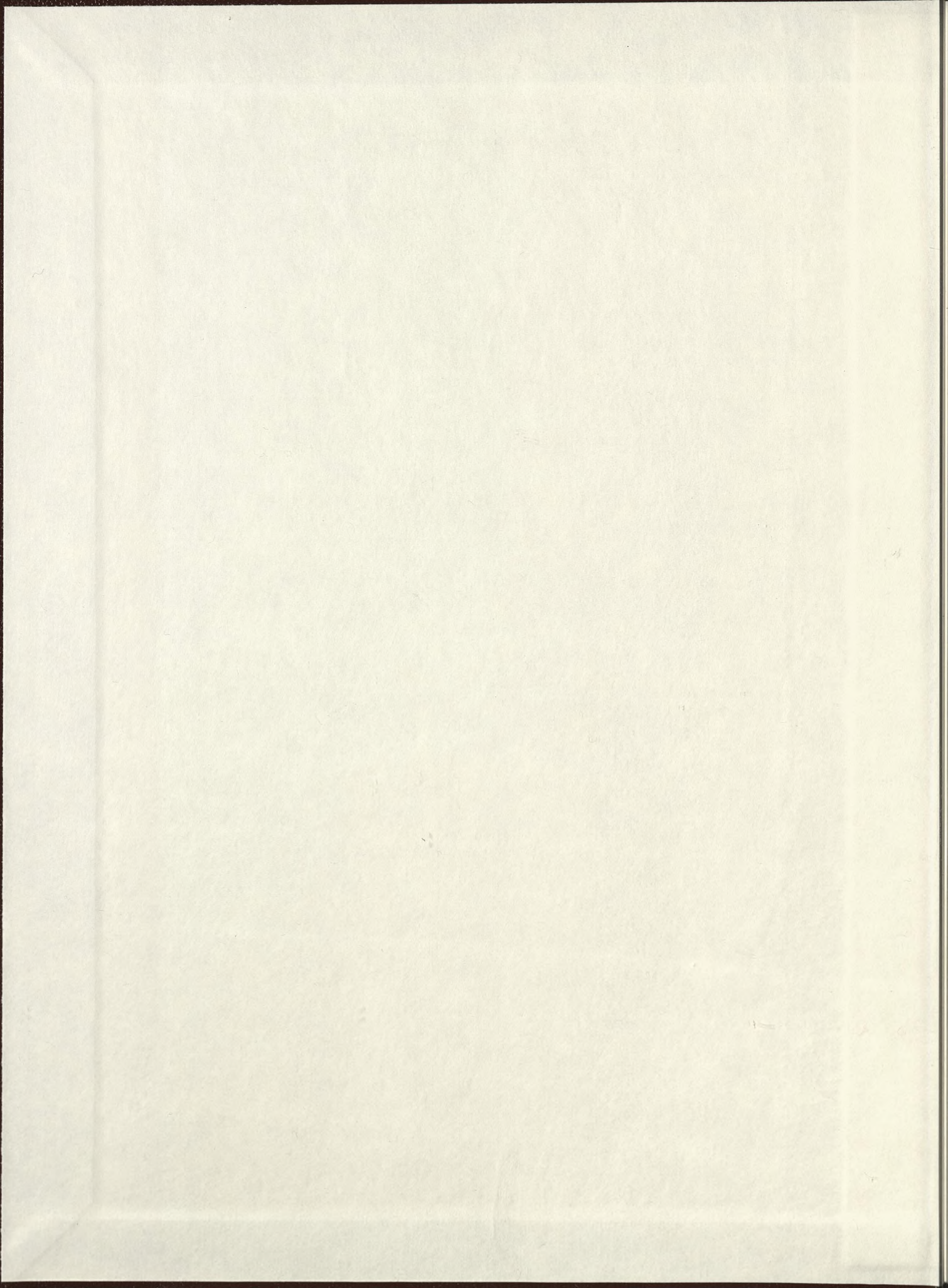
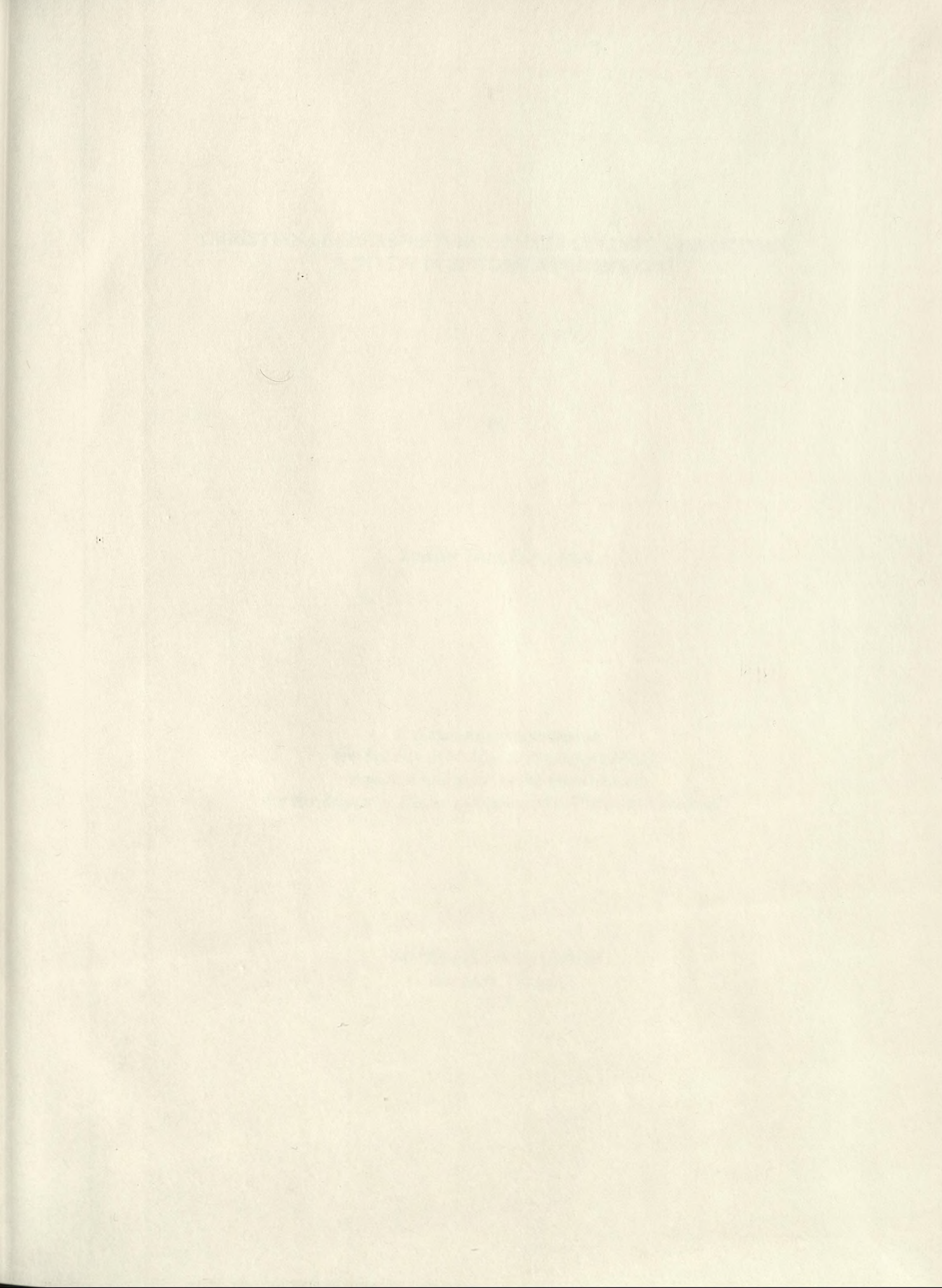


CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP FUNCTIONS IN
CORINTH AND EPHEBUS: A STUDY IN
HISTORICAL CONTEXTS

BY

JENNIFER FRIM,
B.A., M.A.





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Jennifer Frim, B.A., M.A.

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AUTHOR: Jennifer Frim

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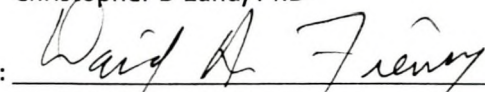
Primary Supervisor:


Stanley E Porter, PhD

Secondary Supervisor:


Christopher D Land, PhD

External Examiner:


David A Fiensy, PhD

Academic Dean Designate:


Paul S Evans, PhD

Date: October 12, 2018

ABSTRACT

“Christian Leadership Functions in Corinth and Ephesus: A Study in Historical Contexts”

Jennifer Frim
McMaster Divinity College
Hamilton, Ontario
Doctor of Philosophy (Christian Theology), 2019

This study contains a thick description of the early Christian communities in Corinth and Ephesus, demonstrating the unique context of each. It explores the Greco-Roman context, the historic context of the emergence of Christianity in each city, and the immediate context of the writing of each of the Pauline letters under investigation. It then uses those descriptions as a lens through which to examine the discussion of Christian leadership functions in 1 Cor 12:27–31, Eph 4:1–16, and 1 Tim 3:1–13. By employing methods of social description in an analysis of the Christian communities in Corinth and Ephesus, this study has demonstrated that Paul’s discussion of specific leadership functions with respect to each city is rooted in the historical context of each Christian community and therefore Paul mentions leadership functions and promotes attitudes concerning leadership which are in keeping with the circumstances of each community and does not necessarily promote uniform practice in all places. Ultimately, 1 Cor 12:27–31 discusses the primary importance of the leadership functions of apostle, prophet, and teacher in building up the Christian church, rather than the gifts of tongues that the Corinthians had been elevating to the highest positions. Ephesians 4:1–16 describes the leadership functions of apostle, prophet, evangelist, and pastor and teacher as gifts from God whose purpose is training the saints, doing works of service, and building up the

body of Christ. These leaders are to promote unity in a divided Ephesian church. Finally, 1 Tim 3:1–13 describes qualities for those wishing to fulfill the leadership functions of overseer and deacon (men and women). These qualities are designed to combat false teachers in the midst of the Christian community in Ephesus which had a long history of difficulties.

DEDICATION

For Jeremy and Ingrid

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Primary Source Abbreviations¹

Aelian	<i>Var. Hist.</i>	<i>Varia historia</i>
Aeschylus	<i>Prom.</i> <i>Sept.</i>	<i>Prometheus Vincetus</i> <i>Septem contra Thebas</i>
Antipater of Sidon		<i>Greek Anthology</i>
Appian	<i>Hist. Rom.</i>	<i>Historia romana</i>
Aristophanes	<i>Av.</i>	<i>Aves</i>
Aristotle	<i>Eth. Nic.</i>	<i>Ethica nicomachea</i>
Cicero	<i>Agr.</i> <i>Tusc.</i>	<i>De Lege agraria</i> <i>Tusculanae disputationes</i>
Demosthenes	<i>Or.</i>	<i>Oration</i>
Dio Cassius	<i>Hist. Rom.</i>	<i>Historia romana</i>
Dio Chrysostom	<i>Or.</i>	<i>Oration</i>
Diogenes Laertius	<i>Vit. phil.</i>	<i>Vitae philosophorum</i>
Epictetus	<i>Diatr.</i>	<i>Dissertationes</i>
Eusebius	<i>Hist. eccl.</i>	<i>Ecclesiastical History</i>
Homer	<i>Il.</i> <i>Od.</i>	<i>Iliad</i> <i>Odyssey</i>
Josephus	<i>Ant.</i> <i>J.W.</i>	<i>Antiquities</i> <i>Jewish Wars</i>
Justin Martyr	<i>Trypho</i>	<i>Dialogue with Trypho</i>
Juvenal	<i>Sat.</i>	<i>Satirae</i>
Livy	<i>Hist. Rom.</i>	<i>Historia romana</i>

¹ Not including biblical texts.

Lucian	<i>Am.</i> <i>Salt.</i>	<i>Amores</i> <i>De saltatione</i>
Martial	<i>Epig.</i>	<i>Epigrammata</i>
Menander	<i>Frag.</i>	<i>Fragment</i>
Onosander	<i>Strat.</i>	<i>Strategicus</i>
Pausanias	<i>Descr.</i>	<i>Graeciae descriptio</i>
Philo	<i>Legat.</i> <i>Sacr.</i>	<i>Legatio ad Gaium</i> <i>De sacrificiis Abelis et Caini</i>
Pindar	<i>Ol.</i>	<i>Olympionikai</i>
Plato	<i>Gorg.</i> <i>Leg.</i> <i>Resp.</i>	<i>Gorgias</i> <i>Leges</i> <i>Respublica</i>
Pliny the Elder	<i>Nat.</i>	<i>Naturalis historia</i>
Pliny the Younger	<i>Ep.</i>	<i>Epistulae</i>
Plutarch	<i>Amic. mult.</i> <i>Caes.</i> <i>Mor.</i> <i>Per.</i> <i>Alex.</i>	<i>De amicorum multitudinae</i> <i>Caesar</i> <i>Moralia</i> <i>Pericles</i> <i>Alexander</i>
Sophocles	<i>Ant.</i> <i>Phil.</i>	<i>Antigone</i> <i>Philocretes</i>
Soranos	<i>Gyn.</i>	<i>Gynaecia</i>
Suetonius	<i>Claud.</i>	<i>Divus Claudius</i>
Suetonius	<i>Nero</i>	<i>Nero</i>
Strabo	<i>Geogr.</i>	<i>Geographica</i>
Tacitus	<i>Ann.</i> <i>Dial.</i> <i>Hist.</i>	<i>Annales</i> <i>Dialogus de oratoribus</i> <i>Historiae</i>
Valerius Maximus	<i>Facta</i>	<i>Facta et Dicta Memorabilia</i>

Xenophon *Anab.* *Anabasis*

Secondary Source Abbreviations

<i>ABD</i>	Freedman, David Noel, ed. <i>The Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> . 6 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1992.
<i>AJA</i>	<i>American Journal of Archaeology</i>
AGJU	Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums
ANRW	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt: Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung</i> . Part 2, <i>Principat</i> . Edited by Hildegard Temporini and Wolfgang Haase. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1972–.
ANTC	Abingdon New Testament Commentaries
<i>AThR</i>	<i>Anglican Theological Review</i>
AYB	Anchor Yale Bible
AYBRL	Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library
<i>BBR</i>	<i>Bulletin for Biblical Research</i>
BDAG	Bauer, Walter, et al. <i>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> . 3rd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
<i>BibInt</i>	<i>Biblical Interpretation</i>
<i>BT</i>	<i>The Bible Translator</i>
<i>BSac</i>	<i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i>
<i>BTB</i>	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CGTSC	Cambridge Greek Testament for Schools and Colleges

ConBNT	Coniectanea Biblica: New Testament Series
ConcC	Concordia Commentary
<i>CTM</i>	<i>Concordia Theological Monthly</i>
<i>CurBR</i>	<i>Currents in Biblical Research</i>
<i>DCH</i>	Clines, David J. A., ed. <i>Dictionary of Classical Hebrew</i> . 9 vols. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 1993–2014.
ECC	Eerdmans Critical Commentary
<i>ENG</i>	Scherrer, Peter, ed. <i>Ephesus: The New Guide</i> . [Turkey]: Ege Yayınları, 2000.
EPRO	Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'empire romain
<i>ETL</i>	<i>Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses</i>
<i>EvQ</i>	<i>Evangelical Quarterly</i>
<i>ExpTim</i>	<i>Expository Times</i>
<i>FiE</i>	<i>Forschungen in Ephesos</i>
<i>Hesperia</i>	<i>Hesperia: Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens</i>
HNTC	Harper's New Testament Commentaries
HTS	Harvard Theological Studies
<i>HvTSt</i>	<i>Hervormde teologiese studies</i>
IBC	Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching
<i>IvE</i>	<i>Inschriften von Ephesos I–VIII</i> in <i>Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien</i> . Bonn: Habelt, 1979–1984. (Note: numbers are inscription numbers.)
ICC	International Critical Commentary
<i>JAAR</i>	<i>Journal of the American Academy of Religion</i>
<i>JAJ</i>	<i>Journal of Ancient Judaism</i>

<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JBR</i>	<i>Journal of Bible and Religion</i>
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
<i>JQR</i>	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
JRASup	Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplementary Series
<i>JRH</i>	<i>Journal of Religious History</i>
<i>JRS</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
LBS	Linguistic Biblical Studies
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LNTS	The Library of New Testament Studies
LSJ	Liddell, Henry George et. al. <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> . 9 th ed. Oxford: Clarendon, 1996.
L&N	Louw, Johannes P., and Eugene A. Nida, eds. <i>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains</i> . 2 nd ed. 2 vols. New York: United Bible Societies, 1989.
<i>MSJ</i>	<i>The Master's Seminary Journal</i>
NCBC	New Century Bible Commentary
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
<i>NIDNTT</i>	Brown, Colin, ed. <i>New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology</i> . 4 vols. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975–1978.
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>

NovTSup	Supplements to Novum Testamentum
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
<i>OGIS</i>	Dittenberger, Wilhelm, ed. <i>Orientalis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae</i> . 2 vols. Leipzig: Herzl, 1903–1905.
PBM	Paternoster Biblical Monographs
PiNTC	Pillar New Testament Commentary
<i>Pneuma</i>	<i>Pneuma: Journal for the Society of Pentecostal Studies</i>
<i>RTR</i>	<i>Reformed Theological Review</i>
RGRW	Religions in the Graeco-Roman World
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
SJLA	Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SNTW	Studies of the New Testament and Its World
SP	Sacra Pagina
<i>SwJT</i>	<i>Southwestern Journal of Theology</i>
<i>TDNT</i>	Kittel, Gerhard, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds. <i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> . Translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. 10 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964–1976.
<i>TJ</i>	<i>Trinity Journal</i>
<i>TynBul</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
TNTC	Tyndale New Testament Commentaries
TPINTC	TPI New Testament Commentaries
<i>TS</i>	<i>Theological Studies</i>
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary

- WGRWSup Writings from the Greco-Roman World Supplement Series
- WTJ* *Westminster Theological Journal*
- WUNT Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
- ZNW* *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche*

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The historical development of leadership functions¹ and structure in the New Testament church has been the subject of much research for countless decades. It is a topic fraught with emotion as modern churches attempt to discern how they should organize, since many have a desire to do it “just like” the Bible dictates. Unfortunately, the biblical text contains no section entitled, “The Definitive Way to Organize a Church.” Instead, the text of the New Testament contains small snippets of information concerning the structure of early Christian communities and specific leadership functions within them as is pertinent to the particular situation that occasioned the writing. Scholars are left to grapple with the evidence, to do their best to interpret the material in the ancient context, and to attempt to determine how such information may or may not be applicable to the modern church.

