate goal in Galatians 4:19, **me,crij ou- morfwqh/| Cristo.j evn u`mi/n. morfwqh/|** is in the subjunctive mood which communicates a sense of indefiniteness,

⁸⁷¹ This is also true of today. For example, in a study by Steve Fortosis (1992) pp. 283-298, stages of Christian formation are broken down into four stages: 1.) Religious Conversion 2.) Stage One: Formative Stage—Fluid convictions, theological dogmatism, juxtaposed motives/attitudes, feeling-orientation, conditional love, black/white morals, less biblical knowledge/discernment, egocentric reasoning. 3.) Stage Two: Responsible Consistency—Solid convictions, less theological dogmatism, purer motives/attitudes, faith-orientation, less conditional love, black/white/gray morals, greater biblical knowledge/discernment, others-centered reasoning. 4.) Stage Three: Self-transcendent Wholeness—Deep consistent intimacy with God, secure theology fosters flexibility, no duplication between public and private self, unwavering faith even in unexplainable tragedy, compassionate/redemptive with others' failings/weakness, universalized moral framework; confronter of public/private injustice, thorough biblical knowledge/wisdom, self-transcendence for the sake of others.

⁸⁷² See also **pleona,zw** *TDNT* 6:263-266 and chapter 2 section 2.2.3.4.1 on the issue of faith and love being fluid and able to increase or decrease.

⁸⁷³ Samra (2006) pp.112-131 writes that there are five components to the maturation process which is similar to this discussion of Paul's goals for his disciples. Samra would see forming into Christ as defined by: 1.) Identifying with Christ, to associate oneself intimately or "inseparably with, so that 'identifying with Christ' indicates a process of strengthening one's conscious association with Christ or strengthening one's self-categorization as a believer in Christ and a member of the Christ-group." 2.) Enduring suffering. 3.) Experiencing the presence of God. 4.) Receiving and living out wisdom from God. 5.) Imitating a godly example.

referring to a process which has not yet been realized.⁸⁷⁴ Paul describes his work as labor or birth-pangs with the outcome of his work not guaranteed. But he does communicate his ultimate and interim goal in a simple manner: having Christ formed in the disciples, which will happen progressively and culminate at the eschaton. Travis writes,

According to Paul, all believers are fundamentally perfect, not because of their own achievements, but because they are in Christ. They already share in the perfection of the age to come, and are expected to grow to maturity within this perfection. . . . There is a tension between the perfection believers have in Christ and the fact that this perfection remains for them a goal not to be fully accomplished until the parousia.⁸⁷⁵

1 Thessalonians offers a glimpse into Paul's mental process where he saw perfection at the eschaton and wanted his disciples to grow towards this perfection while they were waiting.

5.4 Relational Dimension: Sharing Life

Paul's involvement with his disciples was more than that of a teacher who just mainly taught. Paul lived his life with his disciples so that they understood what Paul experienced in daily life. 1 Thessalonians 2:8 reads *euvdokou/men metadou/nai u`mi/n ouv mo,non to. euvagge,lion tou/ qeou/ avlla. kai. ta.j e`autw/n yuca,j.* We

⁸⁷⁴ See also **morfo,w** *TDNT* 4:752-754.

⁸⁷⁵ Travis (2009) p.148.

have discussed the verb **metadi,dwmi** earlier and have used it as the basis for our word ‘impartation.’⁸⁷⁶

How one understands the use of **yuch**, in this context will aid in understanding the intensity of the sharing. The term can mean life, breath, the soul or one’s inner life.⁸⁷⁷ Many understand it to mean the inner life of the missionaries.⁸⁷⁸ The context communicates a sense that alongside the preaching, there was an open-handed outpouring of their deepest self, their inner life.⁸⁷⁹ This giving of their souls symbolizes the peak of their giving.

The familial metaphors of mother and father also add to the sharing of life as an intense giving of one’s self.⁸⁸⁰ The deep affection expressed in the pericope of 2:7-12 and the familial metaphors used to describe the relationship with the Thessalonians point to a deep commitment where the missionaries give of themselves in a loving union to their converts much like parents give to their children. They shared their lives by experiencing the daily routine of life together as well as teaching them how to live. Indeed, Paul’s attitude here shows his

⁸⁷⁶ See Chapter 2, section 2.2.4-2.2.4.2

⁸⁷⁷ See also *TDNT* 9:608-660.

⁸⁷⁸ See Marshall (1983) p.71.

⁸⁷⁹ See Hiebert (1971) p.96.

⁸⁸⁰ We will discuss whether **trofo,j** refers to mother or nurse later.

awareness that people learn more profoundly from the example of others than from verbal teaching alone.

The letter gives us an idea of the nature of the life that was shared with their disciples. In 2:1-6 Paul describes how his converts knew of the trials he and his associates had faced in Philippi and how the converts knew their motive to preach the Gospel to them was to glorify God and not themselves. In 2:9 Paul reminds them of the missionaries' hard work while at Thessalonica so that they could preach to them and not burden them with their needs.⁸⁸¹ The converts had a model of how to work, and remembered their visit with joy (3:6) implying that they were able to spend time getting to know one another in such a way as to produce affection in their hearts.⁸⁸² These instances clearly point to an involvement outside just teaching. The missionaries created a milieu for the disciples to observe the missionaries' lives.

5.4.1 Imitation/Modeling/Example

⁸⁸¹ Best (1986) pp.73-74 states that both the content and proclamation of the Gospel exist together in this passage. See also Nichol (2004) p.86.

⁸⁸² Nichol (2004) p.83 alerts us to the fact that the third member of the triad, hope, is omitted. Nichol uses this as proof that the Thessalonian converts lacked hope. Nichol's interpretation will be responded to in the next chapter.

Because Paul shared his life with the converts, the converts in turn could witness how Paul lived (2:10) and follow the pattern of his life.⁸⁸³ Fowl expresses the essence of this section:

New converts cannot be expected to have mastered the demands of their new faith and the practices needed to live in accord with these demands in their day-to-day lives. Such converts will need both instruction in their new faith and concrete examples of how to embody their faith in the various contexts in which they find themselves. We can understand this if we think in terms of the ways in which it is essential for an apprentice to imitate a master of a particular craft. . .No amount of abstract verbal instruction can

⁸⁸³ On the issue of imitation language as a strategy of control, see chapter 1, section 1.2.3 on a review of Castelli (1991) and response.

bring about mastery of a craft without the concrete example of a master to imitate.⁸⁸⁴

Imitation here will be discussed in light of the relational dimension of impartation. James Samra lists imitation as one of the components of the

⁸⁸⁴ Fowl (1993) p.430. For a fuller discussion of the whole theme of imitation, see Tinsley (1972), Ong (1994), Judge (1992), Michaelis (1968), de Boer (1962), Castelli (1991), Fiore (1986), Sanders (1981), Stanley (1984), Clarke (1998), Getty (1990). Samra (2006) pp.128-130 has given a helpful summary of the concept of Imitation, acknowledging that Imitation has been discussed more deeply than just imitating a more mature individual and notes some of the major topics:

- 1) Imitation as Obedience. . . see Michaelis (1967) contra Fiore (1986)
- 2) Imitation as Sameness: A more sophisticated analysis of Paul's imitation language has resulted in a criticism of it as engendering 'sameness'. In this understanding, Paul is advocating uniformity, suppressing individuality and exerting power. While there are indeed qualities, behaviours and attitudes that Paul does condemn and others he espouses, it is incorrect to understand 'imitation' as requiring rigid uniformity or sameness. Paul's willingness to allow his converts to make decisions for themselves (Romans 14; 1 Corinthians 7, 8, 10.15), his focus on diversity (e.g. 1 Corinthians 14), and his own willingness to reinterpret and contextualize the teachings of Jesus militate against the idea that imitation is somehow designed to bring about external uniformity. It is more likely that Paul intended a recontextualization of certain principles and attitudes for specific situations in his use of imitation.
- 3) Imitation and Discipleship: Betz states, "The gospel had described the existence of the Christian as following Jesus, however, no apparent continuity exists in terminology and concept between "follower of Jesus" and "imitator of Christ" (Betz [1967] p.186 [quote translated by Samra]). Likewise, D.M. Stanley argues in his 1959 article that imitation in Paul has nothing to do with being a disciple of Jesus.

Other scholars, however, have argued that imitation is related to discipleship. We saw . . . that in the ancient world 'imitation' and 'discipleship' could be used in the same context with overlapping meaning. In addition, a comparison with the gospels shows strong correspondence between how Paul uses 'imitation' and how 'discipleship' is presented by the gospel writers. However, Paul does not use μαθητῶν language. This may simply be because Paul's audience would have been more familiar with imitation language than discipleship language, especially in a religious setting. More likely, his imitation language expresses a different nuance (one that reflects that Jesus was no longer present on earth) and allows him to use the same terminology to express the means (imitating Paul and others) as well as the end (imitating Christ). His choice of 'imitation' language may also place more emphasis on ethical action. Therefore, discipleship and imitation are probably related in that they both point to becoming like the master or the one being imitated but with this overlap there may be different emphases and nuances.

maturation process.⁸⁸⁵ I am in agreement with Samra that imitating a more mature individual will aid in the Christian formation process.⁸⁸⁶ Imitation is a theme found in a number of Paul's letters.⁸⁸⁷ Though **mimhth,j** and its cognates only appear eleven times in the New Testament, the concept of imitation or example is not uncommon in the New Testament (1 Cor.4:16; 11:1; Eph.5:1; Phil. 3:17; 1Thess.1:6; 2:14; 2 Thess. 3:7; Heb. 6:12; 13:7; 3 Jn.1:11).⁸⁸⁸ Paul encourages his Corinthian converts in 1 Cor.11:1 to pattern their lives after him as he patterns it after Christ. Though Paul is not as specific in 1 Thessalonians, it is clear that Paul was among his disciples so that they could witness his life (2:10). They could see his actions and model them. It was not for them to follow

⁸⁸⁵ Samra (2006) pp.125-131. Specifically, Samra calls it "imitating a godly example."

