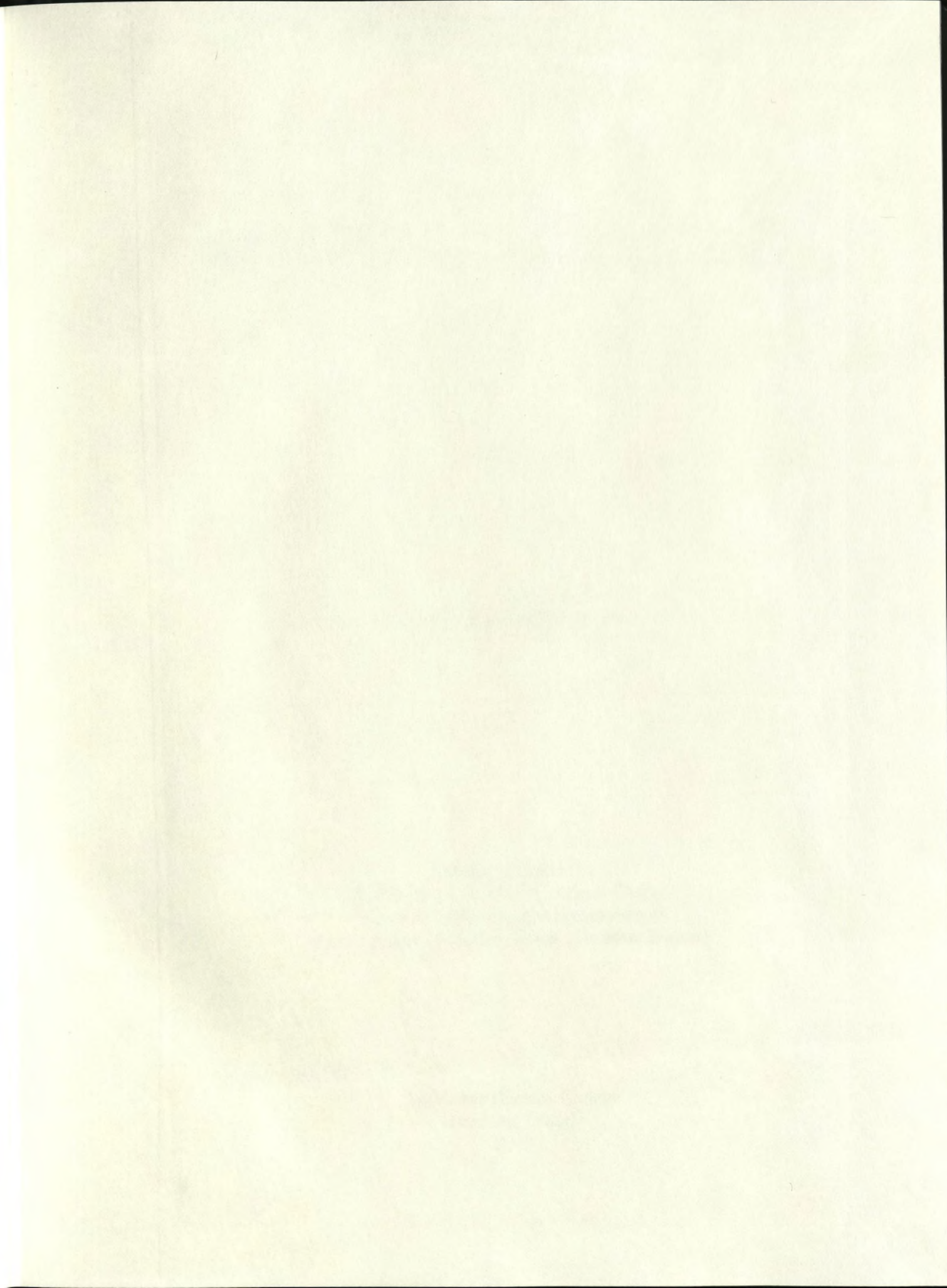


SUCCESS, FOLLY, AND FAILURE: SOME PAULINE
JUDGEMENTS REGARDING THE FORMATION
OF CHRISTIAN SOCIAL IDENTITY

BY

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Joshua D. Conroy, BRS, MDiv

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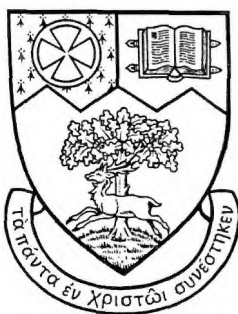
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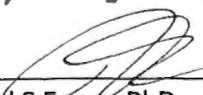
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ABSTRACT

“Success, Folly, and Failure: Some Pauline Judgements Regarding the Formation of Christian Social Identity”

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This thesis seeks to answer questions regarding Paul’s understanding of Christian identity by arguing that Paul views Christian identity as a superordinate or New Human identity in which many previous identities persist as subordinate identities, transformed by the superordinate Christian identity—although some previous identities must cease as they are not compatible with the superordinate Christian identity. Utilizing the combined approaches of Social Identity Theory and Self-Categorization Theory, I describe the perspectives that Paul presents in his correspondence with the Thessalonians, Galatians and Corinthians. As regards the Thessalonians, Paul observes that the Thessalonians succeeded in adopting Christian identity. In comparison, the Galatians, while recognizing their need for transforming their subordinate identities, are foolishly attempting to adopt a Judean identity. Finally, Paul rebukes the Corinthians for failing to appropriately adopt Christian identity and for choosing instead to continue to live according to their Old Human identity.

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INTRODUCTION

How does Paul view Christian identity in relation to Judean and gentile identities?¹ Does Paul favour a singular expression of Christianity regardless of existing ethnic, social, or class distinctions, or does he believe in a plurality of Christian expressions within the broader Christian identity? Chapter 1 will lay out the issues that are involved in assessing Paul's understanding of Judean, gentile, and "Christian" social identities. The remainder of the thesis will then argue that Paul views Christian identity as a superordinate or new human identity in which many previous identities persist as subordinate identities, transformed by the superordinate Christian identity—although some previous identities must cease as they are not compatible with the superordinate Christian identity.

Social Identity Theory and Self-Categorization Theory provide the framework that supports this thesis and informs my argument. Both of these theories make up the Social Identity Approach and focus on the formation of identity as well as the way that social identities relate to one another. In Chapter 2, I present a basic understanding of the Social Identity Approach and outline how I apply it to the question of Christian identity in relation to Judean and gentile identities.

¹ A certain amount of debate surrounds the terms *Christian*, *Judean*, and *gentile* in relation to Paul and his first-century context. I will address the debate in Chapter 2.

Chapter 3 argues that Paul presents Christian identity as a superordinate, new human identity and presents it in contrast with the previous superordinate identity of Old Humanity. It also argues that many of the previous subordinate identities persist as transformed identities that must subordinate to the new human/Christian identity, whereas identities that are unable to transform must cease. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 analyze Paul's correspondence with the Thessalonians, Galatians, and Corinthians. In my analysis, I argue that the Thessalonians adopted Christian identity as a superordinate identity and were doing well in adjusting and shaping their other identities as subordinate to Christian identity, that the Galatians were attempting to adopt a Judean identity as a more faithful expression of Christian identity, and that the Corinthians failed to recognize the transformative and superordinate nature of Christian identity and therefore continued to live according to the norms of the old human identity.

CHAPTER 1: SCHOLARSHIP REVIEW

Scholarly views of the relationship between Judean and gentile Christians can be separated into three broad categories.¹ The first category presents Christian identity as a completely new and separate identity. Both Judeans and gentiles adopt this new identity, effectively leaving their old identities as Judeans and gentiles. The second category argues that Judean Christians retain their Judean identities in Christ while gentile Christians abandon their previous identity as gentiles in order to be united with the Judean Christians. The third category argues that Christian identity is a new identity under which both Judeans and gentiles still maintain previous identities.

A New Ethnic or National Identity

For many in the first category, in which Christian identity is a separate identity from the Judean and gentile identities,² this new identity is a new ethnic or national identity, so Christ-followers are often referred to as “New Israel.” Longenecker argues that Paul and the Jerusalem apostles viewed the church as some form of “new and true Israel.”³

¹ These three categories are adapted from Tucker (*Remain*, 2–10), who distinguishes between a traditional view of Christian identity, the *New Perspective on Paul* (NPP) and what he terms “Beyond the New Perspectives” (9). I realize that many scholars will not fit easily into these specific categories. In fact, there is a spectrum of possibilities in which these three categories function as predominant viewpoints. As a result, my placement of scholars within specific categories may be debated, particularly when they have views that may bridge between the categories.

² While many of these scholars recognize that there are elements of the Judean or gentile identities that continue in Christ, the primary identities of Judean or gentile effectively end and are replaced by a common Christian identity.

³ Longenecker, *Paul*, 203.

Hence, for Paul, the idea of Israel no longer maintains any reference to ethnic or national identity; instead, it holds a purely spiritual connotation. Longenecker further asserts that conflict occurred because the Judean believers sought to maintain aspects of their national identity and customs and therefore they regarded Paul's teaching as extreme and dangerous. As a result, Paul limited his own freedoms and asked his churches to do the same so as not to offend the "weaker" Judean believers and cause them to stumble.

Longenecker accurately points to the Judean and gentile Christian's common status. Key to this common status is Longenecker's understanding of Jesus's fulfillment and completion of the Old Covenant. Longenecker is representative of a historical view that argues for the "abrogation of the law" in Christ.⁴ According to Longenecker, Paul taught that Christ had terminated the "contractual obligation of the law" for both Judeans and gentiles.⁵ As a result both were now united in one new covenant identity as a completely new people of God.

Sechrest offers another example of this kind of position in her analysis of Paul's use of ἔθνος and γένος in relation to other early Judean and gentile writers.⁶ She initiates her study by differentiating between current views regarding race and ethnicity⁷ and those held by Judeans and gentiles in the first century.⁸ While her analysis of ἔθνος and γένος would benefit from a more robust linguistic methodology,⁹ she does provide some

⁴ Longenecker, *Paul*, 131–39.

⁵ Longenecker, *Paul*, 134.

⁶ Sechrest, *Former Jew*.

⁷ Sechrest, *Former Jew*, 25–53.

⁸ Sechrest, *Former Jew*, 54–104.

⁹ Specifically, her work would benefit if she moved beyond simple association of terms by collocation and assessed exactly how the words ἔθνος and γένος function in relation to the specific categories.

useful insights into first-century understanding of race and ethnicity. Specifically, Sechrest highlights the strong connection between ethnicity and religion for first-century Judeans.¹⁰ As a result, she argues that Paul viewed conversion to Christianity as a change in racial or ethnic identity.¹¹ Yet at the same time, she states that in Paul's view Judean Christians still maintained an affinity to non-believing Judeans¹² while gentile Christians also maintained an affinity to non-believing gentiles.¹³ Sechrest does well to point toward a common identity shared by Judean and gentile Christians while still maintaining a connection with their former identities.¹⁴ In contrast to Sechrest, I will argue that Paul believed in a continuation of Judean and gentile identities under a new superordinate Christian identity.

Uniting Gentiles with Judeans

In the second group, scholars argue that the new Christian identity is formed as gentiles are able to join Judeans as the people of God. In this view, the Judean Christians maintain their identity as Judeans while the gentiles turn away from their pagan identities to be united with the Judeans as Christians.¹⁵ Two different approaches typify this category. On the one hand, there is F. C. Baur, who is, perhaps, one of the earliest

¹⁰ Sechrest, *Former Jew*, 100–105.

¹¹ Sechrest, *Former Jew*, 163.

¹² Sechrest, *Former Jew*, 118–25. Interpreting Rom 4:12–16, Sechrest states that Rom 4:16 indicates a connection between unbelieving Judeans and the Christian (both Judean and gentile). Therefore, Paul still maintains a connection to unbelieving Judeans, referring to them as seeds of Abraham in the flesh.

¹³ Sechrest (*Former Jew*, 129–33) uses Phlm 16 to argue that, in Paul's view, Philemon's common ancestry with Onesimus as gentiles strengthens "the bonds of Christian kinship" (133).

¹⁴ Because of this connection to previous ethnic groups, Sechrest's position could fit in the third category. I have chosen to place her in this first category because the primary focus of her work is the idea of a third race/ethnicity and that Judeans and gentiles change ethnic identity when they become Christians.

¹⁵ The term "pagan" here refers to the religious and ethical practices of many non-Judean people groups which were marked by idolatry and immorality from a Judean perspective.

scholars to suggest a strong disunity between Judean Christians and the gentile Christians who were being added into Christian identity. On the other hand, there are the proponents of the New Perspective on Paul (NPP), who argue for various levels of continuation of Judean identity combined with a new approach to inclusion of gentiles as the People of God.

F. C. Baur is perhaps most famous for his dialectical interpretation in which Pauline (gentile) Christianity is antithetical to Petrine (Judean) Christianity.¹⁶ For Baur, Peter and the other Jerusalem apostles presented a Christianity that focused on Jesus as the Jewish Messiah, maintaining many aspects of the Judean identity including law keeping and temple worship, while Pauline Christianity was universal, seeking an internal spirituality that emphasised Jesus's death and the ability of all people to come to God through faith.¹⁷ In this framework, Paul's converts stand in opposition to the Judean believers. They are not part of a unified body; instead they compete for status and influence. Many have refuted Baur's approach, but his views continue to have an influence in scholarship.

Within the New Perspective on Paul, Christian identity is often expressed in terms related to an opening of, or extension of the Judean identity to allow for the inclusion of Gentiles. Dunn presents the combination of gentiles with Judeans in terms of God's covenant with his chosen people. According to Dunn, "The covenant is not thereby abandoned. Rather it is broadened out as God had originally intended—with the grace of God which it expressed separated from its national restriction and freely

¹⁶ Baur, *Paul*; Baur, *History*; Hodgson, *Formation*.

¹⁷ Harrisville and Sundberg, *Bible*, 108–15.

bestowed without respect to race or work, as it had been bestowed in the beginning.”¹⁸ As a result, according to Dunn, God’s covenant is no longer identified with Judean practices such as Sabbath keeping, circumcision and dietary restrictions.¹⁹ Instead the covenant is based on the faith of Abraham and gentiles are now included in God’s covenant by that same faith. In essence, gentiles have joined Judeans as the people of God. Similarly, Dunn comments on Rom 9–11 stating, “That purpose, Paul can now reveal, always had in view the bringing in of the gentiles.”²⁰ He goes on to explain the intricate connection between God choosing to harden Israel in order that “the full number of gentiles” would be included and the final statement that “all Israel” is inclusive of both Judean and gentile Christians.²¹

Paula Fredricksen contributes to this approach in two recent articles on Paul and Judaizing.²² In “Judaizing the Nations,” Fredricksen rebuts the traditional view of Paul as a “law-free” apostle, insisting instead that, in the first century, Judean Christians, including Paul, “continued to live according to their ancestral practices, while the apostles encouraged gentile Christians, without converting to Judaism, to Judaize.”²³ She supports this claim with three main arguments. First, Judeans and gentiles recognized the existence of the various gods of the distinct people groups throughout the world.²⁴ The key difference was that the Judeans did not participate in the cultic rituals of worshipping these other gods. Gentiles were included in Judean religious practices as they visited the outer court of the temple in Jerusalem or as they participated in the

¹⁸ Dunn, *Jesus*, 197.

¹⁹ Dunn, *Jesus*, 197.

²⁰ Dunn, *Theology*, 526.

²¹ Dunn, *Theology*, 526–30.

²² Fredriksen, “Judaizing”; Fredriksen, “Law-Free.”

²³ Fredriksen, “Judaizing,” 234.

²⁴ Fredriksen, “Judaizing,” 235–40.

synagogues scattered throughout the Roman Empire without having to forgo the worship of their native gods. Second, Paul was a first-century monotheist, meaning that, while he worshipped only the one God of Israel, he acknowledged the existence of the gentiles' gods as lesser deities.²⁵ The difference for Paul's approach to the gentile Christians was that he expected them to abandon the worship of their gods. Third, while gentile Christians were not required to adopt Judean cult practices they were required by Paul to live according to the moral expectations of Israel's God.²⁶ Thus, gentiles are now included with Judeans as God's people through their sanctification through Christ.²⁷

The scholars in this second category recognize the continuation of the Judean identity within Christian identity. Each one also recognizes a continued affinity between Judean Christians and non-Christians in that the Judean Christians still felt a connection to their non-Christian contemporaries as a result of their shared Judean identity. My approach will similarly affirm this continuation of Judean identity, while also highlighting the continuation of various gentile identities in Christ and the continued affinity between gentile Christians and their non-Christian contemporaries.

A Superordinate Identity

The third category recognizes the superordinate nature of the common Christian identity, but also maintains the continuation and modification of existing identities.

²⁵ Fredriksen, "Judaizing," 240–44.

²⁶ Fredriksen, "Judaizing," 244–49.

²⁷ Because of the nature of "Judaizing," Fredriksen focuses on Paul's approach to gentile inclusion as the People of God. She does not elaborate on the status of unbelieving Judeans or the current relationship between believing Judeans and unbelieving Judeans or Christian and non-Christian gentiles. As a result, while I see Fredriksen as fitting in the second group in which gentiles join Judeans as God's people, at the same time, her insistence that the gentiles do not convert to Judaism and so remain as "expagan pagans" (247) could place her in the third category.

Campbell takes issue with what he refers to as a “sectarian reading of Paul,” where Paul is believed to be promoting some level of separation from contemporary Judaism including synagogue attendance and even, for some, a separation from the other apostles.²⁸ Campbell uses a social–historical approach to dispute approaches that tend to minimize the continuation of gentile and Judean identities in Christ.²⁹ Instead, he argues that Paul saw continuity between his Judean identity before his conversion and his new Christian identity. At the same time, Paul sought the inclusion of gentile Christians as gentiles in Christ who do not need to adopt a Judean identity. While there are some flaws to Campbell’s overall presentation, his main thesis and many of his supporting arguments are insightful.³⁰

One possible criticism of Campbell’s work relates to the relationship of the emerging Christ-movement and the people of Israel. As Le Grys states, “the outcome for Campbell looks suspiciously like a ‘two covenant’ situation.”³¹ While this may not be Campbell’s intent, others in this third category have explicitly argued for such an approach. Eisenbaum, for example, argues for a “two-ways salvation” approach where Judeans are already part of God’s chosen people and Paul’s mission to the gentiles was to offer them salvation through Christ.³² In this approach the gentiles could join the Judeans in salvation without having to become Judeans or follow Judean customs, while

²⁸ Campbell, *Paul*, 47–49.

²⁹ An explanation of the difference between a social–historical or social–description approach and a social–model approach will be discussed in the next chapter.

³⁰ In many ways Campbell’s presentation is hard to follow, as the connection between each chapter is not explicit and therefore comes across as a collection of essays along similar themes instead of one coherent and consistent argument. His presentation would also benefit from more significant analysis and rebuttal of contradictory arguments. His insistence that Paul wrote *Romans* to an entirely gentile audience is also not well supported and he ignores many key passages and arguments that contradict his position. For a more thorough defence of a gentile audience, see Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, xliv–lxiii.

³¹ Le Grys, Review of *Paul*, 85–86.

³² Eisenbaum, *Paul*.

Judeans are already part of God's covenant people outside of any commitment to following Christ. This approach takes the strengths of this third category to the extreme by emphasising the continued salience of and affinity to the gentile and Judean identities while minimizing the superordinate nature of Christian identity.³³

Hansen argues that "ethnic groups are discursively constructed because the connection between cultural norms [including religion] and a genealogically defined identity is not objectively observable but must be asserted."³⁴ Hansen's approach sees Paul as attempting to level the ground between divergent social categories.³⁵ Hansen analyses Gal 3:28, 1 Cor 12:13 and Col 3:11, arguing that Paul presents in these "baptismal formulae" various dichotomies and uses ethnic language and imagery in order to eliminate privilege and exclusion while emphasising a social ethnic unity among Christians.³⁶ Like Sechrest, Hansen's biggest strength is his recognition of this new common identity, particularly his reference to resolving different people groups into "one kind of human."³⁷ Hansen has laid part of the foundation for the current study by analyzing three key passages from Galatians, 1 Corinthians, and Colossians and concluding that the concept of a new social identity is present in these three letters. My study seeks to find similar connections throughout Paul's letters to the three communities in Thessalonica, Galatia and Corinth.

Building on work done by Campbell, Tucker also emphasises the continued salience of previous identities (including Judean and gentile identities) as subordinate

³³ Saliency is discussed below on p. 18.

³⁴ Hansen, *All of You*, 192.

³⁵ Hansen, *All of You*.

³⁶ Hansen (*All of You*, 7–11), distinguishes between anthropological identities and social identities. In defining the two, he says, "There are diverse kinds of people who through Christ are resolved into one kind of human or there are contrasting social groupings who become united into a new social group" (7).

³⁷ Hansen, *All of You*, 7.

identities within Christian identity.³⁸ Tucker uses social scientific models including Social Identity Theory and Self-Categorization Theory in relation to 1 Corinthians to argue for the continuation of subordinate identities within a superordinate Christian identity. Tucker's research forms the foundation for my own work in this thesis as I apply these insights to the Corinthian, Galatian and Thessalonian correspondences.

³⁸ Tucker, *You Belong*; Tucker, *Remain*.

CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY

The question at hand is a question of social groups and group interaction. Therefore, Social Identity Theory (SIT) and Self Categorization Theory (SCT) are ideal tools for seeking an answer. Before introducing these models and their application to Paul's writings, I will highlight some key presuppositions that help to form the basis for my approach.

Presuppositions

In 1957 Bultmann made the bold statement that “*no* exegesis is without presuppositions.”¹ Bultmann argues that exegesis should be free from the type of prejudice in which the exegete presupposes the results of his or her exegesis. At the same time, no exegete is free of presuppositional influences. Bultmann's answer to avoid undue prejudicial presuppositions is to adopt five specific presuppositions.²

¹ Bultmann, “Presuppositions?” 194. Bultmann originally presented this idea in, “Ist Voraussetzungslose Exegese Möglich?” References in this thesis will be taken from the English translation found in Bultmann, “Presuppositions?” 189.

² First, the exegete must use the Historical Critical method. Second, it is possible to understand the historical meaning of a passage. While Bultmann states that we can never reach a definitive understanding (189), it is possible to gain a relative understanding based on the social position and relation to the interpreter. Third, the ability to understand the historical meaning requires some level of “pre-understanding” or “life relation” (199) to the historical text. Fourth, the interpreter is also impacted existentially by the text as he or she must respond to the new understanding of the text. Fifth, the understanding of the text is never definitive, but will continue to develop as the text reveals new understanding and continues to impact the understanding and existence of the interpreter.

Bultmann's assertion continues to influence interpreters today, including the field of social-scientific criticism.

Elliott builds on Bultmann's premise by recognizing that it is equally important for the interpreter to recognize his or her own presuppositions both theologically and hermeneutically as well as his or her sociological presuppositions.³ The key, for Elliott, is the stating and testing of presuppositions in order to check their validity and either affirmed or corrected as needed.⁴ Problems arise when the existence of presuppositions is denied or an interpreter is not sufficiently aware or open about his or her presuppositions. Therefore, I intend to briefly outline some of the presuppositions that form the basis of this thesis.

The first and foundational presupposition is the idea that knowledge is socially conditioned.⁵ This means that both Paul and his interpreter's knowledge and understanding are conditioned by their social setting and are therefore perspectival in nature. Thus, the interpreter needs to first understand his or her social setting and presuppositions and then how they may contrast with or complement those of Paul. It is important to recognize that this does not indicate that relative objectivity is impossible but rather that complete objectivity is unachievable. Hence, as Elliott states, quoting Carney, "There is no such thing as immaculate perception."⁶ In relation to the current topic, one of the key differences occurs when considering twenty-first century views of religious identity and Paul's views. Typically, North Americans view religious identity as one of many secondary identities within the individual. In contrast, first-century

³ Elliott, *Social-Scientific Criticism?* 36–59.

⁴ Elliott, *Social-Scientific Criticism?* 36.

⁵ Elliott, *Social-Scientific Criticism?* 36–37; Berger, *The Social Construction*.

⁶ Elliott, *Social-Scientific Criticism?* 37.

Mediterranean culture tended to connect religious identity intimately with ethnic identity as the primary identity of the individual.⁷

Second, social-scientific models provide a useful tool in understanding the social setting of Paul and his churches. In agreement with Esler,⁸ I believe that every interpreter uses some sort of model in their exegesis. The issue is whether or not the interpreter is consciously aware and intentional in his or her use of their model. Models, when used properly, provide a clear structure and framework for analyzing the social world and understanding of Paul and his readers and function as a heuristic tool for assessing and verifying different interpretations as well as generating new interpretations. The specific models that I am using for this thesis are Social Identity Theory and Self Categorization Theory.

Third, understanding is possible. Social scientific criticism believes that all texts are “units of meaningful social discourse in either oral or written form.”⁹ This has two important implications for the current study. It implies that it is possible to understand the meaning of a text. Texts are created with the intent to carry meaning—specifically, meaning that is intended to be understood by the intended recipients. Also, it is critical to understand the social setting in which the text is created. The meaning of a text is socially conditioned and encoded in the text in a way that was meaningful and relevant

⁷ Malina, “Mediterranean Sacrifice,” 28. Malina argues that the concept of separation of church and state and therefore religious identity from kinship and political identity developed in the 1800s. Instead, for first-century Mediterranean society, religious identity was intimately tied into both ethnic and political identities. See also, Esler, *Conflict*, 8; Elliott, *Social-Scientific Criticism?* 57.

⁸ Esler, “Models”; Horrell, “Models”; Elliott, *Social-Scientific Criticism?* 40–48. As Elliott comments, “Theories and models, in fact, even dictate which competing sets of materials are to be examined and regarded as ‘relevant data’ for an investigation in the first place.” A model directs the researcher and restricts the unintentional insertion of cultural presuppositions and biases into his or her research.

⁹ Elliott, *Social-Scientific Criticism?* 49.

to the author and his or her readers. Understanding that social setting and its impact on the communication of the author of the text is vital to understanding the text itself.

Fourth, along with these sociological presuppositions it is important that I recognize a key hermeneutical presupposition. I hold to Pauline authorship of all thirteen letters attributed to Paul in the New Testament.¹⁰ As a result, I use evidence from Ephesians as well as from the undisputed letters (esp. 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Corinthian and Galatians). While some scholars may disagree with my inclusion of Ephesians, I do not believe that its presence detracts from my overall argument or that my argument is dependent solely on the evidence of Ephesians.

Having reviewed these key presuppositions I now turn to the social model that I will use in this thesis.