Even those who have little or no interest in discerning a “biblical model” of modern church structure have attempted to interpret the information concerning the ancient church. Scholars of various persuasions have, in spite of their different goals, frequently simplified the biblical evidence for early structure into a uniform mold with linear development. They claim that the earliest churches were without formal structure and functioned charismatically, and that only later did this give way to a more formal

¹ The phrase “leadership function” is meant as a generic phrase to indicate the various terms used by Paul in his discussions of leadership with each of the Christian communities in question. These terms include: apostle (*ἀπόστολος*), prophet (*προφήτης*), teacher (*διδάσκαλος*), evangelist (*εὐαγγελιστής*), pastor (*ποιμήν*), overseer (*ἐπίσκοπος*), and deacon (*διάκονος*). The use of the word “function” is meant to indicate that while each of these words describes an individual with a particular set of leadership tasks within a Christian community (such as overseer), or who is respected as a leader by a number of different Christian communities (such as apostle), there is no textual evidence to suggest that in the first century any of these functions had developed into a formal “office.” Many of these functions would eventually develop into offices in later centuries, but the information available concerning those later offices and their particular place within early ecclesiology ought not to be read back into the first-century use of the terms.

structure.² This alleged development of a formal, institutional structure is often met with sentiments of regret, negativity, and lament at the loss of things free and charismatic.

Many questions remain unanswered, or the answers that have been given are unsatisfactory. The unfortunate reality for those who are hunting for detailed answers concerning New Testament leadership is that the New Testament does not provide systematic answers to most of the questions which have been raised concerning it. Instead, the New Testament documents address a wide range of communities in various locations and speak about leadership functions only as the need arose in a given community. Further to this, the need to discuss leadership functions always arose out of the context of a particular Christian community which in turn was shaped by the history and geographic location of that particular community. Both the Christian context and the historical social context must be considered when assessing the available leadership evidence. Before any over-arching leadership structures can be deduced from the New Testament evidence—if they can indeed be deduced at all—the words concerning leadership functions in the New Testament must be examined in detail for each location that is addressed. These words must be examined in light of the ancient social context and thoroughly understood in that light before any further assertions can be made about the meaning of the texts for modern readers. The reason for this is that even similar sentiments expressed to different locations in different contexts may have slightly different interpretive implications.

² This idea can be traced to Rudolf Sohm in the nineteenth century: “Die aus dem göttlichen Wort geschöpfte, in Wahrheit apostolische Lehre von der Verfassung der Ekklesia ist die, dass die Organisation der Christenheit nicht rechtliche, sondern charismatische Organisation ist.” Sohm, *Kirchenrecht I*, 26. “The true apostolic teaching created from the word of God about the composition of the church is this: that the institution of Christendom is not regimented but rather is a charismatic organization” (translation mine). Weber was highly influenced by Sohm’s ideas. For a discussion of Weber’s use of Sohm, see below.

History of Research

Many have sought to answer the plethora of questions concerning the various aspects of leadership in the New Testament. Each study has its own approach to the text and its own set of assumptions. As the years have passed and common interpretive methods have changed, the nature of these studies has also evolved and changed. What follows is a brief discussion of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century scholars who favour a theological interpretation of early church leadership practice, followed by a selection of scholars who study the same topic using sociological methods of interpretation from the late-twentieth century and early twenty-first century.³

Joseph Barber Lightfoot

Lightfoot's work *The Christian Ministry*, originally published in 1888, is a standard work cited by nearly everyone who studies the issue of New Testament leadership, even if it is only to disagree with his findings.⁴ Lightfoot's main concern is deciding who can be considered a "minister": clergy, laity, or both? In exploring this issue, he argues for three levels of "ministers" prior to the mid-second century: the presbyters, deacons, and bishops.⁵ Lightfoot argues that, as the church grew from a relatively small group to a larger one, it could no longer maintain its then current leadership structure. He notes, "As the Church grew in numbers, as new and heterogeneous elements were added, as the early fervour of devotion cooled and strange forms of disorder sprang up, it became

³ There some scholars who continue to support their church's organizational structure by using theologically-based biblical exegesis. One example of this is Beckwith, *Elders*.

⁴ This work was originally published as an appendix to Lightfoot's *Commentary on the Epistle to the Philippians* (1888) and was later published separately (1901) by the Trustees of the Lightfoot Fund. Lightfoot, *Christian Ministry*, v.

⁵ Lightfoot, *Christian Ministry*, 9.

necessary to provide for the emergency by fixed rules and definite officers.”⁶ It is with this in mind that he sets about demonstrating how the three-tiered ministry structure came about.

Lightfoot traces the emergence of the three offices by showing how the deacons emerged in Acts 6,⁷ asserting that this was intended to be a lasting and permanent office which developed neither out of the order of Levites in the Old Testament nor out of a similar idea in the synagogues of the time.⁸ He goes on to discuss the later emergence of the presbyter, which he says sprang from a similar position in the synagogues.⁹ Though he has ample evidence in the New Testament for these two “lower orders,” he freely admits that “traces of the third and highest order, the episcopate properly so called, are few and indistinct.”¹⁰ For evidence of the further cementing of this final office, Lightfoot turns to the church fathers and early Christian literature.

Lightfoot is looking for evidence of a threefold office and he concludes that one develops not in the New Testament but in the early church—and more than half of his book is focused there. It is not his goal to look at the New Testament alone; he starts with the idea of the threefold office from the early church and looks for evidence of it in the New Testament. Certainly, New Testament events eventually led to the development of these offices. Yet looking at the New Testament in its own right (as much as is possible) may shed different light on what the first Christians actually did and why they did it.

⁶ Lightfoot, *Christian Ministry*, 5. Lightfoot mentions the need to create more definite orders in the church, but does not suggest that this is a negative development as Sohm will only four years later.

⁷ See Lightfoot, *Christian Ministry*, 10–17.

⁸ Lightfoot, *Christian Ministry*, 12, 13.

⁹ Lightfoot, *Christian Ministry*, 18. For further discussion on the idea of elders/presbyters from Lightfoot’s point of view, see Lightfoot, *Christian Ministry*, 17–23.

¹⁰ Lightfoot, *Christian Ministry*, 23.

Rudolph Sohm

In 1892 Rudolph Sohm published *Kirchenrecht: Erster Band*.¹¹ Despite the fact that Sohm was a jurist and not a theologian, his concept of charisma affected the theological understanding of church order which is still felt in the twenty-first century.¹² Sohm developed the idea of charisma from Paul's writings. Max Weber would adopt the term (with modifications), and sociologists and biblical scholars alike would thereafter immortalize it in subsequent research concerning church order and its origins. Sohm's *Kirchenrecht* is an important foundation for understanding later works and the significance of their various theses.

When Sohm wrote *Kirchenrecht*, he was unhappy with the then-prevailing ideas concerning the emergence of church order.¹³ In Sohm's opinion, the idea that the church could, of its own accord, determine the particulars of its structure was nonsense. Likewise, the idea that the structure of a church's order and government was something separate from its "spiritual" components, such as doctrine, was absurd.¹⁴ The nature of "ecclesiastical law" (*Kirchenrecht*), according to Sohm, stood in direct opposition to the very nature of the church and therefore such law could not actually exist.¹⁵

As support for his ideas, Sohm denies that there is such a thing as a "local church gathering" (*Ortsgemeindeversammlung*) or a "house church gathering"

¹¹ Hereafter *Kirchenrecht*. This work has no complete English translation, though a summary of his ideas was published as Lowrie and Sohm, *Church and Its Organization*. D. Smith notes that at times the two volumes are very close whereas in other places Lowrie's version is more summary than translation. See D. Smith, "Faith, Reason and Charisma," 54. Though the second volume was published posthumously (1923), it is the first volume, the "historical foundations," which is most discussed when the subject of church order is raised.

¹² It is from Sohm that Max Weber derived his ideas of charisma. While Weber acknowledges that he borrows the term from Sohm, the two do not agree on the source of charisma in a leader. Though for Sohm charisma was divinely bestowed, for Weber it was sociologically construed. (For discussion of their relation and Weber's use of Sohm see D. Smith, "Faith, Reason and Charisma," 34–35.)

¹³ For discussion see Nardoni, "Charism in the Early Church," 647–48.

¹⁴ Sohm, *Kirchenrecht I*, 2.

¹⁵ Sohm, *Kirchenrecht I*, 1.

(*Hausegemeindeversammlung*). Instead, any gathering of Christians in any given location is simply a manifestation of the whole of Christendom.¹⁶ This, he insists, is how the New Testament church saw itself.¹⁷ While he does not deny the existence of, or necessity for, leadership in the church (wherever the manifestation), he insists that such leadership cannot be of a legal nature.

The reason for this rejection of all things legal is that laws are a human creation and the head of the church is not a person, but God. For Sohm, “Control in the church can consequently become accomplished solely in the name of Christ (God).”¹⁸ This means that any order that the church might have must be derived from God’s word. The only way in which this can be done is by acknowledging that the source of authority in the church is a charismatic, God-bestowed authority.¹⁹

According to Sohm, the way in which God bestows his order on the church is through the one truly charismatic gift: the gift of teaching (*die Lehrgabe*).²⁰ It is only through individuals divinely bestowed with this charismatic gift that any decisions of any kind can be made in the church. They are the method through which God works: “The teaching-gift (*Lehrgabe*) is the gift of ruling, a gift which authorizes those who govern Christendom to lead in the name of God.”²¹ Sohm is not against “order” in the church so much as any notion that humans have any real institutional power or anything to contribute to it. Therefore he rejects the established structures of bishops and elders, of

¹⁶ Sohm, *Kirchenrecht I*, 21.

¹⁷ Sohm, *Kirchenrecht I*, 21.

¹⁸ “Gewalt in der Ekklesia kann folglich nur im Namen Christi (Gottes) geübt werden,” (English translation mine). Sohm, *Kirchenrecht I*, 23.

¹⁹ Sohm, *Kirchenrecht I*, 26.

²⁰ Sohm, *Kirchenrecht I*, 28.

²¹ “Die Lehrgabe ist die Gabe des Regiments, eine Gabe, welche ermächtigt, im Namen Gottes die Regierung der Christenheit zu führen” (English translation mine). Sohm, *Kirchenrecht I*, 36.

both the Catholics and Protestants, in favour of only that which God ordains: a single charismatic leader.²²

Though Sohm's caution against placing too much faith in a humanly-derived church order is perhaps warranted, his assertions are extreme. They are not as easily supported by the New Testament as he thinks, and they can only be sustained by taking a very narrow view of Paul's writings. Burtchaell is not at all kind (though not far from the truth) when he states, "Sohm lays down his dogmatic principles, and then arrays historical evidence to which they can be applied. Though he is an erudite historical scholar, he fits scriptural texts to his doctrine pretty much the way Cinderella's stepsisters fitted their feet into the slipper."²³ Deriving an over-arching doctrine of church order (or rather why there should not be a church order in the first place) requires a much wider perspective on the New Testament evidence. Nevertheless, Sohm's ideas have had a lasting influence on subsequent scholarship (garnering both supporters and adversaries) and his work cannot be overlooked.

Vernon K. Bartlet

Bartlet's book *Church Life and Church Order During the First Four Centuries* is based on a set of manuscripts found after his death. They represent the majority of six lectures delivered in 1924 at Trinity College (Cambridge). They were edited by Cecil Jon Cadoux and published in 1943.²⁴ Like Lightfoot, Bartlet begins his study in the New Testament but spends most of his time examining the centuries following it. About the New Testament era, Bartlet says, "All Church-order, in the positive and not merely the

²² In this he includes a resounding rejection of councils of elders or bishops, as the earliest churches apparently knew of no such groups, but only individual leaders. Sohm, *Kirchenrecht I*, 118.

²³ Burtchaell, *Synagogue to Church*, 89 n. 47.

²⁴ See forward by W. B. Selbie in Bartlet, *Church Life and Church Order*, xi-xii.

restrictive sense, sprang out of the inspired quality of Christian life within the unity-amid-diversity of the membership of the Church, viewed as the body or organism animated by the Christ present in all by the Spirit.”²⁵ He advocates for a charismatic “freely flowing” order initially, but is careful to point out that it was not chaos.²⁶ He also implies that at this point in the growth of Christianity, there was little interest in long-term planning for leadership as the Christians were not expecting much delay in the return of Christ.²⁷ In the “later” Pauline Letters he notes that “the new church order” is beginning to emerge,²⁸ but it is not until the death of the apostles, Bartlet suggests, that stricter order began to emerge.²⁹ The transition begins with the writing of the *Didache* shortly after the death of Peter as a means of preserving teachings that could no longer be heard orally.³⁰ Bartlet then moves his discussion on to the post-New Testament period and discusses the development of church life and order in the second, third, and fourth centuries.

Bartlet’s work has a scope much broader than my study and so only the first few chapters are of particular relevance. Because his interest is so broad, the chapters in his book which pertain to the New Testament era are very general and do not delve into the specifics or particulars of any given letter or location. Though his New Testament work is general, Bartlet is a careful scholar and he effectively nuances the difference between the completely chaotic “charismatic” tendencies in the New Testament church and the

²⁵ Bartlet, *Church Life and Church Order*, 22.

²⁶ Bartlet, *Church Life and Church Order*, 33. His posthumous editor, Cadoux, notes that this idea was not new at the time, but had been put forth by Rudolph Sohm. Bartlet’s new contribution is his application of Sohm’s ideas to the church orders. See Bartlet, *Church Life and Church Order*, lxi-lxii.

²⁷ Bartlet, *Church Life and Church Order*, 28–29.

²⁸ Bartlet, *Church Life and Church Order*, 33. At this point he does not make clear to which Pauline Letters he is referring nor exactly what that “new order” is.

²⁹ Bartlet, *Church Life and Church Order*, 35.

³⁰ Bartlet, *Church Life and Church Order*, 35. He suggests that this happens around 65 CE and elsewhere firmly suggests that the *Didache* belongs to the period prior to 64 CE, not after it. See Bartlet, *Church Life and Church Order*, 22.

stricter order of hierarchies which emerged later. For Bartlet, the reality of the “apostolic age” is somewhere between these two extremes, though he suggests that there was a greater tendency toward the spirit-led, charismatic end of the spectrum in the earlier time periods. This demonstrates the influence of Sohm, though perhaps not a whole-hearted embrace of his ideas.³¹ Notably, Bartlet says that his findings concerning charismatic authority and church order are generally true and that these two things “co-existed side-by-side, *if in varying degrees in different localities.*”³² Though I am skeptical of the degree of charismatic authority that Bartlet suggests, I fully agree with his assertion that there may have been differences in the degree of organization in varying locations. This idea has only the briefest of mentions in the early chapters of Bartlet’s book, but it is one that needs more exploration.

Hans von Campenhausen

Hans von Campenhausen’s work *Ecclesiastical Authority and Spiritual Power in the Church of the First Three Centuries* was originally published in German in 1953 and was translated into English in 1969. His self-stated purpose is “to set out the historical evidence which enables us to recognize the mutual relationships of these various factors [see below], and their basic importance, during the period from the beginnings of primitive Christianity to the threshold of the new development which produced the

³¹ In Bartlet’s *Church Life and Church Order* there is no explicit reference to Sohm, though the influence of his ideas comes through clearly. Burtchaell suggests that Bartlet does indeed follow Sohm’s views generally and cites an earlier work of Bartlet’s as evidence, though no specific page is given. Burtchaell, *Synagogue to Church*, 122. An examination of Bartlet’s other work, *The Apostolic Age*, reveals no explicit references to Sohm, either, but the ideas of Sohm are especially felt in the second chapter of the section of Church Life and Doctrine. It is here that Bartlet discusses organization and discipline and emphasises the role of the spirit and the charismatic gifts. See Bartlet, *The Apostolic Age*, 476–96. The fact that Bartlet feels no need to mention Sohm explicitly may suggest that the ideas Sohm put forth were already commonly accepted.

³² Bartlet, *Church Life and Church Order*, 28 (emphasis mine).

phenomenon of the state church.”³³ The “various factors” he mentions include divine commissioning and endowment of leaders and the balance between the ideas of office and charisma.³⁴ His work reads as a chronological description of the development of authority from Jesus down to the early church fathers.

Von Campenhausen sees that Jesus and the apostles derive their authority from God directly, while other early leaders are given a kind of spirit-endowed authority.³⁵ According to his study, this spiritual side of authority is the only authority Paul promotes³⁶ while other New Testament evidence shows a twofold emphasis on both spirit and office.³⁷ Eventually, as the church develops, it moves toward a more hierarchical structure involving the idea of succession, grounded in canon law.³⁸ In the end, von Campenhausen promotes the idea of a balance between the ideas of office and spirit. This balanced perspective, according to von Campenhausen, avoids the trap of pitting Paul’s spiritual emphasis against the ideas of office found in the Pastorals.³⁹

While von Campenhausen seeks to demonstrate how the ideas of authority and leadership developed chronologically, his presuppositions, his method, and his ultimate goals are different than mine. Von Campenhausen’s assumption that the Pastoral Epistles and the book of Ephesians are not authentic colours his conclusions.⁴⁰ If the Pastorals and

³³ Von Campenhausen, *Ecclesiastical Authority*, 3.

³⁴ Von Campenhausen, *Ecclesiastical Authority*, 2.

³⁵ Von Campenhausen, *Ecclesiastical Authority*, 76.

³⁶ For von Campenhausen, Paul’s works do not include Ephesians or the Pastorals. See von Campenhausen, *Ecclesiastical Authority*, 58.

³⁷ Von Campenhausen, *Ecclesiastical Authority*, 76, 80.

³⁸ Von Campenhausen, *Ecclesiastical Authority*, 293.

³⁹ Von Campenhausen, *Ecclesiastical Authority*, 301. Nardoni notes that von Campenhausen is one of Sohm’s great supporters. Nardoni, “Charism in the Early Church,” 649–50. This can be seen in von Campenhausen’s office-spirit separation which suggests (though von Campenhausen’s perspective is more balanced) an affinity for Sohm’s work. In this particular work von Campenhausen refers to Sohm directly only to dispute Sohm’s idea that Clement instituted the monarchical episcopate at Rome. Von Campenhausen, *Ecclesiastical Authority*, 84.

⁴⁰ Von Campenhausen, *Ecclesiastical Authority*, 58 n. 11.

their comments regarding potential early “offices” within Christianity are allowed to mingle chronologically with the other Pauline Epistles, one’s conclusions concerning a separation between office and spirit may be very different.⁴¹ Additionally, Campenhausen concentrates more on authority than structure, attempting to determine by what or whose authority the subsequent authority structure of the church came into being. His study thus consists of tracing the path of authority and the way the church perceived who had authority to do what. In contrast, I am not so interested in the issue of authority relating to the development of church structure as I am in the leadership functions which existed in a given location at a given time and the words Paul wrote to the churches concerning those functions. Also, while Campenhausen moves past the New Testament to complete his study, I will confine my research to the New Testament period alone.