⁸⁸⁶Samra (2006) pp.126-128 offers some observations on *mimetes* in the Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Josephus, Philo, classical writers (Plutarch, Isocrates, Epictetus, Xenophon, Quintilian), other NT writers (Heb. 6:12; 3 Jn 11; Eph. 5:1-2; 1 Peter 3:13) and Early Church Fathers (Clement, Ignatius, *Martyrdom of Polycarp*). Samra writes, First, the ideas of personal example, ethical model and 'mimesis' are often found together. Second, 'distant' (i.e. unavailable) models for imitation are often supplemented by imitation of 'known' persons. Third, imitation could be tied to moral progress, perfection, blamelessness and could be more important than obedience to 'law.' Fourth, imitation can be distinguished from mere mimicking and is more closely tied to recontextualization of attitudes. Similarly, to imitate someone does not demand a one-to-one correlation of ability. This is usually noted when 'God' is involved. Fifth, one was often exhorted to imitate God and could also be instructed to imitate humans in the same context. Sixth, imitation could also be tied to the ideas of discipleship and the context of love.

⁸⁸⁷ 1 Thess. 1:6; Phil.3:17;1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1; Gal.4:12; Phil 4:9. See also Martin (1999) pp.40-41 and Fowl (1993) pp.428. Contrast Michaelis (1967) pp.659-674 and Getty (1990) p.277.

⁸⁸⁸ See Martin (1999) pp.39-49.

Paul's every action and become his clone but to observe the noteworthy aspects of his life and to live in that way.⁸⁸⁹

This concept is also present in modern psychology. Albert Bandura writes, "The people with whom one regularly associates, either through preference or imposition, delimit the behavioral patterns that will be repeatedly observed, and hence learned most thoroughly. . ."⁸⁹⁰

Bandura goes on to write, "People can acquire abstract principles but remain in a quandary about how to implement them if they have not had the benefit of illustrative exemplars."⁸⁹¹ Oman and Thoresen write,

Throughout history, religious traditions have emphasized the importance of keeping company with good or holy persons, arguing that people tend to become more like persons with whom they associate. Religious devotees are especially urged to be with wise and holy persons, with saints and sages in the hope of absorbing in some small measure the exemplary characteristics of such persons.⁸⁹²

The company one keeps influences one's life. Sharing life involved being deeply involved with the disciples' life, like that of a parent giving their life for a child, and having an involvement that allows one to observe one's life and model it. This is a crucial aspect in impartation.

⁸⁸⁹ I again refer to Samra's discussion of 'imitation as sameness' and how it was discussed that Paul was likely not advocating a rigid uniformity but that "that Paul intended a recontextualization of certain principles and attitudes for specific situations in his use of imitation."

⁸⁹⁰ Bandura (1986) p.55.

⁸⁹¹ Bandura (1986) p.73.

⁸⁹² Oman and Thoresen (2003) p. 150.

There is much language in 1 Thessalonians of Paul being with/ among the Thessalonian converts.⁸⁹³ Paul writes that the converts knew of his concern for them by the way he lived among them when he was with them (1:5). As a result of them imitating Paul and Christ, they could be examples to others (1:7-10). Paul shared not just the word but his own life (2:8), and reminded the converts that he and his associates worked hard among them, night and day (2:9) so that they could witness Paul's life (2:10). Paul used familial imagery to describe his relationship with the converts (2:7-12), and his time among the converts left such strong emotions that his separation from the converts left him desirous to see them again (2:17). Paul reminds them that while he was with them, he warned them (3:4). So Paul affirms the relational dimension of impartation and gives his converts the opportunity to live life with him and see his life. For further insight, I will now look at the use of **mimhth,j** in 1:6 and 2:14.

Both 1:6 and 2:14 relate imitation to suffering; 1:6 relates an enduring commitment to God despite difficult circumstances and 2:14 relates their persevering through trials.⁸⁹⁴ The converts' experience of suffering is evidence of a genuine faith as Paul and his associates, and the

⁸⁹³ I have already discussed that Paul saw himself as a model to the converts in the pericope of 1 Thess. 2:1-12. Samra (2006) p.130 sees the pericope as continuing to 2:1-20.

⁸⁹⁴ See also Samra (2006) pp.125-126.

believers in Judea, all have experienced persecution as a product of their allegiance to Christ.⁸⁹⁵

1 Thessalonians 1:6. The nature of their imitation may not be defined merely by endurance of persecution, but also by their receiving the word of God (1:6).⁸⁹⁶ Does Paul intend to emphasize receiving the word ‘in much affliction’ or receiving it ‘with joy of the Holy Spirit’ or just simply receiving the message?⁸⁹⁷ These three options are born out of which participle or adverbial phrase one focuses on.⁸⁹⁸ The nature of the imitation is determined by whether the focus is on the participle, *dexa,menoi*, or the adverbial phrases: *evn qli,yei pollh/|* or *meta. cara/j pneu,matoj a`gi,ou*.⁸⁹⁹ Richard places the emphasis on *meta. cara/j pneu,matoj a`gi,ou*. “The focus is not on the ‘difficulties’ or even on the ‘acceptance of the word’ but rather on the note of ‘joy’ which has resulted in the Thessalonians becoming ‘an example’ to others.”⁹⁰⁰ Wanamaker and Best place the emphasis on the first adverbial phrase *evn*

⁸⁹⁵ DeBoer (1962) pp.97-99, Fowler (1993) p.430 also shares this interpretation of imitation in 1 Thess.

⁸⁹⁶ See also Clarke (1998) p.334.

⁸⁹⁷ See Clarke (1998) p.334.

⁸⁹⁸ See Richard (1995) p.67.

⁸⁹⁹ See Richard (1995) p.67.

⁹⁰⁰ See Richard (1995) p.67.

qli,yei pollh.⁹⁰¹ Apart from the issue of which participial or adverbial phrase is used, the context suggests that receiving the word *meta. cara/j pneu,matoj a`gi,ou* is the focus as the joy contrasts with the *evn qli,yei pollh*; therefore, ‘with joy of the Holy Spirit’ is more likely the focus of Paul’s description of the nature of his converts’ imitation of himself and Christ. But these are not the only options for the nature of imitation in the pericope.

A further investigation of the whole pericope of 1:2-10 could lead to a different conclusion. The section is in the genre of thanksgiving.⁹⁰² The thanksgiving sections confirmed correct actions and gave affirmation when appropriately earned. They exhorted proper performance, being used as motivation for the faithful believers to continue being faithful and

⁹⁰¹ Wanamaker (1990) p.82 reads, “Because their conversion had occurred in spite of opposition and distress and they had remained faithful in the face of continuing opposition (cf.3:1-5), their persistence served as a source of encouragement and inspiration to other groups of believers in their region.” See also Best (1977) p.77.

⁹⁰² See Jewett (1970) pp.40-53 for a detailed discussion of the Thanksgiving section in Paul.

for unfaithful believers to become faithful. It was also used to establish rapport between Paul and the recipients of his letter.⁹⁰³

Paul was encouraged by the life of his converts as they exhibited the qualities of faith, hope and love, and his prayer for them was continual and “unceasing.” They are commended for receiving the word of God with the power of the Holy Spirit and full conviction as an evidence of them being chosen by God. Paul reminds them of the life he and his associates lived while in their presence (1:5) and this is related to Paul mentioning the fact that his converts became imitators. It is very clear from the letter that the missionaries were in close contact with their disciples, and this close contact allowed the missionaries to be an example in their words, and actions, and to model the character that a believer in Christ has. Paul’s prayer in 1:3 suggests growing character that is

⁹⁰³ See O’Brien (1977) for a more thorough overview of the thanksgiving section. But O’Brien sees the thanksgiving section extending beyond 1:2-10, along with Schubert (1939) pp.16-27; they see the thanksgiving section extending all the way to 3:13. Wanamaker (1990) p.90 notes that the problem with this view is that 2:1-12 and 2:14-3:8 have almost nothing to do with the thanksgiving formulas.

Sweeney (2002) p.328 writes in general of Paul’s thanksgivings that:

All but one of Paul’s letters to churches opened with a thanksgiving to God for His rich blessings on the congregations to whom Paul wrote . . . Paul often thanked God for His guidance in the lives of his coworkers . . . for personal blessings he received from God . . . and for the victory God gave believers in Christ . . . In fact for Paul the failure to give God thanks was one of two ominous factors (along with failing to glorify God) that lead pagans in a downward spiral toward idolatry and gross licentiousness (Rom. 1:21).

Therefore not surprisingly, thanksgiving played a central role in Paul’s view of the nature of the Christian life.

Getty (1990) p.279 writes that the principal elements of the thanksgiving are an: “emphasis on the cooperation with God’s grace, the role of suffering and perseverance in the face of persecution, the description of relationships among members of the Christian community.”

observed by their “work,” “deeds,” and “endurance” that were obvious fruits in their lives.

It is the thanksgiving section that leads Paul to remark that his disciples had become “imitators of us and the Lord.” Kai. u` mei/j mimhtai. h`mw/n evgenh,qhte connects 1:6 to the pericope of the prayer of thanksgiving section of 1:2-5. The section emphasizes a life of faith, hope and love. Because the thanksgiving section connects with 1:6, the imitation should be read in the context of 1:2-5. This imitation was not just experiencing suffering and the joy of Paul and associates, but it is also evidence of true Christian character by displaying the traits of faith, hope and love learned from someone more mature.⁹⁰⁴

The pericope of 1:7-10 is connected to verse 6 as well, w[ste gene,sqai “so that you became” connects verse 6 with 7 and verses 8, 9-10 are connected to verse 7 by the ga,r. Because they were living a life of faith, hope and love, the converts’ lives became examples for others to follow (1:7). Verses 7-10 give details of their example. The Gospel was being preached to people all around them and this Gospel was not just preached with words but affirmed by their changed lives, an example of their faith (1:8). The converts’ hospitality toward the missionaries, along with their rejection of their past idolatry and turning toward the true God was evident to those around the Thessalonians, an example of love (1:9).

⁹⁰⁴See also Martin (1999) p.43.