Social Identity Theory

Social Identity Theory was developed by Henri Tajfel as a means to explain intergroup conflict.¹¹ According to Tajfel “Social Identity [is] that part of an individual’s self-concept which derives from his [*sic*] knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the emotional significance attached to that membership.”¹² Tajfel explains that membership in a group has three important components: The first is the cognitive component indicating the knowledge that one is a member of a group. The second is the evaluative component, which refers to the notion that the group or the individual’s membership in the group may have positive or negative connotations. The

¹⁰ For an excellent defence of Pauline authorship, see Porter, *Apostle Paul*, 156–79.

¹¹ Tajfel, “Social Identity.”

¹² Tajfel, “Social Identity,” 69.

third is the emotional component, referring to the emotions connected with the individual's own group and others in the group.¹³ The theory refers to the way in which group members see themselves as part of a group and how they differentiate themselves from other groups in order to gain a positive social identity. According to SIT, people interact with one another based on a spectrum of identity. At the extreme ends of the spectrum are hypothetical situations that have no real existence. On the one extreme is completely individual interaction where two individuals interact purely as individuals with group identity having no impact on the interaction. On the other end of the spectrum, lies interaction on a purely group level where individual identity has little to no influence.

Previous attempts to utilize SIT in relation to Paul's writings have focused on the way in which group identity creates conflict and on Paul's attempts to raise the positive perception of Christian identity as a solution to the conflict.¹⁴ Esler, for example, argues that Romans is written in a context in which Judean and gentile Christians are focused on their different identities as Judeans or gentiles. This has caused conflict as each group sees the other as outsiders and of less importance or significance than their own ingroup. Paul answers this problem by emphasizing their common group identity as Christian while not completely dismissing their subordinate identities. While this approach has some merit and helps in understanding the role of group identity in creating conflict, it does not fully address Paul's view of Christian identity and how he sought to persuade his readers to adopt this new identity along with the implications of living out Christian identity in their social contexts. One of the primary flaws of SIT is the fact that it does

¹³ Tajfel, *Interindividual*, 28–29.

¹⁴ Esler, *Galatians*; Esler, "Social Ethos"; Esler, "Jesus and Intergroup Conflict"; Esler, *Conflict*.

not sufficiently account for multiple identities and the complexity of interaction between the different group identities.¹⁵ The addition of Self-Categorization Theory provides the nuance needed to delve deeper into the formation of group identity.

Self-Categorization Theory was developed by one of Tajfel's former students and colleagues, John Turner.¹⁶ While SCT is a distinct theory from SIT, both are considered part of what is known as the social identity approach. In Turner's own words:

Social identity and self-categorization theories are, despite some confusion on this point, different theories, but there is no question that they rest on the same anti-reductionist metatheory . . . and invoke the same concept of social identity . . . They are different theories, but they are allied and largely complementary, doing different jobs from the same broad social psychological perspective.¹⁷

The primary difference between the two approaches is that SIT focuses on intergroup behaviour (that is, why and how groups interact with one another) while SCT engages in intragroup analysis (how people interact within specific groups or subgroups).¹⁸ Rather than a spectrum of behaviour as presented in SIT, Turner argues for different levels of identity that all have an impact on the individual.¹⁹ At the subordinate level, people interact as unique individuals and in-group members define each other as unique individuals. The intermediate level is the group level (inclusive of subgroups and supergroups). At this level people interact with one another based on the similarities and differences of various ingroups and outgroups. The highest level is the super-ordinate

¹⁵ For example, see Kok's critique of SIT in Kok, "Social Identity Complexity Theory," 1–9. Kok condemns both SIT and SCT with the same fundamental flaw and suggests Social Identity Complexity Theory as a preferable alternative. This blanket critique of SCT along with SIT misses the added nuance that SCT provides.

¹⁶ Turner et al, *Rediscovering the Social Group*.

¹⁷ Turner, "Research on Social Identity," 6–7.

¹⁸ Baker, "Social," 130.

¹⁹ Turner et al, *Rediscovering the Social Group*, 45.

group in which people interact based on the common species identity of “human” and the common features shared with other humans in contrast to other species.

In addition to observing these various levels of identity, Turner’s position indicates that cognitive awareness of group membership is not enough to impact behavior. In order for group membership to have an impact, he says, “it is not simply a group which one is objectively *in*, but one which is subjectively important in determining one’s actions.”²⁰ The subjective importance of group membership is dependent on the following meta-contrast principle:

Any collection of individuals in a given setting is more likely to categorize themselves in a group (become a psychological group) to the degree that the subjectively perceived differences between them are less than the differences perceived between them and other people (psychologically) present in the setting (i.e., as the ratio of intergroup to intragroup differences increases).²¹

Therefore, the influence of group identity is dependent on the subjective perception of the individual(s). This is where salience becomes important.

Salience refers to the “conditions under which some specific group membership” becomes potent or prominent in self-perception resulting in an immediate influence on behaviour.²² Salience is, therefore, a subjective category in which an individual’s self-perception and behaviour can change depending on what category is most salient at any given time. According to Turner, “The salience of some in-group-out-group categorization in a specific situation is a function of an interaction between the ‘relative accessibility’ of that categorization for the perceiver and the ‘fit’ between the stimulus

²⁰ Turner et al, *Rediscovering the Social Group*, 2.

²¹ Turner et al, *Rediscovering the Social Group*, 51–52.

²² Turner et al, *Rediscovering the Social Group*, 54–56. Salient group membership is further defined as “one which is *functioning psychologically* to increase the influence of one’s membership in that group on perception and behaviour, and/or impression of and hence behaviour towards that person” (*Rediscovering the Social Group*, 118).

input and category specifications.”²³ *Relative accessibility* refers to how well the setting or situation matches an existing or created category. It is relative in the sense that there may be two or more existing categories that potentially match the given setting; however, the category that has the best match in relation to the others will have the most influence on perceptions and behaviour. Two criteria help to determine accessibility: (1) past learning of what tends to match a specific setting, and (2) the individual’s current motives (what he or she wishes to accomplish). *Fit* refers to the level to which the situation does or does not cohere with the individual’s understanding of the defined category.²⁴ The identity that is most salient in a given situation, on account of its relative accessibility and fit, has the greatest impact on behaviour and beliefs.

The concept of salience is central to understanding Christian identity and how Paul’s letters are intended to influence his readers and their behaviour. Paul recognizes the existence of multiple social identities within Christian identity but seeks to raise the salience of Christian identity over and above the competing subordinate identities. By utilizing SCT as well as SIT, I will show that Paul intended to influence his recipients’ behaviour by raising the salience of their Christian identity relative to their previous identities. On one hand, Paul raises the relative accessibility of Christian identity in relation to the old identities by ensuring that his readers understand the category and what it looks like. On the other hand, he also seeks to redefine his readers’ understanding of what fits as a Christian identity in order to enact transformation of their

²³ Turner et al (*Rediscovering the Social Group*, 54) develops this concept from Bruner, “On Perceptual Readiness,” 123–52.

²⁴ Turner, “Social Identity,” 10–11.

existing subordinate identities.²⁵ It could be argued that Paul's letters address specific situations and communicate in a way that emphasises how Christian identity applies to those situations.

A recent development in SCT, the Common Ingroup Identity Model (CIIM) is particularly significant as it argues that one of the most effective methods for reducing intergroup bias is re-categorization in which two sub-groups are recategorized as part of a common superordinate identity group.²⁶ What is particularly striking is that CIIM maintains that "the development of a common ingroup identity (in this case, Christian identity) does not necessarily require each group to forsake its less inclusive group identity completely."²⁷ In fact, reduction of intergroup bias has been shown to be most successful when subgroup differentiation is maintained and encouraged whereas attempts to eliminate subgroup differentiation within the superordinate identity tend to increase intergroup bias.²⁸ Social identity theory, therefore, predicts that a successful strategy for Paul might have been to recategorize his diverse congregants by means of a

²⁵ A variety of studies have shown that increased identity salience has a direct impact on behaviour. In one particular study, Haslam et al. ("Social Identity Salience") prove that conformation and acceptance of in-group stereotypes increase as identity salience increases. In another study, Levine ("Identity and Illness") presents the results of a study showing that identity salience actually influences the subjects' perception of the significance of a particular injury or illness. Wellen et al. ("Group Norms") show that high identity salience has an impact on an individual's decision making and behavioural adherence to group norms. Group salience also has an influence in how people respond to comfort. Platow et al. ("In-Group Reassurance"), provide a study in which people in pain responded better to comfort provided by people from a recognized common in-group in contrast to an out-group member. Wyer ("Selective Self-Categorization"), proves that individuals are more easily persuaded by members of a recognized in-group (high salience) than members of an out-group. Finally, Zhang and Reid ("A Self-Categorization Explanation") show that increased salience has a direct impact on group consensus. When a group's common identity salience raises, expressed opinion consensus also increases.

²⁶ Gaertner and Dovidio, *Reducing Intergroup Bias*, 46–49.

²⁷ Gaertner and Dovidio, *Reducing Intergroup Bias*, 48.

²⁸ Gaertner and Dovidio (*Reducing Intergroup Bias*, 59) explain that this method "increases the attractiveness of the former outgroup members" and therefore allows the inclusion of them as outgroup members within the new superordinate group identity. Crisp et al. ("Common Ingroups," 34) similarly state that "subgroup identification is exactly what determines whether a common ingroup identity will decrease or increase intergroup bias."

common superordinate identity and to make that superordinate identity especially salient in cases when problems arose on account of persistent subgroups.

Applying SIT and SCT

Many scholars have applied SIT and SCT to better understand the New Testament and the social settings in which it was created. My own approach is limited to describing Paul's perspective regarding Christian identity. As a result, this thesis is largely exegetical, using the framework of SIT and SCT to describe Paul's presentation of Christian identity in his letters to the Thessalonians, Galatians and Corinthians; I make no claim to provide an objective, comprehensive, sociologically-informed description of the first-century Christian movement. Before I begin to apply these theories to Paul and his depictions of Christian identity, however, I will first need to define some of the terms that I use throughout this thesis, before outlining how I plan to utilize SIT and SCT in my analysis of Paul's letters to the Thessalonians, Galatians and Corinthians.

Terms

Throughout this thesis I use the terms *Christian*, *Judean* and *gentile* to label the various identities that Paul addresses in his letters. Recently, each of these terms has been brought into question by scholars, so I must define what I mean by them. Similarly, I need to clarify why and how I use the terms *New Humanity* and *Old Humanity*.

The term *Christian* has rightly been deemed anachronistic when used in reference to first-century Christ followers.²⁹ I recognize that Paul and his contemporaries would not have called themselves Christians, nor would they have defined their identity as a Christian identity. Problems arise, however, in finding a suitable substitute. Tucker uses a variety of different terms or phrases to replace *Christian* including “in Christ” to refer to the identity, “Christ-movement” when referring to the spread of the in Christ identity, “Christ-followers” when referring to the followers of the movement and “Christ-following community” when referring to the local gatherings of Christ-followers.³⁰ Instead, I continue to use *Christian* because of its flexibility in application in each of these instances. While Paul and his readers may not have recognized the term, or utilized it in this way, I believe it can be used responsibly as an accurate descriptor of the reality of Paul’s day, provided that modern readers are informed with respect to the differences that exist between first-century and twenty-first-century social identities.

In contrast to *Christian*, which does not have a suitable replacement that provides the flexibility of the original, *Jew* can be adequately replaced by the term *Judean*. Esler provides a strong argument for translating Ἰουδαῖοι as *Judeans* rather than *Jews*.³¹ Not only does *Judean* avoid anachronistic readings of twentieth- or twenty-first-century understandings of Jewishness or Judaism into New Testament contexts, it offers a term that easily functions in both nominative and adjectival applications.

²⁹ Tucker (*You Belong*, 3) states, “‘Christianity’ as a separate religion did not occur until after the time of Paul.” Also see, Horrell, “Converging Ideologies”; Ehrensperger, *Paul and the Dynamics of Power*, 182; Campbell, *Paul*, 31–32.

³⁰ Tucker works hard to be consistent with his use of terms. For example, every one of these terms is used in close proximity to one another in pages 224–25 of *You Belong*.

³¹ Esler, *Conflict*, 63–74. Contrary to Schwartz, “Judean.”

The term *gentile*, while not necessarily anachronistic, represents a label placed on non-Judeans by Judeans. As such, it offers an etic or outsider label that encompasses a variety of ethnic identities.³² Esler seeks to resolve the issue by utilizing the terms *non-Judean*, *foreigner* or *heathen*.³³ Tucker, recognizing that there is no suitable single alternative, chooses to translate *gentile* without capitalization.³⁴ Donaldson also recognizes that there is currently no appropriate alternative but warns that we should only use them “in full awareness of their deficiencies and blind spots, making every effort to clear these away, to compensate for them, and to bring the underlying realities into view.”³⁵

When dealing with identity and self-categorization, the primary issue with such a term is that the people labeled as gentiles would not have naturally thought of themselves as such. It was a label used by Judeans in reference to all out-group members, regardless of the inherent distinctions between the specific identities that made up the out-group population. While my focus is on Paul’s view of Christian identity vis-à-vis the Judean and gentile identities, and therefore it could be argued that the self-categorization of his non-Judean recipients is less significant, it is still important to ensure clarity of meaning. Primarily, I recognize that, when dealing with the gentile people groups, there would not have been a single identity concept shared by all. In fact, they likely would have differentiated themselves from one another and defined themselves as Phrygians, Parthians, or Bithinians as “ethnicity was a fundamental

³² Esler, *Conflict*, 12; Tucker, *You Belong*, 4; Donaldson, “Gentile Christianity.”

³³ Esler, *Conflict*, 12.

³⁴ Tucker, *You Belong*, 4.

³⁵ Donaldson, “Gentile Christianity” 458.

element of identity in the ancient world, probably the most fundamental.”³⁶ In recognition of the plurality of non-Judean identities that Paul would have interacted with, I will refer in the plural to gentile identities or gentile nations, highlighting their plurality, wherever possible.

Lastly, I will use throughout this thesis the expressions *New Humanity* and *Old Humanity*. These are intended to represent two contrasting superordinate identities. *New Humanity* represents my estimation of Paul’s view of the new superordinate Christian identity. As I will discuss in Chapter 3, I believe that Paul presents Christian identity as a new human identity, and therefore, by contrast he presents the non-Christian human as belonging to Old Humanity. Obviously, neither Paul nor his converts would have viewed their previous identities as part of an Old Humanity while they were living within the identity (though Rom 6:6 may support such a position), so once again, this is a label that becomes salient only for certain individuals and only as they become part of the New Humanity and begin to view their previous identity in a new light (i.e. as past and no longer salient). In terms of the CIIM model, I am proposing that Paul exploits a common superordinate identity to reduce intergroup bias, and that he views this new identity in Christ as a New Humanity. While CIIM provides no standard method for referring to people who fall outside of a superordinate identity, social identity theory in general would likely view the contrastive Old Humanity identity as a common outgroup identity, similar in nature to the use of gentile as an outgroup label by Judeans.

³⁶ Donaldson, “Gentile Christianity” 451.

Superordinate Identity

In Chapter 3, I will demonstrate that Paul viewed Christian identity as a new superordinate identity. This is in line with Tucker's argument as well as Esler's understanding of Paul's efforts in Romans.³⁷ Esler explains this viewpoint as one of three options for reducing conflict between groups: "*Recategorization* . . . refers to redefining a situation of conflict so that the members of rival groups (or subgroups antagonistic to one another) are subsumed into a larger single, superordinate category."³⁸ One of the primary tools used in redefining the situation and raising the salience of the superordinate category is comparison. Tucker highlights the significance of comparison:

SIT/SCT note that identity is formed through ongoing comparison with others and the perceived relationship to the super-ordinate group. Hogg and Abrams conclude that this ongoing comparison and its resulting recategorization may produce "a shared super-ordinate identity." This comparison establishes difference and defines an outgroup, while reinforcing social identity by more clearly defining the ingroup.³⁹

Paul utilizes this kind of comparison throughout his letters. It is not feasible to do a full examination of every instance, so Chapter 3 will focus on six key passages: 1 Cor 15:7–9; 2 Cor 5:1–5; 5:16–21; Gal 6:15, Eph 2 and Rom 5:12–22. In each of these instances, Paul provides a comparison between aspects of Christian identity and the former or current subordinate identities of his recipients, and his comparisons serve to highlight the superordinate nature of Christian identity at the expense of all other identities.

³⁷ Tucker, *You Belong*; Tucker, *Remain*; Esler, *Conflict*.

³⁸ Esler, *Conflict*, 29.

³⁹ Tucker, *You Belong*, 140.

In addition to observing these comparisons, I need to show that, for Paul, some of the previous identities continue under the new superordinate identity. I will accomplish this by reviewing 1 Cor 7:17–24, where Paul tells the Corinthian Christians to remain in their calling (to remain as uncircumcised or as circumcised etc.). This encouragement, I will demonstrate, is much more than just a call to contentment.⁴⁰ It is a window into Paul's understanding of the various social identities relevant to his readers and their relations to the new Christian identity he seeks to inculcate.

Paul's Use of Prototypes, Benefits and Boundary Markers

Later in this thesis, Chapters 4, 5, and 6 will analyze Paul's correspondence with the Thessalonian, Galatian, and Corinthian communities, each of which responded differently to their new superordinate identity. In each of the chapters, I analyze Paul's correspondence using three broad categories: prototypes, benefits, and behaviours.

In seeking to influence his new Christian communities, Paul offered prototypes of Christian identity as models for them to follow. A prototype can be understood as an exemplar of a specific category. Eiser states, "The most prototypical exemplar is the one with the strongest associations to both the category label and most other exemplars of the same category."⁴¹ Prototypicality is also a flexible category that is highly contextual. Based on the meta-contrast principle of SCT, it suggests that the presentation of the prototype will differ based on the ingroup similarities vis-à-vis outgroup differences. Frequently, Paul presents himself and his companions as prototypes of Christian identity and adds other significant figures as additional prototypes or archetypes to further

⁴⁰ Keener, *1–2 Corinthians*, 66; Ciampa, *The First Letter*, 308–9.

⁴¹ Eiser, "Accentuation Revisited," 135.

emphasise and enforce his arguments. As Paul presents prototypes to his readers, he intends for them to be representative of a specific category (typically the superordinate Christian identity) and to relate specifically to whatever issue or issues he is seeking to address. Therefore, I will examine Paul's prototypes, archetypes, and antitypes in order to assess the kinds of behaviours and attitudes that he sought to promote as prototypically Christian through the exemplars.⁴²

Another aspect of Paul's correspondence that would have raised the salience of Christian identity is the presentation of the benefits of Christian identity. This particular strategy relates to the evaluative aspect of group membership. By reminding or informing his readers of the benefits of Christian identity, Paul potentially raises their evaluation of the identity. At the same time, by presenting the benefits of Christian identity in relation to specific contexts or situations, Paul encourages his readers, who presumably were familiar with or even in the midst of these types of situations, to recognize how these benefits relate to themselves and hence to perceive an increased fit of Christian identity in relation to their specific situations. Therefore, I will relate the specific benefits of Christian identity that Paul highlighted in each correspondence in

⁴² In SCT prototypicality functions comparatively, meaning that prototypes represent the perceived norm of the ingroup and that ingroup members will vary in comparison to the prototypical group member. Serino, "Personal-Social Interplay," 33–40. In this thesis, I use to *prototype* when referring to Paul's presentation of individuals representing the group norm. Therefore, when Paul presents himself and others as prototypes he is highlighting specific behaviours and attitudes that are prototypical for Christian identity. Similarly, Abraham functions as an *archetype* as an historical figure who is presented as an ideal representation of the ingroup member. Archetypes differ from prototypes in that, while a prototype is a current example with whom ingroup members can identify, archetypes are historical figures who are presented as mythological role models that represent the ideal ingroup member. In using Peter and others as *antitypes*, Paul also focuses on behaviour or actions that are antithetical to Christian identity. Rather than viewing Peter as an outgroup member or deviant, Paul uses Peter's actions in Gal 2 to represent actions that do not fit within Christian identity. Antitypes, therefore, refer to ingroup members who deviate significantly from the group norm. See also Oakes et al., "Role of Prototypicality," 76–86; Marques et al., "Social Identity," 127.

order to try to better understand the specific situation and context that he sought to address.

Finally, I will assess the boundary markers that Paul discusses within his letters. Boundary markers can be either rites or behaviours that are intended to differentiate an ingroup from outgroups. Behaviours, usually referred to as norms, are “expected or ideal modes of behavior defined by norms related to motives and goals that members share in common, or concern the existence and perpetuation of the group itself, along with the reciprocal expectations that regulate the function of the organizational pattern.”⁴³ Marques et al. distinguish between denotative norms, which refer to descriptive principles that assist in differentiating between groups, and prescriptive norms, which can be understood as “standards on which ingroup members anchor their judgements . . . about other ingroup members in order to ascertain . . . the legitimacy of the ingroup’s superiority.”⁴⁴ As I examine the behavioural standards presented by Paul in his letters to the Thessalonians, Galatians and Corinthians, it will be with a focus on them as prescriptive norms that Paul is putting forward as standards to be followed and emulated as part of Christian identity.

⁴³ Sherif, “Intergroup Relations,” 5.

⁴⁴ Marques et al., “Social Identity,” 129.

CHAPTER 3: THE SUPERORDINATE NATURE OF CHRISTIAN IDENTITY

One of the things for which I am arguing in this thesis is that Paul viewed Christian identity as a superordinate identity that can be described as New Humanity. In Paul's view, Christian identity is not another identity that is subordinate to the human identity. It is not another ethnic, racial or religious identity. It is a new superordinate identity that replaces the common human identity. As a result, where there was once one type of human identity, Paul now sees two separate identities, which I have deemed New Humanity and Old Humanity. In this chapter I will show that Paul saw Christian identity as a new human identity and therefore a new superordinate identity, and that he also believed that Christians maintained many of their previous subordinate identities but that these identities were transformed in relation to the superordinate Christian identity.¹

Christian Identity as New Humanity

If Paul viewed Christian identity as a new human identity, then there should be evidence of that position in his communications. How did Paul speak about Christian identity? To what other identity or identities did he compare it and which aspects of those identities does he use for comparison? How does he choose to describe Christian identity? I argue

¹ No one in a first-century context would have thought in terms of SIT/SCT or superordinate identities as a technical category. Nevertheless, I believe that the concept of New Humanity is in fact a Pauline concept and one that is supported by his written arguments, and that it can be helpfully clarified by means of SIT/SCT.

that Paul uses specific and symbolic comparisons in order to differentiate Christian identity as New Humanity. He also used language of recreation that both reflected and contrasted the original creation, showing that he viewed Christian identity as a re-created human identity.

Metaphorical Comparison: 2 Corinthians 5:1–5²

In 2 Cor 5:1–5 Paul compares humanity's current physical status with the future physical reality for those who are part of Christian identity, using two metaphors relating to dwellings.³ The heart of this metaphor is the difference between the current reality, which is tied directly into the Corinthians' former identities, and the future reality, which is tied directly into Christian identity.⁴ Paul compares a temporary cloth dwelling (σκῆνος), which represents the current reality, with a permanent solid dwelling (οἰκία), which represents the future reality. In the context of the greater passage it is clear that the future reality and future dwelling are directly connected with the Corinthians' identification with Christ. The current reality and the weaknesses of the current dwelling are connected to their previous identity as part of Old Humanity. Paul's use of this metaphor impacts the Corinthians' self-identification in two ways.

² Land (*Integrity*, 131–33) treats the current passage in connection with 4:16–18 as a section that reflects Paul and Timothy's eschatological focus and the motivation for their ministry. For the purposes of this thesis, however, I am focussing on the dwelling metaphor used by Paul and its impact on the Corinthians' self-identification with Christian identity.

³ While the English translations mix between the concept of dwellings and being clothed, I believe the concept of being clothed, ἐπενδύσασθαι, is intended to communicate the idea of being covered.

⁴ There is significant debate around the exact nature of the metaphors and when the eternal dwelling is/will be received. For an overview of the different positions see, Harris, *Second Epistle*, 361–94. Ultimately the point, for my purposes is that the future existence is significantly superior to the current existence.

First, it reminds the Corinthians that their connection with the new identity is not yet complete. They are not yet fully experiencing all the benefits of Christian identity and they still have benefits coming, to which they can and should look forward. This future completion also means, however, that the Corinthians continue to experience the physical reality associated with their former identity. While Paul's metaphor explicitly references the affliction and decay of the current physical body (dwelling), it also implicitly reminds the Corinthians that there are other aspects of the former identity that they still need to overcome. This is at least partially the motivation for the rest of the chapter. Following Paul's somewhat confusing digression of being absent from the body and present with the Lord, he reminds the Corinthians that the goal is to please God. Judgement is coming; therefore, it is imperative that the Corinthians reject living as Old Humanity and seek to please God by living as part of the New Humanity (2 Cor 5:6–10), even while still living within the current pre-resurrection physical reality associated with Old Humanity. Similarly, this is the motivation for Paul and Timothy's ministry (2 Cor 5:11–15). Paul concludes this section by reminding the Corinthians of the price Christ paid so that they might no longer live for themselves (Old Humanity) but might live for Christ (New Humanity).

The second impact, and the more significant for the present study, relates to the salience of the new human identity over that of the old human identity. By relating the two physical realities of the two identities to a tent and a house, Paul implicitly compares the quality of the two realities. The current reality that has its origins in the old human identity is flawed, fragile and temporary. The new reality, with its origins in

the New Humanity, is perfect, enduring and eternal.⁵ Such a comparison raises the salience of Christian identity by highlighting the superiority of Christian identity over the old human identity. Ultimately, the comparison creates a sharp distinction between Old and New Humanity that is at the heart of Christian identity. As a result, Christian identity is recognized as a new superordinate identity which replaces the previous superordinate identity (i.e. humanity, the human species in contrast with other creatures). As the next section will show, Paul makes this distinction even more explicit later in 2 Cor 5.

Transformed Identity: 2 Corinthian 5:16–21

Paul makes his strongest statement regarding Christian identity in 2 Cor 5:17:

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, New Creation! The old has died. Behold he/she has become new.”⁶ Paul here emphasizes new creation as the core of Christian identity.

Paul’s use of “New Creation” indicates that he views Christian identity as a new human identity that is presented in contrast to Old Humanity. He strengthens this comparison by indicating to the Corinthians that the old has died (including their former identity) and that the new has taken its place. Paul thus presents the new Christian identity as a New Humanity; anyone who is in Christ is by definition a new creation. He or she is no longer a part of Old Humanity as that former identity has died and a completely new identity has arrived.