Eduard Schweizer

Another standard in research concerning New Testament leadership structure is Eduard Schweizer’s *Church Order in the New Testament*, first published in German in 1959. Schweizer is less concerned about tracing the church’s actual development than with describing theologically how the church of the New Testament understood itself and how this understanding influenced the way it ordered itself.⁴² In seeking to accomplish his goals, therefore, Schweizer groups his study of the New Testament books by theology rather than by chronology or geography.⁴³ What he primarily seeks to discover is the

⁴¹ My assumptions concerning the authenticity of the Pastoral Epistles and Ephesians will be discussed in Chapter 2.

⁴² Schweizer, *Church Order*, 7.

⁴³ Schweizer, *Church Order*, 7. Part A of his book simply deals with “Jesus” and his conception of the church. This is gleaned primarily from the Gospels, though Schweizer notes “It is often not possible to say with certainty what can be traced back to Jesus himself, and what has been transformed or re-formed by the Church.” Schweizer, *Church Order*, 20. Part B of the book groups Matthew, Luke and the Pastorals together; Part C groups the “Letters of Paul” (though this does not include the Pastorals, Colossians or

church's "essential nature" and from that he forms principles of order relating to various aspects of the church.⁴⁴

Schweizer notes that churches cannot look to the New Testament as a "law" for church order in the present day. He is somewhat ahead of his time in noting that "the ordering of the church in Jerusalem is not a law for the church in Corinth."⁴⁵ He is careful also to point out that this does not make the New Testament indifferent to order but rather that the church's order must be reflective of its need to proclaim the gospel, which may indeed take on different forms and may speak louder than any words it actually proclaims.⁴⁶ It is here that Schweizer notes Sohm's conviction that "if order must be deduced from God's word, it is only a voluntary and loving accommodation for the sake of unity."⁴⁷

Schweizer's concept of office and order chiefly sees order as an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, with no distinction made in the New Testament between traditional "offices" (like apostle and presbyter) and the more charismatic gifts (like prophecy or glossolalia).⁴⁸ That is to say, Schweizer does not think that the New Testament promotes one group as higher or more important than any other, but that all positions are brought about equally by the Holy Spirit.

Ephesians), Colossians and Ephesians, 1 Peter, and Hebrews; and Part D includes the whole of the Johannine corpus. A selection of works from the church fathers comprises Part E. Schweizer, *Church Order*, 5.

⁴⁴ Schweizer, *Church Order*, 14–15. His categories of order include: office, the priesthood of all believers, ordination, apostolic succession, and the worship service. These are discussed in several chapters in Schweizer, *Church Order*, 163–224.

⁴⁵ Schweizer, *Church Order*, 13–14.

⁴⁶ Schweizer, *Church Order*, 14.

⁴⁷ Schweizer, *Church Order*, 14 n. 7. Here Schweizer is citing Sohm in summary from Sohm, *Kirchenrecht I*, 23 n. 2, 583. Nardoni also lists Schweizer among Sohm's supporters. Nardoni, "Charism in the Early Church," 649, 651.

⁴⁸ Schweizer, *Church Order*, 181, 184.

Schweizer's method of grouping books theologically has great potential to lead to a misunderstanding of the information. It is vital first to understand the historical context of each document before attempting to determine if two documents do indeed contain similar theologies. Such a study might also reveal that even documents with similar theologies ought to be studied separately for contextual reasons. A consideration of historical contexts might entirely change the conclusions of the study.

Bengt Holmberg

Bengt Holmberg is among the early proponents of sociologically-based methods of biblical criticism. His book *Paul and Power: The Structure of Authority in the Primitive Church as Reflected in the Pauline Epistles* was published in 1978, and in it he reminds his readers that too often scholars have intentionally or unintentionally read their own tradition of church order back into the biblical text and that the theological convictions of a scholar often influence the outcome of a study as much as the evidence it examines.⁴⁹ Holmberg notes that too much time is spent reading "later theological categories" like ministry back into the text rather than noting what is actually taking place in the text itself.⁵⁰ As an alternative, Holmberg suggests using a sociological method based on Max Weber's sociology of authority.⁵¹ Holmberg notes, "Weber's theory of authority includes a typology distinguishing between traditional, rational-legal and charismatic authority, as well as many hypotheses on the inner functioning and transformations of the different types of authority."⁵² Holmberg concludes that the authority within the primitive church

⁴⁹ Holmberg, *Paul and Power*, 1.

⁵⁰ Holmberg, *Paul and Power*, 2.

⁵¹ Holmberg, *Paul and Power*, 6. He suggests that to embark on a sociological study of this nature requires that this theory be used. It will be shown later that this view has changed somewhat in recent years.

⁵² Holmberg, *Paul and Power*, 6 (underline original).

mainly falls under the category of “charismatic authority” but it is nevertheless socially determined and a part of the process of institutionalization.⁵³ He carefully makes the distinction between authority’s being a sociological phenomenon (which he accepts) and its being a theological interpretation of social phenomena (which he rejects).⁵⁴ He says, “Paul’s theology becomes effective in Church life only in so far as he is part of its authority structure.”⁵⁵ Holmberg asserts then that a theology of leadership must be based in reality and that reality begins with a sociological analysis of the activities in the New Testament in relation to leadership. This is a blatant criticism of Sohm’s ideas concerning charisma, which stem from theological influences as opposed to sociological ones.⁵⁶

While Holmberg’s study gets close to the heart of my interest in New Testament leadership functions, there are aspects of his research that I find problematic. First, although Holmberg’s title suggests that his study deals with the entire Pauline corpus, he only includes those letters which he considers genuine.⁵⁷ This means that several important passages from the Pauline corpus are missed, especially those within the Pastorals.⁵⁸ Additionally, Holmberg employs sociological theory in order to avoid the

⁵³ Holmberg, *Paul and Power*, 208.

⁵⁴ Holmberg, *Paul and Power*, 208.

⁵⁵ Holmberg, *Paul and Power*, 208.

⁵⁶ Holmberg, *Paul and Power*, 148–49. According to D. Smith, while Sohm did have an influence on Weber, Weber rejected the idea that charisma came to an individual not by their own choice or by some form of community recognition, but simply by its own volition. See D. Smith, “Faith, Reason and Charisma,” 33–34.

⁵⁷ These genuine epistles are Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians and Philemon. Holmberg, *Paul and Power*, 3. He sometimes supplements these letters with details from Acts. Holmberg, *Paul and Power*, 4.

⁵⁸ In defense of Holmberg, his purpose was to demonstrate the need for sociological study, which he has effectively done. He sought to narrow his focus not to purposefully exclude information, but in order to have a manageable amount of material to work with in making his point.

“fallacy of idealism,” which he sees as arising from theologically-based methods. As will be discussed below, in seeking to avoid one “fallacy” Holmberg has created another.⁵⁹

Margaret MacDonald

Margaret MacDonald published *The Pauline Churches: A Socio-Historical Study of Institutionalization in the Pauline and Deutero-Pauline Writings* in 1988. She uses what she terms “socio-historical criticism” to explore the way the Pauline churches moved toward greater institutionalization.⁶⁰ As her primary sociological models, she draws on the work of Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann as well as Weber.⁶¹ Her book divides the Pauline corpus into three groups: the genuine letters, Colossians and Ephesians, and the Pastorals. She does not include 2 Thessalonians in her study.⁶² MacDonald examines the Pauline churches represented by each group of letters and draws conclusions about their attitudes to the world/ethics, ministry, ritual, and belief. She observes a gradual trend toward increased institutionalization among the Pauline churches. The churches represented by the genuine letters are shown to be in the earliest stages (“community-building”), the churches in Colossae and Ephesus are in the middle stages (“stabilizing”),

⁵⁹ For a description of Holmberg’s concept of the fallacy of idealism, see Holmberg, *Paul and Power*, 205. In fact, in later years Holmberg does recognize the validity of Judge’s criticism of his work (which will be discussed below). Holmberg notes, “A good knowledge of social history is indispensable for reaching secure conclusions about stratum-specific differences in attitude and mentality, which form the basis of textual interpretation in this case. This is the undeniably strong point in Judge’s criticism against a too-facile sociological interpretation of first-century Christian texts.” Holmberg, “The Methods of Historical Reconstruction,” 259.

⁶⁰ See Chapter 2 for a more detailed discussion of the use of sociological methods in biblical criticism.

⁶¹ MacDonald, *Pauline Churches*, 10–11. Berger and Luckmann’s work is called *The Social Construction of Reality*. In it they discuss how “reality” is something each society creates for itself based on what they perceive to be “normal.” Things are not inherently “real.” They are real only because a given society perceives them to be so. See Berger and Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality*.

⁶² She says, “2 Thessalonians will only be given peripheral treatment here. The notoriously difficult problem of its dating and authorship make it virtually impossible for it to be employed in this analysis.” MacDonald, *Pauline Churches*, 4.

and the communities of the Pastorals are in a defensive or maintenance stage (“protecting”).⁶³

MacDonald’s use of sociologically-based interpretive methods is to be applauded, yet her selection of a sociological model is less than satisfying. As will be discussed below, there is debate as to whether employing a specific model is the optimal choice given the array of sociological methods available. In addition, MacDonald’s convictions regarding the authorship and dating of the Pauline Letters have a huge effect on her study. It is not inherently implausible that the Pauline churches moved, over time, into a greater state of institutionalization and even uniform practice, but if the letters were written closer together than MacDonald posits, then the implications of the evidence may be different. Perhaps institutionalization was a more rapid process. Or perhaps there were more institutional and less institutional churches at the same time. None of these questions can be answered without first thoroughly investigating each location individually.

James Tunstead Burtchaell

James Burtchaell published his study *From Synagogue to Church: Public Services and Offices in the Earliest Christian Communities* in 1992. He is convinced that the earlier “consensus view”⁶⁴ among those who study church leadership is wrong. He says, “Every story should start at the beginning, but for the historian the beginning may already be too

⁶³ MacDonald, *Pauline Churches*, 235–36.

⁶⁴ According to the consensus view, “The earliest documents describe leadership of the first days as provided to the church by inward, spiritual gifts. The evidence of the next century describes officers provided by the church through an appointment or electoral process” and “[this] was a radical perversion of the liberating forces Christ had brought them. It was a regression to the worst aspects of the Jewish Law and temple priesthood.” Burtchaell, *Synagogue to Church*, 99–100. In short, the organizational structure found in the early church was a negative thing and was never the way God intended his church to be.

late.”⁶⁵ By this he means that rather than simply beginning a study of Christian leadership with Christianity, a scholar must go farther back to the thing from which the Christian community developed: the Jewish synagogue. Accordingly, Burtchaell begins his study of Christian leadership by studying the leadership practices in the Jewish synagogues before the time of Christ.

Concerning these synagogues, Burtchaell finds that each had officers to carry out its affairs, including “scripture reading and inquiry, prayer, election of officers, and disciplinary proceedings.”⁶⁶ Synagogues may also have provided services like tax collection and remittance, social welfare, hospitality, education, safekeeping of valuables, and provisions of water for both domestic and ritual purposes. Its members may have met in homes, outdoors, or in multi-purpose public buildings.⁶⁷

Based on his study of the synagogue practices, Burtchaell concludes that “The emergence of various categories of officer in the early second century was not simply the stifling of a vigorous lay age in Christian history. It was the reinvention of a community organization that had been customary in Israel and had served as a foundational structure for the new Christian groups since before they were very conscious of it.”⁶⁸ Among the offices that Christians may have borrowed from the synagogue is the office of elder, a widespread phenomenon in second-temple Judaism.⁶⁹ So, while Burtchaell concedes that there was a degree of charismatic freedom in the early Christian communities, he argues that their move toward more structure and organization was not a move to something

⁶⁵ Burtchaell, *Synagogue to Church*, 193.

⁶⁶ Burtchaell, *Synagogue to Church*, 227.

⁶⁷ Burtchaell, *Synagogue to Church*, 227.

⁶⁸ Burtchaell, *Synagogue to Church*, xii–xiii. While Burtchaell makes note of the development of church offices in the early second century, it is also practical to think that his theory would generally support the why and how of office development no matter when it came about—perhaps earlier than the second century.

⁶⁹ Burtchaell, *Synagogue to Church*, xv.

foreign, but rather the natural solidification of a system with which they were already very familiar—a system originating in the synagogue.⁷⁰

Burtchaell's approach is in the social-scientific camp. He uses information about the history of the community in order to make his case, and he does it without imposing social theory from other centuries upon it. However, I cannot help but think that Burtchaell only took half of the relevant history into account. Greco-Roman influences are completely ignored. Certainly the first Christians—and the first Christian leaders—were Jews, and undoubtedly this had a major influence on how the church developed. It was not long, however, before the Christian faith spread beyond the Jews. In addition to this, the Jews of the time were immersed in Greco-Roman culture, especially (but not exclusively) those Jews living in the diaspora. Burtchaell's idea that Jewish culture influenced Christian leadership needs to be expanded so as to include not only the Jewish influence but the Greco-Roman one as well.

Andrew D. Clarke

Andrew Clarke has carried out a great deal of recent research into early church leadership and structure. He uses social-scientific principles in each of his works, bringing both Greco-Roman and Jewish practices into the analysis of the various texts that he explores. What distinguishes him from MacDonald and Holmberg is his rejection of the use of sociological models and his preference to work with the method of social description.⁷¹ This eliminates the potential imposition of anachronistic sociological theories on ancient

⁷⁰ This is a fundamental rejection of Sohm's ideas concerning early church order.

⁷¹ See A. Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership*, 3–7. Social description takes information about the ancient world from ancient texts and archaeological finds and uses this information to create a context or backdrop against which to understand the New Testament. In general, specific sociological models are not used. This method will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2.

cultures. Instead, a description of what is known about the ancient culture, based on literary and archaeological evidence is used in conjunction with the New Testament in order to understand a text's meaning and purpose in the time in which it was written.

In *Secular and Christian Leadership in Corinth* (1991), A. Clarke demonstrates that leadership principles from the Greco-Roman world influenced the leadership of the Christian community in Corinth.⁷² This supplies, at least in part, the piece missing from Burtchaell's study. It is also significant that A. Clarke concentrates on only one location and does not attempt to amalgamate all of the available information into one general model of the ideal Greco-Roman city. He allows Corinth to stand apart in all of its uniqueness and to speak for itself.

In *Serve the Community and the Church* (2000), A. Clarke again highlights the influence of the Greco-Roman world on the Pauline churches and demonstrates that Paul sought to change the Christian way of thinking from elevating leadership to a high rank (as the Romans did) to viewing leaders as servants.⁷³ Finally, in *A Pauline Theology of Church Leadership* (2008), A. Clarke examines the Pauline churches in their social setting to create a theology of leadership.⁷⁴ He does not comment on church order so much as he discusses the "style, ethos, dynamics and practice"⁷⁵ of leadership, but nevertheless his insights in this book are valuable to church leadership discussions. He notes several points of connection to this topic of study, including the difference between prescription and description in the Pauline Letters,⁷⁶ the benefits of considering the whole

⁷² A. Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership*.

⁷³ A. Clarke, *Serve the Community*.

⁷⁴ A. Clarke, *Pauline Theology*.

⁷⁵ A. Clarke, *Pauline Theology*, 3.

⁷⁶ A. Clarke, *Pauline Theology*, 6.

Pauline corpus together without excluding portions due to uncertain authorship,⁷⁷ and the importance of laying solid historical research as a groundwork for theological discussions.⁷⁸

What A. Clarke does not develop is a comprehensive survey of all the cities of the Pauline corpus. He does extensive work on Corinth, but dedicates only a single chapter in *Serve the Community and the Church* to the specifics of different Pauline cities.⁷⁹ What is notably missing here is a discussion of Ephesus, whether drawing upon Ephesians, Acts, or 1 and 2 Timothy.

Jack Barentsen

Barentsen published his book *Emerging Leadership in the Pauline Mission* in 2011. It is one of the most recent treatments of this topic and in many ways also the one closest in scope to my own proposed study. Yet despite the similarities in topic, Barentsen's methods and assumptions are very different from my own. He uses principles of social science to study church leadership and specifically a social identity model.⁸⁰ He describes this model as follows: "The social identity model of leadership (SIMOL) describes the social position of group members relative to one another, and thus of the leader(s) relative to other group members."⁸¹ He goes on to say, "Although SIMOL does not directly analyze organizational structures (as a sociological study might do), it analyzes

⁷⁷ A. Clarke, *Pauline Theology*, 4–5. In this he also notes that scholarly views concerning the ecclesiology of a given text and its authorship and date cannot be separated; each can influence the other. This awareness is not always demonstrated in other studies. A. Clarke, *Pauline Theology*, 8.

⁷⁸ A. Clarke, *Pauline Theology*, 3.

⁷⁹ He cites his work in *Serve the Community and the Church* and *Secular and Christian Leadership* as the place where he has done the needed historical work that informs his theology.

⁸⁰ Barentsen, *Emerging Leadership*, 6.

⁸¹ Barentsen, *Emerging Leadership*, 6.

the social and psychological processes that underpin such structural developments.”⁸²

This theory comes from social and cognitive psychology and is widely accepted by these disciplines as a foundation upon which to study group dynamics.

Based on his use of this model, Barentsen concludes that Paul established uniform leadership patterns within his churches in order to promote communication both within a particular group and between groups.⁸³ The key to Barentsen’s conclusion is the idea of pattern. He states, “The main point is not convergence towards identical leadership structures, but towards a standardized leadership pattern as historical fact.”⁸⁴ Those who are part of Paul’s prescribed leadership pattern are those involved in maintaining Paul’s teachings in the communities and connecting those communities with other Pauline communities.⁸⁵ In order to maintain these leadership structures in the long-term, Paul imbedded them in his “vision of Christian social identity”⁸⁶ and the purpose of uniform leadership was to facilitate communication between groups and not necessarily in order to create a structure that was normative for all time.⁸⁷

Barentsen’s study and his conclusions are innovative and unique. Once again, however, a modern model is used in the study of an ancient group. Barentsen is able, using this method, to demonstrate patterns of leadership and observe the way in which those patterns developed. One of the difficulties is that he uses only two locations (Corinth and Ephesus) with which to develop his pattern. Can this pattern be sustained in other locations as well? In my own research, I am less concerned with how patterns of

⁸² Barentsen, *Emerging Leadership*, 6.

⁸³ Barentsen, *Emerging Leadership*, 311.

⁸⁴ Barentsen, *Emerging Leadership*, 308–9.

⁸⁵ Barentsen, *Emerging Leadership*, 309.

⁸⁶ Barentsen, *Emerging Leadership*, 310.

⁸⁷ Barentsen, *Emerging Leadership*, 310–11.

leadership developed over time than I am with the historical circumstances which led Paul to speak about leadership functions in particular ways to particular places at a particular point in time.