Finally, the converts displayed the essence of the Christian hope: eagerly awaiting in anticipation the return of Christ so that this anticipation and expectation of the future return influences their daily, present life (1:10). So the section in vv.7-10 gives us a clearer picture of the converts' "work of faith," "labor of love," and "steadfastness of hope." Imitation not just overcoming suffering and receiving the word with joy of the Holy Spirit, but is directly linked to living a life of faith, hope and love. Therefore, imitation is more than just copying someone's example. It is a life lived out from following the example, in this case, a life that demonstrates faith, hope and love.⁹⁰⁵

From 1:6 we can see imitation as enduring suffering while exhibiting Christ-like characteristics in the midst of suffering. Paul here uses the converts' imitation as a gauge of their status in the faith. Paul is comforted by the converts exhibiting qualities that he and the Lord Jesus did.

1 Thess. 2:14. Paul now shifts the comparison from himself, his associates and the Lord to the Judean church.⁹⁰⁶ Again there is imitation through suffering, though the type of suffering may not have been

⁹⁰⁵ Stanley (1984) p.133 writes that the term 'imitation' "excludes any notion of a deliberate or extrinsic copying of an example: the term denotes a deeply religious Christian experience of conversion to the faith."

⁹⁰⁶ Best (1977) p.113 writes that the reason Paul uses the Judean church to compare with the Thessalonians is uncertain but gives some possibilities:
(a) because of their prestige as the area where Christianity was born; (b) because their endurance was widely known; (c) because they had stood up to their persecutions more stoutly than others; (d) because he himself had been involved in persecution in Judea both as persecutor . . . and as persecuted . . . (e) because the history of the primitive community was included in the Pauline kerygma.

shared.⁹⁰⁷ Like the church of Judea, they experienced the pain of denial by their fellow countrymen and unnamed difficulties intended to dissuade them from following Christ.⁹⁰⁸ But through the difficulties, they endured. This endurance gave witness to their genuine faith and commitment to the value they placed on being followers of Christ.

Richard argues that this verse is not referring to a deliberate imitation, but to a similarity of experience shared by the Thessalonian and Judean churches.⁹⁰⁹ Pearson argues that Paul does not use the imitation terminology as he does in other parts of his letters.⁹¹⁰ But within the Pauline corpus, there is evidence that Paul uses churches as models (1 Thess. 1:7; 2 Cor. 8:1-9:4). Also, Wanamaker states that the Thessalonian church was already an imitator of the Judean one and the exhortation was not for the Thessalonians to imitate the Judean church.⁹¹¹ Wanamaker writes that 1 Thess. 2:14 “should not be taken in an active sense as though the Thessalonian Christians had intentionally sought to imitate the Judean Christians in suffering for their faith. Rather they had through

⁹⁰⁷ Bruce (1982) p.46 lists periods of suffering endured by the church of Judea.

⁹⁰⁸ Martin (1999) p.45.

⁹⁰⁹ Richard (1995) p.119. Wanamaker (1990) p.112 writes, “‘You became imitators’ . . . should not be taken in an active sense as though the Thessalonian Christians had intentionally sought to imitate the Judean Christians in suffering for their faith. Rather they had through circumstances been made imitators of the Judean Christians.” See also Witherington (2006) p.87, Marshall (1983) p.78 and Malherbe (2000) p.167.

⁹¹⁰ Pearson (1971) p.87.

⁹¹¹ Wanamaker (1990) p.32.

circumstances been imitators of the Judean Christians.”⁹¹² Jewett writes, “Since a major issue in the congregation was the relation between persecution and faith, it is understandable that Paul should have selected the earliest Christian communities as having experienced the same thing [i.e. suffering] as the Thessalonians.”⁹¹³ So the call to imitate in 2:14 is more of the Thessalonians sharing an experience with the Judean churches.

We have seen that imitation in Thessalonians has aspects of a continued faith in the midst of suffering, receiving the word of God with joy of the Holy Spirit, a lifestyle that is worthy of God characterized by displaying the traits of faith, hope and love.

It was these traits, and others not mentioned, that the converts needed to add to their lives. It was a matter not just of mimicking specific actions, but of reflecting deeper patterns of life and attitude. Paul was a part of his converts’ lives enough for them to observe his life and was a good model for them to follow.

Paul’s impartational method encompasses cognitive and relational dimensions, but it does not stop with these two.

5.5 Affective Dimension: Love/Caring, a Crucial Aspect of Mentoring

⁹¹² Wanamaker (1990) p.112.

⁹¹³ Jewett (1986) p.39.

concern, driven by love.⁹¹⁷ No matter how he views his relationships with people, he always considers that his motivation is out of love for his disciples.⁹¹⁸ From the letters of Paul, a “failure in love” was not something that was a characteristic of his practice of discipling. On the contrary, it was the essence of everything Paul did for his converts. Paul loved his disciples, which motivated his caring for them.

Paul’s first act of caring for his disciples was to not burden them with the responsibility of supporting him for his living expenses, looking into 1 Thess.2:7, *duna,menoi evn ba,rei ei=nai w`j Cristou/ avpo,stoloi*, we see Paul could have asked them to support him. This part of the verse translates as “though we could have made demands as apostles of Christ.” With apostleship apparently came privileges.⁹¹⁹ Because of this apostleship, Paul and his companions possessed a higher status in the church but felt it necessary not to exploit it. They did not want the Thessalonians to view them as expecting preferential treatment

⁹¹⁷See Holmes (1998), p.65.

⁹¹⁸ Barrett (1968) pp.97, 154, 184 did research on why the churches in Africa sought hard to be independent from their western missionaries and concluded that the main issue was the western missionaries’ “failure in love” towards the ways they viewed the African people. Hundreds of religious movements were studied and the conclusion of “love failure” is why the African churches sought to break away from their western counterparts. From the example of modern missions the need for love to be a part of the practice of mentoring is crucial. Anderson (2001) pp.275-286 goes deeper in the issue of why the churches of Africa broke away but never disputed the fact that a “failure in love” was part of the problem.

⁹¹⁹ Were Silas and Timothy really apostles? Apostles were traditionally thought of as the original twelve disciples. Others like Paul, Timothy and Silas were not part of the original twelve but still referred to as apostles. The New Testament usage can denote a missionary who is not of the original twelve; see Ashcraft (1958) pp.400-412. Therefore, Paul has no problem with using apostle to describe Timothy and Silas.

because they were considered apostles.⁹²⁰ In the society as a whole, there was no inherent status of being an ‘apostle’ of Christ, but among the new converts to Christianity they were looked upon as respected figures. This is not to state that Paul was not privileged by his converts, but it means that he and his associates did not insist upon preferential treatment. As Paul indicates in the next verses, they received the respect of the Thessalonians by their manner of life while among them.⁹²¹

It was not an uncommon practice for those traveling around to receive payment and special treatment for their services, but Paul and his fellow missionaries had a different agenda: they wanted to form the Thessalonians spiritually, and part of that formation process was to model humility as Christ did.⁹²² They had reason to ask for monetary assistance from the converts in exchange for their service; instead, they chose to request nothing. Their sustenance came first and foremost from working day and night, supplemented by an irregular gift from Philippi. Marshall writes,

Their refusal to seek honour took place despite the fact that they had a legitimate right to it. The Greek phrase is literally ‘being able to be a weight (*en barei*)’. The construction, which is paralleled in

⁹²⁰ Tarazi (1982) p.88. The Didache teaches: “Now concerning the apostles and prophets. Act in accordance with the precept of the Gospel. Every apostle . . . who comes to you should be received as the Lord. . . And when the apostle departs, he should receive nothing but bread until he finds his next lodging.” (Didache 11:3-4, 6).

⁹²¹ See Wanamaker (1990), pp.98-99.

⁹²² Though not spoken of specifically in this pericope, it is clear from Philippians 2:4-11 and other parts of the Pauline Corpus that Paul’s desire was to see “Christ . . . formed in you.” (Galatians 4:19) and from a section of a disputed letter of Paul, his goal in ministry was to see people “mature in Christ.”(Colossians 1:29).

1 Tim. 2:2, refers metaphorically to the way in which missionaries could have made use of a position of ‘weight’ or influence. In virtue of their position they could have stood on their dignity (cf. how Paul’s opponents in 2 C. 10:10 accused him of writing weighty letters) and handed out commands in the church.⁹²³

They did not take support because of their care for their converts, much like a parent caring for their children.

avlla.. evgenh,qhmen nh,pioi evn me,sw| u`mw/n.

There exists an issue with the reading of **nh,pioi**, some argue that it should be read as **h;pioi** instead. Many modern translations and commentators favor **h;pioi**.⁹²⁴ The context favors **h;pioi**, and offers a better comparison with **evn ba,rei ei=nai**. ‘Gentle’ also goes well with the caring nurse or mother metaphor, whereas ‘infant’ would confuse the metaphor. Nowhere else in Paul’s letters does he use infants as a description of him and his associates and when it is used, there is an uncomplimentary sense that is communicated.⁹²⁵ I also favor the reading **h;pioi**⁹²⁶ in agreement with Bruce that the form **nh,pioi** is due to dittography of the **n** in **evgenh,qhmen**.⁹²⁷ Bruce writes, “It is

⁹²³ Marshall (1983), p.68. See also Holmes (1998) p.63.

⁹²⁴ Best (1988), p.101, Bruce (1982) p.31, Marshall (1983), p.70, Wanamaker (1990), p.100, and Hiebert (1971), p.94 to name a few. Morris (1959) p. 78 favors **nh,pioi**.

⁹²⁵ Wanamaker (1990) p.100. See Rom. 2:20; 1 Cor. 3:1; 13:11; Gal. 4:1,3.

⁹²⁶ Contrast Sailors (2000) pp.81-98. Sailors melds the reading of **nh,pioi** from textual criticism with an understanding of the rhetorical style of 1 Thessalonians 2:7 to argue that **nh,pioi** is the preferred reading over **h;pioi**. See also Weima (2000) pp.547-564; Cotrozzi (1999) pp.155-160; Fowl (1990) pp.469-473

⁹²⁷ Bruce (1982) p.31.

inappropriate in the immediate context, where the writers go on to compare themselves not to infants but to a nurse or a parent caring for her children. 'Being gentle' also provides a fitting contrast to 'being burdensome' in the preceding clause."⁹²⁸ Paul is trying to communicate the fact that the attitude of the missionaries is that of loving and caring for the Thessalonians.