One of the key differences created by this new identity is the way Christians view others. In 2 Cor 5:16 Paul writes, “So from now on we regard no one from a

⁵ Westfall, *Paul*, 149; Barnett, *Second Epistle*, 256–67.

⁶ This is my own translation.

worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer.”⁷ Paul insists here that Christians no longer view other people from a “worldly” point of view.⁸ But what is the difference? The primary difference is the elimination of divisions based on the evaluative criteria and group norms of the Corinthians’ former old human identity.⁹ Whether focused on physical appearance, rhetorical skills or status such as Judean or gentile, slave or free, and male or female (Gal 6:15), such divisive appraisals are no longer a part of Christian identity.

New Creation Over Ethnic Identity: Galatians 6:15

Some have suggested that Christian identity is an ethnic identity that is equal to other ethnic identities like the Judean and gentile identities.¹⁰ By contrast, I maintain that Paul depicts Christian identity as a new human identity that replaces the old human superordinate identity. Another verse that helps is Gal 6:15.

Galatians 6:15 is set in a section of Galatians (6:11–16) in which Paul, in his own hand-writing (6:11), denounces those who are compelling the Galatian Christians to be circumcised.¹¹ Paul informs the Galatians that neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any significance in God’s sight: “Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is the new creation” (6:15). The expression

⁷ While this verse comes before the proclamation of new creation. The entire passage however revolves around this new identity and the impact it has on Christians’ lives.

⁸ In this context, therefore, *worldly* relates to the former identity, in contrast to a spiritual perspective that relates to the new Christian identity.

⁹ Land, *Integrity*, 136, where he states, “(1) members of the Pauline mission refrain from evaluating others in accordance with fleshly standards (v. 16a); (2) they forget about the roles that people played in their former lives and instead regard all believers as new creations (vv. 16b–17).”

¹⁰ Sechrest, *Former Jew*, 410.

¹¹ The identity of these “circumcisers” is debated among scholars, as is the method with which they are compelling the Galatian Christians to be circumcised. For a review of the main positions see Porter, *Apostle Paul*, 196–200. The nature of the issue facing the Galatians and Paul’s solution will be explored further in Chapter 5.

new creation here is central to Paul's point, and by applying the meta-contrast principle from SIT/SCT, we can observe that Paul chooses to focus on the new creation as a means of reducing the salience of competing social identities.¹²

The meta-contrast principle indicates that "a given set of items is more likely to be categorized as a single entity *to the degree that differences within that set of items are less than differences between that set and others within the comparative context.*"¹³

Oakes et al. provide a helpful chart to help understand how the meta-contrast principle works and similar charts are used below to help illustrate the principle in relation to Paul's views of identity both before and after his conversion experience.¹⁴ Figure 3.1 presents Paul's perspective prior to his encounter with Christ on the road to Damascus. Representing a Judean perspective, Paul's view of identity focussed on the differentiation between Judeans and non-Judeans or gentiles. In this scheme, gentile represents a generalized outgroup that includes everyone who is not Judean.¹⁵ The members of the gentile outgroup would not naturally identify as gentiles but rather as one of the many ethnic identities of the day. While a common humanity may exist, it does not function as a social identity for Paul or any of his contemporaries and, therefore, lacks salience or significance.

¹² It may be argued that *new creation* here refers to the eschatological reality that Paul anticipated as a future event. While the future reality of new creation is an important factor to Paul (cf. Rom 8). Paul also viewed this new creation as a reality that Christians experience in the present as part of their Christian identity. Bruce, *Epistle*, 273; Chilton, "Galatians."

¹³ Oakes et al., "Role of Prototypicality," 77.

¹⁴ Oakes et al., "Role of Prototypicality," 78–79.

¹⁵ Donaldson, "'Gentile Christianity'" 438.

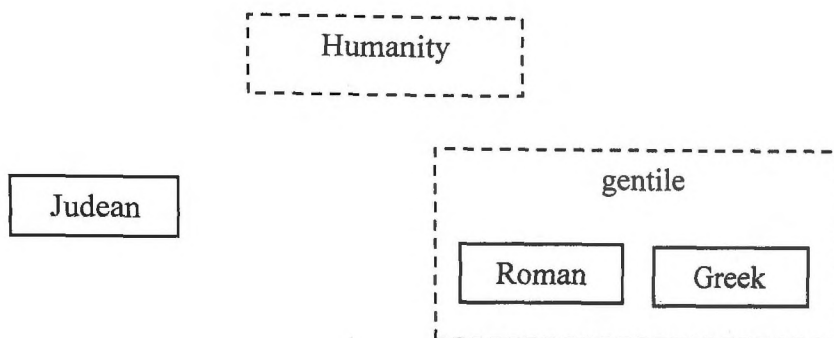


Figure 3.1

In contrast, Figure 3.2 presents the transformation of Paul's view with the addition of Christian identity as a superordinate identity. Following the principles of CIIM, Paul holds to the Christian identity as a new humanity that functions as a superordinate identity that unites the subordinate identities into a common ingroup that reduces intergroup conflict. Outgroup members can be categorised as old humanity in the same manner that non-Judeans can be categorised as gentiles at the subordinate level. Christian identity, as a new humanity, functions as a common ingroup identity for Judean and gentile Christians eliminating the hostilities that exist between them in old humanity.



Figure 3.2

Paul recognizes that the high level of salience of these disparate groups was creating conflict and influencing some gentiles to choose to become identified with the

Judean identity. For Paul, these subordinate identities no longer have the significance that they once had. Instead, he focuses on the identity that Christians share in Christ, the new creation identity. The new creation identity is a common identity that both Judean and gentile Christians share and that, as it becomes more salient, eliminates tension and conflict between Judeans and gentiles. Such an identity, by definition, must be something other than another ethnic identity.¹⁶ The new creation identity is therefore a superordinate identity, equal to the species identity of Old Humanity. It is a new human identity, and the contrasts that Paul wants his readers to notice are the contrasts that exist with the old human identity.

From Old Creation to New Creation: Ephesians 2

In Eph 2, Paul contrasts the reality of the Ephesian Christians' old life as part of Old Humanity with their new reality as part of New Humanity.¹⁷ It is possible to break Eph 2 into two parallel sections.¹⁸ In Eph 2:1–10 the contrast focuses on the Ephesians' status in relation to God, while 2:11–22 emphasises relations between gentiles and Judeans.

In relation to God, Paul presents both gentiles and Judeans as dead, stuck in sin and without hope. Paul marks off the former existence with *ποτε* in v. 2 as he comments on how they “used to live.” Yet, it was not just the gentiles who were part of Old Humanity. Using the same particle, Paul claims that he and his fellow Judeans “also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its

¹⁶ In order for Christian identity to be a common shared identity between two different ethnic or racial identity groups it must be something other than an ethnic or racial identity. In fact, it needs to be an identity that is considered superordinate in relation to the ethnic or racial identities that it is transcending.

¹⁷ O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 155.

¹⁸ O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 154.

desires and thoughts.” The former existence is characterized as being “dead in your transgressions and sins” (v. 1), following “the ways of this world, and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient” (v. 2). “gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts” (v. 3), and “by nature deserving of wrath” (v. 3). Each of these terms describe clearly negative realities associated with the previous old human identity that applies to both gentiles and Judeans.

In contrast to the negative description of the old human identity, Paul describes the New Humanity. Specifically, in contrast to being “dead in your transgressions” Paul states that God has “made us alive with Christ” (v. 5). The comparison of death in the Old Humanity and life in the New Humanity is a common theme for the Apostle Paul. In other passages, he focused on the fact that those who are in Christ have died to their previous way of life in order to be raised to a new life (e.g. Rom 6). For Paul, the Old Humanity is marked by death, while the New Humanity is marked by life. Such strong language negatively impacts the salience of the old human identity for both gentile and Judean readers, while raising the salience of the New Humanity. The same can be said of the other terms used in the Eph 2 comparison. Each of the phrases used to define the former humanity, aside from communicating theological concepts, fulfils the purpose of diminishing the salience of that identity, while the positive phrases increase the salience of the new Christian identity—and all of this reduces the salience of the Judean and gentile identities that are subordinate to both the old and new human identities.

Not only does Paul tell the Ephesians that God had “Made us alive with Christ,” he states that God has also, “raised us up” and “seated us . . . in the heavenly realms in

Christ Jesus” (v. 6). The point here revolves around three verbs: *συνεζωποποίησεν* (made alive together), *συνήγειρεν* (raised up together), and *συνεκάθισεν* (seated together) combined with the phrase *in Christ* (τῷ Χριστῷ).¹⁹ The combination of the prepositional prefix *συν-* and the dative indicates that the thrust of the verbs used is, in fact, union with Christ. Yet, at the same time, the *συν-* prefix highlights the *togetherness* of the actions. In the context of the preceding verses, in which Paul highlights the distinctive differences between gentiles and Judeans by using *you* and *us* language, the prefix attached to the verbs provides a stark contrast. Paul uses the *συν-* prefix to indicate that the new human identity is experienced *together* by Judeans and gentiles who, when they belonged to the Old Humanity, were divided from one another.²⁰ The Old Humanity was marked by conflict between the subordinate identities of gentiles and Judeans, while the New Humanity is marked by unity between these subordinate identities. Diversity still exists in the unified Christian identity—but now gentiles and Judeans, *together*, experience new life, resurrection, and seating in heaven in Christ.²¹ As Dunn comments:

In the meantime we simply need to underline the tremendous sense of “togetherness” implicit in Paul’s language. This again can hardly be reduced to a merely literary motif, a feature of Pauline style. Here the more mystical dimension comes to focus primarily in the decisive salvation-effecting events of Christ’s death and resurrection. And here too the language cannot be reduced to simply a description of baptism or of membership in the believing community. Paul’s language indicates rather a quite profound sense of participating *with others* in a great and cosmic movement of God centred on Christ and effected through his Spirit.²²

¹⁹ While the NIV (2011) translates the dative, τῷ Χριστῷ, as “with Christ” in 2:5 and “in Christ” in 2:6, no support exists for the difference in translation. In fact, the 1984 version of the NIV translates both occurrences as “with Christ.”

²⁰ Campbell, *Unity*, 138

²¹ Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 401–4, where Dunn identifies 16 *συν-* verbs used by Paul in his letters.

²² Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 404 (emphasis added).

Dunn is correct in highlighting the “profound sense of participating with others in a great and cosmic movement of God.”

Paul continues to address the Ephesians as “you” highlighting the continuation of the gentile identities in Christ while emphasising the extreme nature of the separation experienced as part of their former old human identity. Paul reminds the Ephesian Christians of the pejorative terms used to define their identity (uncircumcised) with that of the Judeans (circumcised).²³ Furthermore, Paul reminds them that the separateness of their old human identities meant that not only were they separated from Christ, they were separated from any possible means of connecting with God because of their separation from God’s covenant people Israel as well as the covenants and promises originally given to draw people to God. By emphasizing the separateness of the former identity including the overarching consequence of separation from God, Paul significantly lowers the salience and impact of the former old human identity.

This separation is solved, however, in Christ, as Paul writes, “But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ” (v. 13). Central to my argument is the question, “To what/whom have they been brought near?” The primary answer to this question is that the gentiles have been brought near to God. Yet, at the same time, it is an incomplete answer. Just as being separate from God was precipitated by being separate from Israel and God’s covenants and promises, in the same manner, being brought near to God also necessitates being brought near to Israel and the covenants and promises.²⁴ This interpretation is supported by the continued

²³ Bruce (*Epistles to the Colossians*, 292) states, “In the eyes of the [Judeans] the uncircumcision of Gentiles was a token of their estrangement from God.” See also, Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 135–36.

²⁴ Campbell, *Paul*, 97.

emphasis on unifying peace throughout the rest of the chapter. Paul tells the Ephesians that Christ is the source of peace between the ethnic identities and that he has brought the identities, together, into one new human identity (2:14–15). In Christ, the wall of hostility that once separated the gentiles and Judeans has been eliminated.²⁵ Perhaps the most direct comment regarding the creation of the new human identity comes in the last half of Eph 2:15. In this, Paul states, “in order that, the two, he might create in himself (that is in Christ) into one *New Humanity* making peace.”²⁶ The two key concepts of in Christ and New Humanity are prominent in this verse. In Christ, God is creating a New Humanity. In the creation of the New Humanity, Paul says that Jesus is not eliminating the distinct identities of gentiles and Judeans but *moving* them closer to one another as non-conflicting identities once they have been transformed by the new superordinate identity of the New Humanity.²⁷ From an SIT/SCT approach, we can understand this passage as referring, not to a third race or amalgamation of two people groups thus eliminating the pre-existing identities, but rather the peaceful relations that should exist between two divergent identities when they have been transformed by the new human identity in Christ.²⁸

²⁵ For a summary of the options relating to the exact nature or form of the dividing wall see Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 141–42. The identification of a specific physical wall is less important than Paul’s intended message. Whether referring to an actual physical wall or simply using the idea of a wall as a metaphor to indicate division and separation the meaning is the same. Jesus has eliminated the divisions between the two ethnic identities and has made it possible for them to join together as part of a new human identity.

²⁶ This is my own translation.

²⁷ I use the terminology of *movement* and *into* here intentionally. Applying to the text what Porter (*Idioms*, 151–53) states regarding the preposition *εἰς*, “in its basic meaning [it] is concerned with the movement of the [gentiles and Judeans] toward and into the [New Humanity], as if this were the action that resulted in the condition of *εἶναι*” (151).

²⁸ Many interpret this as an amalgamation of some sort into a new third race. Shkul (*Reading Ephesians*, 108) argues that “it is unlikely that the new *anthropos*, new communal identity, would be an overarching concept that maintains past identities and their differences regarding the Law.” While this is a common reading of Eph 2:15, it is not the only possible way of understanding Paul’s intent. In the context of Eph 2 and Paul’s focus on the elimination of hostility and division, with the disparate identities still

The rest of the chapter supports this interpretation and the focus on the elimination of hostility between the different identity groups. In v. 16, Paul states that “in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he *put to death their hostility*” (emphasis added). By taking the new human (*καινὸν ἄνθρωπον*) of v. 15 as a corporate identity, it is also possible to understand the one body (*ἐνὶ σώματι*) corporately. Paul states that in this one body, this New Humanity, both identity groups have been reconciled to God. The reconciliation achieved on the cross does not eliminate the existing identity groups, but rather transforms their relationship to God, as well as to each other. They are able to exist as one body because the hostility that existed between them has been put to death. Similarly, vv. 17–18 also support this interpretation. Paul insists that Christ came to bring peace to both gentiles (those who were far away) and Judeans (those who were near) and that in Christ “we both (*ἀμφότεροι*) have access to the Father by one Spirit.”²⁹ These verses also highlight the unification of diverse identity groups in Christ while still allowing for continued identification with those groups.

Jesus as the New Adam

In Rom 5:12–21 and 1 Cor 15:20–22, Paul compares Jesus and Adam. Space does not permit a full exegesis of these texts; instead I focus, here, on their relevance to the

united together as groups within their subordination to Christian identity, this interpretation becomes more likely. Bantum, “To Those,” 142.

²⁹ Having already described the gentiles as those who were distant from God because of their lack of connection to the people and covenant of God, Paul once again highlighted the separation between the old gentile identities and the old Judean identity by referring to the gentiles as “those who were far away” and the Judeans as “those who were near.” Yet, it is also significant that Paul indicated that both identity groups required Christ to make peace. Both require Christ to provide them with access to God by one (unifying) Spirit.

concept of a New Humanity.³⁰ Adam is the *origin* of the old human identity and, as Esler says, “the ultimate cause of the problem of sinfulness, to which all humanity contributed, even though in ways different from Adam.”³¹ Similarly, Jesus is the *originator* of New Humanity and the one who “enabled the creation of a new group that has him as the object of its faith.” In vv. 15–19, Paul contrasts the differences between these two progenitors and the legacies they left. Esler, provides a helpful diagram of the contrast, which is reproduced in Figure 3.3.³² By contrasting Christ with Adam in this way Paul seeks to promote Christian identity by appealing to the emotive and evaluative aspects of group membership. It is far superior to be a member of the group represented by Christ over the group represented by Adam.³³ At the same time, by contrasting Christ and Adam as progenitors of their respective groups, Paul represents those groups as contemporaneous.³⁴ Paul provides a similar contrast for the Corinthians in 1 Cor 15:20–22. This contrast, however, was limited to the result of death for all who remain part of Old Humanity under Adam and the result of resurrection and life for those who are a part of New Humanity in Christ.

³⁰ For a recent exegesis of Rom 5:12–21 see Porter, *Romans*, 124–29.

³¹ Esler, *Conflict*, 201.

³² Esler, *Conflict*, 202. Esler provides the translation *righteousing* for δικαίωμα (usually translated *justification*) in vv. 16 and 18.

³³ By superiority here I mean the superiority of the benefits and value of belonging to the new identity and do not intend to suggest that the individuals who are a part of the new identity (i.e. the Christians) are superior to those who are not.

³⁴ Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 200. Puts it this way, “Adam is the pattern or ‘prototype’ of Christ in that each begins an epoch, and the character of each epoch is established by their action. Hence all who belong to the first epoch are ‘in Adam,’ and all who belong to the second are ‘in Christ.’”

One Adam (Wrongdoing: παράπτωμα)		One Christ (Gift: χάρισμα)	
<i>Act of One</i>	<i>Result for Many</i>	<i>Act of One</i>	<i>Result for Many</i>
(15) Wrongdoing grace/gift	Death	Grace/gift	Abounding
(16) Judgment	Condemnation	Abounding grace/ righteousness	Reign in life
(17) Wrongdoing	Reign of death	Gift	Righteousing
(18) Wrongdoing of life	Condemnation	Righteous act	Righteousing
(19) Disobedience righteous	Became sinners	Obedience	Will become

Figure 3.3

The Continuation of Subordinate Identities in Christian Identity

Having established that Paul saw Christian identity as a New Humanity, it remains to demonstrate the persistent nature of the earlier subordinate identities. In this section I argue that previous social identities continue under the new human identity in Christ. Throughout his letters, Paul makes references to gentiles in Christ, Judeans in Christ, as well as slaves and masters in Christ and male and female in Christ. He directly commands those circumcised to remain circumcised and those uncircumcised to remain uncircumcised, and he never explicitly calls for the rejection of the previous identities.³⁵ My discussion will focus on 1 Cor 7:17–24 and Gal 3:26–29.

³⁵ Some may object to this statement by referring to Eph 4:17, “So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking.” In the context of Eph 4 and the rest of the letter, I argue that Paul’s reference to τὰ ἔθνη here focuses on non-Christian gentiles as prototypical of the old human identity. This interpretation is supported by Paul’s arguments in vv. 18–24 in which Paul refers to τὰ ἔθνη as being separated but then instructs the Ephesians to put off their old self (i.e. old human identity) and put on their new self (i.e. new human identity).

Remain in Your Calling: 1 Corinthians 7:17–24

In 1 Cor 7:17–24, Paul commands the Corinthians to, “remain in the situation they were in when God called them” (7:20).³⁶ From the context of this passage, I suggest that Paul did not believe that subordinate identities ended when Christian identity was adopted. Instead, as Tucker states, “He is forming an alternative community, both in continuity and discontinuity with the broader civic community, and he seeks to establish an ethos that allows for social identification while maintaining the boundaries necessary for the salience of an ‘In Christ’ social identity.”³⁷

Beginning with v. 17, Ciampa and Rosner highlight that Paul is “expounding a principle” that helps understand his argument in the previous passage.³⁸ This point is significant when trying to interpret the intent of 1 Cor 7:17, *Εἰ μὴ ἐκάστῳ ὡς ἐμέρισεν ὁ κύριος, ἕκαστον ὡς κέκληκεν ὁ θεός, οὕτως περιπατεῖτω* (nevertheless, each person as the Lord assigned, each person as God called, thus walk).³⁹ In vv. 10–16, Paul instructs married Christians to remain in their marriages, even if their spouse is non-Christian (i.e. the subordinate identity of married that existed in old human identity persists in the new human identity). Verse 17 extends the principle to other subordinate identities by referring to them broadly as what the Lord has assigned when God called them.⁴⁰ Verse 18 cements this understanding as Paul explicitly instructs the Judeans (circumcised) and

³⁶ My interpretation of this passage is heavily influenced by Tucker, *Remain*, 68–88. I will not seek to duplicate his exegesis here, but will simply highlight key elements of the text, with specific mention of where I disagree with Tucker.

³⁷ Tucker, *Remain*, 65.

³⁸ Ciampa, *First Letter*, 308.

³⁹ This is my own translation, intended to communicate the ambiguity of the three phrases.

⁴⁰ In this interpretation I differ from Tucker who argues the both *ἐμέρισεν* and *κέκληκεν* refer to the subordinate identities, indicating that the Lord assigned the identities and God called the Corinthians to those identities Tucker, *Remain*, 70–71. Thiselton’s argument is more convincing as he connects the use of *καλέω* to previous statements in 1 Cor 1:9, 24, 26; and most importantly, 7:18.

gentiles (uncircumcised) to remain as Judeans and gentiles.⁴¹

A potential problem arises in the interpretation of 1 Cor 7:19, in which Paul states, “Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing. Keeping God’s commands is what counts.” The problem is twofold. First, it may be argued that he statements, “circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing” communicates the end of Judean and gentile identities.⁴² Second, Paul’s insistence on keeping God’s commands may suggest a level of Judaizing (i.e. gentiles adopting the Judean identity).⁴³ Tucker accurately responds to the first issue in his insistence that “Paul does not obliterate the Christ-followers’ previous identities by making these claims; rather, both circumcision and uncircumcision are comparatively [in relation to Christian identity] nothing.”⁴⁴ In relation to the second issue raised, Fredriksen’s elaboration of her claims regarding Judaizing help to add nuance to her argument. In fact, she introduces the idea of Judaizing by stating that, “These people had to remain ἔθνη, albeit ἔθνη with a difference. This was because . . . they were to live as ἅγιοι, “holy” or “sanctified” or “separated” ἔθνη.”⁴⁵ Her recognition that the gentiles did not cease to be gentiles is important, as is the recognition that the gentile identity is transformed by its inclusion in Christian identity. The difference between Fredriksen’s position and my own lies more in the emphasis of the transformation, as Judaizing suggests becoming like the Judeans as opposed to becoming sanctified gentiles.

⁴¹ For an explanation of equating circumcised with Judeans and uncircumcised as gentiles, see Ciampa, *First Letter*, 310–11.

⁴² Martyn, *Galatians*, 565–70.

⁴³ Fredriksen, “Law-Free,” 644.

⁴⁴ Tucker, *Remain*, 77.

⁴⁵ Fredriksen, “Law-Free,” 77.

Neither This nor That: Galatians 3:26–29

Similar objections might be raised in Gal 3:28, where Paul writes, “There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”. However, when taken in context of the rest of the book of Galatians, as well as the entire Pauline corpus, Gal 3:28 becomes a bold statement of the unity of diverse identities in Christ.

Betz argues that Gal 3:28 communicates that all distinctions between Jews and Greeks are abolished, slavery ceases and that male and female are eliminated in favour of being united in an “androgynous Christ-Anthropos.”⁴⁶ In contrast, Dunn states, “it would be unwise to draw out an applied theology from the principle without regard for the way in which Paul himself actually theologized in practice,” concluding that, “his claim is that these distinctions have been relativized, not removed.”⁴⁷ Similarly, Westfall states:

Yet, Galatians 3:28 does not erase the diversity that is represented by the pairs. In fact, Paul’s entire argument in Galatians and the Jerusalem Council insists that the gentiles should still be gentiles and members of the people of God instead of being forced to become Jews. Similarly, the Jews were not to become gentiles. There remained a distinctiveness and diversity of the people of God.⁴⁸

This goes beyond the inclusiveness of new community, and manifests the equality and mutuality that each of these persistent identities experience in Christ.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Betz, *Galatians*, 190–201.

⁴⁷ Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 592–93. Also, see Mitternacht, “Foolish Galatians?” 410, who writes, “Oneness in Christ is not the same as collapsing differences into sameness. It implies equality of righteousness for Jews and gentiles in Christ —no more, no less. Jews remain Jews, gentiles may remain gentiles.”

⁴⁸ Westfall, *Paul*, 171.

⁴⁹ Westfall, *Paul*, 166–72. See also, Tucker, *Remain*, 77–80; Odell-Scott, *Paul’s Critique*, 20–21; Longenecker, *Triumph*, 65–67.

Exceptions: Subordinate Identities that Cease

While it is true that, for Paul, most subordinate identities persisted in Christian identity, there were some subordinate identities that ceased. These subordinate identities are expressed directly in 1 Cor 6:9–11 and in vice lists like the one offered in Gal 5:19–21.

Tucker presents 1 Cor 6:9–11, not as subordinate identities, but rather as a “list of behaviours that are unacceptable within the space of the kingdom.”⁵⁰ This position may be strengthened when considered with passages such as Gal 5:19–21. It may be that these lists function to indicate the kind of transformation that the gentile identity must experience to be included as a subordinate identity in Christian identity. Yet, there is also the possibility that these verses represent subordinate identities that do not persist. The strongest support for such an interpretation is that 1 Cor 6:9–10 lists nouns that represent people who commit the acts, as opposed to Gal 5:19–21 which focuses on the acts themselves. As such, I suggest that Paul presents in 1 Cor 6:9–10 stereotypical identities that were considered subordinate to the gentile identities. Recognizing that SCT allows for multiple levels of subordinate identities, it is possible to understand this list in such a way, and therefore recognize that such subordinate identities cannot persist in Christian identity.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have laid the foundations for my work by showing that Paul saw Christian identity as a superordinate or new human identity. Specifically, he presents Christian identity in contrast to the former superordinate identity shared by all humanity,

⁵⁰ Tucker, *Remain*, 179. See also Hansen, *All of You*, 45–46 who connects the list in 1 Cor 6:9–11 with behaviours that are stereotypical of the non-Christian gentile identity.

an identity that I have termed Old Humanity. At the same time, he teaches the persistence of existing subordinate identities under Christian identity.

In the next three chapters I explore how three different Christian communities integrated Paul's message regarding their new Christian identity. Chapter 4 analyses the Thessalonian letters to argue that the Thessalonians were progressing successfully in their adoption of Christian identity. In chapter 5, I argue that the primary issue with the Galatians' was the belief that gentiles had to adopt aspects of the Judean identity in order to be fully Christian. Finally, Chapter 6 shows that the Corinthians did not understand or were failing to subordinate their existing identities to the superordinate Christian identity.