Alistair C. Stewart

Stewart's book *The Original Bishops: Office and Order in the First Christian Communities* (2014) is included here more because of its very recent publication than because it concretely fits the mold of social-scientific contributions to the study of leadership. Stewart notes that though his work will be of interest to those studying theology, his primary goal is to provide an impartial history of events leading to a monepiscopacy near the turn of the third century CE.⁸⁸ He loosely connects with ideas of social history though he does not concretely define a method of study. He surveys both New Testament documents and those in the post-New Testament era and attempts to look at them in the context of the cities to which they were addressed. He ultimately concludes that the emergence of the monepiscopate was not as a result of a combining of Jewish and gentile forms of leadership (which he terms *Verschmelzung*), or out of ideas of institutionalization (in the spirit of Weber), nor was it a result of scholasticization of the Christian community (similar to philosophical schools).⁸⁹ Rather, he suggests that the monepiscopate developed out of a growing centralization of leadership among federated house churches and the external force of persecution.⁹⁰

Though he is right to see the importance of creating an impartial history of events and to look at evidence concerning individual cities, complete impartiality, even when

⁸⁸ Stewart, *Original Bishops*, 5, 9.

⁸⁹ Stewart, *Original Bishops*, 309–37.

⁹⁰ Stewart, *Original Bishops*, 337–38.

reporting history, is quite impossible. Like everyone else, Stewart has a position to defend and the evidence, as he presents it, supports his unique views on the ideas of federations of churches and the emergence of “presbyters of the city” in distinction to presbyters of individual groups of Christians.⁹¹

Stewart’s study is very different from what I propose both in method and scope. First, Stewart limits his evidence to primarily Christian writings when it comes to determining the state of affairs in a given community. He fails to make good use of evidence that is external to Christianity in order to further illuminate the implications of the Christian texts. He creates a description of what Christian writers have left behind concerning given locations rather than an interpretation of Christian evidence in light of a thorough social description of a location. Further to this, Stewart ultimately focuses on the post-New Testament era more than the New Testament documents, taking his study beyond the time period of interest for my study. Contrary to what might be implied by his title, Stewart’s goal is to delineate when the moniscopacy emerges rather than examining the intricacies of office and order in the “earliest” Christian communities.

A Gap in the Research

The above historical survey reveals several gaps in the existing research. Most scholars (A. Clarke being a recent exception) attempt to bring all the New Testament information together into one systematic and coherent discussion on leadership without sufficient attention to the original historical context of each document. Whereas historically there has been much attention directed towards the theological dimensions of leadership, in more recent scholarship there has been a decided preference for social-scientific methods.

⁹¹ His initial discussion of this concept can be found in Stewart, *Original Bishops*, 38–45.

And within the social-scientific realm, there has been a preference for the use of sociological models. By 1980 this trend was sufficiently evident that Judge wrote with grave concerns about it. Specifically, in relation to Holmberg's study, Judge states, "It couples with New Testament studies a strong admixture of modern sociology, as though social theories can be safely transposed across the centuries without verification. The basic question remains unasked: What are the social facts of life characteristic of the world to which the New Testament belongs?"⁹² According to Judge, unless we know these facts, models are useless. He calls this a "sociological fallacy" to go with Holmberg's "fallacy of idealism."⁹³ In Judge's view, models must be tested for historical validity, something that is rarely done: "History walks a tightrope between the unique and the typical. If we explain everything by analogy, we deny our forebears the individuality we take as a basic feature of our own humanity."⁹⁴ If we truly want to learn "how things were," we cannot depend solely on models and analogy.⁹⁵ Instead, we need, as much as possible, to let history speak for itself.

Aside from this methodological gap, there is also a gap in the locations which are studied using social description. The works of A. Clarke are valuable, especially regarding Corinth, but there is room to explore other cities and other matters of leadership with similar methodological convictions. Two prominent locations where Christianity emerged early are Ephesus and Corinth. These cities are suitable test-cases in exploring the importance of historical context in the discussion of New Testament leadership functions as they figure prominently in the New Testament and they are cities

⁹² Judge, "Social Identity," 128.

⁹³ Judge, "Social Identity," 128.

⁹⁴ Judge, "Social Identity," 134.

⁹⁵ Cf. Judge, "Social Identity," 135.

about which much is known.⁹⁶ A study of these two prominent locations in early Christianity may be able to help demonstrate that the locations themselves and their unique situations concerning the emergence of Christianity in each city are essential in understanding the discussions of Christian leadership functions with respect to each location.

By considering both Ephesus and Corinth as prominent cities in which Christianity emerged and also allowing the statements concerning leadership functions directed to those two cities to sit in similar historical timeframes, similarities and differences concerning their ancient contexts can be appreciated and parameters for the interpretation of New Testament leadership functions based on those texts and contexts can begin to be established. By employing methods of social description in an analysis of the Christian communities in first-century Corinth and Ephesus, I will explore the hypothesis that Paul's discussion of specific leadership functions with respect to each city is rooted in the historical context of each Christian community and therefore Paul mentions leadership functions and promotes attitudes concerning leadership which are in keeping with the circumstances of each community and does not necessarily promote uniform practice in all places. In order to illustrate this, I will create thick descriptions of the Greco-Roman and Christian context in each city and consider how these descriptions affect the interpretation of the discussions of specific leadership functions mentioned in

⁹⁶ That location-specific study is important in the examination of early Christianity is evidenced in the publication of the Religious Rivalries series in the early 2000s and the First Urban Churches series since 2015. The former has examined Sardis, Smyrna, and Caesarea Maritima and the latter Corinth and Ephesus. In the introductory volume of the First Urban Churches series, Harrison states that a problem the series intends to address is "New Testament researchers have failed to bring the full range of documentary and archaeological evidence into sympathetic dialogue with the upper-class literary evidence and the writings of the New Testament." Harrison, "First Urban Churches," 2. He further states that a "city-by-city approach, based on a close analysis of the local civic evidence . . . is required to understand the experiences of the first urban Christians and their writings." Harrison, "First Urban Churches," 2.

the texts under examination. My methods and assumptions will be thoroughly discussed in Chapter 2.

CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY AND ASSUMPTIONS

In the previous chapter, I discussed the history of research concerning New Testament leadership, with particular focus on those who employ some method of “social-scientific criticism.” None of this scholarship satisfactorily took into account the unique historical context of the texts addressing leadership functions. While A. Clarke’s work on Corinth does take the city’s distinctives into consideration, it does not consider the list of leadership functions in 1 Cor 12; the study concerns only 1 Cor 1–6. A consideration of each community individually and texts concerning lists of leadership functions¹ in each community might shed important light on Paul’s view of leadership functions and the roles they played in each Christian community.

Now that the need for an examination of the individual historical contexts of Paul’s discussions of leadership functions has been established, it is important to consider the specifics of the method that such a study should employ. The idea of “social description” is not self-explanatory; there are several different ideas related to this term and so its meaning must be clarified. Further to this, methodological assumptions must be discussed with respect to the New Testament documents to be used. These include the authenticity of Ephesians and 1 Timothy, the reliability of Acts as a source of information concerning Paul’s travels, and the legitimacy of connecting the letter of Ephesians with the city of Ephesus. It is only after a suitable discussion of my method and associated assumptions that the real work of my study can begin.

¹ The meaning of the phrase “leadership functions” has been defined in Chapter 1.

Discussion of Methodological Theory

There is a certain amount of confusion surrounding “sociology” and “social science” in discussions of biblical criticism.² The term “sociological criticism” is used here as an umbrella term for interpretive methods connected to the social sciences. Soulen and Soulen note that these methods generally fall into the following overlapping categories: “(a) social description, (b) social history, and (c) social theory.”³ Social description and social history are often grouped together over and against social theory. Social theorists use sociological theories and models to learn from the New Testament by attempting to see its events in light of those models.⁴ Social historians and descriptivists do not use models but rather use historical evidence from archaeology and ancient literature to describe ancient social situations.⁵

Van Staden and van Aarde suggest that the methods of social description can do nothing more than accumulate data which is then used to describe historical contexts; they argue that the advantage to methods employing social science theories is that they can actually produce raw data.⁶ In their opinion, it is only after this raw data is produced that any kind of accurate description and interpretation can happen.⁷ This use of theories and models certainly does produce data, but what remains to be seen is whether this data

² For example, van Staden and van Aarde argue that the terms “sociological” and “social-scientific” should not be used to describe methods of social description because these methods, in their opinion, are not connected solidly to the ideas of social science methods and theories. Van Staden and van Aarde, “Social Description,” 58. This illustrates the great difficulty in terminology surrounding this general area of biblical scholarship. Cf. Soulen and Soulen, *Biblical Criticism*, 176.

³ Soulen and Soulen, *Biblical Criticism*, 176.

⁴ Popular models were briefly mentioned in Chapter 1.

⁵ Soulen and Soulen, *Biblical Criticism*, 176; DeSilva, “Embodying the Word,” 118. DeSilva also notes that this distinction was not one that developed gradually, but one that is visible even among the pioneers of the methods. DeSilva, “Embodying the Word,” 120–21.

⁶ Van Staden and van Aarde, “Social Description,” 58.

⁷ They note that “Social-scientific data within the narrative is not directly accessible or available for a historical (re)construction. Of course it can be, and is being, accessed in that way, but I would regard this as methodologically fallacious.” Van Staden and van Aarde, “Social Description,” 59. This is rather short-sighted.

is actually useful in understanding ancient worlds when it is produced via modern social theories. It is also accurate to say that social description methods collect data and use it to produce historical backdrops. What van Staden and van Aarde have failed to do effectively is demonstrate why this is inherently “fallacious.”⁸

Those who use social models in their interpretation of the evidence have sought to distance themselves from other branches of sociological criticism and prefer the term “social-scientific criticism.”⁹ They have been criticized for their use of these models, which are viewed by some as anachronistic and an imposition of the modern on the ancient.¹⁰ In defense of the use of models, Esler says,

To some the very idea [of using models] is illicit, apparently evoking the image of the arbitrary imposition of alien concepts on unsuspecting data. This objection is based on the mistaken notion that we can ever avoid employing models! Everyone uses models; for the most part, however, they remain at the level of unspoken, even unrecognised, assumptions or prejudgments which are based upon our own experience and which inevitably shape our interpretation of the texts.¹¹

It is true that everyone has a framework from which he or she sees a situation and to a point that framework or “model” influences interpretation. On the other hand, it is not accurate to assume that just because an interpreter uses an explicit or recognized social-scientific model that the study is somehow more honest or accurate than an interpreter who chooses to conduct research using literary and archaeological evidence and who is

⁸ Cf. Van Staden and van Aarde, “Social Description,” 59.

⁹ While a divide is evident, this particular distinction in terminology was only mentioned by Soulen and Soulen, *Biblical Criticism*, 175. It is apparent, however, when reading those who espouse the use of models, that more often than not they are hostile to those who even hint that this is an invalid method. For example Esler, *The First Christians*, 11–12; Blasi, “Methodological Perspective,” 63. Blasi essentially brushes off those who would oppose the use of models as “unscientific,” though he is not quite so blatant as that in his comments.

¹⁰ For example Judge, “Social Identity,” 128.

¹¹ Esler, *The First Christians*, 11–12.

also aware of his or her biases and states their underlying interpretive assumptions.¹²

Esler also attempts to deny all naysayers the privilege of disagreeing with the use of models by saying that models are designed to free the interpreter to see what otherwise could not be seen.¹³ He further states, “For this reason it is inappropriate to debate whether a model is ‘true’ or ‘false’, or ‘valid’ or ‘invalid’. What matters is whether it is useful or not.”¹⁴ In spite of Esler’s convictions, models run the risk of being quite useless if they cannot be shown to be applicable to the times and places under examination.

Determining whether a particular model is applicable to a certain historical time or place is quite difficult due to the nature of historical evidence. All evidence concerning the past comes to us in a fragmentary fashion and the people of the past are no longer around to comment on the inner workings of their societies. Even if a model could, based on available site-specific literary and archaeological evidence, be determined to be applicable for the study of one location in the first century, there is no guarantee that it

¹² Some assumptions are in fact better than others. Feinberg notes that there must be a connection between the facts of history and their correct interpretation. If there is no connection then there is no way to distinguish between differing interpretations. As an example he suggests that one might interpret the death of six million Jews under Hitler as either evidence of his extreme hatred for them or his extreme love and desire for them to quickly enter “eternal blessedness.” Feinberg, “History,” 378–79. Unless there is a connection between a fact of history and its correct interpretation, then there would be no way to assert that the second view is wrong. This is not to say that there is only one way to interpret historical data, especially when the evidence is partial; however, there are not an unlimited number of ways in which even partial data can responsibly be interpreted.

¹³ Provan, Long, and Longman note that there is no way to avoid “testimony” when studying the past. Testimony about the past comes to us from people of the past and people of the present (such as archaeologists) who study artifacts from the past. “Since testimony—we might also refer to it as tradition—is central to our quest to know about the past, *interpretation* is unavoidable as well. All testimony about the past is also interpretation of the past, possessing ideology or theology, presuppositions and point of view, narrative structure, and (if at all interesting to read or listen to) narrative art, or rhetoric. We cannot avoid testimony, if we are interested in the past, and we cannot avoid interpretation.” Provan, Long and Longman, *Biblical History*, 39. This is an important observation and is pertinent to the discussion of the use of models. The use of explicit sociological models in the study of historical documents or historical periods does not eliminate the scholar’s biases or presuppositions; it simply makes at least one of these explicit. It also does not erase the ideology from the text or historical evidence under examination as though it were possible to “get behind” the surface and discover the “truth” underlying a text. Rather than revealing things that “otherwise could not be seen,” a model may, at times, obscure the idiosyncrasies of a given historical situation by mistakenly assuming that the text under investigation describes a “typical” situation occurring in a predictable manner and proceeding according to a “typical” set of circumstances.

¹⁴ Esler, *The First Christians*, 12.

would be applicable for study in a neighbouring location. It is safer to avoid interpretive models and allow evidence about the past in a given location to speak for itself in spite of the challenges this brings.

There are those who take a more balanced approach between the two extremes of social description and social theory. DeSilva suggests that “The two modes are, of course, complementary and are probably best executed when used in conjunction with one another.”¹⁵ Like deSilva, A. Clarke and Tucker also suggest that fruitful collaboration happens when people move away from the extremes of the spectrum and meet somewhere in the middle.¹⁶ A. Clarke and Tucker are probably closer to the truth than deSilva when they note that there has been considerable animosity between the two sides, with only some more recent moves to “rapprochement,” rather than antagonism, and *sometimes* even cooperation.¹⁷ Though there is truth to the fact that some cooperation exists, too often too little work is done in relevant socio-historical research and favour is too often given to the use of models as a “superior” method.¹⁸

In navigating the complex world of the various methods that call themselves “social-something” criticisms, the work of anthropologist Clifford Geertz is important to consider. His method has emerged from within the social sciences, yet at the same time it appeals to those who wish to avoid, as much as possible, potentially anachronistic models. His idea of “thick description” brings meaning to ancient texts and societies

¹⁵ DeSilva, “Embodying the Word,” 121. DeSilva acknowledges that there is inherent danger in using models due to possible anachronisms, “since social-scientific interpreters generally apply models derived from the observation of modern religious and cultural phenomena to ancient civilizations and groups.” DeSilva, “Embodying the Word,” 127.

¹⁶ A. Clarke and Tucker, “Social History and Social Theory,” 41.

¹⁷ A. Clarke and Tucker, “Social History and Social Theory,” 41.

¹⁸ See, for example van Staden and van Aarde, “Social Description,” 56–57, where social description is called “naïve social description” and the authors are critical of the perceived lack of sociological theory and method in this approach. While certain models may have a place, they are by no means “superior” simply because they are models and they are not always used with proper caution.

without imposing too much that is modern. He adapts this method from British philosopher Gilbert Ryle's ideas.¹⁹ Ryle suggests that what is readily observable about a person's activity (for example, contracting right eyelids) is only a "thin" description of what is happening in that moment. A "thick" description of the activity takes into account what lies behind the action (that the eyelid contraction is a twitch, or a wink, or an imitation of another person winking, or even an individual practicing winking so he can imitate another person winking).²⁰ It is this concept of "thick description," as adapted by Geertz, which will be used in my study to create a social description of the cities of Ephesus and Corinth in order to best understand the parameters of interpretation of Paul's words to these cities concerning leadership functions.²¹

Geertz rejects the concept that those things observed in a given location (like a small village) actually have anything grandiose to say about the wider world in which the village exists. He says, "The notion that one can find the essence of national societies, civilizations, great religions, or whatever summed up and simplified in so-called 'typical' small towns and villages is palpable nonsense. That which one finds in small towns and villages is (alas) small-town or village life."²² This concept is important for my study as it may be unwise to assume that the things which one reads concerning Corinth or Ephesus—or the early Christian communities in these cities—are at all "typical" of first-century Christianity; they are in fact only indicative of what was happening in Corinth or

¹⁹ Geertz, "Thick Description," 6. Geertz points to Ryle, "Thinking and Reflecting," 465–79; Ryle, "Thinking of Thoughts," 480–96.

²⁰ Cf. Ryle's discussion in "Thinking and Reflecting," 478 and "Thinking of Thoughts," 480–81.

²¹ The merits of "thick description" as a method of study for New Testament research has been recognized over the years by several scholars. Examples include, but are not limited to, Hock, *Social Context*; Winter, *Roman Wives*; Witherington, *Conflict and Community*; A. Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership*; Judge, "Social Identity," 117–35. Each of these authors has multiple publications using methods of thick description and social history.

²² Geertz, "Thick Description," 22.

Ephesus. On the other hand, what appears to be “typical” based on general historical research may not, in fact, apply to Corinth or Ephesus specifically and an effort must be made, wherever possible, to ascertain whether a given piece of evidence is applicable to each specific location.

The concept of “thick description” takes anthropological field observations and gives them meaning within the context in which they occur rather than simply reporting what is observable to the proverbial “man spying in the bushes.” Tate defines “thick description” as “the practice of making meaningful and stratified layers of inferences based on discoveries in the field.”²³ The purpose of thick description is to get past a description of the action itself (such as the aforementioned contraction of eyelids) to the meaning or significance of the action within the culture. The question for this study is: What did Paul’s words to the churches in Ephesus and Corinth, with regard to leadership functions, actually *mean* in the contexts of the relevant cities and cultures?

Procedure

Having discussed the history of social scientific methods of biblical research and identified social description as an oft-overlooked yet important method of study it is now necessary to discuss the specifics of how this method will be used in this study. Creating a thick description of a location is like staging a play. There are backdrops, scenery, props, actors, and a story line. There are sound effects, dialogue, and music. There are costumes and make-up. Each of these components adds vibrancy and life to the play. Certainly, a play may not have all of these things and they need not all be fully developed. But the more details that are added, the more life-like and vivid the play

²³ Tate, *Biblical Interpretation*, 450.

becomes. In the same way, the more layers of context in a thick description, the more life-like the ancient context becomes. The more details in each layer, the better the modern reader can understand the ancient world being described.

Though the goal of thick description is to give life to the ancient context, reality dictates that no description can ever be absolutely complete. One limitation of thick description is the lack of available evidence. The literary and archaeological record is not complete and therefore descriptions cannot be complete. Some things will always be open questions. Another limitation facing every study of this nature is the available space. Every researcher must make choices about which details of context to probe and which details to leave for another day. Some details may be deemed interesting but ultimately unnecessary in the context of a given study. In this study enough detail will be given in the descriptions to sketch the overall “scene” with additional details provided to inform the most pressing issues of the analysis. Many interesting pieces of context will regrettably have to be left for other studies.