Not only do they not desire preferential treatment due to their apostleship, the missionaries try to function as equals in status by referring to the converts as **avdelfoi**. Paul wanted to establish an aspect of his relationship with the converts that he was an equal with them and not always the superior. Why would Paul try referring to himself as a 'brother' and not always use the 'paternal' imagery he uses elsewhere in the letter? Paul may have desired this aspect of 'equality' in their relationship to aid in developing relationships with his converts, or maybe the fact that many may have been close to him in age. Is it also possible that Rabbinic thought carried an aspect where the master was superior to his disciple and Paul saw that this was a weakness in rabbinic mentoring and sought to alleviate it? The answer is uncertain as to why Paul refers to himself as brother rather than continue the maternal/paternal imagery throughout the letter; they were his converts and hence were his spiritual

⁹²⁸ Bruce (1982) p.31.

children.⁹²⁹ All we can know for certain is that he thought of himself as part of this new family and used both parental and fraternal terms to describe his relationship to it. Nineteen times he uses **avdelfoj** in 1 Thessalonians. Contrasting it with the uses of **path,r**, which is used five times in the letter and only once in reference to himself; all the other references are to God. One could argue that if Paul wanted to emphasize the relationship of him as the parent then he would have used ‘children’ more to refer to his disciples, but he does not. From the letter we can ascertain that there is an aspect of equality/inequality in how Paul saw his status among the community.⁹³⁰ He was parent and at the same time brother. Paul as mentor must not always try to be the superior figure, but create a peer aspect in the relationship status as well. There were aspects of superiority which we will now move on to discuss.

w`j eva.n trofo.j qa,lph| ta. e`auth/j te,kna. Not only did they not consider special treatment, they had the idea that the Thessalonian believers would be their children and that they would care for them “like a nursing mother taking care of her own children.” There has been discussion on whether the image is a nursing mother or a nurse.⁹³¹ The custom existed in Roman society of having a wet nurse to help raise

⁹²⁹ For a fuller discussion of Paul and ‘equality of status in relationship’ see Best (1988) pp.139-162. See also Samra (2003) pp.220, 225-226. Glad (1995) pp.208-212 also deals with this issue.

⁹³⁰ Best (1998) p.29 uses superior/inferior to handle this tension while Glad (1995) p.208 uses symmetry and/or asymmetry.

⁹³¹ See Malherbe (1970) pp.203-217.

children, with the most important characteristic being that the nurse is gentle.⁹³² But wet nurses were expensive and were reserved for the wealthier. Plutarch encouraged mothers to raise their children rather than use a wet nurse.⁹³³ With this in mind, a nursing mother would be the better choice.

The use of mother over nurse also makes a clearer comparison with father in verse 11. Whether we use nurse or nursing mother, both metaphors carry the notion of a caring, gentle entity.

Paul continues his parental theme to illustrate the love and care they had for their converts in verses 11-12. This time, contrasting verse 7, Paul switches from the nurturing mother to an exhorting, encouraging and charging father. The mother metaphor communicates tender care, but a father cares through pushing his converts to live a life “in a manner worthy of God.” Similar to a good father, Paul did not put a burden on his children to sustain him (2:9) but offered spiritual leadership and safety.⁹³⁴

The ultimate goal of the missionaries was for their converts to “live lives worthy of God,” literally “walk worthily of God.”⁹³⁵ ‘Walk’ was a widespread metaphor for following an example of conduct; it is

⁹³² Keener (1993) p.587, says of the wet nurses, “They often endeared themselves to young children, who when they grew older frequently freed those nurses who had been slaves.”

⁹³³ Keener (1993) p.587.

⁹³⁴ See Beale (2003) p.74.

⁹³⁵ See Woolsey (1997) p. 41. Halakah, a rabbinical term for instruction in living according to Torah, is related to the verb “walk” (הלך; halak).

used about thirty-two times in the Pauline corpus. It entails that the Christian life involves direction, development, and objectives. Here the measure is **worthy of God**, that is, a life that mirrors his Christ-like pattern of life as revealed in Jesus Christ.⁹³⁶ Paul's fatherly love and care was to aid the converts to walk in a manner that is pleasing to God. This sets a good example to the believers in that Paul and his companions wanted to be models of humility and not seek privileged treatment. They would rather care for them as a mother and father would for their children.

Paul's caring also manifested itself in the words he spoke to his disciples. In 5:14 his view of speech is summed up with, "warn the lazy, encourage the fearful, care for those who are weak." He used gentle and firm speech to them. To those who needed encouragement and a more gentle approach he was gentle and to those who were more obstinate, he was more firm. Like a parent, Paul sought to know his disciples and deal with them at their level of maturity. In 2:12 Paul says that he *parakalou/ntej u`ma/j kai. paramuqou,menoi kai. marturo,menoi eivj to. peripatei/n u`ma/j avxi,wj tou/ qeou/*. The word and language is very much of a parent wanting his children to excel. Paul's speech was adapted to the situation. At times he was paternal and other times critical; sometimes he was gentle and other

⁹³⁶ See Woolsey (1997) p.41.

times more harsh. But the motivation behind all his speech was his care and desire for them to grow.

Prayer was another way the affective dimension was manifested. Paul appeals to the divine agency to help his converts. Prayer is another practical expression of Paul's love and care for his disciples and expresses his desire to see them grow. The thanksgiving section opens with Paul referring to the fact that his converts were in his prayers.⁹³⁷ The thanksgiving has a source and in this case, it is the converts that have demonstrated Christian maturity. The thankfulness is felt and expressed to God, not mentioning the converts' imperfections, but highlighting their demonstration of faith, hope and love. The adverbs *παντοτε* and *αδιαλειπτως* express that Paul's prayers were not sparse, but ones that were continual and regularly interceding on the converts' behalf.⁹³⁸

⁹³⁷ Some, e.g. O' Connor (1996) p.105, Schmithals (1964) p. 298, hold to the presence of two thanksgiving sections, 1:2-10 and 2:13-14. Jewett (1986) p.32 disagrees with Schmithals stating that 2:13 is part of a lengthy thanksgiving section from 1:2-3:13.

Thanksgiving is a common theme in Paul's disputed and undisputed letters. Only Galatians does not have a thanksgiving section in the letter. The reason, Longenecker (1990) p.13 writes, is that it "reflects Paul's agitation and indignation over the situation faced." On the genre of thanksgiving in Paul, Sweeney (2002) p.328 writes, All but one of Paul's letters to churches opened with a thanksgiving to God for his rich blessings on the congregations to whom Paul wrote . . . Paul often thanked God for his guidance in the lives of his coworkers . . . for personal blessings he received from God . . . and for the victory God gave believers in Christ . . . Therefore not surprisingly, thanksgiving played a central role in the nature of the Christian life.

⁹³⁸ Wiles (1974) p.3 writes, Constantly he is giving thanks for the continuing victories of his converts, praying that they increase in the graces of faith, hope and love, and urging them to take their full share in the wider life of the whole church. His intercessory prayers seem to be closely related to a longing for the maturity of his churches, as the scope of his own mission extended.

The theme of prayer for his disciples continues in 3:10-13. Paul writes in 1 Thess. 3:10 that “we pray most earnestly night and day that we may see you face to face and supply what is lacking to your faith.” Though Paul is likely in Corinth now, he still has some of his mind with the Thessalonians. He did not have to be physically present to care for his disciples. One way he cares for them while being away is through prayer.⁹³⁹

Prayer was not the only method by which Paul cared for them when he was not in their presence; he also sent Timothy to check up on them. The disciples were on Paul’s mind, so in 2:17- 3:10 Paul’s concern for the faith of the converts leads him to send Timothy to gauge the status of their faith and care for them. Paul expresses his desire to see the converts in 2:17-20. After trying to see them himself but being thwarted, Timothy was dispatched. Although not in their presence, Paul still had the converts on his mind. It is not uncommon for Paul to express concern for his churches, and here in 1 Thess. is no different (see also 1 Cor. 4:18-21; 5:3-4; 16:1-7; 2 Cor. 1:15-2:1; 7:5-7; Phil. 1:27; 2:12). Paul had in mind the need for his disciples to be encouraged for fear that they may have

⁹³⁹ Carson (2000) p.180 writes that the majority of Paul’s prayers were “for the spiritual maturation of believers, for their growth in love and obedience to the Gospel and their perseverance to the end.”

forsaken their faith.⁹⁴⁰ Paul knew his converts were experiencing affliction and was concerned that they might depart from their new faith in Christ. Timothy's positive report was comforting and encouraging for Paul as the report assured Paul that the converts were continuing in their faith. Malherbe sums up Timothy's mission well:

Paul's recounting of Timothy's mission and subsequent report reflects Paul's awareness of the Thessalonians' condition as well as his pastoral method. He was conscious of their sense of desolation, which had been aggravated by his absence, was uncertain whether their faith could withstand the emotional stress caused by knowledge of his own experiences, and knew that their faith needed to be supplemented. He sent Timothy as his emissary to establish them further in their faith and exhort them.⁹⁴¹

The act of Timothy being dispatched is another example of how Paul cared for the disciples.

Paul was aware that impartation had an affective dimension. The affective dimension expressed itself through speaking gently or harshly when the circumstances dictated, establishing an equal relationship status while retaining the status of authority in the community, praying for them continually, and being concerned for them even when he was not

⁹⁴⁰ Another motivation to send Timothy was his personal emotion towards the converts. Paul describes his feelings towards the converts in 2:17 that he desired with "great desire" (ESV used) to see them. In 2:20 the converts are described as Paul's "joy and crown," and in 3:1 Paul states as a motivation that when he and his associates "could bear it no longer," Timothy was sent. So there is a personal motivation for Timothy's dispatch as well as pastoral concern for their spiritual condition. But this personal motivation was born out of his pastoral concern so the two are related.

⁹⁴¹ Malherbe (1987) p.68.

physically present. These and other aspects contributed to how Paul mentored his disciples.