CHAPTER 4: SUCCESS IN THESSALONICA

In the previous chapter, I argued that Paul views Christian identity as a new human identity under which other identities became subordinate, and identities unable to properly subordinate to Christian identity ceased.¹ In this chapter, I explore both letters to the Thessalonians to argue that they had successfully adopted Christian identity and, as a result, faced opposition from non-Christian gentiles with whom they shared or had previously shared subordinate identities.² In direct contrast to the Corinthians who were

¹ Even though Paul did not think or communicate in terms of SIT/SCT, by encouraging the Thessalonians' commitment to his gospel and living in light of his gospel, Paul was encouraging commitment to Christian identity.

² Many scholars recognize the positive nature of 1 Thessalonians. Frame (*Thessalonians*, 9) states, "The Thessalonians, notwithstanding some imperfections, were constant in their faith and love . . ." See also, Morris, *Thessalonians*, 20; Fee, *Thessalonians*, 7–8; Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 77–78. Each of these commentators have recognized an element of consistency or perseverance in the lives of the Thessalonians. As I will argue through this chapter, such consistent gospel living is a sign of the successful adoption of Christian identity as a superordinate identity. See also, Barclay, "Thessalonica and Corinth," 51.

Unfortunately, there is less consensus on the issue that Paul addressed in these two letters. Frame (*Thessalonians*, 10) argues that Judean opposition to Paul's lifestyle was at the heart of 1 Thessalonians and that the first three chapters were devoted by Paul to refutation of their opposition, while Morris (*Thessalonians*, 21), connects the primary issue to questions raised by Judeans regarding Paul's ministry and leadership. Wanamaker (*Thessalonians*, 53) disagrees, stating that "The evidence of the two letters simply does not support the theory [that Judeans are the source of the problem in Thessalonica]. None of the central issues like law, circumcision, and justification by faith, which play a decisive role in the debate in Galatians, is found in the Thessalonian letter." See also Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 56. Instead, Wanamaker (*Thessalonians*, 62–63) believes that 1 Thessalonians was written to address eschatological issues raised by Timothy's visit. Second Thessalonians, he argues, was written first and sent with Timothy based on misinformation Paul had regarding the situation in Thessalonica (57–60). Fee (*Thessalonians*, 8) recognizes that 1 Thessalonians was written, at least in part, to address some level of suffering caused by some form of persecution. Barclay ("Thessalonica and Corinth," 52) states that "it is clear that his converts also have experienced considerable hostility."

Second Thessalonians provides an even wider range of views regarding its purpose. Morris (*Thessalonians*, 9–10) finds Wanamaker's position (mentioned above) unsupportable and simply suggests that Paul must have received a report that the issues addressed in 1 Thessalonians had gotten worse, requiring a second letter. Frame (*Thessalonians*, 18–20) presents a similar situation, postulating a letter sent by the leaders of the Thessalonian Christians expressing their concerns and asking for clarification. Previously, Morris (*Thessalonians*, 24) suggested that the second letter focused on two key issues from

failing to understand the transformative significance of Christian identity as a superordinate identity, the Thessalonians responded to Paul's gospel positively and succeeded in adopting the superordinate Christian identity, which transformed how they lived out their subordinate identities in the Thessalonian city culture. This transformation created discord and the potential for conflict between the Thessalonian Christians and their non-Christian counterparts. Paul's use of prototypes, benefits and boundary markers serve to encourage the Thessalonians in their willingness to suffer persecution for Christian identity.

Prototypes: Willing to Suffer for Christian Identity

Whereas, in both the Galatian and Corinthian letters, Paul commanded his readers to "become like me" (Gal 4:12) and to "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ" (1 Cor 11:1), he praises the Thessalonians because they "became imitators of us and of the Lord" (1 Thess 1:6) and similarly commends them by stating, "we instructed you how to live in order to please, God, as in fact you are living" (1 Thess 4:1).³ Thus the Thessalonians have already considered Paul and his companions prototypes. The Thessalonian letters leverage this by presenting Paul and his companions' commitment to Christian identity through hardship and persecution as a specific exemplary behaviour for the Thessalonians to follow.

the first: the Parousia and those within the Thessalonian Christian group who had become idle. Fee (*Thessalonians*, 241–42) agrees with these two themes and adds an increase of outside persecution, recognizing Paul's attempts to assure the Thessalonians of the destiny set aside for their persecutors.

³ Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 114, 220. "As in all the other places where he speaks of imitation, with the exception of 2:14, Paul refers to imitation of himself" (114). Paul was pleased that the Thessalonians recognized his prototypical behaviour and began to live accordingly.

Paul and His Companions as Prototypes⁴

Paul and his companions function as prototypes who are willing to suffer at the hands of those who are not part of Christian identity, but who share a common subordinate identity. Specifically, Paul and his companions, as Judean Christians, suffered opposition from non-Christian Judeans.⁵ Paul reminded the Thessalonians that they were aware of both the situation in Philippi that caused him to leave that city and the persecution they encountered in Thessalonica (2:1–2).⁶ Yet, even in the midst of such great opposition, Paul and his companions continued to spread the Christian message.⁷ For Paul, a major part of Christian identity includes sharing the gospel with those who are still part of Old Humanity. Not only does Paul and his companions model a commitment to Christian identity even in the face of opposition, they expected and predicted such opposition. In 1 Thess 3:4, Paul reminds the Thessalonians that he told them in advance that he and his companions would face opposition in their ministry and that his prediction came true. Such a statement suggests that Paul views opposition by non-Christian contemporaries as a mark of Christian identity. Such a perspective is even more certain when the previous verse is considered and Paul's statement concerning

⁴ "Strictly speaking, therefore, Paul's concerns for their faith and for their attitude towards him were inseparable. So, Paul has learned, happily, that he is still their model, and as such he aids their continuing development by writing the letter, in which he completes what is yet lacking in their faith (3:10)." Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 78.

⁵ For support of the Judean identity of Paul's opposition in Thessalonica and elsewhere, see Malherbe (*Thessalonians*, 4–6), who supports the accuracy of the account in Acts 17 and the Judean nature of the opposition Paul faced in Thessalonica.

⁶ Barclay ("Thessalonica and Corinth," 52) applies the idea of opposition and persecution to 1 Thess 2:3–12 as well, stating, "That Paul was the target of at least slanderous attacks from non-believers in Thessalonica is the most likely explanation of the painstaking personal defence he mounts in 2.3–12."

⁷ Wanamaker (*Thessalonians*, 90–92) argues for the significance of Paul's message in these verses, indicating the extent to which Paul and his companions would go to communicate the gospel.

trials, “For you know quite well that we are destined for them.”⁸ Paul expected that the Thessalonians, who had adopted Christian identity, would face opposition and persecution, and therefore presents his own experiences as a prototypical example of how to endure and respond to such opposition.

Not only does Paul and his companions model a willingness to suffer for the sake of the new identity, they also model a change in motivation. They are no longer motivated by a desire to please or seek the approval of others, instead, they are motivated by a love for those who are not yet part of the new redeemed human identity. Paul and his companions are not interested in the standards of the subordinate identities and the people of influence in those identity groups. Instead they seek to live according to the standards of Christian identity. In 1 Thess 2:4–6, Paul mentions that they are not trying to please people (v. 4) nor are they trying to attain glory or esteem from people (v. 6).⁹ Malherbe points out that there is no indication that Paul’s own reputation is in question but rather that Paul makes these claims, “because it was a standard part of the description of the ideal philosopher.”¹⁰ Not only is this Paul’s depiction of the ideal philosopher, but also his depiction of the ideal (or prototypical) Christian. Indeed, it would not make sense for Paul to proclaim that he did not seek to please humans or attain a reputation for himself simply to try to impress the Thessalonians. Instead, he provides these statements, “as a general theological truth designed to encourage proper

⁸ Frame (*Thessalonians*, 128) presents a similar reading by providing an amplified translation of verse 3 which says, “And I say you are aware that suffering is a principle of our religion . . .” See also, Morris, *Thessalonians*, 102; Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 130–31; Fee, *Thessalonians*, 118–19. Malherbe (*Thessalonians*, 193) states, “Thinking of his own life as paradigmatic in this respect, he at times, referred to his suffering for hortatory purposes.”

⁹ Malherbe (*Thessalonians*, 141) states that Paul is drawing, not on the tradition of moral philosophers but rather OT prophets of God, who were focused on pleasing God with the faithfulness of the gospel message. See also Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 95.

¹⁰ Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 143.

moral behavior by his converts by implicitly reminding them that God also tested their hearts to determine their motives and desires.”¹¹ While Galatians also contains prototypes who are willing to suffer and reject the esteem of subordinate identity groups, the intent of the Thessalonian exemplars focuses on encouragement during suffering as opposed to the exhortative nature of the Galatian prototypes.

Paul and his companions are motivated by love for the Thessalonians as well as a desire to be obedient to God. In 1 Thess 2:8, Paul states that it was this love that motivated him to share the gospel with the Thessalonians. This expression of love goes beyond what might have been expected in the context of Old Humanity and the subordinate identities of Paul and the Thessalonians.¹² Verse 8 begins with, οὕτως δμειρόμενοι ὑμῶν (‘so we cared for you’). The verb δμειρόμενοι is a *hapax legomenon* in the New Testament, and its meaning is best understood in relation to the final clause of v. 7, “Just as a nursing mother cares for her children.”¹³ Paul equates the love and desire he has for the Thessalonians with that of a nursing mother. This metaphor, when considered in relation to the tendency toward division and conflict when intergroup differences are most salient, creates a strong image of familial unity that goes beyond the subordinate identities that once caused division. Not only did they share the gospel, but Paul reminded the Thessalonians that they also shared their lives. Referring to the depth of love expressed by Paul in this passage, Wanamaker states:

We can scarcely doubt that it functioned to create mutual love and commitment between Paul and his converts. This was intended to encourage them to listen to his exhortation with sympathetic ears. His example of love for and devotion to his converts also had other important social functions. It was designed to

¹¹ Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 96.

¹² See material in Chapter 3 relating to the dividing wall and the hostilities between Judeans and gentiles.

¹³ Bruce, *Thessalonians*, 32.

establish the norm for true leadership for any who aspired to lead the community. At the same time it implicitly exhorted the readers to the sense of mutuality and love that would unite them into a cohesive community, thereby strengthening them to face a hostile environment.¹⁴

Paul and his companions displayed a higher level of affection and care for the Thessalonians than was normally expected by sharing, not just the gospel message, but their very lives¹⁵ with the Thessalonian Christ followers.¹⁶

This love, and desire to share the gospel message also motivates Paul and his companions to work hard in order to provide for their own needs.¹⁷ After proclaiming their love for the Thessalonians and their desire to share the gospel in 1 Thess 2:8, Paul goes on to remind his readers of, “our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you.” Also, in 2 Thess 3:7–10, Paul told the Thessalonians that they ought to follow the prototypical example (v. 7) as Paul and his companions present themselves as a model for the Thessalonians to imitate (v. 9). Specifically, Paul and his companions model a lifestyle of commitment to hard work and earning a living through working. The purpose of this

¹⁴ Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 102.

¹⁵ Paul uses the term ψυχή, which the NIV translates as “life” instead of “soul.” In the context, it seems more logical for Paul to speak of sharing his life with the Thessalonians rather than sharing his soul. See Porter (*Paul the Apostle*, 218–19), who speaks of Paul as having “shared in a common physical existence” with the Thessalonians. See also Dunn, *Theology*, 76; Morris, *Thessalonians*, 80; Fee, *Thessalonians*, 76; Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 106. Wanamaker (*Thessalonians*, 102) suggests that Paul uses this term in order to add the concept of sharing physical life (time, place, possessions) to the sharing of an emotional connection. Also, Bruce (*Thessalonians*, 32) refers to it as “the seat of affection.” Contra Longenecker (*Paul*, 44), who suggests a more traditional “soul” reference for the term.

¹⁶ To highlight the sense in which Paul and his companions went beyond any expectations in their care for the Thessalonians, see Whittington (“Figuring Joy,” 19), who compares Paul to the philosopher/teacher of the same period. According to Whittington, “While philosophers were sometimes characterized as gentle nurses, they would not likely claim to share their own selves with their audience.” In fact, he says, “Paul’s gesture of sharing his very soul with the Thessalonians would then strike many as inappropriate, given his lofty status—especially since, within the simile, the nurse’s life-giving substance was her breast milk.”

¹⁷ Wanamaker (*Thessalonians*, 102–3) sees a connection between the care Paul has for the Thessalonians and his desire to preach the gospel without putting any undue burden on his converts.

lifestyle of hard work was out of concern for their fellow Christians. Paul and his companions did not want to put any additional burden on the Thessalonians.¹⁸ The behaviour Paul was emphasising goes beyond the simple idea of working for a living and is instead tied to the motivation of not being a burden.¹⁹

The Thessalonians' Response to the Prototypes

The Thessalonians recognized Paul's prototypical behaviour and followed his example extraordinarily well. In reference to 1 Thess 1:5–10, Malherbe comments, "Paul had been a model whom the Thessalonians had imitated so successfully that they had become examples to others."²⁰ In fact, it could be stated that the Thessalonians' positive adoption of the lifestyle modeled by Paul and his companions was an indication of their response to the gospel message and their inclusion in Christian identity.²¹ As a result, the Thessalonians became a model for others to follow. They themselves became prototypes for other Christians to look to as an example of proper behaviour for Christian identity.

Not only did the Thessalonians follow the prototypical example of Paul and his companions, but they also followed the example of the Christians in Judea and were

¹⁸ Frame, *Thessalonians*, 102.

¹⁹ Fee, *Thessalonians*, 330–32. As Fee points out, v. 10 relates to a command Paul gave when he was with the Thessalonians and therefore, the behaviour he is addressing is not a recent development but was likely something that was evident from the start of the Thessalonian ministry. Malherbe (*Thessalonians*, 148) connects Paul's self-sufficiency to his ability to present the gospel as an act of sharing himself with the Thessalonians as presented in 1 Thess 2:8. Paul shared of himself and his gospel freely and without any expectation of remuneration.

²⁰ Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 78.

²¹ Bruce, *Thessalonians*, 13–15. "The Thessalonian church was an apostolic fellowship because its members not only accepted the apostles' teaching but also followed the apostles' example." Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 78.

willing to suffer²² just as the Judean Christians were suffering.²³ Paul's specific mention of the Judean Christians suffering and the Thessalonians union with them in that suffering served to emphasise the superordinate nature of Christian identity. Even though the Judean Christians remained as Judeans and the gentile Christians remained as gentiles, they shared in the suffering that is a prime indication of Christian identity.²⁴ Paul added to the image of the unity of the superordinate Christian identity by referring to the suffering of the Thessalonians as being at the hands of their own people. The Thessalonians would have recognized the connection Paul was making. Paul and the Judean Christians suffered at the hands of their non-Christian Judean counterparts just as the Thessalonians suffered at the hands of their non-Christian gentile counterparts. The conflict between the gentile Christian identity and the non-Christian gentile identity, combined with the common experience of suffering between the gentile and Judean Christians would have served to raise the salience of the common superordinate identity at the expense of the subordinate identities.²⁵ By drawing a direct comparison to the churches in Judea, Paul portrayed the unity and common identity that they all share in Christian identity.²⁶ To make that bond even stronger, Paul concluded this section by proclaiming that the non-Christian Judeans will be subject to God's wrath.²⁷

²² Contrary to Malherbe (*Thessalonians*, 115, 127–28), who argues for a more internal aspect to ὀλιψις, Wanamaker (*Thessalonians*, 81) maintains that the Thessalonians experienced “some form of social oppression” as a result of their conversion.

²³ Dunn, *Theology*, 484. “Paul regarded suffering as an integral feature of the eschatological tension. . . [T]he more general descriptions . . . indicate clearly enough that Paul saw suffering as part of the already–not yet for all thus caught up in the eschatological tension.” The suffering the Thessalonians were experiencing was evidence that they had properly adopted Christian identity.

²⁴ Barclay, “Thessalonica and Corinth,” 52–53; Morris, *Thessalonians*, 89.

²⁵ Porter (*Apostle Paul*, 215) states “[T]hey have suffered from their own countrymen, just as other churches suffered from the Jews (2:14); and they now are unlike the heathen (4:5).” See also Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 113.

²⁶ Fee, *Thessalonians*, 92–93.

²⁷ Fee (*Thessalonians*, 91), in refuting those who see this as a later anti-Judaic addition states, “scholarly integrity demands that one come to terms with the passage as having been written by one for

As I have argued above, Paul and his companions displayed prototypical behaviour by showing love and care to the Thessalonians.²⁸ Paul's assessment of the Thessalonians proved that they were also succeeding in adopting this essential aspect of Christian identity.²⁹ In 1 Thess 4:9–10, Paul commended the Thessalonians for the fact that they had learned how to show love to their fellow Christians.³⁰ In fact, as Morris argues, Paul made clear that the kind of love they were exhibiting was only possible because of the work of God in their lives.³¹ At the end of this passage, Paul encourages the Thessalonians to increase the love they had for their fellow Christians,³² which in fact they did as Paul commented in 2 Thess 1:3–4 that they were growing in their love.

Amidst the success of the Thessalonians one glaring failure stands out: hard work. Paul addresses the issue in 1 Thess 5:14 as he tells the Thessalonians to “warn those who are idle and disruptive,” and again in 2 Thess 3:6–13. In this latter passage Paul exhorts the idle Christians to earn their keep while commanding the rest of the Thessalonian Christians to have nothing to do with the idle and disruptive. By commanding the rest of the Thessalonian Christians to choose not to associate with these idle Christians Paul indicates that this is indeed an important aspect of Christian identity, and that, in this one area at least, the Thessalonians are failing to live up to the

whom its immediate context has touched a raw nerve regarding his own treatment by fellow, but non-believing, members of the Jewish community.”

²⁸ Longenecker (*Paul*, 186) refers to love for fellow Christians as basic to Paul's concept of Christian identity.

²⁹ One possible exception relates to issues of laziness addressed by Paul, particularly in 2 Thessalonians. I will discuss these in more detail below.

³⁰ For the understanding of *φιλαδελφίας* as referring to love for other Christians, see Frame, *Thessalonians*, 158.

³¹ Morris, *Thessalonians*, 129.

³² Wright (*Paul*, 1118) views Paul's command to show love to the Christians more and more as a call to showing that love through the meeting of material needs (giving monetary support, hospitality etc.).

prototypical exemplars.³³

Benefits of Christian Identity

As Paul seeks to encourage the Thessalonians in their suffering he reminded them of the benefits of Christian identity. Specifically, he compares the Christian ingroup's benefits with those of the outgroup of Old Humanity. While these benefits are primarily future oriented, Paul makes sure to remind the Thessalonians that these future benefits are worth the present cost.

Contrasts between Ingroup and Outgroup:

Paul uses language that compares the ingroup of Christians with the outgroup of non-Christians, or New Humanity with Old Humanity. He addresses the Thessalonians with "you" statements combined with positive attributes and imagery, while at the same time referring to those outside the Christian group as they/them combined with negative attributes and images. This approach works toward solidifying Christian identity as a positive, beneficial identity over and above their former identity as part of Old Humanity.³⁴

Knowledge and ignorance are contrasted throughout 1 Thess 5. Regardless of what Paul's intentions are in writing this chapter,³⁵ the contrast exists and the impact of

³³ This suggests that the issue at hand does not relate to an "over realized eschatology" but rather an existing issue within Thessalonica. The fact that Paul instructed the Thessalonians when he was with them (2 Thess 3:11) also indicates that this was an existing issue.

³⁴ Specifically, using "they/them" to refer to those still part of Old Humanity creates a distancing between them and the Thessalonian Christians, while the positive addressing of the Thessalonians along with "you" and "us" statements build a strong connection between Paul/his companions and the Thessalonians as part of the same superordinate identity.

³⁵ Most commentators argue that Paul wrote this chapter to address (or continue to address) concerns regarding the Parousia. (e.g. Fee, *Thessalonians*, 182–84). "The reason for addressing this issue

the contrast on the Thessalonian Christians' identity salience is still significant.³⁶ The contrast is initiated with a focus on the Thessalonians' understanding of the "Day of the Lord" in contrast to the blissful ignorance of those outside Christian identity.³⁷ Paul utilizes two key phrases to highlight that the information in 1 Thess 5:1–3 is well known by the Thessalonians. In v. 1, Paul states, οὐ χρείαν ἔχετε ὑμῖν γραφῆσθαι (you do not have need to be written to), indicating that they should know this information already.³⁸ In v. 2, he goes on to say, αὐτοὶ γὰρ ἀκριβῶς οἴδατε ('for you know very well') when referring to the coming of the Day of the Lord. Paul is confident in the Thessalonian Christians' knowledge about the coming Parousia and the Day of the Lord.³⁹ This knowledge is contrasted with those who are saying "peace, and safety" and will end up facing destruction at the day of the Lord. Some debate exists over the identity of those to

[the Parousia] here, however, is not immediately clear." Fee argues that this chapter is focused on reminding the Thessalonians of the teaching they received regarding the Parousia in order to press "on them the need for genuinely godly living" (184). Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 176–77; Fee, *Thessalonians*, 186; Morris, *Thessalonians*, 150; Wright (*Paul*, 1291) sees in ch. 5 a reference to Roman empiricism in which Paul dismisses Roman claims. It seems that such an interpretation must be read into the text whereas it is much simpler to take Paul's polemic of knowledge and ignorance as reference to the Thessalonians and their immediate context.

³⁶ In fact, according to Turner et al (*Rediscovering the Social Group*, 71–78), most actions that impact identity salience are unintentional.

³⁷ Porter (*Apostle Paul*, 150) states that part of the purpose of 1 Thess 5 is based on knowledge the Thessalonians have regarding the coming of the Lord and the purpose of that knowledge is to encourage and build up the Thessalonians.

³⁸ Wanamaker (*Thessalonians*, 178) states that the phrase indicates that Paul had already provided instruction regarding the Day of the Lord. See also Morris, *Thessalonians*, 150; Fee, *Thessalonians*, 186, "so this opening clause functions primarily as a way of telling the Thessalonians that what follows is information they have already received"; Bruce, *Thessalonians*, 109.

³⁹ Land ("Paul's Response," 243) writes, "It must be noted that Paul routinely uses οἴδαμεν ὅτι to introduce propositions which both he and his addressees can (or should, in his opinion) accept." Then after listing 30 instances, including 1 Thess 5:2, when Paul uses this phrase goes on to conclude, "All of these uses of οἴδα introduce information either that is already acceptable as common ground or that should (by Paul's reckoning, at least) be accepted as such." See also, Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 178–79; Bruce, *Thessalonians*, 109; Fee, *Thessalonians*, 186–87. Paul is reminding them of something that they should already know, specifically that what they want to know (the timing of the Parousia) is unknowable and can arrive when least expected. Morris, *Thessalonians*, 150–51.

whom Paul was referring.⁴⁰ In the context of the rest of the chapter, it seems more likely that those who were proclaiming peace and safety were the very same non-Christian gentiles who have been persecuting the Christian gentiles at Thessalonica.⁴¹ First, having told the Thessalonian Christians that they already know about the Day of the Lord, it would seem counter intuitive to now suggest that there were some Christians in Thessalonica who did not have that knowledge.⁴² Second, Paul's assertion that "destruction will come on them suddenly" points towards the judgement that he expected Christ to bring on non-Christians at the Parousia.⁴³ Third, the next comparison image that Paul uses (light and darkness) also points toward a Christian and non-Christian contrast. When considered thusly, the contrast Paul makes between the Thessalonian Christians and the non-Christians who were persecuting them powerfully increases the salience of Christian identity. The Christians possess an understanding of the future that the non-Christians do not. They are aware of and prepared for the Day of the Lord and the non-Christians will not be and therefore, the non-Christians, who had been persecuting the Christians in Thessalonica are guaranteed to experience suffering at the Parousia. This kind of contrast would naturally raise the salience of Christian identity as the Thessalonians would have been emboldened to continue and persevere through the temporary hardship, knowing that their oppressors would face justice.

⁴⁰ Malherbe (*Thessalonians*, 287) believes that Paul was arguing against Christians who were prophesying peace. Bruce (*Thessalonians*, 110) also suggests that Paul is referring to "unwatchful disciples" who will be caught off-guard by the coming day of judgement.

⁴¹ Wright (*Paul*, 1291) believes that the peace that is being proclaimed is the peace of Rome and argues that this is a critique of the faith that many had placed in the Roman empire.

⁴² Morris, *Thessalonians*, 153. "Unlike the Christians, the unredeemed world will have no thought of a cataclysmic end to the universe, and they will be rejoicing in a fancied security right up to the very moment of the disaster." Also, Fee, *Thessalonians*, 188: "Here they serve as a reassurance that this (destruction) aspect of the Coming exists strictly for those who are *not* followers of Christ" (emphasis original).

⁴³ Frame, *Thessalonians*, 181.

Similarly, in 1 Thess 5:4–5, Paul goes on to contrast the Thessalonian Christians as light compared to the non-Christian gentiles as darkness. Continuing with the theme of the Parousia, Paul uses the metaphors of light and dark to further emphasise the Thessalonian Christians as having knowledge and understanding so they are able to anticipate the coming Day of the Lord, while the non-Christian gentiles remain in darkness, and therefore will be taken by surprise.⁴⁴ The continued contrast of Christian identity as having knowledge and understanding while being in the light with the non-Christian identity as blissfully ignorant and in darkness serves to build up Christian identity for the Thessalonians, creating a clear distinction between Christian identity group and the non-Christian identity (including all the subordinate identities of each).⁴⁵ “At the same time they strengthen group identity and the group boundaries of those who employ the antitheses to create their own self image.”⁴⁶

The contrastive characteristics offered in 1 Thess 5:6–11 build on and apply the previous contrasts of knowledge and understanding. Beginning with ἀρα οὖν (so then) in 1 Thess 5:6, Paul indicates that what followed is directly linked to the previous verses.⁴⁷ Using a number of hortatory subjunctives, Paul builds on the foundation of the previous contrasts by calling the Thessalonian Christians to live and act in a way that continues to be in contrast with the non-Christian gentiles in their community. Later, I will discuss the specific actions or behaviours that Paul pinpoints; for now I will focus on the fact of the contrast itself which employs the negative images sleeping and drunkenness in

⁴⁴ Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 181; Fee, *Thessalonians*, 192–93.

⁴⁵ Meeks (*First*, 94–96) discusses the impact that in-group/out-group contrasts have in the formation and reinforcement of identity.

⁴⁶ Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 181.