There are three layers of context which must be explored in order to effectively address the above-mentioned question concerning Christian leadership functions in the churches in Ephesus and Corinth. First, the cities themselves and the unique situations they presented to the Christians who lived there must be understood. This is the Greco-Roman context layer. Second, the emergence of Christian communities in those locations and the circumstances of their early experiences must also be considered. This is the “historical” Christian context layer. The Christian context must be considered in light of both the historical Christian context—that is the context of Christianity from its emergence in each city—and the “immediate” Christian context—that is the context of

Christianity which occasioned Paul's words to each city concerning leadership functions. This immediate Christian context is the third contextual layer. Once these contexts have been established, they can be used to shed light on Paul's words concerning leadership functions for each group.

In order to gain appropriate information about these various layers of context, several different strategies will be employed. For each of the cities, a basic description will be created, including information concerning the city's geography, people, politics, economy, and religion. These pieces of information will create a general layer of Greco-Roman context which must be understood before the historical and immediate Christian contexts can be superimposed over it. The emergence of early Christianity in each city must be seen in light of the history and culture of that city.

After the Greco-Roman layer has been established, the emergence of Christianity in these locations will be explored (historical Christian context). In addition to discussing the beginnings of Christianity in each location, details concerning early events relating to the Christian community will also be included. Of particular interest are events that occurred in relation to the Christian communities in each location immediately prior to the time when Paul wrote to the communities regarding leadership functions (immediate Christian context). Such events in the history of the Christian community are part of the shared experience of the members of the community and will influence the way in which Paul's words concerning leadership functions ought to be interpreted.

It is against the backdrop of the Greco-Roman context layer and the historical and immediate Christian context layers that the texts under consideration will be read. The context layers are important in interpretation because they provide parameters within

which these texts must be interpreted. Although not all details of the context may seem directly pertinent to Paul's statements concerning leadership functions, each detail contributes to the knowledge of the Christian community in which the recipients of Paul's words lived and is closely tied to every other detail of context. Every detail of context creates the lens through which Paul's words concerning leadership functions must be interpreted. The wider scope of the lens in this study sets it apart from other studies of Christian leadership using social description methodologies; these studies often consider only the social context of leadership in the Greco-Roman world rather than the broader social context within which that leadership exists.²⁴

When it comes to compiling the information needed for the Greco-Roman context, there are several different locations from which information can be gleaned. Primary texts from the first century (or pertaining to it) will be used, as well as archaeological evidence discovered through excavations of each city. Excavation reports and secondary works interpreting these will also be used. Specific details concerning the date-range of suitable archaeological evidence will be discussed near the beginning of each of the thick description chapters, though generally speaking, evidence will be confined to the first century in order to create as accurate a picture as possible of first-century life in each location.

Evidence regarding the Christian community will be gleaned through a study of Acts (specifically 18:1–18; 19:1–41) and other New Testament documents which detail the historical situation of Ephesus and Corinth. Literary material outside of the New Testament that specifically addresses the beginnings of Christianity in Ephesus and

²⁴ For example, A. Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership*, focuses on social history directly concerning existing secular and Christian leadership in Corinth, and Burtchaell, *From Synagogue to Church*, focuses only on Jewish influences and neglects Greco-Roman ones.

Corinth does not exist. There are also no archaeological finds which specifically address the emergence of Christianity in Ephesus and Corinth, but where archaeological evidence exists which informs the literary record it will be discussed.²⁵

After establishing a thick description for each city, passages in Paul's letters which discuss leadership functions within each Christian community will be analysed in light of those descriptions. The sections from Paul's letters to Corinth and Ephesus which will be analysed were selected because each passage explicitly mentions particular leadership functions in relation to the Christian community in each city. The three selected passages are: 1 Cor 12:28–31; Eph 4:1–16 and 1 Tim 3:1–13.²⁶ Each of the above passages will be set in its literary context and analysed in light of the thick descriptions of the cities of Ephesus and Corinth created in Chapters 3 and 5.

The passage chosen to illustrate Paul's discussion of leadership functions with Corinth is 1 Cor 12:28–31. It discusses three leadership functions and six additional spiritual gifts which God has appointed in the church. Of specific interest to this study are the leadership functions of *ἀπόστολος*, *προφήτης*, and *διδάσκαλος* which are ranked "first, second and third" in this list.

The passages which pertain to Ephesus are drawn from Ephesians and 1 Timothy. Ephesians 4:1–16 contains verses similar to 1 Cor 12:28–31. In Eph 4:11 Paul speaks of the leadership functions of *ἀπόστολος*, *προφήτης*, *εὐαγγελιστής*, *ποιμήν*, and *διδάσκαλος*

²⁵ The potential reasons for the lack of archaeological finds directly pertaining to first-century Christianity are discussed in Chapter 3.

²⁶ In addition to these texts, 1 Tim 5:17–22 might also have been included in this study. Constraints of space and a desire to achieve a measure of balance between texts to Corinth and Ephesus ultimately determined that two texts from 1 Timothy not be included. Because 1 Tim 3:1–13 addresses at least two leadership functions and 1 Tim 5:17–22 addresses only one, the passage at 3:1–13 was ultimately chosen to represent Paul's discussion of leadership functions in 1 Timothy in testing the hypothesis of this study.

being appointed by God to serve the church. Though some of the leadership words used here are the same as those used in the 1 Corinthians passage above, the context of use is different and the implications of these differences must be probed.

The letters to Timothy present some of the clearest references to early leadership functions in the New Testament. First Timothy 3:1–13 outlines in detail the requirements of being an *ἐπίσκοπος* and *διάκονος*. This passage also outlines the involvement of some women fulfilling leadership functions with the phrase *γυναῖκας ὡσαύτως* in 1 Tim 3:11.²⁷ These verses are advice to a young leader in the church and they concern how to select other leaders. It will be important to consider the criteria for the selection of these other leaders in light of the context of Christianity in Ephesus to determine how much these criteria might be “universal” and how much they are tied directly to the context of Ephesus.

Methodological Assumptions

The above method and procedure are suitable only if certain assumptions are made. The first of these assumptions concerns the authenticity of Paul’s letters. Somewhat bound up in this are their dates of composition. The position taken in this study is that all three of the Pauline Letters under consideration are authentic, express the opinions and directives of the apostle Paul,²⁸ and were thus composed within his lifetime. As this study is not focused on Pauline authorship issues, an extensive discussion of the arguments will not be made.

²⁷ The term *γυναῖκας* can mean both women and wives, which has caused much debate over the intention of this passage. Both possibilities will be explored in this study.

²⁸ This does not discount the use of an amanuensis.

There are vastly different opinions on which of Paul's letters should be considered authentic. On one extreme are ideas like those of Baur, who held that only Galatians, 1–2 Corinthians, and Romans were assuredly authentic.²⁹ O'Neill also contends that "Paul wrote some of all, but not all of any" of the Pauline Epistles.³⁰ A more moderate approach is that 1 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Romans, Philemon, and Philippians are authentic while Ephesians, 1 and 2 Timothy, and Titus are certainly not by Paul. Second Thessalonians and Colossians are uncertain. This perspective represents the majority of scholars.³¹ A minority of scholars accept all thirteen of the New Testament letters attributed to Paul as authentic and even critics of such a position admit that scholars adhering to this view ought not to be dismissed as irresponsible or "cranky."³² Scholars such as Stanley E. Porter, Bo Ivar Reicke, John A. T. Robinson, and Terry L. Wilder have published material whose ideas either suggest or explicitly state that it is possible that all thirteen Pauline Letters are authentic.³³

The position of authenticity and the resulting early dates of composition are important to consider because they significantly influence the handling of evidence for this study. For example, if Paul did not write the Pastoral Letters, then they need not be

²⁹ Baur, *Paul the Apostle*, 256. Baur's work was originally published in German in 1845.

³⁰ This is the title of an essay where O'Neill contends that Paul's actual letters were turned into the canonical "letters" that we currently have in monasteries, where several short letters were combined to make each larger book. In the process of combining the material, he contends, redactors edited the letters and added material of their own. Thus none of the letters, as we have them today, were actually written entirely by Paul. See O'Neill, "Paul Wrote Some," 185.

³¹ For examples of discussions concerning the idea that the above-mentioned Pauline letters should be considered inauthentic and that pseudonymous writings are found in the New Testament cf. Gamble, *New Testament Canon*; Patzia, *Making of the New Testament* (though he does not take a position on the matter in this work); Meade, *Pseudonymity and Canon*; Donelson, *Pseudepigraphy and Ethical Argument*; K. Clarke, "Problem of Pseudonymity," 440–68.

³² For example, see Meade, *Pseudonymity and Canon*, 118 and 139 in reference to the Pastorals and Ephesians respectively.

³³ S. Porter, "When and How?" 95–127; S. Porter, "Pauline Chronology," 65–88; S. Porter, *Apostle Paul*; Reicke, *Re-Examining Paul's Letters*; J. A. T. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament*; T. Wilder, *Pseudonymity*. Others who hold to the authenticity of some or all of the Pastorals include Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*; and L. Johnson, *1st and 2nd Letters to Timothy*.

considered in a study which seeks to examine Paul's directions concerning leadership functions to his churches. On the other hand, if Paul *did* write them, then the content of those letters must not be overlooked.³⁴ This perspective also allows for a tangible connection of 1 Timothy to Paul's assistant, Timothy, in the city of Ephesus.³⁵ The vast majority of scholars who have studied Paul's descriptions of leadership have assumed that only a portion of the Pauline corpus is authentic and the Pastoral Letters have been routinely left uninvestigated or they are relegated to a time period well after the life of the Apostle. These perspectives have influenced interpretation of the evidence.³⁶ There is, however, a rich amount of information in these letters concerning Paul and leadership functions, such that including 1 Timothy in this study and situating its writing during the lifetime of Paul will have an important effect on my results.

A second methodological assumption concerns the validity of using the book of Acts as a reference for the life and character of Paul. In this study, the record of his visits to Corinth and Ephesus are specifically in view. The historicity of Acts and thus its legitimate use as a source for the life and travels of the Apostle Paul has been seriously questioned. Among the early scholars to question the legitimacy of using Acts as a source about Paul and early Christianity was Baur. He states that when comparing the account in Acts and the account of Paul in his letters, "considering the great difference between the

³⁴ In fact, it is the rich amount of material concerning leadership functions found in the Pastorals which is used by many to deem them "inauthentic." According to Reicke, the Pastoral Letters should not be deemed late because of perceived evidence of later church developments within them. He says, "It is simply not possible to set up a standard that can measure in advance the speed of developing offices and positions of leadership in the diverse congregations of the Pauline mission. Attempts in modern research to do precisely this often betray an a prioristic schema that has already determined the results of the investigation." Reicke, *Re-Examining Paul's Letters*, 120.

³⁵ The letters to Timothy note that Timothy is in Ephesus (see 1 Tim 1:3; 2 Tim 1:18; 4:12). It is reasonable to accept this location if the letters are seen as authentic.

³⁶ See my discussion of various works in Chapter 1.

two statements, historical truth can only belong to one of them.”³⁷ He expressly states that Acts is secondary. Much of the debate concerning the historicity of Acts in the 140 years since Baur is focused on the number of visits to Jerusalem which are difficult to reconcile between Acts and Paul’s letters, and also on the fact that the author of Acts is writing with apologetic purposes which may have caused him to construe detail in ways which were not historically accurate.³⁸ In spite of these challenges, many scholars have concluded that Acts presents a reasonable picture of events concerning Paul’s life and the development of early Christianity under his influence.³⁹ For this study I will assume the general historicity of Acts, particularly Acts 18–19. The details that Acts affords in terms of the development of early Christianity in Ephesus and Corinth will serve to inform the thick description of early Christianity in these locations. These details will help to create a better description of the Christian context of the cities and the particular experiences of the Christians in those locations as Christianity emerged.

A final assumption which needs to be discussed concerning this study is the actual location for which the letter to the Ephesians was intended. The earliest extant manuscripts of the letter do not include the phrase ἐν Ἐφέσῳ as part of the original text.⁴⁰ Because of this many scholars have questioned the validity of associating the letter with

³⁷ Baur, *Paul the Apostle*, 5.

³⁸ Examples of scholars who question the reliability of Acts as an historical source are Baur, *Paul the Apostle*; Pervo, *Making of Paul*; Lüdemann, *Early Christianity*; Haenchen, *Acts of the Apostles*; Campbell, *Framing Paul*.

³⁹ Examples of scholars who accept Acts as being generally historically reliable are, J. A. T. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament*; Reicke, *Re-Examining Paul’s Letters*; Phillips, *Paul, His Letters, and Acts*; Schellenberg, “First Pauline Chronologist?” 193–213; S. Porter, *Apostle Paul*.

⁴⁰ For manuscript evidence see Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 532. Even though the location is not found in P46 nor in the original text of Sinaiticus or Vaticanus, each of these manuscripts suggests that the letter was intended for the Ephesians by the title *προς εφεσιους* which either precedes or follows the letter in each of the manuscripts. See Parker, *New Testament Manuscripts*, 274. Sinaiticus appears to have the title of the letter added by the first corrector (at the end of the letter) while the second corrector adds the ἐν Ἐφέσῳ to the text of 1:1. Hoehner supports the observation that the “To the Ephesians” title is found in all extant manuscripts. Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 146.

the city of Ephesus.⁴¹ There are also the curious remarks in 1:15, 3:2–3, and 4:21 which leave the impression with some that the author does not know the letter's recipients. If Paul, who is said to have spent a lot of time in Ephesus, is the author of this letter these remarks are indeed strange.⁴² Because of these challenges concerning the certainty of the letter's destination, some have suggested that the letter was either not written by Paul or was intended as a circular letter with any number of intended destinations which could be entered into the space where ἐν Ἐφέσῳ sits.⁴³ In spite of the difficulties, the only city with which Ephesians is ever associated is Ephesus, with the single exception of Marcion who associated it with Laodicea.⁴⁴ In spite of the above-mentioned difficulties, there are scholars who nevertheless hold to the idea that Ephesians was written with Ephesus as the intended destination owing to the fact that it cannot be proven that Ephesus was *not* the intended destination and that no other location is attested save for Marcion whose testimony is suspect.⁴⁵

⁴¹ For example Lincoln, *Ephesians*, lxxiv; Snodgrass, *Ephesians*, 21.

⁴² S. Porter, *Apostle Paul*, 396. But see Immendörfer, *Ephesians and Artemis*, 72–74 for a discussion of reasons why the apparent “impersonal” remarks need not suggest that Paul was not the author and the recipients were not the Christians in Ephesus.

⁴³ Issues of pseudonymity in the Pauline Letters have been addressed above. On the view that the letter may have been circular cf. Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 532; Best, “Ephesians I.I.” 275; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 78–79; S. Porter, *Apostle Paul*, 396.

⁴⁴ Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 532.

⁴⁵ The excursus that Hoehner includes on this matter is very informative. One of the most interesting portions is where he admits that, by the usual canons of textual criticism, the shorter and more difficult reading is preferred (and hence the omission of ἐν Ἐφέσῳ). On the other hand, he notes that Griesbach, the man who suggested these canons, would also argue that “if the shorter reading utterly lacks sense and is out of keeping with the style of the author, the longer reading is to be preferred.” Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 147. Cf. Metzger, *Text of the New Testament*, 122. This is the case that Hoehner finds with Eph 1:1. To leave out the name of the recipients is not in keeping with any of the other Pauline letters and further, the grammar almost demands the inclusion of a location to make sense. Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 147. S. Porter also notes that the omission of a destination makes the Greek “not only awkward but unparalleled.” S. Porter, *Apostle Paul*, 395. It must be noted, however, that S. Porter is not convinced that the words ἐν Ἐφέσῳ belong in the text. In his recently published monograph, Immendörfer (*Ephesians and Artemis*) makes the case that the letter to the Ephesians ought to be more closely associated with the ancient city of Ephesus because he finds evidence that the letter was first written to former Artemis worshippers. The connection of Artemis to Ephesus will be discussed in Chapter 5.

It is reasonable to assume that the early Christians in Ephesus did, in fact, receive this letter (whether or not they were the only ones who received it)⁴⁶ and thus they would have interpreted its meaning through their own particular lens. This study will assume that the letter known as Ephesians was indeed received by the Christians in the city of Ephesus wherever else it may have been sent. This assumption is significant for this study because without a concrete destination for the letter there is no location or context for which to create a thick description to aid in the analysis of the Ephesians passage.

Now that the method of social description has been discussed in relation to this project and relevant assumptions have been stated and explored, the work can begin in earnest with the study of the ancient locations of Ephesus and Corinth.

⁴⁶ Even if another location had received this letter, the Ephesians would have interpreted it in their own context. If another group or groups received it, each group would have done the same. If the context of the other recipients was different, their interpretation may, arguable, have also been different. Since Ephesus is the only explicit context known for that letter, it is the only context that can be examined.

CHAPTER 3: THE CITY OF CORINTH: GRECO-ROMAN AND CHRISTIAN CONTEXTS

Greco-Roman Context

The ancient city of Corinth is located in Greece on the Isthmus of Corinth, to the southwest of the modern city of the same name. The ancient city was built near the base of the Acrocorinth, a steep limestone rock face which rises to a height of 575 metres.¹ There is evidence of nearly continuous occupation of the site from c. 3000 BCE.² The Greek city-state of Corinth was embroiled in a battle with the Romans over its independence and this ultimately led to its destruction by the Romans in 146 BCE.³ It was left mostly uninhabited until it was re-founded by Julius Caesar in 44 BCE.⁴

Strabo suggests that the Romans chose to refound the city because of its “favourable position.”⁵ This refers to the geographic location of Corinth between two ports which allowed for easy trade and created a decided economic advantage.⁶ The new inhabitants were mostly freedmen, though some veterans of the Roman military may have been among them.⁷ Based on descriptions by Appian, Murphy-O’Connor suggests that around 3000 settlers were first sent to refound the city of Corinth.⁸

¹ Murphy-O’Connor, *St. Paul’s Corinth*, 35.

² This is shown by remains of pottery. Fowler, “Introduction,” 13.

³ Murphy-O’Connor, *St. Paul’s Corinth*, 3. See also Pausanias, *Descr.* 2.1.2.

⁴ C. K. Williams, “Roman Corinth,” 33. The destruction of Corinth was not total. Cicero notes that there were still inhabitants of the city in the following 100 years. See Cicero, *Tusc.* 3.22.53. For a discussion of Cicero’s importance in this matter see Murphy-O’Connor, *St. Paul’s Corinth*, 43; Wiseman, “Corinth and Rome,” 493. Archaeological excavations of coinage and pottery which date to the “abandoned” period also support the idea that Corinth was partially inhabited even after its destruction in 146 BCE. See Romano, “Post 146 B.C. Land Use,” 12–13; Wiseman, “Corinth and Rome,” 495.