5.6 Paul Compared with Epicureans, Rabbinic Thought

The Epicureans stressed: frank speech, community, imitation/emulation of mentor, and teaching. Paul shares all these with the Epicureans. In the area of frank speech, Paul clearly admonishes his converts.⁹⁴² Paul is similar to the Epicureans in that both have a continuum of harshness and gentleness in their use of frank speech.

Self-disclosure was also evident in Paul (1 Thess. 2:1-2, see also 1 Cor.4, 2 Cor.6, 10-13) but not in every letter. Paul's teaching would have been based on his personal teaching to the converts and scripture rather than philosophical works. Both have a similar view of community where mutual edification and admonition occurred.

The rabbis stressed: a focus on studying, understanding and applying the Torah; study in association with other disciples (likely a disciple circle rather than an academy during Paul's time); serving the master; reproof. Paul emphasized teaching, but his teaching may not have had exactly the same function as teaching the Torah. Samra gives us an idea of how Paul's teaching may have functioned,

Therefore, although Paul is free from the restraints of the Mosaic Law, he (and all believers) is still under the obligation to love

⁹⁴² But in places like Galatians 6:1, he encourages gentleness.

others as exemplified by Christ . . . Whereas the Mosaic Law defined the character of obedience for Jews this definition and exemplification of obedience for believers is now found in Christ.⁹⁴³

Paul believed community was important. The size of the community is not exactly known,⁹⁴⁴ since the academy could hold numbers in the hundreds, Pauline communities may be closer to the number found in a disciple circle, though this cannot be confirmed.

Paul had an aspect of being a master but unlike the rabbis, he also tried to create a sense of equality with his disciples while acknowledging concurrently that he is a mentor to them. Paul models that he serves his disciples rather than teaching that disciples should serve him. Christ is the master to be served.

Just as the rabbis allowed their disciples to be exposed to other rabbis, Paul was not the only one helping disciples; he had associates that were also working with him that were in agreement with Paul's vision for younger believers to grow in Christ.

Just like the Epicureans and the rabbis, Paul reproves his disciples in areas they can grow in. Neither the Epicureans nor the rabbis demonstrated much of the affective dimension of impartation. Paul shares with the rabbis a mental picture of what he wants his disciples to look like.

⁹⁴³ Samra (2006) p.79. It is clear that Paul did not value teaching that was contrary to his nor people who taught differently (see Galatians 1:6 ff).

⁹⁴⁴ See Hays (1997) pp.6-7. Hays states that houses could accommodate no more than thirty to fifty people and that it is likely that there were several different house gatherings.

The rabbis had specific quality lists. In 1 Thessalonians, Paul had an intermediate and ultimate goal, both of which were part of growing into maturity.

Paul has similarities to both. A case can be made that each had an influence on Paul's impartational method. It is likely that Paul did adopt some from both. He likely picked up the aspects from rabbinic training under Gamaliel which he felt appropriate for his purposes. Paul likely learned the Epicurean method less systematically, from his constant engagement with Greek culture and more occasional encounters with Greeks educated in the philosophical schools. On the other hand, we must heed Sandmel's warning against "parallelomania"⁹⁴⁵ and not assume that parallels lead to influence. Still, familiarity with mentoring methods contemporary to Paul gives a basis for comparison.

5.7 Paul and Power

Now that we have stated that Paul's desire was to help his disciples grow, we must again discuss the issue of Paul and power. The perspective was largely derived from the 'hermeneutics of suspicion' and is at odds with the overall view that Paul desired his disciples to grow.

Before we go into the more postmodern interpreters, we must note that Bengt Holmberg, using the tool of the social sciences, studied the power relationships in the early church. Holmberg writes, "Our concern is

⁹⁴⁵ Sandmel (1967) pp.1-13.

with a historical study of the structure of authority in the Primitive Church as reflected in the Pauline epistles.”⁹⁴⁶ Holmberg states that earlier works operated with a deficient methodology and were entirely based on theology. A new method that explains the relationship between theology and societal structure was necessary.⁹⁴⁷ Holmberg writes that authority means “social relations of asymmetric power distribution considered legitimate by the participating actors,”⁹⁴⁸ and structure means “a totality or system of interdependent qualities or phenomena.”⁹⁴⁹

Holmberg challenges us to take into account the social structures of Paul’s time in order to supplement our historical and theological reflections. He also has shown that seeing texts from other perspectives outside of the traditional ways of hermeneutics can provide perspective to enable understanding of issues that would not be discovered if texts were studied exclusively under the guise of theology. Without this perspective, understanding the authority structure of the early church would not be as complete.

But using the social sciences is not without flaw. It is a strong statement to assert that the Jerusalem church and the first apostles were “a superior charismatic authority that placed them closer to the source of all

⁹⁴⁶ Holmberg (1980) p.3.

⁹⁴⁷ See Holmberg (1980) pp.201-203.

⁹⁴⁸ Holmberg (1980) p.3

⁹⁴⁹ Holmberg (1980) p.3

authority, the Lord.”⁹⁵⁰ Paul does acknowledge that he is the least among the apostles (1 Cor. 15:9) but this is because in his former life, he persecuted the church and not because he was not as close to the Lord. Paul claims that he is an apostle based on his experience with the Lord (1 Cor. 9:1; 15:8; Gal. 1:11-12, 15-17).⁹⁵¹ This is an example of how the lens of the social sciences can blur theology and the need to hold the two in balance.

But in the end, Holmberg has challenged us all to view Paul’s authority in new ways rather than using only historical and theological lenses. He has begun the discussion of the social structures of the earliest church’s work.

From the social sciences to post-modernity and the hermeneutics of suspicion, Paul is now discussed from the perspective of using his converts for his own personal gain rather than caring for them.⁹⁵² We have already addressed the issue in our discussion of Castelli in chapter 1. The following discussion will introduce a few others who interpret Paul through the postmodern lens of suspicion to give us a better understanding of how they see the issue of power within the Paul. To the postmodern reader, language is incomplete and must be filled in by the reader to attain

⁹⁵⁰ Holmberg (1980) p.200. The second part of Holmberg’s work deals with the issue of using a modified version of Max Weber’s ‘charismatic authority’ to analyze the authority of the early church. See also Polaski (1999) pp.28-35.

⁹⁵¹ See also Acts 9:17; 18:9; 22:14, 18; 23:11.

⁹⁵² See Castelli (1991) p.23. Castelli says that readers of Scripture have not dealt with this issue.

meaning. Meanings are not static but fluid and can change, shift or expand as the reader moves along the text. Thiselton writes that the postmodern person “faces life and society through suspicion rather than trust.”⁹⁵³

Similar to Castelli, Graham Shaw writes that Paul cannot be correctly understood apart from his political motives, in the sense that he was in a position of power which enabled him to manipulate his readers for his own purposes.⁹⁵⁴ Shaw claims that the motivation behind the writings of Paul is manipulation.⁹⁵⁵ Paul manipulates by drawing attention to himself.⁹⁵⁶ In summary, God’s only function is to prevent change and to

⁹⁵³ Thiselton (1995) pp.11-12.

⁹⁵⁴ Shaw (1983) p.181.

⁹⁵⁵ See Shaw (1983) and (1987). On Christianity itself, Shaw (1983) p. 5 writes, Christianity is not simply a programme for human reform. It is a gospel of freedom, deliverance and reconciliation. It proclaims Jesus as the Saviour. It offers men the opportunity of new life and brotherhood. The fundamental challenge of the historical experience is that it directly contradicts that claim. Repeatedly in the church's history the message of freedom and deliverance has only served to sanctify a new system of social control, buttressed by bitterly divisive social attitudes.

In this respect Christian experience has a disconcerting similarity to many modern secular ideologies. The moral earnestness to abolish slavery established the British Empire. The French pursuit of freedom, equality and fraternity brought first the Terror and then the Empire. The search for social regeneration in Italy and Germany established Fascism. Most pervasively, the Marxist dreams of a new humanity have sanctioned systematic oppression and the uncritical concentration of power. These secular gospels have all promised a fresh start, and have often directly appealed to aspirations for freedom and fraternity. Repeatedly such rhetoric has only served to sanction the replacement of one tyranny by another, and provided ancient antagonisms with new sanctions. Some features of Christian history suggest disturbing parallels.

⁹⁵⁶ In Shaw’s view, whereas Paul manipulates by drawing attention to himself, Mark manipulates by secrecy, see Shaw (1983) pp.198-199. Shaw (1983) p.257 writes, “We may even look back rather wistfully at the undisguised egotism of Paul’s letters: the self-assertion of Mark’s gospel is considerably more devious.”

support those who have advantages and are influential.⁹⁵⁷ Appealing to God distracts attention from the communicator.⁹⁵⁸ Prayer can lead to deceiving oneself,⁹⁵⁹ Paul's use of prayer in the thanksgiving in 1 Thessalonians was for the purpose of flattery and manipulation.⁹⁶⁰ True religion for Shaw is not driven by power but peace, and God is not necessarily real in an ontological sense but an object that exists only in one's mind.⁹⁶¹ Shaw claims that though Paul was preaching a gospel of freedom and reconciliation, his real agenda is one of manipulation to control people, tricking them to help him against his opposition, wanting command over the churches and propagating attitudes to his readers that will separate them from those outside the community.

Polaski writes that Paul uses the language of grace as a disguise for a language of power.⁹⁶² Just as Shaw accused the writer of Mark for being secretive, Polaski claims that this 'grace language' is hidden which makes

⁹⁵⁷ See Shaw (1983) p.283 and (1987) p.x.

⁹⁵⁸ Shaw (1987) p.xiii.

⁹⁵⁹ Shaw (1987) p.2. See also Shaw (1983) pp.30-31, 127-128. Shaw (1987) p.15 writes, "The reverence and docility which accompany prayer give dangerous opportunities for unscrupulous manipulation."

⁹⁶⁰ Shaw (1983) pp.31-32. Shaw also writes on p.40 "Already prayer is being used as a means of social control, and the earliest Christian community which we know seems based on a combination of vigorous sexual repression with a heavy emphasis on work. The church of Thessalonica is thus prophetic of some of the nastiest features of later Christian communities. Nor is this an accident; it is the direct consequence of the repressive and arbitrary authority on which the community is based."

⁹⁶¹ See Shaw (1987) pp.240-241.