⁴⁷ Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 183–84; Fee, *Thessalonians*, 193; Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 295. Thrall (*Greek Particles*, 10) highlights this combination as providing “an emphatically inferential connective” emphasizing the connection of the following clause to the preceding clause.

darkness and night and the positive images of wakefulness and sobriety in the light of day.⁴⁸ As Fee states, “The point of the contrast is straightforward: Live as believers in Christ in your city, and do so in stark contrast to your pagan neighbors who do not know him.”⁴⁹ This exhortation to live differently from those who were actively persecuting them serves to raise the salience of Christian identity. A similar contrast occurs in 1 Thess 4:13, where Paul contrasts the grieving process of those in Christian identity with *λοιποὶ* (the rest). The primary contrast in this verse centres on the idea that “the rest” (that is non-Christian, Old Humanity) do not have hope in the face of death.⁵⁰ And so, with this single clause Paul presents a significant contrast that illuminates the differences between the two identities in relation to one of the most profound experiences shared by all humanity: Death. Because of Christian identity, the Thessalonians had a hope beyond death that their non-Christian opponents did not, and that reality would not only encourage them in their grief for the dead but also in their continued living Christian identity during hard times.⁵¹

The final contrast that Paul presents is the contrast between the salvation experienced by those in Christian identity and the wrath experienced by those outside Christian identity. In the midst of the suffering endured at the hands of the unbelievers

⁴⁸ The terms *καθεύδωμεν* (asleep), *μεθυσκόμενοι* (drunk), *γρηγορῶμεν* (awake), *νήφωμεν* (sober) are likely intended to be metaphorical here, contrasting the diligence of being awake/aware and sober/mindful and therefore prepared for the Day of the Lord with the unpreparedness of being asleep or drunk. Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 295–97.

⁴⁹ Fee, *Thessalonians*, 194.

⁵⁰ Wanamaker (*Thessalonians*, 167–68) asserts that Paul likely did not believe that the “rest of humanity” had no concept of the afterlife, but rather, having rejected the gospel of Christ, they were hopeless in respect to the coming Day of the Lord and judgement. This view is supported as Paul goes on to develop the contrast of salvation and judgement through the rest of the chapter.

⁵¹ Malherbe (*Thessalonians*, 264–365) rightly points out that Paul’s use of *οἱ λοιποὶ* (“the rest”) does not refer to (non-Christian) gentiles only, but also (non-Christian) Judeans. This emphasises the idea that Paul did not see Christian identity in opposition with the ethnic/racial identities of Judean/gentile but rather as a new (redeemed) humanity identity that stands in direct contrast to “the rest” of humanity; that is, all the identity groups that continue to exist in the old human identity.

Paul highlights the superiority of Christian identity, based on the salvation experienced through Christ. In 1 Thess 5:9, after drawing the distinction between living out Christian identity by being awake and sober, Paul contrasts the benefit of having received salvation through Jesus Christ with the non-Christian identity as those who have been appointed objects of wrath. Similarly, in 2 Thess 2:10–14, Paul refers to the non-Christian identity group as going to perish, having been deceived into believing a lie, being condemned for believing the lies, whereas the Thessalonian Christian identity is praised as a first fruit offering, loved by the Lord and chosen by God to be saved through faith. This contrast would have had a significant impact on the Thessalonians Christians. Similar comparisons exist in both the Galatian and Corinthian texts but with significantly different purposes and impact—specifically, deterring improper adoption of the Judean identity for the Galatians and encouraging the rejection old human identity norms for the Corinthians. The Thessalonians were reminded of the benefits of Christian identity in order to encourage them as they suffered for their Christian identity.

Behaviour

The behavioural factors that Paul highlights in 1 and 2 Thessalonians serve to encourage differentiation from their Non-Christian gentile contemporaries, while also seeking to influence the Thessalonians in their treatment of outgroup members. While discussion of rites and rituals is limited, discussion of the group norms and the treatment of ingroup and outgroup members follow similar patterns to the Galatian and Corinthian letters.

Rites and Rituals

The Thessalonian letters lack the specific references to baptism and the Lord's supper that we find in Galatians and the Corinthian letters. It is possible that his discussion of "those who sleep" may refer to or be applied to burial rituals. Some believe that the absence of references to baptism or communion reflects an early date for the Thessalonian letters and that such ritualistic boundary distinctions such as entry rites (baptism) and community celebrations were not well established.⁵² In the present thesis, I suggest that a better answer lies in the situational nature of the Pauline epistles. If the Thessalonians had succeeded in adopting Christian identity in a way that pleased Paul, then it is safe to assume that he had no need to remind them of the rituals that differentiated Christian identity. Instead, Paul addresses one ritualistic rite that was a concern for the Thessalonians: death and funerals.⁵³

Paul's discussion of "those who sleep" in 1 Thess 4:13–18 contributes to the salience of Christian identity beyond the simple comparison between Christian identity group and the non-Christian identities discussed earlier. Many scholars have recognized the concern the Thessalonian Christians had for those who had died before the Parousia.⁵⁴ While Paul's answer addresses the concerns regarding what happens or will happen to those who have already died, it also provides additional support for the formation of Christian identity. As Ascough points out, burial rights often played a

⁵² Cf. Connell, "Clothing," 139–40. In contrast, Boring (*I & II Thessalonians*, 26) states, "there is every reason to believe that the eucharistic tradition Paul was establishing in Corinth at the same time he was writing 1 Thessalonians had already been established in Thessalonica when the congregation there was begun a few months earlier."

⁵³ Even in relation to death and the funeral rites themselves, Paul does not make specific comment on how the Christian identity group should remember their dead.

⁵⁴ Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 263–64; Fee, *Thessalonians*, 165–66; Morris, *Thessalonians*, 136; Bruce, *Thessalonians*, 96; Weima, *1-2 Thessalonians*, 310–14.

significant role in the formation of community and identity among different associations within the Roman Empire.⁵⁵ The burial rites along with the gathering of the community in order to celebrate the life of the deceased became “an important aspect of this social construction.”⁵⁶ Yet Paul does not provide any specific instructions regarding what rites to perform or how to perform them except to say, “encourage one another with these words” (4:18).

Ascough also brings out another aspect of burial rites that is relevant to the current discussion. Having joined Christian identity group, some of the Thessalonians would have had to give up or, at the least, significantly alter their burial practices.⁵⁷ This would have served to further isolate the Thessalonian Christians from their non-Christian counterparts. Paul’s reminder of the Parousia and the resurrection of the dead indicates to the Thessalonians that “the dead in Christ” are still a part of Christian identity and that identity continues to bind them together even after death and beyond the Parousia.

Group Norms

Paul holds the Thessalonians to the same ethical standards that he held the rest of his communities. He presents certain ethical standards as contrary to Christian identity and insists on others as essential.⁵⁸ In contrast to the other two communities, Paul commends the Thessalonians for their conformity to the ethical standards of Christian identity.

⁵⁵ Ascough, “A Question.”

⁵⁶ Ascough, “A Question,” 519.

⁵⁷ Ascough, “A Question,” 525. In fact, this provides a better explanation of what Paul may have meant by, “so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope” (1 Thess 4:13). Paul was instructing the Thessalonians not to practice the funeral rites of those who do not have the hope of salvation in Christ, though there is some doubt as to whether *λυπήσθε* (grieve) can be used in this fashion.

⁵⁸ Fredriksen, “Judaizing”; Fredriksen, “Paul’s Letter”; Fredriksen, “Law-Free.”

One of the primary ethical standards that contribute to Christian identity is the rejection of idol worship.⁵⁹ In the Thessalonian correspondence, Paul mentions idol worship only in 1 Thess 1:9 where he commends the Thessalonians for their adoption of Christian identity and the prototypes they became for other Christian groups in Macedonia and Achaia. The Thessalonians had gained a reputation among the other Christian groups for having turned away from idol worship and turning to God. This reputation provides proof to Paul that the Thessalonian Christians successfully adopted Christian identity.

Another aspect of Christian identity relates to sexual purity. In 1 Thess 4:1–8 Paul reminds the Thessalonians of the importance of remaining sexually pure. In v. 5, Paul differentiates the sexual purity of Christian identity with the “passionate lust” of the “ἔθνη who do not know God.” The NIV chooses to translate ἔθνη as “pagans” which is anachronistic and it is unclear as to why the term pagan is preferred here as opposed to gentiles or nations. It is better to understand Paul to have used the term in the sense it was typically used by first century Judeans to refer to the nations (or gentiles), who were not Judeans.⁶⁰ In this reading the important information regarding these gentiles comes in their description as gentiles “who do not know God.” This designation creates a differentiation of identity between the Thessalonian Christians as Christian gentiles with those gentiles who do not know God. While they still maintain a common identity as gentiles, the superordinate Christian and non-Christian identities are more prominent which must result in differing ethics relating to sexuality. In his assessment of the

⁵⁹ Paul addresses idol worship negatively in 1 Cor 5:9–11; 6:9–16; 8; 10:6–10, 18–21; 12:2; 2 Cor 6:14–16; Gal 5:19–21; Eph 5:5; Col 3:5.

⁶⁰ Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 154.

Thessalonians in this regard, Paul recognizes that they are already living out the instructions he gave them previously, and calls them to increase their efforts. The Thessalonians were successful in adopting this aspect of Christian identity, and Paul encourages them to raise their commitment to it in differentiation from the non-Christian Gentiles who were opposing them.

The Thessalonian Christians succeeded in adopting most of the ethical standards of Christian identity. They had turned away from idols to such an extent that they became prototypes for other Christian groups. They succeeded in following Paul's initial instructions regarding sexual purity and Paul seems to anticipate further success in that regard. I now turn to Paul's instructions regarding the treatment of ingroup and outgroup members.

Treatment of Ingroup and Outgroup Members

Boundary markers impact how people interact with others. As might be expected, Paul encourages positive treatment of ingroup members by placing restrictions on the Thessalonians. Specifically, he prohibits them from taking financial advantage of other members of Christian identity group (1 Thess 4:6), as well as commanding them to "encourage one another and build each other up" (1 Thess 5:11) and to "always do what is good" for each other (1 Thess 5:15). Paul also encourages prototypicality by exhorting the Thessalonians to show proper respect and honour for insiders who model proper ingroup behaviour by working hard, providing care for their fellow Christians and holding positions of authority (1 Thess 5:12). In v. 13, he encourages living in peace within the ingroup. Even in all of these admonitions, he states in 1 Thess 5:11 "just as you are doing" showing that he recognizes that, in contrast to the Corinthians, the

Thessalonians were living out this aspect of Christian identity as well.⁶¹

Even when disciplining the idle and disruptive insiders, Paul instructs the Thessalonians not to treat them like an enemy (outsider) but to warn them like a brother or sister (2 Thess 3:15). Even when he instructs the Thessalonians to not associate with the idle and disruptive (1 Thess 3:6), they are still not to be treated like outsiders. It is impossible to reconstruct exactly how that distinction would have been lived out by the Thessalonians, however, the fact remains that Paul presents the distinction. Insiders who were to be shunned by the ingroup were not regarded as outsiders.⁶²

Aside from the statement in 1 Thess 3:6, Paul does not comment directly regarding outsiders to the Thessalonian Christians. Instead, 1 Thess 5:15 provides an important understanding for how Paul wanted the Thessalonians to treat the outsiders in Thessalonica. The verse opens with Paul stating that the Thessalonians should not repay evil for evil. It is likely that Paul is referring to the mistreatment they were receiving at the hands of the outsiders, and the command to not repay evil for evil would have been counter intuitive and likely counter cultural in a setting in which identity group differentiation is prevalent. Also, the command to do what is good for each other at the end of the verse is followed up with *καὶ εἰς πάντα* (and for all) which includes the outsiders. Thus, even while he employs ingroup/outgroup differentiation in order to advocate care for ingroup members, Paul views outsiders as a group of people who are

⁶¹ Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 190. "Group control and pressure are generally decisive in regulating the behaviour of members of a group . . . In verse 11 Paul merely seeks to affirm the Thessalonians in their practice of mutual exhortation and edification, as the final words of the verse, *καθὼς καὶ ποιεῖτε* ('just as you also are doing'), demonstrate."

⁶² Perhaps the distinction lies in Paul's comments in 1 Cor 5:9–13, where he instructs the Corinthians to not associate with anyone who is an insider who is sexually immoral yet to freely associate with outsiders who are socially immoral. See Chapter 6.

not to be treated negatively but rather with care and concern.⁶³

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter I have argued that the Thessalonians succeeded in adopting Christian identity and that Paul wrote the Thessalonian letters to encourage them in their living out Christian identity even in the midst of opposition and persecution. The Thessalonians followed the prototypical behaviours of Paul and his companions even to the point of becoming prototypes for others to follow. Paul provides contrasts between the positives of Christian identity and the negative evaluation of the non-Christian identities. In presenting the boundary markers of Christian identity group, Paul reminds the Thessalonians of the hope they have in Christ and the impact it should have in their mourning over the dead. He praises the Thessalonians for their reputation of having turned away from idols and commends them for their commitment to sexual purity while encouraging them to continue to improve in this area. He encourages the Thessalonians to treat other members of Christian identity with honour and respect, ensuring to do good for each other, yet does not call on them to mistreat or retaliate against the outsiders. The Christian ingroup in Thessalonica, though experiencing opposition and suffering, would have been encouraged by Paul's letters, that they were doing well in living Christian identity and would have been encouraged to continue to persevere and take further steps to differentiate themselves from the outsiders in their community.

⁶³ Barclay, "Thessalonica and Corinth," 54.

CHAPTER 5: FOOLISHNESS IN GALATIA

The Thessalonians succeeded in recognizing the need to transform their subordinate identities as they abandoned their old human identity and adopted Christian identity. In contrast, though the Galatians recognized the need to transform their subordinate gentile identities, they foolishly sought to transform them into a Judean subordinate identity.¹ In Galatians, Paul's prototypes, benefits and behaviours point the Galatians towards the sufficiency of Christian identity and their inclusion as transformed Christian gentiles.²

Prototypes: The Futility of the Judean Identity

In Galatians Paul presents prototypicality through three figures representing three different points on the spectrum. Paul presents himself as a prototype of Christian

¹ Many scholars have debated the situation in the Galatian churches and the purpose of Paul's letter. Betz (*Galatians*, 24–25) argues that Galatians is both a letter of "self-apology" in which Paul defends himself against his accusers as well as a "magical letter" that calls down blessings and or curses on the reader. Smiles (*The Gospel*, 7–14) believes that Galatians was written by Paul to counter the teaching of Jewish Christians that gentiles had to follow the Jewish law including circumcision. Hall ("The Rhetorical Outline," 38) believes that Paul wrote the letter to convince the Galatians to reject his opponents' gospel in favour of his own. Fredriksen ("Judaism," 255–60) offers a slightly different interpretation by suggesting that the Judean Christians' requirement of gentile circumcision was a new development in both Judaism and Christianity. She argues that Judean Christians had become disillusioned over the delay of the Parousia and the lack of Judean response to the gospel and saw gentile conversion to Judaism or a form of Judean-Christianity as the solution.

² Some of the behavioural markers and rituals promoted by Paul have a Judean origin. See Fredriksen, "Judaizing." Esler ("Keeping It in the Family," 174) states, "Paul's gentile converts are being exposed to a powerful and attractive Israelite group identity that is largely summed up in the notion of 'righteousness', which I consider to mean, on his opponents' lips, something like 'the blessed and morally exalted status of being a faithful Israelite'." And "In response to this challenge Paul seeks to promote the positive identity of his congregations and to devalue that of the Israelite out-group using strategies which can be interpreted in terms of Tajfel's 'social creativity' and 'social change', and the associated process of stereotyping, discussed above."

identity as he exhorts the Galatians to *Γίνεσθε ὡς ἐγώ* ('become like me') in Gal 4:12.³ In contrast, Paul presents Peter as an antitype who significantly differs from the prototypical Christian identity. Finally, he presents Abraham as an archetype of Christian identity in Gal 3.⁴

Prototypical Rejection of Non-Christian Judean Standards

Paul recognizes that the Galatians were feeling pressure from some within Christian identity to adopt more Judean practices. Part of the issue, based Paul's encounter with Peter in Gal 2, was the exclusive practices of some Judeans within Christian identity.⁵ By setting themselves apart from the gentiles in Christian identity, they were communicating a superior status within the ingroup. Some may have even been pressuring the Galatians directly to adopt circumcision as well as other Judean practices. In response, Paul presents himself as a prototype who is no longer concerned with pleasing his non-Christian Judean contemporaries as an effort to influence the Galatians to also reject attempting to live up to Judean principles as a means to live up to the standards of Christian identity.

Paul actually begins the letter with a statement that emphasises his lack of concern for how others view him and his mission. By stating in Gal 1:1 that he was not

³ Dodd, *Paul's Paradigmatic 'I'*, 15.

⁴ I choose to identify Abraham here has an archetype in order to differentiate between a prototypical exemplar who is typically a current member of the ingroup and an historical figure who is presented as an ideal representation of the ingroup member.

⁵ McKnight ("I Am Church," 221) argues that Peter, as a (non-Christian) Judean, had lived as if there had been a wall separating gentiles and Judeans; a metaphorical wall based on the wall separating gentiles from the inner courts of the Jerusalem temple. After adopting Christian identity, Peter recognized that the division between Christian Judeans and Christian gentiles no longer existed and that he could worship with and eat with Christian gentiles. By choosing to separate himself again from gentiles, Peter was rebuilding what he had destroyed (2:18).

“sent from men or by a man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father,” he immediately set himself as a Christian prototype who does not give in to pressure from other people.⁶ This point is emphasised in the rhetorical questions presented in 1:10.⁷ In v. 10, Paul concludes that if he were “*still* trying to please people, [he] would not be a [slave] of Christ.”⁸ The adverb “still” indicates that, in the past (as a non-Christian Judean), Paul did try to please people, but now has given that up because of Christian identity’s focus on pleasing Christ.⁹ Paul elaborates on this rejection of the non-Christian Judean identity in his autobiographical section in Gal 1:13–16. In these verses Paul reminds the Galatians of his achievements in Judaism specifically, his rapid advancement among the ranks of the Pharisees and his zealousness for the traditions of Judaism. He was likely earning high praise and esteem among his fellow Judeans. Yet, when he encountered Christ, his desire to please his fellow Judeans ended. It is implied that his attempts to be the prototypical Judean also ended and instead he began to seek after pleasing God through Christian identity. In these verses, Paul presents a prototypical example in which he rejected the urge to please out-group Judeans in favour of serving Christ.

Paul further emphasizes the prototypical rejection of pleasing Judeans through the way he refers to the Jerusalem apostles in 1:18—2:10. While Paul recognizes Peter’s significance among the Jerusalem Apostles,¹⁰ his report of waiting three years before

⁶ Koptak, “Rhetorical Identification,” 161–62.

⁷ See Tsang (*From Slaves*, 63–74) for the connection between 1:1 and 1:10. Also, see Koptak, “Rhetorical Identification,” 162–63.

⁸ Though the NIV translates δούλος as “servant,” I argue for a more consistent translation of “slave” for δούλος throughout most of Paul’s writings.

⁹ Barclay, *Paul*, 356. For the significance of being a slave of Christ on Christian identity, see Tsang, *From Slaves*.

¹⁰ Dunn, *Neither Jew*, 731. “By his recourse to Peter, Paul in effect acknowledged Peter’s role as leader of the first disciples of Jesus, and therefore, presumably, the best resource for Paul’s re-education regarding Jesus’ mission.”

visiting Jerusalem combined with his continued separation from the Jerusalem Apostles until returning fourteen years later, is an indication to the Galatian Christians that Paul did not look up to, or even seek the approval of these recognized Judean Christian leaders.¹¹ Even so, Paul's trip to Jerusalem to meet with these leaders did not result in a change to his gospel, nor did it require the gentiles (Titus) with him to be circumcised.¹² Even these esteemed Judean Apostles did not require gentiles to adopt Judean practices in order to become part of Christian identity.

When read in light of SIT and the use of prototypes, Paul's encounter with Peter is particularly significant. In Paul's representation of the events, not only does Paul present himself as a prototype, but Peter is also presented as an antitype. As the prototypical example, Paul defies the wishes of the Judean men "from James" and even confronted Peter over his hypocrisy. In so doing, Paul portrays Peter as an antitype, who has deviated from the norms and expectations of the ingroup. As Hodge argues, "Paul presents two models for Judean teachers of gentiles: act like Judeans or acting like gentiles."¹³ While this is an accurate description of part of what Paul was doing in vv. 11–16, it does not capture the entirety of Paul's argument. Hodge's presentation gives the impression that Paul saw these as two equally viable models, however, Paul's own words that he "opposed him [Peter/Cephas] to his face because he stood condemned" (v. 11) indicates his negative assessment of Peter's actions. While the two positions present

¹¹ Barclay, *Paul*, 361–62. Paul, of course, was also a Judean. In this instance, the emphasis is on their mission to bring the gospel to other Judeans and to lead those Judeans who have responded to the gospel and joined the broader Christian identity group. Also, see Koptak, "Rhetorical Identification," 162–63.

¹² Koptak, "Rhetorical Identification," 165. By mentioning that Titus was not required to be circumcised, Paul invited the Galatians to identify with Titus and his prototypical role as a gentile Christian.

¹³ Hodge, "Apostle," 278.

two different approaches to gentile Christians, Peter's decision to separate himself from the gentiles was decidedly un-Christian to Paul.¹⁴ The issue at hand is the treatment of gentile Christians. Peter, and the other Judeans from James, were treating gentile Christians as outgroup members in their refusal to eat with them.¹⁵ Presumably, this kind of behaviour by Judean Christians was also taking place in Galatia and influencing the gentile Christians in Galatia to adopt Judean practices in order to be included as part of the ingroup. By highlighting his conflict with Peter, Paul presents himself as a prototypical Christian who accepts and includes gentile Christians, as gentiles, in opposition to Peter's antitypical exclusivity. The account, understood in this way, emphasises the equal standing of Judean and gentile Christians in the Christian identity group. Gentiles did not have to adopt Judean rituals and identity markers to be accepted as Christians.

Paul's Prototypical Subordination of Subordinate Identities

The primary focus of Paul's prototypical behaviour as presented in Galatians is that he chose to subordinate his Judean identity to Christian identity. He claims to have stopped trying to fulfill the law. He rejects any attempt to attain righteousness through the rituals and rites of the Judean identity as he realizes that they are insufficient in comparison to Christian identity (2:15–21). He begins this section by pointing out the stark contrast

¹⁴ By "un-Christian," I mean that his behaviour stood outside of what is appropriate for Christian identity group.

¹⁵ For a convincing account of what was taking place, see Nanos, "At Stake." Nanos argues that the issue was not related to dietary restrictions but rather the simple practice of choosing not to eat with gentile Christians, even when proper dietary considerations had been made (296). The Judeans from James opposed such extreme measures of inclusion with gentiles and drew Peter and others into their exclusionary practice (300–301). See also McKnight, "I Am Church," 220–25.

between himself (and Peter) as Judeans by birth and not “gentile sinners.” In this, he was comparing their previous non-Christian subordinate identities. Paul and Peter began life outside of Christian identity as Judeans whereas the Galatians would have been considered gentile sinners by the Judeans.¹⁶ He went on to indicate that they, as Judeans, became justified through faith, and not through works of the law.¹⁷ They no longer view the law as a means by which they could achieve justification, but rather that they had received that justification through Christ. It is in this context that Paul states, “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me” (2:20).¹⁸ Paul wants the Galatians to know that he (along with all the rest of the Judean Christians) have died to the law and that they are no longer seeking to fulfill the law as a means of achieving righteousness. The Judean identity, and the accompanying commitment to Torah observance in order to achieve righteousness became subordinate to Christian identity. As a result, the very behaviour and practices that once separated Judeans from gentiles no longer had any significance for Paul; their common Christian identity was superior to the divisions of their subordinate identities.

In fact, Paul attributes the persecution that he was experiencing to his commitment to Christian identity over the Judean identity (5:11). Yet, it does not appear that Paul completely abandoned his Judean identity. He still participated in Judean rites

¹⁶ Paul did not consider Christian gentiles to be “gentile sinners,” but would have considered their non-Christian counterparts to be slaves to sin. His intent is not to contrast the Judeans with the Galatians as Christian gentiles but their previous identities as non-Christian gentiles. Esler, *Galatians*, 143.

¹⁷ McKnight, “I Am Church,” 222. I follow McKnight here who argues that Paul used the phrase “works of the law” to refer to “those practices that [Judeans] observed, on the basis of Torah, that intentionally segregated them from gentiles.”

¹⁸ McKnight (“I Am Church,” 221) argues that, “This passage is about the [Judean] experience, or perhaps better yet, the consequences for [Judeans] who are now part of the Messiah’s work.” Paul purposefully indicated that Christian Judeans, who had previously lived for the law and sought to fulfill the law as a means of righteousness, died to the law through Christ and now lived a new righteous life through Christ.

and rituals (as depicted in Acts 21) yet, they had become subordinate to the influence and significance of Christian identity. He no longer viewed the Judean identity as his primary identity, nor did he consider the distinction between Judean and gentile identities as significant in relation to Christian identity.

Abraham as an Archetype of Christian Identity

As Esler has pointed out, while many scholars have written about the role of Abraham in Gal 3, few have recognized the significance that being a descendent of Abraham held for Judeans in the first century.¹⁹ Building from Barth's theory on ethnic identity construction and the influential work of Hutchinson and Smith, Esler recognizes that the Judean identity is founded, in part, upon "a myth of common ancestry."²⁰ Abraham, as the common ancestor or forefather of the Judean identity would have been considered a prototype or possibly even an archetype of the Judean identity. Judeans throughout the empire would have viewed Abraham as an archetype, who set an example for all Judeans to follow. Whether or not Paul's opponents utilized Abraham as a prototype for Christian identity, Paul did.²¹ In using Abraham in this way, Paul accomplished two important tasks relating to the Galatians and Christian identity.

By appropriating a decidedly Judean archetype for use within Christian identity,

¹⁹ Esler utilizes collective memory theory along with SIT and ethnic theories to determine the role that Abraham played in the collective Judean mindset arguing that Paul's opponents in Galatia were using the traditions surrounding Abraham as a central figure for the Judean ethnic identity to persuade the gentile Christians to become *ethnic Judeans through circumcision*. This approach has some merit and deserves further investigation. For the purposes of this study, however, I am limiting my focus to the role of Abraham as a prototype for Christian identity. Esler, "Paul's Contestation," 25.

²⁰ Esler, "Paul's Contestation," 26. Note that "myth" here refers to the fact that the accuracy of a genealogical link to the ancestor is irrelevant.