⁵ Strabo, *Geogr.* 8.6.23c.

⁶ Murphy-O’Connor, *St. Paul’s Corinth*, 64.

⁷ Veterans seem to have been in the minority. See Murphy-O’Connor, *St. Paul’s Corinth*, 64; A. Clarke, *Serve the Community*, 37–38. The impression is given by Plutarch’s remarks in *Caes.* 47.8 that

Much of the early rebuilding effort was destroyed in an earthquake in 77 CE, so that much of the city had to be rebuilt yet again.⁹ For the study of Paul and the reception of his letters by Corinthian Christians in the first century CE, the details of the Roman city, particularly before its destruction by earthquake in 77 CE, are of primary interest.¹⁰

Geography

When discussing Corinth as a city, one must also consider the fact that the whole of the Corinthia functioned together. The term “Corinthia” refers to the area which fell under the influence of the city and encompasses much of the isthmus. Wiseman writes,

Citizens of all the towns of the Corinthia evidently considered themselves, throughout most of antiquity, citizens of Corinth; there are few epigraphical instances of demotics and only Tena offers evidence of independence (spiritually or politically) from Corinth at any time. Corinth, then, may be viewed as a unitary state in which the city was the seat of political authority.¹¹

The nearby ports of Cenchreae (8.5 km to the south-east) and Lechaeum (2 km to the north) were important partners in trade as Corinth itself was not on the coast.¹² Another important feature in joining the isthmus together was the *diolkos*, a paved roadway for hauling boats and cargo across the isthmus from the Saronic Gulf to the Gulf of Corinth, which meant that ships did not have to sail around the Peloponnese. The road is thought

there were many veterans who settled Corinth. Murphy-O'Connor notes, however, that Caesar founded eighteen colonies between 45–44 BCE and that Plutarch may only be referring to the fact that veterans were among the settlers of all of them, though Corinth and Carthage were the largest colonies. This does not mean that the largest number of veterans settled in these two locations. Strabo seems to contradict the idea that there were large numbers of veterans in Corinth. Cf. Murphy-O'Connor, *St. Paul's Corinth*, 64, 112; Strabo, *Geogr.* 8.6.23c.

⁸ Murphy-O'Connor, *St. Paul's Corinth*, 64. He suggests that though Appian is discussing the re-founding of Carthage, there is reason to think that a similar number of colonists were sent to Corinth. Murphy-O'Connor, *St. Paul's Corinth*, 120–21. Cf. Appian, *Hist. Rom.* 8.136.

⁹ Wiseman, “Corinth and Rome,” 521.

¹⁰ Oster makes an important point when he says that at times *too* much is made of the one-hundred-year period of abandonment of the site of Corinth and that scholars have effectively created two “Corinths” due to the conquest and recolonization. To assume that there was no influence from the Greek period on the Roman one is a grave mistake and evidence from both periods must be weighed carefully to determine what is applicable to a given research question. Cf. Oster, “Use, Misuse, and Neglect,” 54–55.

¹¹ Wiseman, “Corinth and Rome,” 446.

¹² Wiseman, “Corinth and Rome,” 441.

to have been paved by Periander in the sixth century BCE.¹³ According to Casson, this roadway was initially not for cargo, but for light and slender warships which enabled the Greek city of Corinth to make better use of its navy on its two coasts.¹⁴ He further notes that an “appropriate fee” went along with this great mode of transport and thereby Corinth was able to amass a “tidy income.”¹⁵ This was long before the Roman destruction and later re-founding of the city, but the stone road endured into that period and beyond. In Paul’s time, which is of primary interest here, the paved road was in use, but as the size of ships increased, the usefulness of this passage became less and less.¹⁶ This road was used for the last time in the ninth century.¹⁷

As noted above, the whole of the Corinthia functioned together. The territory over which the city of Corinth had influence is approximately 270 square miles (700 square kilometers).¹⁸ This was approximately the same in both the Greek and Roman eras,¹⁹ though the size of the walled portion of the city itself was different. When the city of Corinth was re-founded, its walls were not rebuilt to the same level of completeness that characterized the Greek era. Since cities were walled for the purposes of defense there may not have been a need to rebuild walls if the city was not under threat.²⁰ The colonists would need to rebuild homes to live in, but also the portions of the city that were vital to business and the worship of the gods, so these were the initial priorities.

¹³ Cf. Wiseman, *Ancient Corinthians*, 45; Casson, *Ancient Mariners 2nd Ed.*, 72-73.

¹⁴ Casson, *Ancient Mariners 2nd Ed.*, 73.

¹⁵ Casson, *Ancient Mariners 2nd Ed.*, 73.

¹⁶ For further discussion of the use of the *diolkos* and the weight of goods that could be transported over it, and attempts to dig a canal through the isthmus in ancient times see: Murphy-O’Connor, *St. Paul’s Corinth*, 62, 88, 118; Casson, *Ancient Mariners 1st Ed.*, 119; Burford, “Heavy Transport,” 14; Wiseman, *Ancient Corinthians*, 45, 48. Cf. Pliny the Elder, *Nat.* 4.10; Suetonius, *Nero* 19.

¹⁷ Cf. Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 59.

¹⁸ Fowler, “Corinth and the Corinthia,” 23. Engels suggests that the area is as large as 318 square miles, which is approximately 825 square kilometers. Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 27.

¹⁹ Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 27.

²⁰ See Murphy-O’Connor, *St. Paul’s Corinth*, 58.

The main area of the city was the agora or forum area. This was where the major business and market areas of the city were found as well as many temples, statues, and fountains devoted to various deities.²¹ The open area of the forum is estimated at 15,300 square metres²² and was home to numerous temples and places of business.

Another important landmark overlooking the city was the Acrocorinth. The city was built in the shadow of this mountain, which Pausanias says was “assigned to Helius by Briareos when he acted as adjudicator, and handed over, the Corinthians say, by Helius to Aphrodite” (Pausanias, *Descr.* 4.6. LCL).²³ Whatever legendary reasons there may have been for this peak to be important in Greek history, it afforded the city protection (it served as part of the city wall) and also a strategic defensible position. On the road leading up to the summit there were various temples and at the top was the famed temple of Aphrodite.

The domestic areas of the city must also be considered in addition to the commercial ones. Murphy-O’Connor notes that there have been four Roman-era villas discovered at Corinth, but that only one of them can be dated to the time period when Paul the Apostle was in the city.²⁴ This is the villa at Anaploga. According to Murphy-O’Connor, if a home such as this were used for a meeting of early Christians, they would most likely use the “public” portions of the house which were the entrance, the atrium or courtyard, and the dining area or triclinium.²⁵ On further analysis of the dimensions of this home and comparing it with several other similar homes in other locations, he concludes that such a home, on average, could have accommodated between thirty and

²¹ See below for specific discussion of temples and religion in Roman Corinth.

²² C. K. Williams, “Roman Corinth,” 33.

²³ The Acrocorinth plays a role in many Greek legends, including those of Sisyphus and Pegasus.

²⁴ Murphy-O’Connor, *St. Paul’s Corinth*, 178.

²⁵ Murphy-O’Connor, *St. Paul’s Corinth*, 178.

forty people for a large gathering in the atrium.²⁶ Other potential meeting places for groups of early Christians will be discussed below.

A knowledge of the general geography of the city of Corinth helps to orient the rest of the material in the thick description. It assists in visualizing the topography and landscape within which much of the rest of the descriptive material exists. The citizens of the Corinthia would have come to Corinth to shop, perform acts of worship, sacrifice to the gods, and partake of the entertainments that the city had to offer. Corinth, due to its favourable geographic location, also was host to many visitors. Paul and other Christians travelled through the area bringing their Christian message with them. Others may have encountered Christianity for the first time on their way through the region.

The People of the City

The city of Corinth was, of course, populated by a variety of people. The next step in the thick description of the city includes an overview of the population of the city and the social classes that comprised the populace. A brief discussion of the Jewish population of Corinth is included here, rather than in the religion section, in order to highlight some of the social and cultural phenomena which were attached to this group. Finally, important social customs practiced by the people of Corinth conclude the section.

Population

It is notoriously difficult to determine how many people inhabited first-century Corinth owing to the fact that there is no census in existence for Roman Corinth.²⁷ Engels

²⁶ Murphy-O'Connor, *St. Paul's Corinth*, 182.

²⁷ Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 79.

estimates the population of Corinth based on known densities of other classical cities.²⁸

Based on all his data, Engels estimates that the city may have been able to support around 56,000 people living in it,²⁹ but Murphy-O'Connor sides with Wiseman's previous assertion that there is no way to effectively determine the population of that city in the Roman period due to too many unknown factors such as the amount of available drinking water.³⁰ Whatever the population, Corinth was not insignificant. On a major shipping and land-transport thoroughfare, Corinth and the surrounding environs would have been a desirable place to live and work.

Social Classes

Roman society was a highly-stratified society with everyone fitting into various social strata based on factors such as family, wealth, language, occupation, age, and sex.³¹ In addition to these factors, the order or *ordo* to which one belonged also played a role in determining one's social status. The four main orders of society, from highest rank to lowest, were the senators, equestrians, decurions, and plebeians.³²

These orders originated in the Roman Republic, long before Corinth was colonized by the Romans, but they were restored to prominence under Augustus and the divisions between classes became even more marked.³³ Garnsey and Saller define these social orders or "ranks" as "social categories defined by the state through statutory or customary rules."³⁴ Such rules dictated that the senators were the highest and most

²⁸ For discussion of his process and his calculations, see Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 79–84.

²⁹ Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 181.

³⁰ Murphy-O'Connor, *St. Paul's Corinth*, 31; Wiseman, *Ancient Corinthians*, 10. For further discussion on the possible population of Corinth, see Keener, *Acts*, 2685–86.

³¹ Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 22.

³² Harland, "Connections with Elites," 387.

³³ Garnsey and Saller, *The Roman Empire*, 112.

³⁴ Garnsey and Saller, *The Roman Empire*, 112.

wealthy and prestigious members of society. In order to be included in their ranks, a person had to be deemed superb “by the traditional standards of birth, wealth, and moral excellence.”³⁵ Under Augustus the men in the senate had to meet a financial requirement of one million sesterces and this dictated that only a few hundred families could meet the requirement.³⁶ A further complication was that those who achieved senatorial status did not automatically pass this status on to their sons. Though sons of senators were certainly encouraged to work to earn senatorial status in their own right (and were in a better position than most to do so), succession was not guaranteed.³⁷ If a son was not able to succeed his father, an opportunity arose for someone of a lower rank to move into his place.

Movement between ranks was not limited to the senatorial rank. Movement in and out of the equestrian rank, the second most prestigious, was easier than the above-noted senatorial movement.³⁸ The equestrians were the second most prestigious group in Roman society and though they also had to meet high moral and birth requirements, they did not need to possess as much wealth as the senators. Garnsey and Saller note that they required only 400,000 sesterces, less than half that required for senators.³⁹ Though

³⁵ Garnsey and Saller, *The Roman Empire*, 112.

³⁶ Garnsey and Saller, *The Roman Empire*, 113. Even if more could have met the financial obligation, the additional requirements of birth and “moral excellence” would have excluded some. A freedman, for example, no matter how wealthy he might become, would never have the required rank of birth to be included in the upper classes.

³⁷ Garnsey and Saller, *The Roman Empire*, 113. Garnsey and Saller also note some of the advantages afforded to the sons of senators: “Sons of senators were encouraged to follow in their father’s footsteps, not only by wearing the *latus clavus*, but also by attending meetings of the senate with their fathers. Furthermore, senatorial distinction was recognized as extending to descendants of senators for three generations, and the order was offered incentives to reproduce itself.” Garnsey and Saller, *The Roman Empire*, 113.

³⁸ Cf. Garnsey and Saller, *The Roman Empire*, 123. The “new” senatorial families were probably of equestrian rank first.

³⁹ Garnsey and Saller, *The Roman Empire*, 113.

Tiberius required that they have two previous generations of free birth, this order was still much larger than the senatorial order.⁴⁰

The third of the upper ranks in Roman society was that of the decurion or councillor. Again, members were required to have suitable birth, wealth, and moral standards. Though normally freedmen could not hold this position, freedmen's sons could.⁴¹ This is a marked difference from the senatorial and equestrian ranks. Though minimum wealth requirements varied according to the wealth of the town/city overall, there is evidence that in the "unexceptional town" of Comum, Italy, they required only 100,000 sesterces.⁴² Garnsey and Saller also note that "Moral excellence was more difficult to guarantee, but at least men with a criminal past and those in demeaning occupations, such as auctioneers and undertakers, were excluded."⁴³ This was the general rule, though not always reality. For example, if there was a shortage of "qualifying" men in a given location (such as Corinth) then those with the most wealth were able to step into higher positions, even if their level of birth and moral worth were in some way questioned.⁴⁴

After these three elite groups came the plebeians who made up the rest of the population. Among them were the slaves and the freedmen. The city of Corinth presents an unusual imbalance between the plebeians and the elites. Though there would have been vastly more plebeians in every city than there were senators, equestrians or decurions,⁴⁵ in Corinth the imbalance may have been even greater than usual, at least in

⁴⁰ Garnsey and Saller, *The Roman Empire*, 113–14.

⁴¹ Garnsey and Saller, *The Roman Empire*, 114.

⁴² Garnsey and Saller, *The Roman Empire*, 114.

⁴³ Garnsey and Saller, *The Roman Empire*, 114–15.

⁴⁴ Garnsey and Saller, *The Roman Empire*, 115; A. Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership*, 14.

⁴⁵ Some estimates suggest that the plebeians made up ninety-five percent of the population. Welborn, "Inequality," 65.

the years immediately following its refounding, due to its refounding with a large population of freedmen. This meant that there was no long-standing aristocracy occupying the upper classes and social mobility in the newly re-founded Corinth was possible in ways that it would not have been in other Roman cities. Some who enjoyed an elite status in Corinth might never have held such status in other locations. Meeks states, “To be a freedman in the early years of Roman Corinth, a colony whose first settlers were mostly freedmen, would surely have been less of a social disability than it would have been in Rome or Antioch.”⁴⁶ Indeed, Millis notes that the group of elites of Corinth was comprised of freedmen, Roman elites already active in the eastern parts of the empire, and Greek elites.⁴⁷ Of these groups, the freedmen were the largest in the elite group, which is not what normally would be expected. Millis is careful to point out, however, that once an elite was established in Corinth, it worked hard to perpetuate itself and so this opportunity for social mobility would not have lasted forever.⁴⁸

It is important to remember that, while social mobility in Corinth was possible, this does not suggest that the city was more “egalitarian” than other locations.⁴⁹ To ascend to a higher social rank still required a great deal of wealth and was a difficult feat. Competition for a higher rank was no doubt very stiff as many were hoping for the same opportunity to advance. Chow notes,

While in first-century Corinth honour and power, whether political or religious, were sought by the ambitious men, the way to fame was probably marked by strong competition. That is to say, in order to climb the ladder of power and honour, one would have to do more than fulfil the basic property requirements. Hence it was essential for those who did not come from a good family background, like freedmen, to have proper personal connections. For the seats of

⁴⁶ Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 55.

⁴⁷ Millis, “The Local Magistrates,” 41.

⁴⁸ Millis, “The Local Magistrates,” 53. See also Welborn, “Inequality,” 58–59.

⁴⁹ Welborn, “Inequality,” 60.

honour were probably in the hand of the ruling elites under the system of cooption. One of the necessary and honourable things to do was to cultivate relationships with men of influence and, if possible, the Roman authorities.⁵⁰

This strongly competitive atmosphere brought about by the high numbers of freedmen in the city likely permeated every aspect of life in Corinth. It is apparent that this highly-competitive social mobility was still happening in pre-70 Roman Corinth, which means that its implications must be considered in this study.⁵¹

Aside from the potential mobility between social orders, the refounding of the city with Roman freedmen and soldiers would have brought changes in social ideas to the former Greek city. Initially, those Greeks who remained in the city during its period of abandonment would have been overshadowed by the influx of new Roman ideas and considered to be a lower-ranked group.⁵² Corinth has been called a “mini Rome” by some scholars owing to its use of Latin (whereas most eastern colonies continued to use Greek as a dominant language), Roman grid pattern for the city’s layout, Latin coinage, and Italian pottery.⁵³ This Roman cultural dominance, however, was not to last. Engels notes that over time, the city gradually lost its very Italian, Latin identity, and became more Hellenized.⁵⁴ Immigration of Greeks to the city may have overthrown the population of the original Roman colonists. Names, inscriptions, and language seem to have changed over the first three centuries CE. There was also a marked shift in preference for Greek

⁵⁰ Chow, *Patronage and Power*, 82.

⁵¹ A. Clarke’s list of leading officials in Roman Corinth suggests that freedmen attained these positions into the fourth decade of the first century and freedmen attained social honours into the third century. A. Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership*, 135–57.

⁵² Murphy-O’Connor, *St. Paul’s Corinth*, 39.

⁵³ Keener, *Acts*, 2690–91. Most public inscriptions were also in Latin (Keener, *Acts*, 2690), which is unusual for an eastern city, but Philippi also displays a similar imbalance of Latin and Greek inscriptions. S. Porter, *Apostle Paul*, 330. In both cities there was a strong Roman influence.

⁵⁴ Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 71–74.

religion over Roman.⁵⁵ This does not mean that during Paul's stay in Corinth the city was fully "Roman" and that there was no Greek influence at all. On the contrary it is highly likely that many people spoke Greek, which could be why Paul wrote to the Christians there in the Greek language. Further, the shifting of the city toward a greater Greek influence from immigration may have already begun.⁵⁶

As previously stated, the population of Roman Corinth was initially made up largely of freedmen. Though "free," these former slaves were not without obligations to their former masters. Dupont notes,

Although free, the freedman remained in a relation of dependence *vis-à-vis* his former master, now his *patronus*—literally "he who takes the place of the father." He owed him *obsequium*, as a son his father; in other words, he had to join his retinue in public places and generally support him in public life. He could not bring legal proceedings against him. He also owed him *operae*, a certain number of days of work. If the patron was a craftsman, the freedman had either to work under him or to set up shop in a different town.⁵⁷

If the freedman no longer lived in the vicinity of his master, then these obligations would have been cumbersome to uphold and he may have been free from them.⁵⁸ In contrast, Duff implies that unless a freedman was actually free from his obligations to his "master" he would not have been able to leave and join a colony.⁵⁹ It is difficult to see how a colony could be nearly completely settled by freedmen if such individuals were not free to travel, at least in the specific case of Corinthian colonists.

⁵⁵ Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 71–74.

⁵⁶ Cf. Keener, *Acts*, 2693.