⁹⁶² Contrast Ehrensperger (2007) pp.69-70 in which the language of grace is meant as God's gift that is shared within individuals and communities to promote everyone's well-being in the relationship network.

its power to control more effective.⁹⁶³ Despite the fact that Paul recognizes that grace is available to the members of the churches, Paul seeks to set aside for himself sole influence as mediator of the message of the divine gift, creating a hierarchy based on the ethereal with Paul as the head.⁹⁶⁴ Polaski argues that Paul's goal for the discourse that creates a culture of likeness renders those who differ as powerless and insignificant.

Another perspective is from Stephen Moore. Moore writes, "Christian discipline is also bound up with power: . . . (1 Cor.4:20). . . Discipline has only one purpose, according to Foucault: the production of 'docile bodies'."⁹⁶⁵ Paul threatens by using divine judgment (Rom. 2:16, 29; 1 Cor. 4:5) as a method of control and to elicit confessions.⁹⁶⁶ Paul is accused of using 'confession' as a tool for manipulation which serves to control the very essence of the person.⁹⁶⁷

As we discussed earlier when Castelli was being reviewed, perspectives like the 'hermeneutics of suspicion' read from a postmodern perspective using 'power' as a lens has made a contribution to understanding potential abuses of a person's role as a 'mentor.' Words like

⁹⁶³ Polaski (1999) pp. 109, 111.

⁹⁶⁴ See Polaski (1999) pp.119, 123.

⁹⁶⁵ Moore (1994) p.109.

⁹⁶⁶ Moore (1994) p.114 Moore shares his personal experience of this control by recounting his time in an Irish monastery and the use of the image of the tortured Christ on the cross as a method of manipulative control.

⁹⁶⁷ See Moore (1994) p.111. Also, for a feminist perspective on Paul and power, see Fiorenza (2000) pp.40-57.

manipulation, discourse of power, control, abusing authority are words that are not usually associated with Paul or the role of one who is practicing the art of impartation for another's growth. The potential of abuse of one's role as mentor to manipulate a protégé for one's own benefit rather than for the benefit of the protégé has been brought to the forefront by the writers who interpret Paul through the 'hermeneutics of suspicion.' This is a valuable perspective for students, apprentices, and people belonging to a community with recognized and structural authority, who are in a position under someone's authority. More broadly, anyone under authority is a potential object of this kind of abuse, but there is a specific vulnerability to those being guided by another in the realm of Christian formation. Evidence in the history of the church affirms this. Copan writes, "One potential danger in the practice of spiritual direction is abuse of authority leading to coercion of the directee. Spiritual direction can and did imply unquestioning submission and obedience to a superior. This danger was manifest early within the Christian tradition."⁹⁶⁸ Hence, the disciple/protégé/directee/etc. must guard against potential coercion and abuse by the mentor for the mentor's personal motivations rather than the betterment of the disciple. And the mentor must be constantly aware of this potential for abuse within himself/herself.

⁹⁶⁸ Copan (2007) p.10.

Reading from perspectives like those of the hermeneutics of ‘suspicion’ has produced an important contribution to the idea of impartation and a perspective that likely would not have come forth had traditional hermeneutics continued to give the text its ‘special-ness.’⁹⁶⁹ But there are still some reservations. Reading the text from this perspective takes away the control from the original author and places the ‘power’ of interpretation on the reader of the text. Though postmodern readers have challenged language as incomplete, would the reader be able to fill-in the incompleteness correctly? Postmodernism argues that there are hidden meanings in the texts, but this, in and of itself, is a statement of the truth. Moore himself writes that it is necessary to “to read against the ideological grain of the biblical text at times.”⁹⁷⁰ Castelli writes,

I assume here that the author’s intent—the motive residing in the mind of the writer—is unattainable because it involves inaccessible aspects of the author’s psychology. In any case, to assume that verbal expression is continuous with authorial intent is to assume that language is transparent and self-evident.⁹⁷¹

Castelli admits in her writing that she has not made an effort to understand the text from the author’s view, in this case Paul: “Whether Paul meant or intended that his discourse be understood in the way I have argued is not a question that I have answered . . . I have bracketed the whole matter of

⁹⁶⁹ To borrow an idea from Castelli.

⁹⁷⁰ Moore (1994) p.116.

⁹⁷¹ Castelli (1991) p.120.

conscious authorial intent.”⁹⁷² In essence, the text is a tool of the reader and not a medium for an author to communicate his/her thoughts, ideas, etc. This gives too much ‘power’ to the reader to impose his/her ideas into/onto the text, and too much power to an author such as Castelli to influence readers into interpreting the text in the way she proposes when they would not have thought of such an interpretation if left to themselves.⁹⁷³

Overall, I find it hard to defend the thesis that Paul was an abuser of power and that his goal was manipulation and control rather than caring and helping his converts grow. Though writers claim that Paul uses prayer as a tool for manipulation,⁹⁷⁴ the content of the prayers should have reflected more Paul’s desire for domination, but instead, they reflect a desire to see young believers grow (1Thess. 3:10-13, 5:23-24).

Also, within the pages of Paul’s letters, there is a concern for his converts’ well-being (1 Thess. 3:2, see also Rom 1:11 for his concern for a church he did not found), an expression of affection aimed at his disciples

⁹⁷² Castelli (1991) p.120.

⁹⁷³ I will not go into a thorough discussion of postmodern hermeneutics here. See Thiselton (1995) for a thorough response to postmodernity and its effect on theology and the deconstructive mood within the broad intellectual climate. See also Copan (2007) pp. 190-200 for his discussion of authorial intention instead of the postmodern view where the reader has control of interpretation. Copan asserts that texts have meaning and significance and borrows from Vanhoozer the concept that texts cannot have biased meanings based on the readers interpretations alone. Vanhoozer (1998) p.263 writes, “Bereft of intrinsic meaning, a text becomes a screen on which to readers project their own images or a surface that reflects the interpreter’s own face.”

⁹⁷⁴ E.g. Shaw (1983) pp.31-32, 40.

(1 Thess. 2:8), paternal imagery (1 Thess 2:7, 11),⁹⁷⁵ a desire to be with them when apart (1 Thess. 3:1-6), a desire to instruct them for their benefit (1 Thess.4:1-2ff), a desire not to be a burden to them (1 Thess. 2:9), and laying down his authority to be a servant (1 Thess. 2:6-7). Ehrensperger writes, “self-enhancement through . . . [his] understanding of power seems contradictory to the content of the message itself.”⁹⁷⁶

The ‘hermeneutics of suspicion’ perspective has correctly identified an authoritarian structure, but has not factored in the governing power of love.⁹⁷⁷ Paul uses **avga,ph** over forty times in the undisputed letters. Though it could be seen that this discourse is meant to create a spiritual hierarchy with Paul as the head, it can also be viewed from the perspective that Paul’s main concern is the care and nurture of his disciples instead of manipulating them.⁹⁷⁸ Best writes, “Paul’s converts should find it natural to imitate him. They would look on him as their father and teacher, and model for Christian conduct.”⁹⁷⁹

Also, if Paul’s main goal was to control people, would not a reference to appreciating and following another individual threaten this

⁹⁷⁵ Ehrensperger (2007) pp.118ff states that the familial imagery is based on Jewish traditions that have parents teach children values based on scripture. Paul was not using the Roman model which was understood as permanent control over communities which would require complete obedience to a superior.

⁹⁷⁶ Ehrensperger (2007) p.91.

⁹⁷⁷ See Best (1988) p.29.

⁹⁷⁸ See also Best (1988) pp.31-56.

⁹⁷⁹ Best (1988) p.63.

position? Would Paul give honor and respect to people like Silvanus and Timothy and Apollos (1 Thess. 1:6; 1 Cor. 4:6) if his main goal was his personal power and influence.⁹⁸⁰ Would not this pose a threat to Paul's power? I argue that if the driving motivation for Paul was power, then an appeal to those outside him would threaten this power.

As we have discussed before, if Paul was trying to control people, why would he use any type of language that would reflect or be perceived as equality? There are those who manipulate because they 'love' another and others who may abuse authority but still use the language of love. Paul's language here, balancing brother with familial imagery, suggests that he is not motivated by self-interests as he does not exclusively use familial language to describe his relationship with the disciples but also has language of equality and at times, inferiority. Paul uses language like brother⁹⁸¹ and also language of inferiority like slave/servant.⁹⁸² Given the emphasis of power and language reflected earlier by people like Castelli and Polaski, language that communicates equality and inferiority would not enhance Paul's position of power among people. Paul did have an authoritarian structure and did appeal to his position at times (e.g., 2 Cor.

⁹⁸⁰ See Ehrensperger (2007) pp.41-54 on equality among the apostles.

⁹⁸¹ See Best (1988) pp.132-135.

⁹⁸² See Best (1988) pp.135-136.

10:8) but his goal was the growth and care of his converts rather than the strengthening of his own control over them.⁹⁸³

5.7.1 Reading from the Standpoint of Christian Formation

We have just discussed Paul from the perspective of the ‘hermeneutics of suspicion.’ Now I would like to offer two examples of how reading Paul from the perspective of the ‘hermeneutics of impartation or Christian formation’ can offer a surer way of interpreting the text of Paul and can provide fresh insight on the debate about the relationship between 1 Thessalonians and Galatians in the sequence of Paul’s letter-writing.

5.7.1.1 Exegesis of 1 Thess. 3:6

Colin Nicholl states that in 1 Thess. 3:6, the absence of the third member of the triad, hope, is evidence that the Thessalonian converts lacked hope.⁹⁸⁴ Nicholl writes that the Thessalonian community was “moving from initial hope to hopeless grieving and nervous dread.”⁹⁸⁵ But reading the verse in context as well as from the perspective of ‘hermeneutics of Christian formation’ can lead to a different conclusion. We know that Paul was concerned about the status of his converts’ faith and was concerned that his converts had left the faith due to their experience of affliction and

⁹⁸³ See Best (1988) pp.85-94. See also Ehrensperger (2007) pp.15, 62 who states that Paul was guided by Christ’s life and scriptures with his use of power to empower his disciples for the ability to follow the call of God. Also, Paul wanted this ‘power’ obsolete so his converts would eventually grow into a relationship of equality with him.