²¹ Appeals to Abraham were a common rhetorical tactic among first-century Judeans. Cf. Land ("Torah Observance," 29–32), who argues that James references Abraham in response to a non-Christian Judean interlocuter who objects to James' insistence that "Jesus-faith" is essential for Judeans.

Paul diminishes the extent to which the Galatian Christians saw the Judean Christian identity as unique or superior. Esler points out that one of the key aspects of Judean identity was the common ancestry of Abraham.²² Being a descendent of Abraham and having Abraham as an archetype of the Judean identity provided certain perceived benefits to the Judean identity group, even within the Christian identity group. By appropriating Abraham as an archetype of Christian identity and informing the Galatian Christians that their faith in Christ, based on Abraham's archetypal faith in God, makes them descendants of Abraham (3:7), Paul eliminates the possibility that the Galatians would see any advantage for the Judean subordinate identity based on Abrahamic descent. According to Paul, in Gal 3, the gentile Christians in Galatia were equally descendants of Abraham as the Judean Christians.

Paul also ensures that the Galatians view Abraham's faith as a prototypical example of Christian identity. Paul said that Abraham's righteousness and the blessing promised to him and through him and his seed was based on faith and not fulfillment of the law which came 430 years later (3:17). This faith-based righteousness is not just prototypical but is archetypal (that is, it is a foundational trait) of Christian identity. Instead of relying on the covenant and circumcision, whether to achieve righteousness or any other perceived benefits or blessings associated with the Judean Christian identity, Paul exhorts the Galatians to follow archetypal Abrahamic faith and to reject the notion of following Judean covenantal practices. The gentile Christians, by virtue of their faith in Christ, were children of Abraham and were therefore heirs of Abraham's promises and blessings.

²² Esler, "Paul's Contestation," 29.

It is in this context that Paul writes, “There is neither Jew nor gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (3:28). In the current context, this verse affirms the existence of distinct subordinate identities within Christian identity but also seeks to limit, or even prevent the effect that these subordinate identities have on the Christian ingroup.²³ Paul is not denying that these different social categories exist. He does not deny that there are men and women in Christian identity. Nor does he deny that slaves and free or Judeans and gentiles persist within Christian identity. As I have already shown, he promotes the existence of gentiles as gentiles distinct from Judeans within Christian identity. Yet, at the same time, the unity here goes beyond simple salvation. Paul is not simply stating the fact that people from all these different distinct social groups can find salvation in Christ. Up to this point, Paul’s primary focus has been the equality of the differing identity groups within Christian identity. Gentile Christians participate fully in Christian identity without having to become Judeans. Their faith in Christ designates them as full children of Abraham and full children of God (3:26). The same, therefore, should also be applied to the other social identities presented by Paul in v. 28. Slave and free are equal participants in Christian identity. Slaves do not need to become free in order to find significance or privilege within Christian identity. Similarly, women do not need to

²³ McKnight, (“I Am Church,” 225) states,

The [Judean] identity, and we could mirror this discussion with the new identity of a gentile because it, too, was reformed in Christ, is now formed through the death and resurrection of the faithful Israelite, Messiah Jesus. It is not that [Judeans] ceased being [Judeans] or that Romans ceased being Romans or anything of the sort. But what is different is that *the primary identity*, or what one might call *the ontology of identity*, shifted. From being [Judean] or Roman, one saw oneself as ‘in Christ’ and ‘in the church.’ That is, Paul became an ‘in Christ’ or ecclesial [Judean], or if you prefer, a [Judean] Christian or [Judean] ecclesial person. One’s Judaism and one’s Roman identities were now given a new orientation so that one’s standing in Christ and in the church became the primary identity that reformed one’s Judaism or Roman cultural outlook. (emphasis original)

become men in order to share in the same rights and privileges of Christian Identity. These ideas would have been significant within the culture of Paul's world. Slaves were certainly viewed as inferior and lacking certain privileges and benefits in comparison to those who were free. Similar things can be said in relation to the differences between women and men. The Greco-Roman culture of Paul's day certainly displayed favour toward men over women, and Paul's statement in 3:28 would have significantly challenged and revised that perspective within Christian identity.²⁴

Comparing the Galatians to the Prototypes

In contrast to the prototypes presented, Paul was critical of the Galatians. Specifically, he criticizes the Galatians' commitment to Christian identity, suggesting that, by adopting the practices of the Judean identity, they were actually abandoning their Christian identity. Paul uses two primary means to criticize the Galatians and their commitment to Christian identity. In 3:1–5 he uses rhetorical questions to emphasize the ridiculousness of the Galatians' actions, while in 4:8–12 he uses the metaphor of slavery to present the same kind of evaluation.

Paul begins this section by addressing the Galatians directly as, "foolish Galatians" (3:1). It is important to note that Paul addresses the Galatians directly and not any so-called opponents.²⁵ This indicates that Paul's concern is for the behaviour of the Galatians themselves. They are the ones who are being foolish and acting contrary to the prototypical Christian identity. In these five verses, Paul criticizes the Galatians'

²⁴ Much more can be said on the subject of equality of slaves and free, as well as women and men within Christian Identity. However, the primary purpose of this thesis is restricted to Paul's view of Christian identity in relation to the ethnic identities of Judean and gentile.

²⁵ Bruce, *Epistle*, 147.

commitment to Christian identity. The Galatians are abandoning (or are considering abandoning) their Christian gentile identity in favour of a type of Christian Judean identity. Paul's rhetorical questions in Gal 3:2, 3 and 5 communicate that the Galatians have received the Holy Spirit and seen miracles happen at their conversion to Christian identity. The Holy Spirit and the miracles associated with receiving the Spirit are essential benefits of Christian identity and Paul reminds the Galatians that they had received these benefits by expressing the same prototypical faith that defines his own conduct as well as that of Abraham. He contrasts this fact with the foolishness of attempting to now live according to the law of the Old Covenant.²⁶

In creating the contrast, Paul highlights key elements of Christian identity as well as the Judean identity. For Paul, Christian identity is defined by the reception of the Holy Spirit and the miracles that accompanied it.²⁷ In Paul's view, the Spirit, and living by the Spirit, is all that is needed to live Christian identity (5:16–18).²⁸ Paul recognizes that the Galatians were trying to fulfill the ethical requirements of Christian identity, and, assuming these good intentions, he informs the Galatians that they have already received everything they need to live out Christian identity as gentiles when they received the Spirit. In contrast, the Galatians attempt to fulfill the ethical requirements of Christian identity by adopting specifically Judean practices was foolishness.

Not only does Paul consider the adoption of Judean practices by gentile Christians to be foolishness, he also equates it with slavery. In Gal 4:8–12, Paul equates the Galatians' experience as non-Christian gentiles with slavery. Paul believes that their

²⁶ Bruce, *Epistle*, 151–52.

²⁷ Esler, *Galatians*, 52–53.

²⁸ Bruce, *Epistle*, 243.

commitment to serving the gods and idols of the day is slavery to false gods and possibly to the “demonic forces of legalism” behind these false gods.²⁹ By adopting Christian identity and turning away from idol worship as a mark of the non-Christian identity, the Galatians became free men and women. When they began to adopt the practices of the Judean identity, they began to abandon their freedom for a new kind of enslavement. The Galatians have been set free from ritualistic observances based around specific days and seasons, yet they have begun to attach themselves to a new set of ritualistic observances based on a new set of specific days and seasons (4:9–10). To some, it may appear as if Paul is comparing identities of equal position and weight in the slavery analogy, that is to say that Paul viewed the gentile and Judean identities to be similar in nature with and therefore in competition with Christian identity. Such interpretations view Christian identity as an ethnic or racial identity that functions on the same level as the gentile and Judean identities. In this interpretation, Paul would have equated Christian identity with freedom and contrasting it with both the gentile and Judean identities as slavery. Within the current paradigm, however, the slave identity is represented by the old human identity. Thus, whether referring to the Galatians’ former identities as non-Christian gentiles or to the non-Christian Judeans of the day, Paul would have identified both groups as part of Old Humanity, and therefore as slaves. Thus, in Rom 6:19–20 Paul reminds the Romans that they were once slaves to sin, and in Rom 7:14 and 21 he makes clear that the Judeans, who had received the law, were also slaves to sin.³⁰ This is because both groups were part of the old human or non-Christian superordinate identity group. Upon entering Christian identity, the Galatians,

²⁹ Bruce, *Epistle*, 203.

³⁰ Esler, *Conflict*, 238–42.

as gentiles, would have been set free from the slavery of their Old Humanity, even while retaining their subordinate identity as gentiles.

To say that Paul is not pleased with the Galatians' efforts to adopt a Judean identity is an understatement. Where Paul celebrated the success of the Thessalonians he condemns the Galatians as foolish and his rhetorical questions in Gal 3:1–5 combined with the analogy to slavery in 4:8–12 indicate that he found their efforts to adopt a Judean identity inexcusable and reprehensible. The Galatians have already received everything they needed by entering Christian identity group as gentiles. They were, in effect, making it as though Paul's missionary work was in vain, contrary to the affirmation Paul had already received from the Jerusalem apostles (Gal 2:2–3). In Paul's mind, the Galatians were abandoning all the benefits that they had already received as part of Christian identity by seeking to adopt a Judean identity.

Benefits of Christian Identity

What were the benefits that the Galatians so foolishly abandoned? In contrast to the Thessalonian letters, where Paul focuses primarily on future benefits, Galatians focuses on benefits that they have already received as part of Christian identity. He reminds the Galatians that they already have freedom in Christ, they are already children of God, and they already have the Holy Spirit. In fact, Paul warns the Galatians that their current course of action (i.e. trying to adopt aspects of the Judean identity) is placing these current benefits at risk. As a result, Paul informs the Galatians that their current identity as gentile Christians contains all the benefits of Christian identity and that any attempt to try and add the Judean identity actually forfeited some of those benefits.

While the comparisons found in the Thessalonian letters present the benefits of Christian identity in contrast to outgroup non-Christian gentiles, in Galatians, Paul compares the benefits the Galatians have as Christian gentiles over the non-Christian Judeans.³¹ One of the most significant benefits that Paul highlights is the benefit of being considered a descendent of Abraham and being blessed alongside of Abraham in 3:7–9. The Galatians' faith, which brought them into Christian identity, identifies them as children of Abraham.³² They are Abraham's true descendants and as a result are blessed alongside of Abraham. By implication, non-Christian Judeans could not consider themselves descendants of Abraham because of their lack of faith. Not only that, but Paul insists that these same non-Christian Judeans, who continued to seek justification through Torah observance, were under a curse (3:10–14). This contrast of blessed and cursed communicates a significant distinction and benefit to the Galatians Christian identity in contrast to the non-Christian Judean identity, thus raising the significance and salience of their Christian identity.

Similarly, Paul compares the Galatians as children of God (3:26) with non-Christian Judeans who were under the care of a legal guardian (3:23–25).³³ As Longenecker indicates, "The focus here is on the supervisory function of the law, the inferior status of the one under such supervision, and the temporary nature of such a situation in the course of salvation history."³⁴ The non-Christian Judeans, as children needing a guardian, have a lesser status compared to the Christian gentiles who are

³¹ Hansen, *All of You*, 89.

³² Uzukwu, *Unity*, 41.

³³ Esler ("Paul's Contestation," 31) argues that the legal guardian of Paul's day would be considered a positive figure in the life of a child. This guardian had a role to play in protecting the child and ensuring appropriate behaviour until the child grew to become a full and complete heir.

³⁴ Longenecker, *Galatians*, 148.

considered full heirs. The Galatians, as Christian gentiles, already possess the benefits of heirs and any attempt to adopt Judean identity markers put those benefits at risk.

As if to emphasize his point, Paul transitions from comparing non-Christian Judeans to juveniles in need of a guardian to comparing them to slaves in Gal 4:1–7. Paul equates the non-Christian Judean experience with slaves (v. 3), stating that they did not reach maturity until Christ came to redeem them and adopt them as full heirs of God.³⁵ In contrast to this, Paul addresses the Galatians as sons of God who have received the Spirit (v. 6). Paul further illustrates this point in his allegorical interpretation of Abraham's two sons Ishmael and Isaac (4:21–27). In these verses, Paul relates the non-Christian Judeans, who were still governed by the law, with Ishmael (children of the slave woman) and the Christian gentiles with Isaac (the children of the free woman). By reinterpreting the narrative in this way, not only does Paul communicate the benefit of Christian identity as the true freeborn descendants of Abraham, but he also appropriates a key formative identity narrative used by non-Christian Judeans. The reapplication of the Abraham/Isaac narrative serves to further emphasise the idea that the Galatians, as Christian gentiles already possess the benefit of being descendants of Abraham.

As descendants of Abraham, the Galatians also have the significant benefit of the Holy Spirit. The first time that Paul mentions the benefit of the Holy Spirit for the Galatians is in 3:2–3, where the rhetorical question posed in v. 2 implies that the Galatians have already received the Holy Spirit. Later, in Gal 3:10, Paul connects the

³⁵ In 4:1 Paul continues the reference to the law as guardian but quickly transitions into the concept of slavery. His continued use of the first-person plural in v. 3, along with the emphasis on those under the law in vv. 4–5 indicate that he had Judeans in mind.

idea of receiving the same blessing as Abraham, as a descendant of Abraham, and the reception of the Holy Spirit. As Christian gentiles, they already possess the Holy Spirit and Paul informs them that the Holy Spirit is all they needed in order to live out Christian identity (5:16–18).³⁶ The Galatians recognized that their new identity as Christian gentiles meant that there had to be a sharp distinction between them and those still living as non-Christian gentiles.³⁷ While the Galatians saw circumcision and Torah observance as key boundary markers and tools for living according to their new identity, Paul dismisses them as contrary to their identity as Christian gentiles. Paul agrees that the new identities must be differentiated from the former identities (which he describes as life in the flesh), but also proclaims that by receiving the Holy Spirit, the gentiles already have everything they need to live out their Christian identity distinct from their former gentile identities. To ensure that the Galatians got the point, Paul concludes the argument in 5:18 by saying, “But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.” The presence and benefit of the Holy Spirit was not compatible with their attempts at Torah fulfillment. Their identity as Christian gentiles was superior to their attempt at adopting a Judean identity.

Behaviour

The new Christian identity needs to be understood in contrast to the former non-Christian identities, specifically as they are experienced in their Judean and gentile subordinate identities. Whereas Paul did not need to remind the Thessalonians regarding the rites or rituals of Christian identity and praised them for their success in adopting the

³⁶ Longenecker, *Galatians*.

³⁷ Esler, “Family Imagery.” See discussion of rites and rituals below.

ethical norms of the new identity, he does remind the Galatians of the significance of their baptism and presses the Galatians to live by the Spirit in order to fulfil the ethical expectations of Christian identity.

Rites and Rituals

In relation to the rites and rituals of the identities being considered, Paul focuses primarily on what might be considered the entry rites of circumcision and baptism.³⁸ Most of Paul's argument centers around the negative appraisal of circumcision. He first mentions circumcision in Gal 2:3 where he states that the Jerusalem apostles did not require circumcision for Titus, indicating that, at the time, the Jerusalem apostles did not see circumcision as an important initiation rite for Christian gentiles. Following that statement, Paul informs the Galatians that the circumcision issue was first raised by false believers (*ψευδαδελφους*) which indicates his appraisal of those promoting circumcision for Christian gentiles. Such actions are definitive of false believers or fake brothers who are not truly part of the Christian ingroup. Paul also emphasises the Jerusalem apostles' recognition of Paul's ministry to the uncircumcised as equal to that of Peter's to the circumcised (2:7–8).³⁹ All of this introductory material emphasises the fact that Christian gentiles were not required to be circumcised as part of the adoption of their Christian identity.

At the end of the letter, Paul drives the point home further by providing a negative evaluation of circumcision and makes it clear that ingroup gentiles who adopt

³⁸ On the concept of circumcision as an entry rite see Esler, *Galatians*, 72–74.

³⁹ Paul offers his ministry of preaching the gospel to the uncircumcised in direct relation and comparison to Peter's ministry of preaching to the circumcised and in such a way as to equate the two as equally valid and significant.

circumcision run the risk becoming outgroup gentiles. In 5:2 Paul condemns such a possibility by informing them that, if they accept circumcision, “Christ will be of no value to you.” He goes on to say that by adopting the law through circumcision they would be “alienated from Christ” and they would have “fallen away from grace” (5:4). His conclusion in v. 6 declares that “in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.” For the Christian gentiles, circumcision is not only useless it is contrary and harmful to their identity as Christians. Circumcision, as an entry rite of the Judean identity, has no place for gentiles adopting Christian identity. As Hansen argues, “If the precedent were to be set that gentiles must live like [Judeans] for the sake of unity, that capitulation would enshrine the boundary markers of one particular culture as normative for the church.”⁴⁰

In contrast to the insufficient and dangerous entry rite of circumcision, Paul only mentions baptism as an entry rite into Christian identity once in 3:26–29.⁴¹ This passage has rightly been described by Hansen as, “his (Paul’s) central proclamation . . . of the believers’ singular identity in Christ.”⁴² By contrasting circumcision and baptism in this way, I do not intend to relate them as entry rites into equal or competitive identities. Paul discusses baptism into Christian identity in relation to becoming children of God and the true descendants of Abraham. Paul informs the Galatians that all of them (including those who have never been circumcised) have been baptised into Christ and therefore have “clothed themselves with Christ.” They have put on Christian identity

⁴⁰ Hansen, *All of You*, 73.

⁴¹ I take Paul’s reference to baptism here to be speaking of actual water baptism in which the new Christian becomes a part of the Christian community and is associated with Christ. Bruce, *Epistle*, 185.

⁴² Hansen, *All of You*, 89.

and have become full participants of Christian identity.⁴³ Whereas circumcision functions as an entry rite into a particular ethnic subordinate identity, baptism functions universally as the entry rite that indicates participation in the new human identity.

Group Norms

While Paul's condemnation of circumcision and promotion of baptism focusses on Christian identity group versus the non-Christian Judean identity, his review of ethical standards focuses on the non-Christian gentile identities.⁴⁴ As stated earlier, the Galatians recognized that their new Christian identity meant transforming their subordinate identities by rejecting certain behaviours associated with stereotypical non-Christian gentiles and adopting new stereotypically Christian behaviours. Paul presents the stereotypical non-Christian gentile behaviours in 5:19–21.⁴⁵ Whether these behaviours were typical of the non-Christian gentiles of Paul's day or not is insignificant. What is important is that they were considered and promoted by Judeans as stereotypical descriptions of non-Christian gentile behaviour. Paul was not addressing any sort of ethical deficit in the Galatian Christians of the time,⁴⁶ but rather highlighting the stereotypical ethical behaviour of their former gentile identities as contrary to the

⁴³ This does not presuppose baptism as some sort of "means of salvation," but rather as a ritual or rite of entry by which individuals identify with Christ and the greater community of the Christian identity group.

⁴⁴ For an explanation of how Paul's discussion of in-group ethics relates to the overall focus on in-group/out-group distinctives see Esler, *Galatians*, 216–18.

⁴⁵ For an argument highlighting these as stereotypically gentile see Fredriksen, "Judaism," 237. Also, see Esler (*Galatians*, 229), who states, "Within the social identity perspective explained previously, Paul's point is that these negative features characterise the identity of the outgroups in which the members of his congregations should have no part." Similarly, "From the perspective of social identity theory, Paul's point is that these negative features characterize the identity of the outgroups. They constitute elements of rival group identity that Paul does not want to feature in his congregations" (Ukwuegbu, "Paraenesis," 549). This is in contrast to Betz (*Galatians*, 282), who argues that the list "represent[s] the conventional morality of the time."

⁴⁶ Martyn, "Law-Observant," 358–61.

new Spirit filled Christian identity. While there may be a temptation to focus on the sexual sins that Paul addresses, the focus of the passage goes beyond just sexual ethics. In discussing these behaviours and Paul's use of the term "flesh" in describing this behaviour, Westfall states, "the opposite of a focus on the Spirit is a focus on the self, independent of God."⁴⁷ Each of the behaviours listed by Paul here are selfishly motivated and seek to benefit the individual over the community. Similarly, Esler states that these stereotypical outgroup behaviours have a "tendency to tear the community apart."⁴⁸ Paul recognized that such behaviours were often self-serving and had the potential to create unnecessary division within the Christian ingroup.

In comparison to the stereotypical ethical behaviour of the gentile identity, Paul offers the prototypical behaviour of Christian identity as the "fruit of the Spirit" in Gal 5:22–23. These fruits represent the proper behaviour for ingroup members of Christian identity.⁴⁹ In contrast to the disruptive nature of the vices listed earlier, these virtues serve to bind the ingroup together by creating unity.⁵⁰ The key in the midst of all this, however, is Paul's statement in 5:23, "Against such things there is no law." The Galatians' lifestyle as stereotypical gentiles included behaviour that was contrary to the behavioural norms of their new Christian identity, but the answer was not adopting aspects of the Judean identity. Instead, Paul urges the Galatians to live out the fullness of their Christian identity by relying on the Holy Spirit as to live well as Christian gentiles.

⁴⁷ Westfall, *Paul*, 178. Westfall also raises the idea that such behaviour was (and is still) often positively associated with the male identity whereas the positive behaviours associated with Christian identity would not typically have been desirable for men (258).

⁴⁸ Esler, "Keeping It in the Family," 178; Esler, *Galatians*, 228.

⁴⁹ Esler, *Galatians*, 229; Ukwuegbu, "Paraenesis," 549–50.

⁵⁰ Ukwuegbu, "Paraenesis," 550–51.

Treatment of Ingroup and Outgroup Members

In addition to the boundary markers that identify ingroup members, Paul also addresses the Galatians' treatment of ingroup members while only tangentially addressing treatment of outgroups. In addressing ingroup behaviour, Paul focuses on correction and restoration which continues to emphasise the bonds of the Galatians as ingroup members. In Gal 6:1 Paul calls on the Galatians to gently restore the ingroup member who is caught in sin. This is in significant contrast with Paul's approach to the Corinthians, with which he takes a much stronger line in addressing sinful behaviour (see Chapter 6). This may indicate that Paul was less concerned about the behaviour of the Galatians, perhaps because they were seeking to live out the behavioural norms of their new identity. Although he wants sin to be dealt with, he encourages the Galatians to "carry each other's burdens" in 6:2.

Finally, after further instructions relating to treating each other well and building community, Paul states in 6:10, "Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers." The emphasis at the end on "those who belong to the family of believers" continues to emphasise the need for unity and support within the Christian ingroup. The verse also is an indirect reference to how the Galatians, as Christians, should relate to non-Christian outgroups. Paul encourages them to "do good to all people" and emphasises ingroup members at the end. The implication of such a statement is that Paul wants the Galatians to ensure that they "do good" to the various outgroup members that they encountered. As previously discussed, SIT/SCT recognizes that the identification of social groups and the separation of people into different social categories is in itself sufficient cause for

conflict between ingroup and outgroup members. In a setting like Galatia, where a new identity has been adopted necessitating the rejection of, or transformation of former identities, and where tension already exists between the new identity group and other outgroups, there would exist a higher expectation of animosity and conflict.⁵¹ Paul's request to do good to outgroup members counters the natural expectation of conflict. Christians, according to Paul, must not engage in outgroup conflict and hatred. Instead, similar to the Thessalonians, Paul exhorts the Galatians, as Christians to act in ways that benefitted outgroup members, regardless of how those outgroups treat the Galatians.

Conclusion

Just like the Thessalonians, the Galatians recognized that their new identity required them to make transform their subordinate identities in order to fit within the superordinate Christian identity. In contrast to the Thessalonians, the Galatians did not understand that they were fully capable of doing that as Christian *gentiles*. They were beginning to believe that they had to become Christian Judeans in order to fully reject their former old human identity because stereotypical aspects of their old human gentile identities were problematic from the perspective of Judeans. Paul's presentation of prototypicality including himself as a prototype, Peter as an antitype and Abraham as an archetype highlights the foolishness of the Galatians efforts. Similarly, Paul's emphasis of the fact that the Galatians already possessed the benefits of Christian identity in

⁵¹ Whether the opponents were Judeans, Christian Judeans from Jerusalem or other, they still represented some form of out-group who were influencing the Christian gentiles in Galatia. Even if the Galatians themselves were the only ones attempting to adopt a Judean identity, the perception that such an identity was necessary or would please others creates an out-group image that would also have an adversarial impact on the Galatian in-group.

contrast to the Judean identity greatly increased the salience of Christian identity.

CHAPTER 6: FAILURE IN CORINTH

Both the Thessalonians and the Galatians recognized the need to abandon certain “fleshly” aspects of their former identities. The Thessalonians were succeeding while the Galatians foolishly turned to Judean identity as a solution. The Corinthians, by contrast, failed to recognize the need to abandon “fleshly” aspects of their former gentile identities.¹ The Corinthian correspondence is Paul’s attempt to correct the Corinthians and help them to transform their former identities in favour of adopting the appropriate practices associated with their new Christian identity.² In these two letters, Paul presents prototypes, benefits and behaviours that highlight the differentiation between the new human identity and the old human identity and call for the Corinthians to truly transform.

¹ Tucker (*You Belong*, 2) observes, “Some in Corinth were continuing to identify primarily with key aspects of their Roman social identity rather than their identity ‘in Christ’ and . . . this confusion over identity positions contributed to the problems within the community.”

² Many scholars have sought to identify the exact situations that prompted Paul to write the letters that we now refer to as 1 and 2 Corinthians. For a survey of some of the views related to the situation in Corinth see, Dunn, “Reconstructions,” 295–310. While Thiselton (“Realized Eschatology”), first argued for an over-realized eschatology as the root issue in the church at Corinth (an approach that was also supported by Barrett, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*; Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*; and Bruce, *1 and 2 Corinthians*.), he later amended his interpretation to include “the seductive infiltration into the Christian church of cultural attitudes derived from secular or non-Christian Corinth as a city” (Thiselton, *First Epistle*, 40).

Prototypes: Sacrificing for Christian Identity

In his letters to the Corinthians, Paul offers himself and his companions as prototypes for the Corinthians to follow.³ Just as he instructs the Galatians to “become like me,” he also exhorts the Corinthians to “imitate me” (1 Cor 4:16, repeated again in 11:1).⁴ To this effect,, Paul sent Timothy to the Corinthians in order to remind them (likely through his own prototypical lifestyle as well as through instruction) of Paul’s example as a prototype (1 Cor 4:17). The Thessalonian prototype was willing to suffer persecution from non-Christian contemporaries for Christian identity. The Galatian prototype rejected the salience of the non-Christian Judean identity in favour of the Christian superordinate identity. Now, in turning to the Corinthians I argue that Paul’s prototypical examples reject the standards of Old Humanity—with particular emphasis on the non-Christian gentile expressions—and willingly sacrifice for the superordinate Christian identity.