⁵⁷ Dupont, *Ancient Rome*, 66. See also J. Crook, *Law and Life*, 51–54. Garnsey and Saller suggest a different scenario: "The formal legal disabilities of being a freedman were not in practice very inhibiting: a slave properly manumitted by a citizen became a citizen, but was barred from the elite orders, from service in the legions and from legitimate marriage to senators." Garnsey and Saller, *The Roman Empire*, 138. It is unclear why they do not mention the same restrictions as Dupont and J. Crook.

⁵⁸ If the freedman were to move to Corinth, away from the vicinity of his former master, though legally nothing changed, it was less likely that his former master would have called on him to fulfil those duties. Murphy-O'Connor, *St. Paul's Corinth*, 65.

⁵⁹ Duff, *Freedmen*, 201.

Though Roman Corinth was initially populated with many former slaves, it would be a mistake to assume that the city did not also have slaves who were the property of the colonists. According to Dupont, all but the most poverty-stricken of free individuals owned at least one slave.⁶⁰ Slavery was very much a fact of life in this and many ancient societies and freedmen, as former slaves, had to prove themselves in ways that those who were born free did not.⁶¹ Wiedemann notes, “Precisely because slaves as a class were denied any moral worth of their own, they could be seen as things, the possession of which conferred status upon their owners, like other objects of material value.”⁶² Because slaves were considered to be property, both freedmen and those born free could display their wealth and further their status in society by owning and displaying their slaves.

Though slaves were “property,” they were able to earn money for themselves (known as a *peculium*) through the generosity of their masters.⁶³ They were sometimes given a portion of the profits they earned or were paid their *peculium* in education or a skilled trade which they could then ply for themselves once earning their freedom.⁶⁴ Often the slave’s accumulated monetary *peculium* was what he or she used to purchase freedom from a master after many years of service.⁶⁵ Those slaves who first came to

⁶⁰ Dupont, *Ancient Rome*, 57. It should be noted that just because many had slaves, it does not mean that everyone had a multitude of them. Balsdon suggests that “it is probable that most people of moderate means in Rome had only one or two [slaves], and that many households had no slaves at all.” Balsdon, *Life and Leisure*, 107. Taking the two ideas together it is probably best to cautiously understand that while many strove to have slaves, not many could afford a multitude of them, and for those who could afford them at all, having only one or two slaves was quite common.

⁶¹ Wiedemann, *Greek and Roman Slavery*, 3.

⁶² Wiedemann, *Greek and Roman Slavery*, 5.

⁶³ Dupont, *Ancient Rome*, 63.

⁶⁴ Dupont, *Ancient Rome*, 63.

⁶⁵ Dupont, *Ancient Rome*, 63. Wiedemann notes, “Roman jurists recognised a slave’s right to use his *peculium* to buy himself free from his owner. On the other hand the *familia rustica*, those slaves working on agricultural estates, received very different treatment and had virtually no opportunities to benefit from this ideal.” Wiedemann, *Greek and Roman Slavery*, 3. He also notes that to send an “urban” slave away to serve on the country estate was considered a punishment for that slave. Wiedemann, *Greek and Roman Slavery*, 117.

newly founded Corinth with their masters would become the freedmen of the next generation.⁶⁶

Jewish Presence

Another group of people in the city of Corinth which needs consideration is the Jews. They may have fallen into various social classes within Corinthian society, though they make up a distinct cultural and religious group.⁶⁷ Apart from the New Testament documents, the best evidence for a Jewish presence at Corinth is provided by Philo, who gives reason to believe that there may have been a fair Jewish population there.⁶⁸ He explicitly notes the presence of Jews in Corinth, and because he mentions this city specifically, along with the region of the Peloponnese which contained it, Murphy-O'Connor suggests that Philo should be taken seriously even though there is scant other evidence of a Jewish population in this area at that time.⁶⁹ He further suggests that the Jewish population in Corinth may have been larger than in the rest of the area, given the city's special mention by Philo.⁷⁰ Keener notes that the population of Jews in Corinth

⁶⁶ For further discussion of slavery in the Roman Empire, see J. Crook, *Law and Life*, 56–58.

⁶⁷ Judaism is treated here with emphasis on the social implications of the group rather than religious considerations only.

⁶⁸ Philo, *Legat.* 281–282. As noted by Panayotov in his survey of evidence for Jewish populations in the Balkans and Aegean, the archaeological and epigraphic evidence of Jewish presence in Corinth dates, at the earliest, to the third century. Panayotov, "Jews and Jewish Communities," 66–67. Panayotov concludes, "The evidence discussed [in the whole chapter] attests to the continuous presence of Jews and Jewish communities in the Balkans, the Aegean and Cyprus until the end of the twelfth century and suggests that Jews were well established in the main administrative centres of these areas, enjoying relative peace and prosperity until the seventh century." Panayotov, "Jews and Jewish Communities," 76. For his conclusions to be applicable to Corinth, which he implies they are, the literary evidence must suffice for the early centuries of the common era. While some would dispute that the number of Jews in Corinth was not large enough to be of any consequence based on archaeological data, it must be remembered that a lack of archaeological remains does not necessitate a lack of Jewish presence. Catto, for example, demonstrates that Jews throughout the diaspora may have met in homes, other public buildings, or outdoors, which would make detection of their worship space virtually impossible today. Catto, *Reconstructing*, 47–48, 104–105.

⁶⁹ Murphy-O'Connor, *St. Paul's Corinth*, 79.

⁷⁰ Murphy-O'Connor, *St. Paul's Corinth*, 79.

may have been the largest in Greece at the time, outside of Macedonia.⁷¹ Engels also supports the idea of a Jewish population in the area along with other people who came to Corinth from places to the east.⁷² Some of the Jewish population in Corinth may have come from the freedmen who were its original colonists.⁷³

It is highly likely that there was at least a modest Jewish presence in Corinth during the first century. What is not certain, however, is the extent of their desire to be separate from their gentile neighbours or to what extent they may have assimilated with them. The Jews, as was true for other minority religious groups, were likely given at least some level of toleration for their beliefs and practices. Smallwood notes, “The normal Roman attitude towards foreign religions was one of toleration, provided that they appeared to be both morally unobjectionable and politically innocuous.”⁷⁴ Provided that they could be good residents of the empire, they likely encountered no “official” problems.

There is some indication that Jews had special rights in the empire when it came to religious toleration.⁷⁵ J. Crook notes,

Now the Jews of Judea were a *natio*, a clear ethnic group, and their special habits of religious thought well known throughout the Mediterranean world from of old; their cult was given special license and sanction by the Romans as a national idiosyncrasy. The Jews of the Dispersion were accorded the same license as a

⁷¹ Keener, *Acts*, 2694. Cf. Stern (“Diaspora,” 159) who calls the Jewish population in Corinth the “most important . . . south of Macedon.”

⁷² Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 70–71. For example Jews, Anatolians, and Phoenicians.

⁷³ Cf. discussion in Smallwood, *Jews under Roman Rule*, 131–32.

⁷⁴ Smallwood, *Jews under Roman Rule*, 124.

⁷⁵ For the purposes of this study an attempt has been made to look at laws concerning Judaism which would have been in effect during the first century. Sources which focus on later periods of the Roman Empire cannot be included, such as Linder, ed. *The Jews in Roman Imperial Legislation*. The earliest law in this collection is mid-second-century.

“permitted religion” *a fortiori*, as it were; though the Romans did not like the Jewish proselytizing it was mostly in the east and led to no disturbances.⁷⁶

Along with this toleration as a permitted religion came rights such as “the right of assembly for worship and common meals, the right to observe the Sabbath and the festivals and to follow the other requirements of their Law, and the right to hold funds, and . . . to build synagogues.”⁷⁷ Though not explicitly stated, it seems as though exemption from participation in the imperial cult was understood as part of these rights, as forcing the Jews to participate would be a direct violation of their guaranteed religious toleration. Some of these privileges were not extended to other groups in the empire wishing to form *collegia*. These were banned by Julius Caesar, with synagogues being one of the few exceptions.⁷⁸ The apparent preferential treatment of Jews (including later exemption from military service) attracted attention to them and actually served to breed anti-Semitism rather than quash it.⁷⁹ These same rights and struggles would have befallen the Jews of Corinth.

⁷⁶ J. Crook, *Law and Life*, 280. J. Crook suggests that the difference between Christians and Jews in terms of exemptions from the imperial cult was that Jews were following ancestral heritage when refusing to participate while Christians rejected it by choice rather than heritage. This made Christianity “*religio illicita*.” J. Crook, *Law and Life*, 280. While this may have been true of Christianity in later years, in its earliest days the Roman authorities did not see Christianity as a separate religion from Judaism. This can be seen from Gallio’s response to Jewish charges against Paul in Acts 18:12–16. Cf. Winter, “Achaean Federal Imperial Cult,” 171. Further, Witherington suggests that the designation of Judaism as *religio licita* may not have occurred before the time of Claudius. Instead, he suggests, “Rather, Judaism is treated like other religions that could claim antiquity and involved nothing inherently morally or politically offensive to Rome; it was treated with a measure of toleration, not with an endorsement of validity.” Witherington, *Acts*, 542–43.

⁷⁷ Smallwood, *Jews under Roman Rule*, 134–35. She further notes: “The Jews’ communal property was safeguarded by a ruling that theft of the Temple tax or of the rolls of the Scriptures from a synagogue by a gentile should count as sacrilege and be punished by the confiscation of property, and that the envoys taking the money to Jerusalem should not be molested; and their religious liberty as individuals was protected by exemption from summonses to law on the Sabbath, when they would not attend and so would lose their cases by default.” Smallwood, *Jews under Roman Rule*, 135. One thing Jews were not permitted to do was actively proselytize. Smallwood, *Jews under Roman Rule*, 130.

⁷⁸ Smallwood, *Jews under Roman Rule*, 134.

⁷⁹ Smallwood, *Jews under Roman Rule*, 149.

In spite of legislation concerning the Jews and the religious toleration that appears to have been granted them, it is not at all certain that every Jew in every area of the empire actually cared to take advantage of these privileges. White suggests that most of the Jewish population in the empire fell somewhere between the extremes of total assimilation into the Roman ideal and total segregation from it.⁸⁰ This means that some Jews ignored their religion completely and others adhered to it in the strictest sense (and perhaps were the ones for whom such exemptions were created), while the majority fell somewhere in between. White says, “Thus, I would suggest that *most* Jewish communities, at least *most* of the time, hovered in the middle ground between complete assimilation and outright resistance. Sometimes they might slide—or *be pushed*—one way or the other, but that is precisely what they were having to ‘negotiate’ on an ongoing basis.”⁸¹ Though his references are primarily related to Jewish participation in the imperial cult, he calls for balance in understanding the ways in which the Jewish people participated in Roman life. It is probable that in the diaspora, where Corinth is found, there were more Jews willing to accommodate to Rome’s requirements than those who felt compelled to assert their need for special religious considerations.⁸²

The Jewish presence in Corinth is important to consider here because the text of Acts claims that Paul had significant interaction with Jews in that city. These interactions and their effect on the emergence of Christianity in Corinth will be discussed below.

⁸⁰ White, “Capitalizing on the Imperial Cult,” 174.

⁸¹ White, “Capitalizing on the Imperial Cult,” 174, (emphasis original).

⁸² Conversely, in Palestine, the center of the Jewish world at the time, is possibly where the most resistance to Romanization was found.

Social Interactions and Customs

Though the city of Corinth was populated by many different sub-cultures, they were all dependent on goods coming into the area via the sea and overland trade routes. This reality would influence their response to outsiders and strangers to the area. They could not afford to offend those who came to their city and Engels suggests that they would have sought to attract outsiders and welcome them. He writes, “For a city like Corinth whose economy depended to a large extent on its ability to attract merchants, travelers, and tourists to use its services, hospitality was an especially important virtue. Pagan and Christian writers alike extolled the pervasive hospitality and warmth displayed by Corinth’s people.”⁸³ Such a hospitable environment may have contributed to Paul’s success in the region when he came to spread the message of Christianity, though it is important to note that hospitality is an important part of Greco-Roman culture in general and is not unique to Corinth.⁸⁴ Further to this, it must be stated that Paul and his Christian message may not have been welcomed by all; in some circles new religious ideas would have been greeted not with hospitality, but with suspicion and persecution.⁸⁵ However, if Paul encountered a group of people, or several groups, who were interested in hearing his ideas, the social value of hospitality may have helped him to find support in the community and provided a means by which to continue sharing his message.

Two more values that were intrinsic to Greco-Roman culture were those of honour and shame. In the Greco-Roman world a person’s honour was their personal value

⁸³ Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 89.

⁸⁴ Meeks, *Origins of Christian Morality*, 104.

⁸⁵ For example, see Wendt, “*Ea Superstitione*,” 183–202 and her discussion of the persecution of “freelance religious experts” in the Roman Empire.

or worth both in their own eyes and in the eyes of society.⁸⁶ “Honour” was only valid if it was publically recognized by others. Shame was the opposite of honour and was carried by a person for their dishonourable deeds.⁸⁷ A person could be ascribed honour by virtue of the social class he was born into or it could be acquired through public challenges.⁸⁸ A person’s honour did not affect the individual alone; honour was a group concept. A person’s individual honour served to bring honour to the group(s) that he belonged to such as his family. Shame worked in the same way; an entire group would suffer for the shameful activities of one of its members.⁸⁹

Somewhat connected with the group mentality of the ancient Mediterranean and the ideas of honour and shame is the idea of patronage. Simply put, patronage occurs when an individual of higher rank provides goods, money, or other services to a group or individual of lower rank. In exchange for these things the lower ranked person or group gives honour and loyalty to the patron.⁹⁰ This honour or loyalty could come in the form of “statues, inscriptions, and public office.”⁹¹ When patronage was given to a group by a member of the group the patron could be rewarded with a leadership role within that group.⁹² This practice was very common in both Greek and Roman culture.⁹³

⁸⁶ Pitt-Rivers, “Honour and Social Status,” 21. Many works have been written on the subject of honour and shame and a full survey of them and their contents is not needed here. What is needed is to understand the basics of these concepts and to understand the massive influence that they must have had on the people of the time.

⁸⁷ In fact only men vied for honour while women sought to properly embody the shame that was theirs by virtue of being a woman. A woman’s “honour” was in her proper shame. For more details on women and shame, see Malina, *The New Testament World*, 50–53.

⁸⁸ Malina, *The New Testament World*, 33–34. These public honour challenges are known as “challenge-riposte.”

⁸⁹ Cf. Pitt-Rivers, “Honour and Social Status,” 35; Malina, *The New Testament World*, 67.

⁹⁰ Moxnes, “Patron-Client Relations,” 242. Cf. Z. Crook, *Reconceptualizing Conversion*, 65. Note that patronage or benefaction only occurs between social un-equals. Gifts between social equals held different expectations for reciprocity, Z. Crook, *Reconceptualizing Conversion*, 63–64.

⁹¹ Osiek and Balch, *Families*, 50.

⁹² Osiek and Balch, *Families*, 50.

⁹³ DeSilva, *Honor, Patronage*, 102.

As will be discussed under the political section below, acts of patronage were, in many ways, foundational to the way society functioned in the Roman world. Aside from individuals, voluntary associations and cities themselves benefited from the money of the wealthy in patron-client relationships.⁹⁴ The expectation that a wealthy person would provide money for a building or food for a communal meal was real. In return for their support, patrons received public honour and advancement in rank in the public eye.

Though some values of the people of Corinth, such as hospitality and patronage, may not have been all that different from the other Greco-Roman cities in the empire, Engels suggests that there were values that were uniquely Corinthian. He highlights the fact that those who knew Roman Corinth emphasized the city's focus on "sensual enjoyment." He says, "To the Greeks and Romans, sex was part of nature, not against nature, as the later Christians believed."⁹⁵ It is perhaps unfair to the Christians to suggest that they thought sex was "against nature," but they certainly had different views on the appropriate relationships, times, and places for sexual activity. These would have clashed with Greco-Roman ideas. In spite of the focus on sensuality that the Corinthians apparently had, Engels also is careful to note that evidence suggests that "the one thousand sacred prostitutes of Aphrodite in Greek Corinth were no longer present in the Roman colony."⁹⁶ The reasons for this will be discussed below in the section concerning religion in Corinth.

⁹⁴ By the time Corinth was re-founded, Chow notes that voluntary associations (such as might comprise a Christian congregation or a Jewish Synagogue) were looked on with some suspicion by the Romans; nevertheless, evidence exists that they were found in Corinth around the turn of the first century CE. It is likely that they were in existence in Corinth before that time. Cf. Chow, "Patronage in Roman Corinth," 118. For a brief introduction to voluntary associations see Harland, *Associations, Synagogues, and Congregations*, 25–53.

⁹⁵ Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 89.

⁹⁶ Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 89. Even if Aphrodite's thousand temple prostitutes no longer existed, Keener points to later writings that still suggest Corinth was a city which embraced "sexual pleasure and

Conclusions

Corinth was a major city with a diverse population, including a Jewish presence, and a variety of social classes. As with most Greco-Roman cities, it had a small number of elites and a large number of plebeians. It was also a typical Greco-Roman city in terms of its practices of hospitality, honour, shame, and patronage. It was not typical in terms of the large number of freedmen that were found in the population and the ability of some of those freedmen to attain social positions which they would never have achieved in other cities. Competition for these elevated social positions appears to have been high. In spite of the fact that Aphrodite's temple no longer housed the famed one thousand prostitutes, if indeed it ever did, the Corinthians seem to have retained a reputation for placing a high importance on sexuality and sensual behaviour. The influence that each of these social factors had on the development of the Christian community in the city will be discussed later in this chapter and in Chapter 4.

First-Century Political Description

The political landscape in Corinth must be understood in light of the politics of the Roman Empire. Though we have a general idea of how cities such as Corinth functioned in relation to the empire and the emperor, Engels notes that we do not possess a specific charter or constitution for ancient Corinth.⁹⁷ Reasonable hypotheses of how Corinth related to Rome must be made from the charters and constitutions of other colonies and the remains of inscriptions and coins from Corinth.⁹⁸

lewdness." Keener, *Acts*, 2689. Cf. Lucian *Am.* 51; Martial *Epig.* 10.68. See further discussion in the section on religion below.

⁹⁷ Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 17.

⁹⁸ Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 17.

The emperor had ultimate power in the empire, but he was assisted by various others. The provinces were managed by proconsuls or governors.⁹⁹ These individuals were responsible for things such as military command in the area, keeping the peace, and hearing disputes.¹⁰⁰ The proconsul's most important staff member was his quaestor. According to Lintott, "The quaestor was not merely a financial official, like those quaestors at the treasury at Rome, but a deputy to the governor in all respects."¹⁰¹ Also close to the proconsul were his *legati* who were men of high rank who assisted the proconsul in his work, particularly with the military.¹⁰²

Excavations at Delphi in the early twentieth century revealed nine fragments of an inscription which make up the beginning of a letter from Claudius.¹⁰³ This letter implies that at the time it was written a man named Gallio was proconsul in Achaia, the region where Corinth is also located. Subsequent discussions of this inscription suggest that the window of time for Gallio's proconsulship was either 50–51 or 51–52.¹⁰⁴ This inscription is significant for this study because Acts records that the proconsul of Achaia during at least part of Paul's stay in Corinth was Gallio (Acts 18:12). Acts also reports that when the Jews brought Paul before him with a complaint, Gallio refused to hear the case because he saw their grievance as a matter of Jewish law and not of Roman concern. This encounter between Paul and Gallio will be discussed below.