⁹⁸⁴ See Nicholl (2004) p.83.

⁹⁸⁵ Nicholl (2004) p.111.

that the tempter had won, which would have made Paul's labor in vain (1 Thess. 3:1-5). Paul clearly states his concern in 3:5 that the Thessalonian believers are still continuing in the faith which is a statement of whether or not they continue in what Paul taught them. We know from our study that faith and love are fluid and not static,⁹⁸⁶ but Paul does not write that hope is fluid. In 3:10-13, Paul prays for his converts' faith and love to grow.

Witherington writes,

Christian growth is not produced 'automatically' by divine grace . . . the believer must show faith and love. Hence Paul can both pray to God for his converts and thank him for their spiritual progress and also urge them to grow in their faith and express delight when they respond to his urging. Paul is not suggesting however that the Thessalonians have defects in their faith, only that they have deficiencies which need to be supplied. Their understanding needs deepening and their adherence to core Christian values needs to be strengthened.⁹⁸⁷

So one can argue against Nicholl that from the perspective of Christian formation, Paul is expressing that he is thankful for the growth of his converts measured in faith and love, because they are both fluid entities that quantify growth while hope is more static (as in 1:3 where hope is paired with **u`pomoh,** steadfastness). Knowing that Paul sees faith and love as fluid and as plumb lines for growth, it would not be surprising then that hope is omitted, given Paul's concern that the afflictions and the

⁹⁸⁶ See chapter 2, section 2.2.3.4.1 on the issue of faith and love being fluid and able to increase or decrease. See Evert (1993) on hope in Paul.

⁹⁸⁷ Witherington (2006) p.97. See also Bruce (1982) p.69 and Wanamaker (1990) p.137.

work of the tempter would cause the disciples to stop practicing their faith that was instilled by Paul.

Also, though hope is missing in 3:6, in 1:10 Paul does affirm their hope, and not only he but those around them notice their hope in the Lord. Paul may have left it out in 3:6 because it has already been affirmed in 1:10, but the absence in 3:6 should not lead one to believe that the converts are without hope. Other places in the Pauline corpus have only two members of the triad linked together. Faith and love are linked together elsewhere in the Pauline corpus: 2 Cor. 8:7, Gal. 5:6, Phm. 5. Faith and hope are linked without love: Rom. 5:2, Gal.5:5. So there are other places in Paul where only two of the three members of the triad are discussed

Since Paul desired his converts to grow, he was pleased that they continued in their faith and love.

5.7.1.2 Paul's First Letter: 1 Thessalonians or Galatians

From his study of the Pauline letters, James Samra writes that the essential theme of maturation in Paul is “conformity to the image of Christ.”⁹⁸⁸ This conformity to Christ language is found in Galatians, rather than 1 Thessalonians, which some scholars believe is earlier than 1 Thess., and is therefore Paul’s earliest surviving letter. I would like to suggest why

⁹⁸⁸ Samra (2006) p.95.

studying 1 Thessalonians, in light of the conformity to Christ language, could yield more evidence that 1 Thessalonians is Paul's first letter.

Samra exegetes five passages where Christ is set as the standard for believers.⁹⁸⁹ Paul has written about sanctification, maturity, holiness, and growth in 1 Thessalonians,⁹⁹⁰ but did he already understand this process of growth as conforming to the image of Christ when writing 1 Thessalonians?

Samra relates the end of maturation with the eschaton. Since the eschaton is such a prevalent topic in the letter, there should be mention of conformity to Christ in these passages. The future coming of Christ is mentioned in 1:10, 2:19-20, 3:13; 4:13-5:11, but not in terms of conformity to the image of Christ. The eschaton in 1 Thessalonians is associated with avoiding the judgment of God, the converts being the missionaries' glory and joy, and the divine agency producing growth that completes at the eschaton. The eschaton is discussed in detail in 4:13-5:11. The converts will be with the Lord (4:17, 5:10) and there will be an avoidance of wrath (5:9). It is surprising given the discussion of growth in the letter that a clear reference to conformity to Christ is not in

⁹⁸⁹ Phil. 3:7-21; Romans 8:29; 12:1-2; 2 Cor 2:14-4:18; 1 Cor. 15; Gal. 3:26-4:20.

⁹⁹⁰ See chapter 2, sections 2.1.2 - 2.1.5.1.2 where I argue that Paul saw it as a significant purpose for writing the letter.

the eschatological sections.⁹⁹¹ Had conformity to Christ been on Paul's mind, this would have been an obvious section to reference it.

Imitation of Paul is mentioned in 1:6 but in terms of enduring suffering. Paul was among his converts but Paul emphasizes that his presence among his converts was one of exhortation, admonition and encouragement to live a life that pleased God. Timothy brings back an encouraging report to Paul that the converts are displaying the traits of faith and love which is a sign they are persevering in the faith (3:6). Paul's prayer for the converts in 3:11-13 refers to Paul's desire for their maturity. **amemptoj** means blameless and faultless and their hearts were to be established "blameless and faultless" in holiness. This is expressed in terms of the growth of their love for people and the holiness of their hearts at the eschaton, but there is no mention of being conformed into the image of Christ. So the concept of maturity is present and the goal of being blameless and faultless in holiness is clear as an ultimate goal as well as the progressive goal of growing towards maturity. Yet Paul describes none of this in terms of conformity to Christ.

Paul writes that his converts received instruction on how to walk and please God (4:1-2). He says sanctification/holiness is the will of God (4:3). But then he emphasizes avoiding sexual sin and controlling one's

⁹⁹¹ Still (1999b) pp.197, 206 holds that the eschatological tenor of 1 Thessalonians is Paul's combative reply to the social displacement he and his disciples were experiencing. See also Barclay (1993) pp.516-520. But we have stated that Paul's use of eschatology was pastoral in nature, to encourage and comfort his disciples during difficult times (1 Thess. 3:3; 4:13; 5:11).

body in holiness (4:4-8) and loving others (4:9-12) with no mention of conformity to Christ. Paul is emphasizing more outward actions than inner growth as in 2:4, to please God, or in 2:12, having a life worthy of God.

The “in Christ” language in the letter is used in connection with a greeting (1:1), a church (2:14), God’s will (5:18), reference to believers who have already died (4:16), and standing firm in the Christian faith [in the Lord instead of in Christ] (3:8), but there is no reference to conformity to Christ as the standard of maturity.

Paul appeals to the divine agency in 5:23-24 to make the converts holy, and for their body and spirit and soul to be kept blameless at the eschaton. It is a similar tone to Paul’s prayer in 3:11-13 with similar language of being blameless at the eschaton. But again, it stops there with no mention of Christ as the standard. Paul develops it later in his other letters as Samra has shown.⁹⁹²

One might argue that since Paul does discuss growth in holiness, the concept of conformity to Christ is present without a direct reference. One can argue that, if Paul had already developed the language of ‘conformity to Christ’ as it is found in Galatians he would have made clearer reference to it here as the goal of maturity, since there is such an

⁹⁹² Of the five passages he exegetes to get to the heart of conformity to the image of Christ, none are from 1 Thessalonians.

emphasis on maturity and the eschaton in the letter.⁹⁹³ So from this brief discussion, conformity to Christ as the standard for maturity, which becomes important in his later letters, is at best in a primitive stage of formulation in Paul's mind or may not have been formulated at all. Since conformity to Christ language is found in Galatians (3:26-4:20) and not in 1 Thessalonians, the position that 1 Thessalonians was Paul's first letter is supported.

If someone only read from the 'hermeneutics of suspicion' like those who discuss Paul and power, it would be difficult to see Paul from the perspectives we have just discussed in this section and in 5.7.1.1. Just as the 'power' perspective has given readers of Paul an idea of the abuses of power on a protégé, reading from an impartational perspective also allows readers new insight into Paul.

5.8 Conclusion

Paul saw the impartational process as himself and his associates sharing the responsibility of helping younger believers grow by addressing the:

- 1.) cognitive dimension: teaching them what was necessary to follow God, having a mental idea of how his disciples are to be formed;
- 2.) relational dimension: sharing their lives;

⁹⁹³ See also chapter 2 sections 2.1.4-2.1.6.3.

3.) affective dimension: love/care for them.

Paul's method of impartation overlapped with those of the Epicureans and the rabbis but there was some incongruence as well. Paul did not practice the 'serving of the masters' as in rabbinic impartation. Paul served his disciples rather than requiring them to serve him. There is not strong evidence that the Epicureans or the rabbis practiced the affective dimension of impartation. Paul did admonish his disciples, similar to frank speech, as well as encouraging spirit gentleness in restoring someone to faith. This is very similar to the Epicurean practice.

In relation to Paul and power, I have shown how Paul's desire to see younger believers grow challenges the 'hermeneutics of suspicion' in that Paul cares for younger believers, communicates equality and even inferiority, and serves them. Reading from a 'hermeneutics of impartation/Christian formation' perspective can also benefit exegesis and biblical scholarship. In the case of 1 Thessalonians being the first letter written by Paul rather than Galatians, we have seen that 'conformity to Christ language' which is present in Galatians and Paul's later letters is not present in 1 Thessalonians. This adds evidence that 1 Thessalonians was Paul's first letter written. Reading Paul in light of his desire to see younger believers grow has benefits not just to pastoral theology and spirituality but also can provide academic applications.

Chapter 6

Summary of Conclusions and Applications

We began our study by stating that ‘spiritual formation’ was a common term today but its usage and understanding is not agreed upon. The term ‘spiritual formation’ is usually understood as emphasizing two entities: the role of the divine agency⁹⁹⁴ and the role of human responsibility. Some writers highlight the divine agency, others highlight human responsibility, while others emphasize the importance of holding them together. One added a third entity: the role of the Christian community in the formation of an individual. Common factors among the definitions were the issues of growth, maturity and holiness. It was also shown that there is relative lack of scholarly attention in the area of Paul and spiritual formation and related subjects.

Then we turned to Paul for his understanding of how people develop into maturity. Many who are engaged in the discussion of spiritual formation implicitly appeal to Scripture as a basis of their teaching. Since Paul is a major writer in the New Testament, it is natural to turn to his writings for a definition of spiritual formation.