³ Throughout this chapter, I refer to Paul as the primary prototype with the recognition that his companions (at least Sosthenes in 1 Corinthians and Timothy in 2 Corinthians) were also included as prototypes for the Corinthians to follow. Many commentators believe that Paul’s purpose in the opening chapters of 1 Cor was to defend or assert his position as an apostle. Melgar, “Paul’s Use of Jewish Exegetical,” 613.

⁴ Whereas Paul used the phrase *Γίνεσθε ὡς ἐγώ* in Gal 4:12, in 1 Cor 4:16 he writes *μιμηταί μου γίνεσθε*. The difference likely arises out of the context in which, to the Galatians, Paul’s focus was on how he became like them by willingly setting aside some of the exclusionary practices of the Judean identity. In the present context, Paul’s role seems to be more that of a mentor or educator who is instructing his students to follow his example in living out the very principles that he has taught them. Tucker, *You Belong*, 260–61.

Ehrensperger (*Paul and the Dynamics of Power*, 144–45) points out that Paul’s “call to imitate him serves as some sort of summarizing and exemplifying statement of issues he had elaborated at some length in the passages which precede these verses.”

Paul's Prototypical Example of Transformed Identity

The first prototypical attribute that Paul promoted in the Corinthian correspondence is that of being “called.”⁵ Assuming that the Corinthians were familiar with Paul’s Damascus Road experience, they would have understood Paul’s apostolic call to be transformative.⁶ Paul’s reference to the call reminds the Corinthians of the cost of accepting the call; a complete change in identity as he went from a non-Christian Judean who persecuted the Christians to a full participant in Christian identity as a Christian Judean. Perkins recognizes the significance of Paul’s apostleship in the opening of the letter, “called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus” and attributes this to the Corinthians’ challenging or questioning Paul’s apostleship.⁷ It is possible that Paul sought to remind the Corinthians of his apostleship in order to cement his position as a prototype of Christian identity. Paul’s greeting in 2 Cor 1:1, “Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God,” reminds the Corinthians that his apostleship was not something he achieved of his own accord. It was something given to him by God and according to God’s will. Paul communicates to the Corinthians that his position as an authority figure was not something that he achieved as a result of his own abilities or efforts, thus presenting his prototypical identity as one that required a drastic transformation of identity as a result of God’s call according to God’s will.

In 2 Cor 5:11–21 Paul and his companions represent the prototypical Christian perspective of themselves and their role in greater society. Having concluded 5:1–10

⁵ Tucker (*You Belong*, 131) states, “Paul’s discourse of calling is a foundational ordering principle in the formation of a salient ‘in Christ’ social identity.”

⁶ Even if one questions the validity of the Acts 9 account, I believe that we can assume that Paul would have told the Corinthians of his experience similar to the depiction in Gal 1:13–17.

⁷ Perkins, *First Corinthians*, 43. See also Ciampa, *First Letter*, 54.

with the certainty of judgement before Christ, Paul affirms their confidence in their Christian identity with the statement, “What we are is plain to God” (5:11), while also presenting a prototypical willingness to be seen as “out of their mind” (5:13) by others. Verse 12 offers two important details in relation to Paul’s view of his opponents as well as his intentions for the Corinthians. In relation to his intentions, he tells the Corinthians that he is giving them “an opportunity to take pride in us (Paul and Timothy), so that you can answer those . . .” By presenting himself and Timothy as prototypes who were willing to be seen as out of their mind by the world in order to be judged righteous by God, he desires that the Corinthians would re-evaluate the criteria used for judging the legitimacy and social value of Christian identity. Similarly, he presents his opponents as those who take pride in appearances.⁸ This characterisation helps the Corinthians re-evaluate these opponents as superficial, therefore devaluing this particular identity group in comparison to Paul’s prototypical Christian identity.⁹ The thrust of this section presents Paul and Timothy as prototypes of Christian identity who were willing to ignore value judgements made in keeping with old human identities, with the idea being that the Corinthians should also be willing to suffer rejection, persecution, and even death for the sake of their new Christian identity. Paul signals his intent that the Corinthians join in his prototypical behaviour and willingness to appear foolish by including the Corinthians in the rest of the depiction of the prototypical identity in vv. 14–21.¹⁰ In these verses, Paul includes the Corinthians as he defines Christian identity as

⁸ Land, *Integrity*, 133.

⁹ The exact identity of Paul’s opponents here is not clear. They may be from the non-Christian gentile identity group of outsiders but more likely are representative of some within Christian identity who continue to evaluate the leadership of Paul and his companions based on the criteria of their former identities and therefore have become dismissive of Paul’s leadership. Land, *Integrity*, 133.

¹⁰ For a defence of the view that shifts from a particular referent of the first-person plural in vv. 11–13 to an inclusive referent in vv. 14–21, see Land, *Integrity*, 134–35.

an identity that has been transformed and no longer evaluates people based on the worldly or non-Christian identity standards.

Paul's Redefinition of Prototypicality

Having cemented his position as the prototypical Christian, Paul also highlights the fact that he does not meet the prototypical characteristics of the non-Christian identity.¹¹ The Corinthians were still evaluating their identity based on the criteria of the non-Christian gentile identity in 1 Cor 2.¹² Paul does not present himself as someone with “lofty words” or “wisdom” (1 Cor 2:1). He experiences tremendous “fear and trembling” when he speaks to the Corinthians (1 Cor 2:3).¹³ Yet, instead of diminishing his value and status as a prototype, Paul believes that this should raise his status as a prototype and should cause the Corinthians to want to emulate him even more. In SIT, when someone wants to raise the evaluative aspect of a social identity, one of the tools available to him/her is to redefine the evaluative criteria or add new criteria.¹⁴ Paul redefines the evaluative criteria in 1 Cor 2 by dismissing the values the Corinthians held as insignificant and a hindrance to Christian identity. To this, Paul adds the criteria of Spirit empowerment as the primary evaluative criteria for the leadership and significance in Christian identity. For Paul, the prototypical Christian leader receives his

¹¹ Much of the discussion in 1 Cor 2 focuses specifically on leadership. From a SIT perspective, one of the key features of leadership is group prototypicality. That is to say that social groups tend to follow leaders who best fit as prototypes of the perceived social group. See Hogg et al., “Social Identity Theory of Leadership.” As a result, while Paul was dealing with challenges to his leadership, the issue here revolves around the Corinthians’ evaluation of Paul in relation to prototypicality and the salient social identity (i.e. non-Christian gentile).

¹² The connection to the non-Christian gentile identity within Corinth will be developed more in the sections on antitypes as well as Paul’s evaluation of the Corinthians below.

¹³ Paul also downplayed the significance of human wisdom in 2 Cor 1:12, promoting, instead, the reliance on God’s grace as the prototypical behaviour.

¹⁴ Esler, *Galatians*, 52–53; Tajfel and Turner, “An Integrative Theory,” 45; Hogg and Abrams, *Social Identifications*, 27.

or her empowerment from the Holy Spirit and regularly points others to the cross as the object of the message. Paul declares his message to be one that the elite of the community in Corinth simply cannot understand.¹⁵

Paul also offers himself and Apollos as prototypes of a proper perspective regarding leadership in Christian identity group in 1 Cor 3:5–9. Paul recognizes that the problem within Corinth included the tendency to view leadership from a non-Christian gentile perspective and to evaluate the leaders and their followers using the criteria provided by that perspective. Paul combatted this perspective by downplaying the importance of both Apollos and himself. The questions, “What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul?” serve to challenge the Corinthians’ views of leaders and leadership by implying that Apollos and Paul are insignificant.¹⁶ Throughout vv. 5–9 Paul presents himself and Apollos in ways that negated the Corinthians’ perspective of leadership. Paul and Apollos were servants, fulfilling tasks assigned by their common master. Their tasks are described in agricultural terms to highlight their co-operative efforts and their complete dependence on God for the results. Overall, Paul presents himself and Apollos as prototypes who were not self-directed, self-promoting or in competition. Instead they were directed by Christ, promoting Christ in a spirit of unity.¹⁷

The redefining of the evaluative criteria of leadership in Christian identity continues in 2 Cor 11:16—12:10. Paul begins this section highlighting what would be considered his qualifications from a non-Christian Judean perspective with the focus on

¹⁵ Theissen, *Social Reality*, 280.

¹⁶ “These questions are designed to recategorize the Corinthian Christ-followers’ thinking and adjust their social comparisons with regard to their estimation of the role of teachers within the *ἐκκλησία* in three ways” (Tucker, *You Belong*, 211).

¹⁷ For a greater review of the impact of vv. 5–9 on the Corinthians’ identity formation, see Tucker, *You Belong*, 211–17.

highlighting how these former values are no longer significant for Christian identity. In vv. 16–21 Paul sets up the qualifications, noting that he is able to match or exceed them, yet, dismisses them as foolishness and worldly standards that others are using as a weapon to keep the Corinthians in line. The criteria that he mentions in v. 22 all relate to his position and status as a Judean. Paul’s statement of defense, that he is in every sense as Judean as his opponents (i.e. Hebrew, Israelite, descendant of Abraham) indicates that his Judean identity was still salient.¹⁸ Yet, Paul expresses that boasting in that Judean identity as criteria for leadership and significance within Christian identity is foolishness. Instead, he chooses to redefine the evaluative criteria by highlighting the ways that he suffered for the gospel. He highlights the different ways in which he was mistreated and beaten for the gospel as reasons to boast, marking these as the new preferred evaluative criteria for Christian identity.¹⁹ Paul continues to redefine the evaluative criteria in 2 Cor 12:1–10. Though some question identifying the “man (person) in Christ” mentioned in v. 2 as Paul,²⁰ given the present discussion regarding Paul’s criteria for leadership, he is the most likely candidate.²¹ Once again, while Paul has the same qualifications that his opponents claim (in this case ecstatic visions), he considers boasting in such things to be useless (οὐ συμφέρον). Instead of boasting of this great spiritual experience to promote his identity as a Christian leader, Paul chooses to boast of one of his greatest spiritual weaknesses. While the exact nature of the thorn in the flesh referred to in 2 Cor 12:7 is debated,²² it is clear that the initial impact of the

¹⁸ Tucker, *Remain*, 100–101.

¹⁹ Dunn, *Theology*, 580.

²⁰ Goulder, “Vision.”

²¹ See Harris (*Second Epistle*, 834) for a defense of Paul as the visionary in question.

²² Martin (*2 Corinthians*, 412–16) offers a survey of the different options.

thorn is negative as Paul states that it was sent “to torment me.” The result, according to Paul, was the realization that his weaknesses exhibit Christ’s strengths. The Corinthians were still evaluating leadership based on the old human identity, therefore, Paul’s prototypical examples seek to tear down the evaluative criteria they were using and replace it with criteria more fitting to the new human identity.

Prototypical Humility

Similarly, as a prototype, Paul does not present himself as an elite, but rather as a servant or assistant (ὑπηρέτας) and a steward (οἰκονόμοις) (1 Cor 4:1–7).²³ As such, he recognizes that his duty is to the master (Jesus), meaning that he sees no value in how others view his efforts. Paul does not even consider it appropriate to judge his own efforts, recognizing that, even if his own conscience has cleared him, it is ultimately Christ who will judge him in his role as an apostle. His own estimation of his efforts is as useful and influential as anyone else’s. As Clarke argues, “This reinforces Paul’s reasoning that the Corinthians should have their perception of leadership in the church turned upside-down.”²⁴ Paul’s point went beyond defending himself or his apostleship to the Corinthians as he offers his own view as a prototypical example of a proper Christian perspective on leadership.

Throughout 1 Cor 4:10–13, Paul presents contrasting descriptions in which the Corinthians are depicted as wise, strong, and honoured, whereas the apostles were depicted as fools, weak, and shamed. Paul and his companions went without food and water, were homeless and regularly beaten. He concludes v.13 by stating, “We have

²³ Thiselton, *First Epistle*, 335

²⁴ Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership*, 121.

become the scum of the earth, the garbage of the world—right up to this moment.”

Paul’s prototypes experienced shame and persecution because of their commitment to the Gospel, whereas the Corinthians continued to experience a positive social status within their community.

Prototypical Suffering and Sacrifice

One aspect of prototypical behaviour modeled by Paul and his companions is their willingness to suffer hardship as a result of their commitment to the Gospel. In 1 Cor 4:9–13, after criticizing the Corinthians’ affluence, Paul depicts the apostles as a spectacle. The community in Corinth values wealth and power, viewing them as the primary criteria for evaluating status.²⁵ In order to combat this lack of transformation, Paul presents the apostles using terms that would typically have gained a negative evaluation from the Corinthians. He speaks of having been put on display, like those condemned to die in the arena (1 Cor 4:9). The metaphor communicates a reversal of the expected roles and status of the apostles in contrast with the Corinthians.²⁶ As May states, “he stresses the social opposition that the gospel has brought to him, inferring that it is to the Corinthians shame that they have not experienced similar opposition.”²⁷ The Corinthians are not experiencing social opposition because they have not properly adopted Christian identity but are still living as Old Humanity. Similarly, in 2 Cor 6:3–13 Paul lists the extent of the suffering that he and his companions experienced in order to bring the gospel message to others, including the Corinthians. He presents this list in

²⁵ Keener, *1–2 Corinthians*, 45. Nguyen, “God’s Execution,” 34.

²⁶ For an explanation of the way in which the arena metaphor and its significance to Paul’s argument, see Nguyen, “God’s Execution.”

²⁷ May, *Body*, 201.

contrast with their own approach that seeks the benefit of others. Paul intends for their behaviour to be a prototypical example of what it means to “not receive God’s grace in vain” (6:1). Receiving God’s grace, being a Christ-follower requires being willing to live by different standards than the rest of society, which will entail suffering and persecution at the hands of non-Christian gentiles. This suggests that, at the time of writing 2 Cor, there were still some within Corinth who continued to refuse to follow the new behaviours associated with Christian identity in order to avoid hardship from their former identities.²⁸

Not only does Paul present prototypes who were willing to suffer social opposition for the sake of the gospel, he also presents prototypes who were willing to sacrifice personal rights and privileges in order to avoid harm to the gospel message. In 1 Cor 9, Paul highlights for the Corinthians the various rights that he is willing to sacrifice in order to promote the gospel. In vv. 1–12 he outlines the rights of an apostle that Paul, though entitled to them, chose not to claim. Similarly, vv. 13–18 outline his decision not to claim the rights of an itinerant preacher in order to be free to preach the gospel for the sake of the gospel. Paul elaborates on his reasoning in vv. 19–23 by pointing out that his purpose in all of this was for the sake of winning others to Christ. He was willing to sacrifice his rights in order to see others experience salvation in Jesus.²⁹ The position of ch. 9 between chs. 8 and 10 dealing with restrictions related to

²⁸ “Some of the Corinthians are still being tempted to avoid the social consequences that would ensue if they made a public declaration of their new faith by refusing to associate with anything overtly idolatrous” (Land, *Integrity*, 147).

²⁹ In relation to Paul’s Judean identity, it is important to address Paul’s statements in 1 Cor 9:20–21. Tucker (*Remain*, 100–109), expertly argues that the salience of Paul’s Judean identity was evident in each of the settings. In the first statement, “To the (Judeans) I became like a (Judean), to win the Judeans” is marked because it does not contain a contrasting statement such as, “though I am no longer a Judean” similar to those found in the following statements. Instead, it could be understood to refer to the diversity that existed within the Judean identity. Therefore, his next claim, “To those under the law I became like

meat sacrificed to idols sheds additional light on Paul's purpose in presenting this prototype. Specifically, Paul seeks to communicate a prototype that was willing to give up personal rights and freedoms in order to bring the gospel message and salvation to others. Jesus, for Paul, also modeled this kind of prototypical behaviour. In 2 Cor 8:9 Paul presents Jesus as intentionally sacrificing his own wealth and prosperity, becoming poor in order that the Corinthians could experience wealth and prosperity.³⁰ Paul returns to the idea of willingly setting aside his rights and privileges as an apostle in 2 Cor 11:1–15 where he defends his approach of preaching the gospel “free of charge” (11:7) and lowering himself in order to be a benefit to the Corinthians because of his love for them.

Antitypes: Negatively Representing Out-group Identities

In 1 Cor 1:18–25, Paul uses outgroup prototypes as representing antitypical behaviour for Christian identity. In v. 20, he asks three rhetorical questions relating to outgroup prototypes, “Where is the wise person (σοφός)? Where is the teacher of the law (γραμματεὺς)? Where is the philosopher (συζητητής) of this age?” He then responds to these questions with a fourth, explanatory, question: “Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?” In this way, Paul dismisses these outgroup prototypes as falling short of God's wisdom with the result that they are presented as antitypical to Christian

one under the law (though I myself am not under the law)” referred to a specific subset of Judeans (possibly the Pharisees). Tucker suggests that Paul was still referring to table fellowship in this text, meaning that, when he ate with Pharisees he followed the customs and traditions of the Pharisees, in order to win them to Christ. The third statement in v. 21 also relates to table fellowship, in which Paul sets aside strict interpretations of Torah in order to sit and eat with those outside of the law (i.e. gentiles).

³⁰ Paul uses the concepts of wealth and prosperity metaphorically referring to Jesus's willingness to humble himself through his incarnation, life, death and resurrection in order to lift the Corinthians out of their sinfulness and provide for the Corinthians an abundance of grace. Barnett, *Second Epistle*, 406–9.

identity. The wise person (σοφός) is well-respected and admired by both Judean and gentile outgroups. For the Judeans, the γραμματεὺς represents a respected teacher of the law or rabbi.³¹ They are respected and looked up to as role models and leaders (prototypes) among the Judeans. The συζητητής is more difficult to identify, but likely represents a philosopher or orator who are known for having skills in debate and rhetoric.³² Throughout 1 Cor 1:21–25, Paul uses language of comparison showing the superior nature of God’s wisdom (and by extension the wisdom of Christian identity) over the world’s wisdom; that is, the wisdom of the non-Christian, old-human identity.³³ Thus, the comparisons used by Paul serve to diminish the salience of the non-Christian prototypes while raising the perceived value and salience of Christian identity.

Comparing the Corinthians to the Prototypes

The Corinthians certainly do not receive the glowing appraisal that Paul gave to the Thessalonians. Like the Galatians, Paul is critical of how the Corinthians match up with the prototypical Christian identity. The primary difference, however, lies in the fact that the Galatians recognized the need for abandoning their old human identity and transforming their subordinate identities to fit within the new human/Christian identity, whereas the Corinthians failed to even recognize the essentiality of transformation.

In his evaluation, Paul makes sure to emphasise the Corinthian Christians’ common Christian identity with the prototypes. Just like Paul and his companions, the Corinthians themselves are called (κλητόις) to Christian identity (1 Cor 1:2). It is

³¹ Fee, *First Epistle*, 71.

³² Fee, *First Epistle*, 71.

³³ Nguyen, “God’s Execution,” 35.

important to recognize that the Corinthians' call in 1 Cor 1:2 is a call to be holy. As Tucker points out, "The Corinthians' primary social identification, their public displays of devotion and their ritual expressions of faith (i.e., group norms [or as I have labelled them, behaviours]) are founded in God's call."³⁴ Furthermore, the calling itself is a call to be separate and set apart by God for a specific purpose.³⁵ Such a message highlights the differentiation between the Corinthians as Christian gentiles and the non-Christian gentiles of the Corinthian community. Paul also connects the Corinthians to the wider Christian community when he addresses them, "together with all those everywhere who call on the named of our Lord Jesus Christ—their Lord and ours."³⁶ Paul here reminds the Corinthians that they are connected to a broader superordinate group that is separated from and distinct from their former identities as Old Humanity. Unfortunately, the Corinthians failed to consistently live their new identity. As Rogers comments, "the church began to have serious issues as they reverted to practices characteristic of their pagan lifestyle."³⁷

One of the signs of a reversion to such pagan practices is evidenced in Paul's comments regarding division in 1 Cor 1:10–17. Paul addresses division within the Corinthian Christians based on association with four different leaders within the Christ-movement: Paul, Apollos, Cephas, and Christ. At best, such division is a sign that the Corinthians are dividing along subordinate identities based on preferred leadership.³⁸

³⁴ Tucker, *You Belong*, 131.

³⁵ "Paul describes a people called into existence by God, and designated ἅγιος; that is, set apart from the rest of humanity for a particular relationship to God." May, *Body*, 50. See also, Ehrensperger, *Paul and the Dynamics of Power*, 169. Ciampa, *First Letter*, 55–56.

³⁶ As Tucker comments, the broader Christ-movement represents the superordinate group to which the Corinthian Christians are connected. Tucker, *You Belong*, 44. Stenschke, "Significance," 217–18.

³⁷ Rogers, *God*, 212; Ciampa, *First Letter*, 56.

³⁸ For an explanation of why I believe Paul was referring to the preference of the Corinthians for certain leaders over actual factions or divisions caused by the leaders themselves or their personal

More than likely, however, these divisions represent the mentality of outgroup gentiles and the preoccupation with leadership characteristics in relation to the evaluative aspect of group identity.³⁹ The Corinthians were placing a higher value on perceived (fictional) subordinate identity groups based on leader evaluations that were based on non-Christian gentile standards.⁴⁰ Interestingly, many of the Corinthians themselves did not match the standards promoted and supported by the non-Christian gentile identity group. The Christian community in Corinth was likely a diverse group that included a plurality of social groups including those who were considered influential within the broader non-Christian culture of Corinth, but mostly consisted of those considered in a lesser social category by first-century standards.⁴¹ Paul reminds the Corinthians that they themselves do not meet the prototypical standards of the old human identity and chastises them for still trying to live by and expecting their leaders to exemplify those standards (1 Cor 1:26–31). “Paul, at this point, perceives the boasting to be over symbols of status, such as wisdom, influence and nobility.”⁴² While there is some indication in 2 Corinthians that Paul saw improvement in the Corinthians in comparison to the prototypical Christian identity (see discussion below), they continue to judge their leaders by the standards of their non-Christian, identities; evidenced by the simple statement in 2 Cor 10:7a, “You are judging by appearances.” Paul also expresses in 2 Cor 12:19–21 a fear

theological positions see Tucker (*You Belong*, 159) who identifies the issue as “divisions over which prototypical figure they are to follow . . .” One of the primary tenets of SIT is that the simple idea that people exist in different groups is enough to create division and inter-group conflict. Tajfel and Turner, “Social Identity Theory,” 13. Frestadius, “Spirit,” 55.

³⁹ Tucker (“Baths,” 174) argues that the Corinthian’s approach to baptism was, “an example of the way Roman social identity continued to influence life within the ἐκκλησία in Corinth.”

⁴⁰ Ciampa, *First Letter*, 77–78. “Such a personality-focused approach to leadership, with its emphasis on the high rank of a leader and the status conferred on the follower, betrays the influence of Corinthian society.”

⁴¹ Theissen, *Social Setting*, 69–120; Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership*, 42–46.

⁴² Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership*, 96.

that he would find continued division among the Corinthians, presumably based on their continued adherence to the self-promoting practices associated with their previous non-Christian gentile identities.

Part of the problem, as Paul saw it, was the Corinthians' willingness to listen to and accept other teachers and other gospels. In 2 Cor 11:3–4 Paul expresses his concern for the Corinthians, that they will lose their devotion to Christ and therefore abandon Christian identity. They were too easily enticed by false teaching who present a different gospel. Paul expresses his desire for the Corinthians as presenting them as a pure virgin bride to Christ (11:1–3) suggesting that their tendency to be deceived by their desires to accommodate their former identities put their purity at risk and could make them unsuitable as a match for Christ.

Second Corinthians offers hope that many in the Corinthian church had responded well to Paul's earlier criticisms and were beginning to adopt the markers of the prototypical Christian identity. In 2 Cor 7:5–16, Paul refers to their reaction to his earlier letter and the sorrow and repentance that it generated. He states that the result of his criticisms in the past was an eagerness within the Corinthians to clear their names and prove themselves innocent of his accusations. While we are unable to ascertain the exact nature or specific issues that Paul refers to in these verses, the fact that he commends them for their efforts to clear their name suggests that they have begun to show themselves to be acting more in line with the prototypical Christian identity. Land, however, suggests that the language of this section hints at the possibility that there was still some animosity between the Corinthians and himself.⁴³ In this case, while there is

⁴³ Land, *Integrity*, 164–71. In this reading the wronged and the wrong doer mentioned in v. 12 are Paul and the Corinthians (or vice versa from the Corinthians' perspective) and Paul is seeking to set aside

some development toward a common understanding and expression of Christian identity, Paul still sees the need for further movement toward a common bond and union based on their common Christian identity. Either way, the passage indicates that Paul was pleased with certain aspects of the Corinthians' obedience, which suggests that they had made progress toward the prototypical Christian identity.

Another indication of the Corinthians' positive movement toward the prototypical Christian identity occurs in 2 Cor 9:1–5. In these verses, Paul mentions that he uses the Corinthians as prototypical examples of generosity in his conversations with the Macedonians. He recognizes that the Corinthians had expressed a willingness to sacrifice their own wealth in order to benefit others. They are beginning to show the prototypical value of sacrifice for others. Yet, it is also clear that Paul is concerned that they may not go through with their promise as he sees the need to remind the Corinthians of their promise and warn them regarding the possibility of embarrassment in front of the Macedonians if they catch the Corinthians unprepared. Paul is encouraged by their expressed desire to sacrifice for others, but still remained skeptical that the Corinthians would really be willing to sacrifice their own wealth and follow through on their promise.

Benefits of Christian Identity

While Paul uses prototypes and antitypes to emphasise the key differences between the new Christian identity and the Corinthians former non-Christian identities and change the criteria used to evaluate leadership, he also chose to present specific benefits of

competing accusations of wrong doing in order to heal the relationship and move the Corinthians toward fully living out Christian identity.

Christian identity to the Corinthians that highlighted the advantages of Christian identity over the non-Christian identities in an effort to move the Corinthians toward subordinating their gentile identities to Christian identity. In what follows, I present the benefits in two broad categories: benefits related to knowledge and wisdom and the spiritual benefits of Christian identity.