⁹⁹⁴ E.g. Lightner, R.P.(2003) p. 39; “spiritual formation describes the continuing work of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer which conforms the child of God more and more to the image of Christ.”

I also argued that the term “spiritual formation” is inadequate from Paul’s perspective and suggested the term “Christian formation” as one that would be more accurate to Paul’s thinking and more appropriate for Christian usage. In chapter 2, Christian formation was defined as: **the maturing process where growth in holiness is accomplished by:**

- 1.) The divine agency (the power of God);*
- 2.) Human responsibility (the disciples’ active participation and free choice to participate in the Christian formation process);*
- 3.) the shared life of the Christian community,*
- 4.) The agency of impartation; which has a one-to-one aspect (Paul imparting to younger believers), and an aspect of a multiplicity of mentors (his associates).⁹⁹⁵*

What stood out in our definition from Paul compared with the definitions surveyed in chapter 1 as well as our synthesized definition was that impartation was not included but impartation was certainly an aspect Paul saw in the growth and maturation of believers. We took this definition from 1 Thessalonians and compared it with the other undisputed Pauline letters and found that it was consistent. There is consistency of thought on this topic from the earlier to the later letters, with modest development in terminology and depth of discussion.

⁹⁹⁵ When Paul and his associates were not physically present with younger believers, letters would be written (see section 5.1), prayer would be done for their growth (1 Thess. 3:10-13; 5:23-24, see section 5.5, especially sections dealing with prayer), people would be sent to visit them (e.g. Timothy in 1 Thess. 3:1-6), communities were established (see section 2.2.3ff), with faith in the primacy of the divine agency in formation (1 Cor. 3:6-9). So impartation is not entirely dependent on physical presence.

Because impartation stood out, we sought to study it deeper. The Epicureans' and rabbis' methods of impartation served as a foundation for comparison with Paul. There were similarities and differences between the rabbis and Epicureans. Then we studied Paul and saw that Paul felt he had a role in his disciples' growth along with his associates and that impartation took place in three dimensions (1 Thess. 2:8): the cognitive, affective, and relational.

Having studied Paul, we could begin to compare Paul with the Epicureans and the rabbis. This would allow us to see if Paul was influenced by them, borrowing what he felt effective and discarding what he did not think useful. The Epicureans stressed: frank speech, community, imitation/emulation of mentor, and teaching. Paul shares all these with the Epicureans. In the area of frank speech, Paul clearly admonishes his converts but also encouraged gentleness. Self-disclosure was also evident in Paul (e.g. 1 Thess. 2:1-2; 1 Cor.4, 2 Cor.6, 10-13), but not in every letter. Paul's teaching would have been based on his personal teaching to the converts and scripture rather than philosophical works. Both have a similar view of community where mutual edification and admonition occurred.

The rabbis stressed: a focus on studying, understanding and applying the Torah; study in association with other disciples – likely a disciple circle rather than an academy during Paul's time, serving the

master; reproof. Paul emphasized teaching, but his teaching may not have had exactly the same function as teaching the Torah. Paul believed community was important. Pauline communities may be closer to the number found in a disciple circle. Paul had an aspect of being a master but unlike the rabbis, he also tried to create a sense of equality with his disciples while acknowledging he is a mentor to them concurrently. Paul models that he serves his disciples rather than teaching that disciples should serve him. Christ is the master to be served.

Neither the Epicureans nor the rabbis demonstrated much of the affective dimension of impartation. Paul shares with the rabbis a mental picture of what he wants his disciples to look like. The rabbis had specific quality lists. In 1 Thessalonians, Paul had an intermediate and ultimate goal, both of which were part of growing into maturity.

Paul has similarities to both; a case can be made that each had an influence on Paul's impartational method. It is likely that Paul did adopt some from both. He likely picked up the aspects from rabbinic training which he felt appropriate for his purposes under Gamaliel. Paul likely learned the Epicurean method less systematically, from his constant engagement with Greek culture and more occasional encounters with Greeks educated in the philosophical schools. On the other hand, we must

heed Sandmel's "parallelomania"⁹⁹⁶ and not assume that parallels necessarily imply influence.

In chapters 1, 5, and briefly in chapters 2 and 3, we addressed the issue of Paul and power. We acknowledged that reading Paul from the 'hermeneutics of suspicion' informed us of the possible abuse a mentor can perform on a protégé, given the position and relationship of the mentor. But we drew attention to what Paul wrote about issues such as acknowledging others in positions of authority, his care for his disciples, language that communicates equality, not just superiority, and expressed concerns about some of the methodology of scholars practicing the hermeneutics of suspicion. For these reasons we concluded that this reading was not an accurate depiction of Paul and that Paul desired more to care for his disciples and help them grow than to control and manipulate them for his own personal gain.

We also saw how reading from the 'hermeneutics of impartation/Christian formation' could not only counter the 'hermeneutics of suspicion' but also could be applied to aid exegesis and biblical scholarship. In the case of 1 Thessalonians, we saw that 'conformity to Christ' language was not present in 1 Thessalonians but was present in Galatians. This supports the notion that 1 Thessalonians was Paul's first letter instead of Galatians.

⁹⁹⁶ Sandmel (1967) pp.1-13.

6.1 Further Research

There is need for further research on Paul's understanding of how people mature – a topic on which he has much to say. This study provides a foundation for further research in how Paul understands Christian formation. One area of research would be in the instruments of Christian formation. Entities like prayer, suffering, the word of God, and so forth could be studied. How do they interact with each other and with the agencies to foster growth?

1 Thessalonians was paramount in the study. It would be fruitful to trace the development of these themes in Paul's other letters. A study that would treat Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, and Philippians with the same detail as was done here with 1 Thessalonians would yield more insight. Was Paul's approach in 1 Thessalonians different than the other letters? Did the circumstances of the other letters offer any new insights? For example, we discussed in chapter 2, section 2.2.3 that Paul discussed the practicalities of community life, e.g., sexual purity (1 Thess. 4:3-8), as well as the more spiritual aspects of the formation of believers in community. More research on the interaction between the practical and spiritual aspects in the other Pauline letters would be worthwhile.

Our research focused more on what people who are mentors can do in their practice of mentoring but Paul went to many different places and continued the relationship with other churches despite not being present physically. Questions we have addressed in the research which would benefit from more study are: How did Paul continue mentoring when he was not there physically? How did letters form his view of Christian formation?

Paul is also happy that the feelings he has for the Thessalonians are reciprocated (1 Thess. 3:6) and that the Thessalonians desired to see Paul. This raises up an area of study that has not been highly discussed: 'Paul's inner/emotional needs.' Best (1988) has already stated that there has not been a great deal of research done on Paul as pastor, but a further need is to study Paul's personal pastoral needs.

Along the same lines, Paul's recognition of the inner/emotional needs of others could also benefit from more study.

6.2 Application to Pastoral and Practical Theology

We have already applied our perspective of Paul's Christian formation to academic questions like exegesis and biblical scholarship;⁹⁹⁷ now we will discuss how our findings impact Pastoral and Practical Theology. The question arises why those engaged in Christian formation today should

⁹⁹⁷ See section 5.7.1.1 and 5.7.1.2.

shape their practice in the light of what we have found in Paul. I suggest that there are important reasons for doing so. Although Paul's pattern of Christian formation was informed by how he was taught himself as a Jew, and what he observed in the practice of other teachers with their converts and disciples, it reflects something deeper than that, which may be summarized as follows:

- 1) Paul's person and practice are inseparable from his understanding of the gospel (2 Cor 4:5). The grace of Christ in the gospel is embodied in Christ's apostle.
- 2) His pastoral practice demonstrates a deep understanding of human nature and Christ's purpose in bringing persons to maturity through agents and instruments that touch on every aspect of the human person – the intellect, the affections, the longing for relationships, and the capacity for receptivity to the work of God within us.
- 3) His practice has a comprehensive scope, from initiation to eschaton. Being 'in Christ' is a life of continuing progress and development.
- 4) Because of these factors Paul's understanding of Christian formation is demonstrably more holistic and wide-ranging than many perspectives which are advocated or practiced at the present time.

For such reasons as this Paul's approach commands respect as one which leaders in Christian formation ignore to their detriment. It has the

capacity to bring new depth, focus and dynamism to the practice of Christian formation today.

Using and applying the findings of this study would suggest:

- 1.) Those who are involved in evangelism, church planting, and church leadership should arrange for mentoring people of new faith.
- 2.) People who are active in church or institutions that are ecclesial in nature should implement the principles of Pauline impartation into their current role of helping others.
- 3.) Those wanting to grow in their personal lives or specific areas should seek out another individual or individuals who are more mature.
- 4.) Applying Paul's impartational method, mentors should not only teach content but also spend time with the disciple, and be aware of the affective component for the disciple expressed by love and care. Content teaches the disciple the information necessary to grow, time together will allow the protégé to watch an example of the content taught and expressing affection will allow the disciple to feel important as he/she is being cared for. When thinking of how people mature, one should not over rely on teaching content but seek to infuse a milieu where relationships, time together and more affective aspects of the human persona can be expressed.
- 5.) Involving protégés with other mentors and a community of people will enhance growth opportunities. Community offers stability, especially if

mentors move on, as Paul did, to different places where the protégés do not reside.

- 6.) A mentor must have a similar attitude to Paul's. This will involve understanding that the role of impartation is one of great responsibility and will require much effort but also an understanding of the divine agency as participating in the impartational process, so the onus of responsibility is not entirely on the mentor.
- 7.) Part of this great responsibility is that one must be careful not to abuse one's protégé and that protégés can be at risk, given the authority of the mentor. A protégé must guard against potential abuse by a mentor.
- 8.) Mentors and disciples should understand that a plumb-line for progress in maturity is growth in areas of faith and love. Faith can be measured through visible life change, enduring suffering, continued belief and understanding of taught content. Love is measured through how a disciple relates to other people and God.

Paul has offered insight to the term 'spiritual formation' by suggesting 'Christian formation' as more comprehensive with the added understanding of 'impartation' as a significant characteristic of the maturing process.

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