Benefits Relating to Knowledge and Wisdom

Most instances of contrastive language in the Corinthian letters revolve around the concepts of wisdom and knowledge in which Paul indicates that those of Christian identity possess superior wisdom and knowledge in comparison to the outgroup identities. In 1 Cor 2:6–16, after informing the Corinthians that he does not utilize the wisdom and persuasive techniques that are valued by the Corinthians' former identities, Paul introduces the concept of a S/spiritual wisdom; that is, a wisdom revealed by God's Holy Spirit. Paul contrasts this wisdom with the wisdom and understanding of "the rulers of this age" (2:8)⁴⁴ as well as the general population of the non-Christian identities (2:14–15). The contrast presents the common wisdom and understanding of Christian identity as unrecognisable and unattainable by those outside of Christian identity. Because they lacked the revelation and understanding provided by the Holy Spirit, those outside the Christian ingroup, including those in authority and considered wise and knowledgeable, are unable to fathom the wisdom attained by all within Christian identity. Similarly, in 3:18–23, Paul urges any among the Corinthians who still evaluate

⁴⁴ For a review of the different interpretations of this phrase see Thiselton, *First Epistle*, 235–40. I understand ἀρχόντων τοῦ αἰῶνος as a reference to governmental and societal leaders in the Roman empire with specific application to outgroup leaders in Corinth.

their wisdom and knowledge from a worldly point of view to abandon such an approach. Paul presents a re-definition of the evaluative criteria of wisdom by referring to the wisdom that was highly regarded by the Corinthians' old human identity as foolishness. Because this evaluation comes so soon after the introduction of the Spirit instructed wisdom in 2:6–16, the Corinthians would have understood the implicit comparison indicating the lower status of worldly wisdom in contrast to the higher status of Christian wisdom.

Not only does Paul contrast Christian wisdom as superior to worldly wisdom, he also contrasts the superiority of Christian knowledge over that of Old Humanity. First Corinthians 8 highlights the understanding of Christians regarding idols compared to the lack of understanding that still persists among the Corinthians' non-Christian contemporaries.⁴⁵ Ultimately, the knowledge and wisdom of Christian identity has a strongly eschatological focus. This eschatological focus is most evident in 1 Cor 13:8–13, where Paul recognises the limits of knowledge in the present age and points the Corinthians toward a future experience in which “I (we) shall know fully, even as I am (we are) fully known” (v. 12).⁴⁶ Paul presents a superior wisdom and knowledge that is able to look beyond the present toward a future reality as a key benefit of Christian identity which would have raised the salience of Christian identity over the non-Christian identity.

⁴⁵ Nanos (“Polytheist Identity”) and Land (“Paul’s Response,” 7) provide an understanding of the “weak” in 1 Cor 8 as a reference to non-Christian gentiles as opposed to the more popular interpretations that depict the weak as a Christian subgroup who do not possess the same understand as the “strong.”

⁴⁶ Though Paul uses himself as a prototypical example of the future knowledge of Christian identity, I believe that his intent is to communicate this future knowledge as a benefit that will be experienced by all who are part of Christian identity.

The primary comparisons offered by Paul in 2 Corinthians revolve around people's responses to his ministry. In 2 Cor 2:14–16, as Paul defends his leadership and mission,⁴⁷ he describes himself and Timothy as “the pleasing aroma of Christ” (v. 15). This aroma impacts people in two opposite manners. To those who do not respond to the message; the non-Christian Judeans and gentiles, the aroma brought death. To those who do respond and subsequently joined Christian identity, the aroma brought life.⁴⁸ Similarly, in 2 Cor 4:1–6, Paul refers to those who are veiled and deceived by the “god of this age” and are therefore unable to respond positively to the gospel as “perishing.” What is of particular interest in these two analogies is Paul's focus on knowledge. In 2 Cor 2:14, Paul begins the odour metaphor by referring to “the aroma of the knowledge of him.” In 4:1–6 Paul uses language that suggests understanding and knowledge, focusing on concepts like “truth,” “veiling,” and “blinding the minds.” Paul concludes these verses by emphasising their dependence on God who gave them “the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ.” Similar to 1 Corinthians, these passages highlight the difference between the knowledge possessed by Christian identity compared to the non-Christian identity. The primary differences come in Paul's presentation of the life and death distinctions between those in Christian identity who have received the knowledge and therefore receive life and those outside Christian identity who have not and therefore are headed toward death.

Knowledge, as a central benefit to Christian identity also applies to Paul's assertion that the Christian ingroup will sit as judges over outgroup members (1 Cor

⁴⁷ Land, *Integrity*, 116–17.

⁴⁸ Land, *Integrity*, 117. Martin (*2 Corinthians*, 47) suggests that the odour is a reference to incense that would often be scattered along the path when a Roman commander returned victorious from a campaign. The incense signaled death to the prisoners captured in battle and life to the victors.

6:2–4). This statement occurs in a broader section (vv. 1–11) where Paul criticizes the Corinthians for bringing personal disputes to the civil magistrates of Corinth.⁴⁹ As part of his criticism of the Corinthians for this practice, Paul states that *οἱ ἅγιοι τὸν κόσμον κρινουῦσιν* (the holy [that is to say, the Christian identity group] will judge the world). The position of a judge is considered a position of power and significance and communicates a higher social standing, therefore, the idea that the Corinthians, as part of Christian identity, would be judging outgroup members would have succeeded in raising the salience of Christian identity.⁵⁰

Overall, Paul's emphasis of the superior knowledge of Christian identity combats the Corinthians' continued focus on the knowledge and wisdom of their non-Christian prototypes. The desired result is that the Corinthians would abandon the prototypical expectations of the old human identity and begin to transform their expression of their subordinate identities to fit under Christian identity.

Spiritual Benefits of Christian Identity

While knowledge and wisdom are tangible benefits over the non-Christian identity, the spiritual benefits are intangible yet, arguably more significant. Paul focuses on three important spiritual benefits that communicate the superiority of Christian identity over the non-Christian identity: their identity as the temple of God (1 Cor 3:16–17; 6:19–20),

⁴⁹ Keown ("Christ-Pattern," 321) suggests that part of the issue for Paul was that Corinthian Christians with wealth and status were using the courts to shame the poor and low status members of the Christian community.

⁵⁰ Ciampa (*First Letter*, 227) connects Paul's assertion that the saints will judge the world with Old Testament promises that God's people will participate in the final judgment in the last days.

the presence of specific empowerment from the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12), and salvation and resurrection (1 Cor 15).

Tucker connects 1 Cor 3:16–17 and 6:19–20 with the creation of “spatial location for the Spirit within the community as a group.”⁵¹ The temple metaphor reminds the Corinthians of the presence of the Holy Spirit as an essential aspect of their corporate identity, which also instructs their understanding of their individual identity.⁵² The Corinthians also would have understood the temple metaphor as prescribing significant value to the corporate gathering and therefore to Christian identity. Such a significant metaphor raises the evaluative aspect of Christian identity helping the Corinthians to understand better the need for transformation in Christian identity.

Another aspect of the benefit of the Holy Spirit becomes apparent in 1 Cor 12. In vv. 4–6 Paul presents three statements highlighting a diversity of *χαρισμάτων* (‘gifts’), *διακονιών* (‘services’) and *ἐνεργημάτων* (‘works’). When considering Paul’s discourse on spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12:4–11) in relation to identity formation and the salience of Christian identity, three important details stand out. First, Paul makes it clear that there are a variety of different gifts within Christian identity. While there is some debate as to what role the gifts listed in 1 Cor 12 have in relation to identity, the portrayal of equally valued variety within the single Christian identity is consistent with the rest of Paul’s views.⁵³ Second, Paul’s focus was on the common or group identity, rather than the

⁵¹ Tucker, *You Belong*, 226; Tucker, *Remain*, 173–75.

⁵² As Tucker (*Remain*, 174) explains, “individual identity receives salience through social identity.”

⁵³ Ciampa (*First Letter*, 568) suggests a connection with the patronage system. As such, even the poorer of the Corinthian Christian group were able to view themselves as privileged as a result of their gifting. Thiselton (*First Epistle*, 928) points out that, while Paul presented a diversity of gifts, his primary focus was on unity. Westfall’s (*Paul*, 221) point is particularly salient, “the function of each part of the body is determined directly by the Holy Spirit, not by any biological essentialism reckoned as inherent in the Hellenistic beliefs about race or gender or social status.” While her focus in *Paul* is on gender identity

individual identities. Paul presents the individual benefits of these Spiritual gifts as serving to provide a greater benefit to the community that is the wider body of the Christian identity group. Finally, the distribution and reception of the gifts are determined by the Spirit. Because the Corinthians continue to live according to the divisions of the old human identity, they potentially could view certain gifts and giftedness as sources of status and influence. However, Paul's emphasis on the Spirit as the one who distributes the gifts and the equal status of the gifted helps to dispel the potential for conflict.⁵⁴ Additionally, Paul informs the Corinthians that regardless of how significant the benefits are in their current setting, they will be surpassed by the future eschatological benefit that will come when Christ returns (1 Cor 13:8–12).

Salvation must be considered the central benefit to Christian identity and Paul highlights this benefit in 1 Cor 15.⁵⁵ He reminds the Corinthians of the central teachings of his gospel in vv. 1–7. Similarly, in 2 Cor 2:14—3:11 Paul reminds the Corinthians of their identity as those being saved (2:15), made alive in the Holy Spirit (3:6), being made righteous (3:9) and part of a lasting, that is eternal, salvation (3:11). In 2 Cor 5:14–21, Paul, again, reminds the Corinthians of their salvation in Christ, culminating with the statement, “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” The central focus of 1 Cor 15 is Paul's argument for the resurrection.⁵⁶ Paul reminds the Corinthians that Christ has been raised from the dead and that they can be certain that they too would be raised when he returns

within Christian identity, her argument in regards equality and status applies to all subordinate identities within Christian identity.

⁵⁴ Thiselton, *First Epistle*, 936

⁵⁵ Fee (*First Epistle*, 721–22) argues for an interpretation of “of first importance” (1 Cor 15:3) that emphasises the primary, essential teaching of salvation as opposed to a temporal reading.

⁵⁶ Thiselton (*First Epistle*, 1216) states that “the fundamental *kerygma* has as its content the raised Christ.”

(vv. 20–28). The resurrected bodies will be superior to the old bodies as they will be spiritual bodies that are immortal, set free of death and decay (vv. 45–57). In v. 50, Paul informs the Corinthians that, “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.” Thiselton points out the apocalyptic nature of this verse and quotes Collins in stating that it emphasizes, “a radical incompatibility between the present condition of human existence and the resurrected condition . . . Transformation is necessary.”⁵⁷ The benefit of salvation and the promise of the kingdom of God necessitates the transformation from the old human identity to the new human identity.

Behaviour

When addressing the Corinthians, Paul addresses behavioural norms that highlight the need to subordinate pre-existing identities to the superordinate Christian identity. Paul addresses rites and rituals that raise the salience of the peace they have in Christian identity while diminishing the relative conflict of the subordinate identities. Using the concepts of the meta-contrast principle, Paul seeks to raise the salience of Christian identity vis-à-vis their subordinate identities in order to help the Corinthians see past the divisions of their subordinate identities and abandon the behaviours associated with the old human identity.

Just as he did with the previous two Christian communities, Paul highlights specific rites and rituals as well as behavioural norms for the Corinthians. Unlike the Galatian letter, which focuses on differentiating the Christian gentile from the Christian

⁵⁷ Thiselton, *First Epistle*, 1293.

Judean, the Corinthian correspondence focuses on differentiating between Christian identity and the non-Christian identity with specific implications for the Corinthians as gentiles. Accordingly, Paul presents the rites and rituals of Christian identity in a way that promotes differentiation, and he points to ethical and behavioural norms related to this particular contrast. Yet, once again, instead of seeking to foster conflict and disdain for outgroup gentiles, Paul calls the Corinthians to seek reconciliation.

Rites and Rituals

Paul addresses the initiation rite of baptism in 1 Cor 1:13–17. The Corinthians recognize the importance of baptism as the only initiation rite required, as opposed to the Galatians who had begun to seek circumcision as a second rite or experience needed to enter into full ingroup participation. Unfortunately, the Corinthians also began to associate the significance of baptism with the person who baptised them instead of the one in whose name they were baptised.⁵⁸ Such an approach shows that the pursuits of status and power associated with Old Humanity continue to have salience for the Corinthians.

Similar issues pervade the Corinthians expression of the rituals associated with Christian identity found in 1 Corinthians 11. In vv. 1–16, Paul emphasizes the gathered community's responsibility to honour God in their decorum and behaviour during worship.⁵⁹ Whatever the exact situation, Paul expresses clear instruction that the Corinthians are to transform their behaviour in order to honour God instead of

⁵⁸ Tucker, *You Belong*, 162–66.

⁵⁹ Space does not allow for a detailed analysis of the arguments relating to this passage and the debate regarding women's roles in the Christian identity group. For an overview of the interpretive options of κεφαλή, see Thiselton, *First Epistle*, 812–23. Also, Westfall, *Paul*, 86–105 and 233–34, where she makes the notable point that, “the main point of the passage is that believers should wear gender-appropriate apparel when leading or ministering during worship: when women *lead* the congregation in praying or prophesying, they should cover their heads . . .” (emphasis added).

dishonouring him. Verses 17–34 present Paul’s criticism of the Corinthians’ abuse of the Lord’s Supper. For Paul the Lord’s Supper was a ritual that was intended to portray the unity of Christian identity. The Corinthians, however, were behaving in a manner that not only reflected but perpetuated and enforced class divisions. Such class divisions are a part of the old human identity that must be removed upon entering into the new human identity. The communion table is an expression of the gathering of diverse social identities together in a common superordinate identity in celebration of their union together in Christ.

Behavioural Norms

In addition to the rites and rituals that were intended to shape and unite Christian identity, Paul also admonishes the Corinthians for violating, or potentially violating the behavioural norms associated with Christian identity. In 1 Cor 5, Paul was outraged by the behaviour of one man who was sleeping with his stepmother and the Corinthians acceptance of his behaviour. He reprimands the Corinthians for their complacency in dealing with this man proclaiming that his behaviour is something that “even the gentiles do not tolerate” (5:1).⁶⁰ The implication is significant. Paul’s view is that, in relation to sexual conduct, Christian identity requires a higher ethical standard than the non-Christian gentile identities. Therefore, the statement that, “not even the gentiles” tolerate this behaviour was intended to shame the Corinthians.⁶¹ Such sexual misconduct

⁶⁰ The NIV translates ἔθνεσιν as “pagans,” however, it is more consistent to understand the term as a broader reference to the gentile nations of the majority of the Corinthian Christians. Cf. Harris, *Second Epistle*, 385.

⁶¹ Paul’s reference to “not even the gentiles” could be interpreted to indicate the cessation of the gentile identities in Christian identity. Instead, I argue that Paul’s use of the term is intentionally pejorative and relies on the stereotypes that he inherited from his Judean background. The non-Christian gentile identities stereotypically represented all that is antithetical to Christian identity. The Corinthians

is contrary to Christian identity. In fact, Paul goes so far as to inform the Corinthians that they are not to associate with anyone who claims to be a Christian yet indulges in sexual immorality (5:9–11).⁶² However, Paul also provides room for forgiveness and grace. In 2 Cor 2:5–11, Paul encourages the Corinthians to welcome back and forgive a different brother who had suffered corporate discipline and was repentant.

The prohibition against associating with any who claim Christian identity yet behave in manners contrary to that identity also applies to those who are greedy, idolaters, slanderers, drunkards and swindlers. Paul, who clearly views table fellowship as an essential rite of Christian identity (Gal 2; 1 Cor 11), instructs the Corinthians to not even eat with such people. Such a strong statement communicates to the Corinthians that people who engage in such practices have no Christian identity. This sentiment is stated even more boldly in 1 Cor 6:9–11 in which Paul writes that the sexually immoral (including adulterers and those who practice homosexuality) as well as idolaters, thieves, greedy, drunkards, slanderers and swindlers would not inherit the kingdom of God.⁶³ Such a statement excludes those who actively participate in such behaviour from Christian identity. The differentiation between Christian identity and the non-Christian identity is further emphasised by Paul's statement, "and that is what some of you were"

would have understood Paul's use of "not even the gentiles" to represent the stereotypical identities of their non-Christian contemporaries.

⁶² Thiselton (*First Epistle*, 409) writes, "Paul calls for *discrimination* about boundary markers, corporate identity, and the recognition of the Christian community as a corporate witness to overt beliefs, values, and lifestyles. *The addressees are to use their sense about how this works out* so that no one is confused and so that a man such as the immoral offender is well aware of where he stands in relation to the community."

⁶³ For a clear interpretation of Paul's use of the terms *μαλαχοί* and *ἀρσενοκοῖται* as references to homosexual practice, see Ciampa, *First Letter*, 241–45.

(6:11).⁶⁴ These behaviours are a marked part of the Corinthians' old human identity and are to be discarded once they adopted Christian identity.

Treatment of Ingroup and Outgroup

While Paul presents the Corinthians with significant differentiation between Christian identity and their former non-Christian gentile identities, he does not intend for that differentiation to become a reason for discrimination or judgment toward them. When condemning the Corinthians for their failure to appropriately respond to the incestuous situation in 1 Cor 5, he also makes it clear that they are not to apply the same standards to those outside the ingroup. In vv. 9–11, Paul makes it clear that his command not to associate with “sexually immoral people” only applies to ingroup members of Christian identity,⁶⁵ and not outgroup gentiles “the people of this world” (10).⁶⁶ For Paul the behavioural norms of Christian identity are intended to function as boundary markers and thus to differentiate between ingroup and outgroup members, however, the behavioural norms of Christian identity are not to be applied to outgroup members. Outgroup members are expected to behave like outgroup members, even if Paul's description of them contain stereotypes and hence are not entirely accurate. Paul even reminds the Corinthians that they once lived as outgroup gentiles (1 Cor 6:11). Such a reminder serves two purposes. It reminds the Corinthians that they no longer live

⁶⁴ While not all non-Christian gentiles fit into the categories listed by Paul, he presents them as stereotypes of the non-Christian (i.e. old human) gentile identity group. Paul's point is two-fold: First, non-Christian gentiles are marked as outgroup because of their immoral behaviours. Second, the Corinthians themselves were once outgroup members before joining Christian identity. That is to say, that they come from the same old human background as the outgroup non-Christian gentiles. May, *Body*, 55–57.

⁶⁵ Or to those who claim to be part of Christian identity (v. 11).

⁶⁶ See Thiselton (*First Epistle* 410), who translates τοῦ κόσμου τούτου (of this world) as *in secular society*.

according to their former identities. They are now expected to live by the behavioural norms of Christian identity. It also reminds the Corinthians that they once lived as outgroup gentiles, therefore, the Corinthians were not to despise outgroup gentiles.

Not only does Paul avoid presenting outgroup gentiles as despicable, he desires that the Corinthians voluntarily sacrifice their own rights and privileges in order to be able to win over outgroup gentiles for the gospel. In 1 Cor 8, Paul exhorts the Corinthians to abstain from participating in temple feasts because such participation would only serve to confuse their non-Christian counterparts and thus hinder their possible salvation.⁶⁷ It is in this context that Paul offers his prototypical sacrifice in ch. 9. This point is expanded in 1 Cor 10:27–33, where Paul wrote about specific settings in which the Corinthians ate in the homes of non-Christians. In settings where their eating idol-sacrificed meat would hinder non-Christian gentiles' salvation, Paul cautioned against eating. The concept of sacrificing personal freedoms in order to win over outgroup members fits with Paul's prototypical example as an ambassador in 2 Cor 5:16–21 and the ministry of reconciliation discussed earlier.

Yet, even though Paul emphasises a ministry of reconciliation with outsiders, he also cautions against overly strong associations with non-Christians in 2 Cor 6:14—7:2. Land highlights the connections between this passage and 1 Cor 10:14–22.⁶⁸ He argues that both passages focus on the purity of the Christian community. In other words, these passages relate primarily to boundary markers and behavioural norms of Christian identity. Specifically, the prohibition against eating temple meat in 1 Cor 10:14–22 and being unequally yoked in 2 Cor 6:14—7:2 relate to behavioural norms connected to

⁶⁷ Land, "Paul's Response," 7.

⁶⁸ Land, "Paul's Response," 254.

idolatry and placing appropriate boundary markers for ingroup Christians to respect those behavioural norms. Therefore, 2 Cor 6:14—7:2 is less about treatment of outgroup gentiles and is more about boundary markers and behavioural norms for ingroup members of Christian identity. To the extent that it does impact treatment of outgroup members, it is particularly important to understand the meaning of “Do not be yoked together with unbelievers” (6:14). The metaphor of the yoke indicates a close relationship in which both participants are required to work in unison toward the same goal.⁶⁹ Paul is concerned that the Corinthians not compromise their purity by entering into significant relationships with non-Christian gentiles that would potentially lead toward the violation of the behavioural norms of Christian identity. Paul presents a balanced perspective to the Corinthians in which they are not to completely isolate themselves from non-Christian gentiles (1 Cor 5:9–11) but are to engage in a ministry of reconciliation that seeks the salvation of non-Christian gentiles (2 Cor 5:16–21) while avoiding too strong a relationship that would lead toward compromising Christian behavioural norms.

Conclusion

The Thessalonians were successful in adopting Christian identity as a superordinate identity and transforming their subordinate identities. The Galatians recognized the need for transforming their subordinate identities, but foolishly sought to effect that transformation through the adoption of the Judean identity. The Corinthians failed to even recognize the need for transformation and continued to live out their old human identity. In response, Paul presented prototypes that represent the transformative nature

⁶⁹ Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 197.

of Christian identity, including the transformation of prototypes surrounding leadership. He emphasised benefits of Christian identity that indicate its superiority over Old humanity and urged the Corinthians to modify their behaviours in a way that transforms their subordinate identities in line with Christian identity.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION AND APPLICATION

I began this thesis with the goal of trying to understand Paul's views regarding Judeans, gentiles and Christians. Because this is primarily a question of identity, that is, how Paul views Christian identity in relation to Judean and gentile identities, I decided to approach the question through the lens of a Social Identity Approach. My hope, in applying these theories, was not only to gain an academic understanding of Paul's perspective, but rather for that understanding to help shape my own personal approach to Christian identity as well as provide direction and application for others in their journey to live out Christian identity in twenty-first-century society. I believe that the conclusions found in this study do have practical implications for today.

Chapter 3 shows that it is possible to interpret Paul's view of Christian identity as a new human identity. Through exploring a variety of passages in the Pauline corpus, I argued that Paul frequently compares Christian identity to the common identity and situation of all of humanity and that he refers to Christian identity as a new creation and a human identity centred on the common union in Christ as a second Adam. This New Humanity is a redeemed or transformed humanity that is distinct from the former human identity, and will be represented as distinct through certain common behaviours and practices that are shaped and defined by this new Christian identity. Christian identity, therefore, is not simply a new religious identity that is equal to all other religious identities, nor is it a new ethnic or racial identity, but rather a new and redeemed superordinate identity under which other social identities become subordinate. In

application, Christian identity, when viewed as a superordinate identity, must impact every aspect of life. We, as those marked by Christian identity, cannot separate that identity into a category that is only relevant and salient during specific segregated times and places. Christian identity must shape and, at times, restrict the expression of our subordinate identities. My identity as a student and a scholar must be shaped by my Christian identity, as must my identity as a husband, a father, a football fan and even as a politically active Canadian citizen. Christian identity, as a superordinate identity, must impact every aspect of life.

In Chapter 4, I explored Paul's letters to the Thessalonians. In these letters, I suggested, Paul writes to a group of Christians who have succeeded in adopting Christian identity as a superordinate identity and who are living out that identity in a way that is creating a noticeable difference between them and their Old Humanity contemporaries. This difference naturally creates hardship and hostility toward Christian identity, which meant the Thessalonian Christians were experiencing isolation, hatred and persecution. Paul writes to them in an effort to encourage the Thessalonians to continue in their devotion to Christian identity even in the midst of opposition. Therefore, even today, Christian identity will create a level of discord with the predominant old human identities in society. Those with whom Christians used to share a common identity become uncomfortable and, at times, intolerant of how we live out Christian identity, particularly in situations where we retain a common subordinate identity. Living out Christian identity, in any context, will create tension and conflict within the community and it is imperative that Christians know this and are prepared to persevere through the difficulties. Chapter 5 focused on the Galatians and the pressure to conform to a Judean form of Christian identity. Paul informs the Galatians that they did

not need to adopt additional Judean identity markers to be fully Christian. He assures the Galatians that they already possess all the benefits of Christian identity and that any efforts to adopt Judean practices and rituals are regressive, moving the Galatians away from Christian identity instead of toward it. In the present context, there are other areas where it is possible for Christians today to overemphasise the importance of a particular subordinate identity and even raise that identity, or aspects of the identity as essential for a Christian identity. It is possible for Christians to hold a variety of political positions and vote for opposing political parties and still be united as Christians. Christians can hold a variety of different views regarding education and schooling choices for their children. They can have different types of jobs and different incomes, as well as different worship styles, theological views and approaches to family planning. There are, I am sure, many other types of subordinate identities that have the potential to cause conflict and division, as some Christians raise their own subordinate identity traits as necessarily Christian.

In Chapter 6 I argued that the Corinthians were failing to live out their new Christian identity, and failed to recognize that their former subordinate identities, while continuing as part of Christian identity, had to change in order to align with the new superordinate Christian identity. Paul focuses on the types of behaviours and rituals that should mark the Corinthians as different from their non-Christian contemporaries. He offers up prototypes who were willing to sacrifice and give up aspects of their former identities for the new Christian identity and he criticizes the Corinthians for not doing the same. Applying this principle is straight-forward. There are many ways in which Christians today can fail to conform their subordinate identities to the superordinate Christian identity of New Humanity. Paul discusses such behavioural norms as idol

worship, sexual immorality and greed (among others) in the Corinthian letters and at least two of these categories are definitely present in current Canadian society. Yet, there are other ways that Christians can fail to conform their subordinate identities to Christian identity. Some of the categories mentioned in Chapter 5 apply here as well. When Christians ignore the clearly un-Christian behaviour of their preferred political party or candidate and even begin to defend such behaviour, they have failed to subordinate their political affiliation to the norms and morals of Christian identity. Like the Corinthians, Christians in the twenty-first century can fail to fully adopt their Christian identity in favour of continuing to live the Old Humanity aspects of their subordinate identities.

These applications just scratch the surface of the implications of the work done in this thesis. I hope that future work will bring out more applications and help others to see the importance of Christian identity as a superordinate identity. Further research is also needed in developing the ideas presented in this thesis. Can these concepts be applied to other of Paul's writings, specifically Romans, Ephesians, and Colossians? It may also be profitable to compare Paul's view of Christian identity vis-à-vis the Judean and gentile identities with other New Testament authors.

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