⁹⁹ The proconsul was answerable to the emperor, though he made many decisions independently. Lintott, *Imperium Romanum*, 43.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Dunstan, *Ancient Rome*, 96; MacMullen, *Romanization in the Time of Augustus*, 11.

¹⁰¹ Lintott, *Imperium Romanum*, 50.

¹⁰² Lintott, *Imperium Romanum*, 50–51.

¹⁰³ For an edition of the nine fragments see Plassart, *Fouilles de Delphes*, 286. For a further discussion of this edition see Oliver, "Epistle of Claudius," 239–40.

¹⁰⁴ For extensive discussion concerning the Gallio inscription, the dates of his rule and its implications for Paul's visit to Corinth see Murphy-O'Connor, *St. Paul's Corinth*, 161–69; Keener, *Acts*, 2760–63.

While the provincial proconsul had a role to play in relation to the city of Corinth, its residents also were subject to a civic government. The colony was made up of citizens (*cives*) and “resident aliens” (*incolae*).¹⁰⁵ The citizens were the free colonists sent there by the emperor and their later descendants. The “resident aliens” or “permanent residents” would have been made of those people who were residing in the environs of the Corinthia prior to re-colonization, their descendants, and those who moved to the area later but were not citizens of the colony.¹⁰⁶ Both citizens and some resident aliens would have had the right to vote in the *comitia tributa* but only citizens could hold office.¹⁰⁷ The *comitia tributa* was a “tribal assembly” that elected the magistrates of the city and was made up of civilians (as opposed to the military). The city of Corinth and other colonies began transitioning away from the tribal assembly system with the end of the Roman Republic but remnants remained into the imperial period.¹⁰⁸

The *comitia* functioned along with a local senate known as the *decurio*.¹⁰⁹ This group likely had one hundred members and was responsible for many things in the Roman colonies.¹¹⁰ Engels notes that, among other things, they “[Built] new aqueducts, chose new festival days, audited municipal accounts, authorized the sending of embassies, passed legislation regarding public expenditures, public buildings and roads, granted citizens the right to use waste water from reservoirs, and called out the militia in

¹⁰⁵ Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 17. These should be understood as citizens of the colony and not necessarily Roman citizens. Some may have been, but this was likely not the case for the majority of the residents of Corinth.

¹⁰⁶ For a good description of the various statuses afforded to people in the Roman colonies, see J. Crook, *Law and Life*, 36–38.

¹⁰⁷ Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 17.

¹⁰⁸ Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 17. See also J. Crook, *Law and Life*, 43.

¹⁰⁹ Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 17.

¹¹⁰ A. Clarke notes that the usual number of members was one hundred but it varied at times from community to community. A. Clarke, *Serve the Community*, 41–42.

times of emergency.”¹¹¹ To be a member of the *decurio* a person needed to hold substantial property. Alternatively those who were *aediles*¹¹² or part of the *duovirate*¹¹³ could also be chosen.¹¹⁴ If these groups still did not produce one hundred suitable candidates for the senate, other “distinguished individuals” could be selected.¹¹⁵ In Corinth, freedmen were not barred from holding office as they were in other locations in the empire¹¹⁶ and several examples of freedmen holding important offices in Corinth during the first centuries BCE and CE are attested in the epigraphic and numismatic evidence of the city.¹¹⁷ Chow suggests it is because wealth in Corinth was especially highly valued and even those who were not of a “distinguishable family” could advance to high status.¹¹⁸ The large number of freedmen and the effect this had on Corinthian elite society has been previously discussed. As Duff notes, “Where the freedman predominated it was impossible to cut him off from municipal office.”¹¹⁹ Such was the case in Corinth.

¹¹¹ Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 17.

¹¹² Those in charge of public buildings, games, streets and markets. They assisted the *duoviri*. A. Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership*, 15; Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 18. In Corinth these individuals were not in charge of the games as they were in other cities as that role was filled by the *agonothete*. A. Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership*, 15.

¹¹³ The group of former chief magistrates. Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 18.

¹¹⁴ Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 17–18.

¹¹⁵ Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 18.

¹¹⁶ Chow, “Patronage in Roman Corinth,” 114. Duff notes that this exception was true for “Julius Caesar’s colonies” and that he seemed to be more sympathetic to the plight of the freedman than his immediate successors. Duff, *Freedmen*, 66.

¹¹⁷ A. Clarke lists Babbuius Gnaeus Philinus (*duovir* and *aedile* 9–11 CE), Cispuleius Quintus (*aedile* during reign of Tiberius), Heius Caius Aristo (*quinquennial duovir*, *aedile* and possibly *duovir* from 3–15 CE), and Heius Gaius Pamphilis (*agonothete*, *duovir*, and *praefectus iure dicundo* 25 BCE–10 CE) as freedmen or suspected freedmen. A. Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership*, 135–57. The *quinquennial duovir* was the *duovir* elected every five years to conduct a census and revise membership in the council. A. Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership*, 14; Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 18. A. Clark suggests the position was elected only every fourth year due to inclusive numbering. A. Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership*, 14. The *praefectus iure dicundo* was chosen by a *duovir* to act in his stead if he had to be away from the colony for an extended period. A. Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership*, 15.

¹¹⁸ Chow, “Patronage in Roman Corinth,” 114.

¹¹⁹ Duff, *Freedmen*, 66.

Though freedmen were permitted to hold office in Corinth, only some were actually able to rise to this level. Wealth was, of course, of great import. Additionally, those who were not previously magistrates needed a minimum age of thirty while those who were already magistrates could be as young as twenty-two (or perhaps twenty-five) by some reports.¹²⁰ In addition to these requirements, those who had been prostitutes or gladiators, who had run a brothel, or who had been convicted of a crime were excluded regardless of age or wealth.¹²¹ There were two chief magistrates who presided over both the *decurio* and *comitia* and carried out decisions of the *decurio*. Every five years the leadership changed hands after a census.¹²² Initially these men also served as judges in civil court matters.¹²³

The necessity for community leaders to be wealthy, to hold substantial property, and to be of a certain age may have been an elitist ideal, but in many ways it was also practical. The financial burden of caring for all the city's needs rested with its officials rather than with the city's own "bank account."¹²⁴ Garnsey and Saller write,

The key institution that enabled the cities to meet the demands of the government and their own needs was the liturgical system. This was a system by which the more well-to-do members of a community saw to the performance of essential services and responsibilities by payment in cash or kind or by personal service. The wealthy also gave of their time and money in performing the regular magistracies of their city, and some, a small minority, made benefactions over and above what was expected of them as liturgists and magistrates.¹²⁵

Though it may seem that the rich did "favours" to the city, they themselves were not without benefit from the system. Their service to the state and benefactions gained them

¹²⁰ Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 18. Cf. Lintott, *Imperium Romanum*, 50; J. Crook, *Law and Life*, 66.

¹²¹ J. Crook, *Law and Life*, 66.

¹²² Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 18.

¹²³ Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 18.

¹²⁴ Some needs were met through taxation, though the majority were paid for by the city's officials in exchange for honours and position. A. Clarke, *Serve the Community*, 45.

¹²⁵ Garnsey and Saller, *The Roman Empire*, 33.

honour and prestige, qualities which were much sought-after.¹²⁶ This is part of the system of patronage that has been previously discussed.

One leader of Corinth who must be discussed is Erastus. A partial inscription written on three pieces of paving stone was discovered at the excavations of the theatre in Corinth.¹²⁷ The inscription reads, . . .]*Erastus pro aedilit*[. . .]*e s. p. stravit*[. . . ¹²⁸ According to Kent, with the recovery of the third slab in 1947, the text should be read as . . . *Erastus pro aedilitate sua pecunia stravit*.¹²⁹ Murphy-O'Connor translates this to read, "Erastus in return for his aedilship laid (the pavement) at his own expense."¹³⁰ Chow notes that this man was likely granted the title of *aedile* when he promised to lay the pavement.¹³¹

This Erastus has been identified as possibly being the same Corinthian person that greets the church at Rome in Rom 16:23. The text there concerning Erastus reads, ἀσπάζεταιται ὑμᾶς Ἐραστός ὁ οἰκονόμος τῆς πόλεως, "Erastus, the city manager, greets you". Kent suggests the reasons this identification is sound are: "(1) the pavement was laid some time near the middle of the first century after Christ; (2) apart from this inscription the name Erastus is not found at Corinth, and is not a common cognomen; (3) Saint Paul's word οἰκονόμος . . . describes with reasonable accuracy the function of a Corinthian aedile."¹³² Not everyone agrees with Kent's assessment.

¹²⁶ Garnsey and Saller, *The Roman Empire*, 33; A. Clarke, *Serve the Community*, 32–33.

¹²⁷ The three pieces of the inscription were discovered in separate digs in 1928, 1929, and 1947. Kent, *Inscriptions*, 99. The remaining portions of the inscription have not been found.

¹²⁸ Kent, *Inscriptions*, 99.

¹²⁹ Kent, *Inscriptions*, 99.

¹³⁰ Murphy-O'Connor, *St. Paul's Corinth*, 34.

¹³¹ Chow, "Patronage in Roman Corinth," 114.

¹³² Kent, *Inscriptions*, 99–100.

Several have questioned the identification of the Erastus of the inscription with the one of Romans due to the date of the inscription. Further, the equating of the Latin *aedile* with the Greek *οικονόμος* is suspect for some. Goodrich and Theissen each suggest that the term *οικονόμος* in Rom 16:23 denotes *quaestor*, rather than *aedile*.¹³³ In order to reconcile this and still equate the Erastus of the inscription with the Erastus of Romans, Theissen suggests Erastus may have held the position of *quaestor* prior to becoming *aedile*¹³⁴ and Goodrich makes no comment on the connection between the two men.¹³⁵ Friesen contends that the Erastus of Rom 16:23 is not a high-ranking official but possibly a slave. He writes, “An *oikonomos* . . . would have been a low to mid level functionary in the city’s financial administration, not a Roman citizen, and probably a slave. He may have had social and economic resources beyond most of the population but not nearly equal to those of the colony’s elite.”¹³⁶ Friesen also contends that the Erastus of Romans and the Erastus from the inscription are in fact different men owing to the fact that, in his estimation, the inscription is now convincingly dated to the second and not the first century.¹³⁷

These are important criticisms to keep in mind, and perhaps it is best to lay aside attempts to equate the Erastus of the inscription and the Erastus of Romans. In spite of this, however, it does not follow that Erastus of Romans is necessarily a slave of little import. Goodrich, and Theissen before him, have demonstrated the possibility that the Erastus of Rom 16:23 might still be an important official (a *quaestor*) whether he is the

¹³³ Goodrich, “Erastus, Quaestor of Corinth,” 115; Theissen, “Social Stratification,” 79–83.

¹³⁴ Theissen, “Social Stratification,” 83.

¹³⁵ Goodrich, “Erastus, Quaestor of Corinth,” 115.

¹³⁶ Friesen, “Corinth in Context,” 245.

¹³⁷ Friesen, “Corinth in Context,” 237–42. In fact he notes that even shortly after the discovery of the first fragment of the inscription Cadbury did not support the identification of the Erastus of Rom 16:23 with that of the inscription. Cf. Cadbury, “Erastus of Corinth,” 42–58.

same Erastus of the inscription or not.¹³⁸ Welborn suggests he should be considered an *aedile*, though makes no reference to the Erastus of the inscription who is also called an *aedile*.¹³⁹ There are instances where the phrase *ὁ οἰκονόμος τῆς πόλεως*, or something similar, does not point to a slave, but an important official.¹⁴⁰ This same idea may be present in Rom 16:23. If the Erastus of Romans is indeed someone of high rank it has implications for the social status of Christians at Corinth, which will be discussed in Chapter 4.

The political description of the city of Corinth provides information concerning the city's place in the province and empire. It also demonstrates the essential components of the inner workings of the city's government. The politics of Corinth cannot be separated from the social systems discussed in the previous section. Only the elite members of society were eligible to hold office, but in Corinth, unlike many other places in the empire, wealthy freedmen were able to be part of the elite. A spot among the elites of society was a coveted spot and these freedmen would have had to engage in stiff social competition to earn one. Political positions were often granted to elite freedmen and others due to acts of patronage they performed in an effort to gain more honour and prestige. The city depended on these acts of patronage and the bank accounts of wealthy office holders to maintain itself. This political system with all its social aspects—including the extra measure of competition among the city's wealthy freedmen—was

¹³⁸ Goodrich responds to Friesen's criticisms of his work and while he notes the important consideration of an alternate date for the Erastus inscription (though does not fully accept the arguments Friesen presents) he also notes that there are several inscriptions which point to the *οἰκονόμος* as a high-ranking official in some instances which Friesen has failed to consider. Goodrich, "Erastus of Corinth Response," 587–88.

¹³⁹ Welborn, "Inequality," 71–73.

¹⁴⁰ Goodrich, "Erastus, Quaestor of Corinth," 95–100; Welborn, "Inequality," 71–73.

understood by each resident of the city and was quite “normal” for the first-century Corinthian.

First-Century Economic Description

The city of Corinth is described as a “wealthy” location. Strabo notes, “Corinth is called ‘wealthy’ because of its commerce, since it is situated on the Isthmus and is master of two harbours, of which the one leads straight to Asia, and the other to Italy; and it makes easy the exchange of merchandise from both countries that are so far distant from each other” (Strabo, *Geogr.* 8.6.20a, LCL). A mention in Plutarch of the financial industry in Corinth, Patrae, and Athens¹⁴¹ may suggest that these were the “three great banking centers in Roman Greece.”¹⁴² Murphy-O’Connor says it is not surprising that Corinth should have such status because of its importance as a trading center. It is rather curious, however, that Plutarch is the only one to mention its banking importance.¹⁴³

Engels notes that there were many ways in which the city of Corinth and the Corinthia could have earned money for itself and supported its citizens. Among these were the harbours. These attracted merchant ships but also provided employment opportunities for people who were needed to load and unload vessels, store merchandise, transport goods to the markets or the other harbours, and house, entertain, and feed sailors and visitors.¹⁴⁴ Indeed Engels suggests the biggest contributor to Corinth’s economy was the “provision of services” to the locals and those who came through the

¹⁴¹ Plutarch, *Mor.* 831a.

¹⁴² Murphy-O’Connor, *St. Paul’s Corinth*, 110.

¹⁴³ Murphy-O’Connor, *St. Paul’s Corinth*, 110.

¹⁴⁴ Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 57.

city for other reasons.¹⁴⁵ Apart from the income generated by the services, there is also evidence of agriculture and manufacturing in Corinth.

Agriculture was an important industry around Corinth and served to help feed the area's population.¹⁴⁶ Cicero notes that the land of the Corinthia was fertile.¹⁴⁷ This fertile land was to the west of the city; the land to the east was poor.¹⁴⁸ Though local agriculture was important to the survival of the residents of the area, the shortage of good agricultural land in the city's immediate vicinity and the potential size of the city make it unlikely that the local farmers alone would have produced enough food to feed the inhabitants of the area. Corinth was likely somewhat dependent on food imports from other areas as well.¹⁴⁹

As with other cities of the time, there were numerous "villas, gardens, and prosperous farmsteads" which surrounded Corinth.¹⁵⁰ According to Engels, the towns and villages of the Corinthia were all within a day's journey of the city of Corinth itself which would allow the area farmers easy access to the city's markets to sell their surplus produce.¹⁵¹ Further, the easy access to small ports all along the coasts meant that farmers could even transport goods to the market via the sea if they had surplus goods that could not be sold in the city.¹⁵²

Apart from agriculture, the city of Corinth was also home to a large manufacturing industry. Engels states, "Although the record for most of them has

¹⁴⁵ Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 42.

¹⁴⁶ Murphy-O'Connor, *St. Paul's Corinth*, 43–44

¹⁴⁷ Cicero, *Agr.* 1.5.

¹⁴⁸ Murphy-O'Connor, *St. Paul's Corinth*, 66.

¹⁴⁹ Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 48.

¹⁵⁰ "To date, six villas have been located within a mile radius of the city limits. Further out from this zone, we find towns, villages, and the occasional isolated farmhouse." Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 24.

¹⁵¹ Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 24–25.

¹⁵² Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 25.

perished, some evidence survives for lamp and pottery manufacture, work in bronze and marble sculpture.”¹⁵³ He suggests that the easy access to harbours made Corinth a particularly convenient location for making goods that required the combination of raw materials (like bronze and perfumes).¹⁵⁴

Of the goods manufactured in the city, lamp-making is the best documented.¹⁵⁵ The lamps made in Corinth were not particularly renowned and the evidence suggests that the finest lamps used in Corinth during the early decades of the Roman period were not locally made. Rather, these lamps were “Ephesian lamps” which were imported from that city and its environs.¹⁵⁶ Initially, the lamps made in Corinth were cheaper and of poor quality, but eventually (during the time of Domitian) they were able to produce their own version of fine lamps modelled after the then-popular Italian lamps.¹⁵⁷ These fine Corinthian lamps were also exported and during the time of their manufacture the importing of lamps from Italy seems to have ceased.¹⁵⁸

Corinthian bronze was also an important industry. Murphy-O’Connor notes, “Corinthian bronze not only had intrinsic worth, but was also valued for the quality of the workmanship.”¹⁵⁹ Pliny the Elder says, “Corinthian bronze is valued before silver and almost even before gold” (*Nat.* 34.1. LCL). Josephus makes a similar remark when discussing the doors of one of the gates to Herod’s temple which were plated in Corinthian bronze.¹⁶⁰ This famous and popular Corinthian bronze is said to have been

¹⁵³ Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 33.

¹⁵⁴ Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 33.

¹⁵⁵ Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 33.

¹⁵⁶ Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 34.

¹⁵⁷ Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 34. By that point the Ephesian lamps were out of style.

¹⁵⁸ Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 34. The Ephesian lamps were pushed out of the market when Italian lamps became fashionable. Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 34.

¹⁵⁹ Murphy-O’Connor, *St. Paul’s Corinth*, 46.

¹⁶⁰ Murphy-O’Connor, *St. Paul’s Corinth*, 93. See Josephus, *J.W.* 5.201–205.

made by a special combination of silver, gold and bronze and was thus available in hues of silver, gold, and the more traditional bronze, depending on which of the ingredients dominated.¹⁶¹ The problem with verifying these legendary claims is that no examples of such an alloy have been discovered.¹⁶² There is, however, evidence of a bronze foundry in Corinth¹⁶³ and a high-tin alloy of bronze which was produced there. This may be the actual “Corinthian bronze” as it was of a lighter colour than the traditional bronze.¹⁶⁴

Though agriculture and manufacturing were important in the Corinthia, the economy of the city of Corinth was, according to Engels, most dependent on the service industry. He notes,

These services may be divided into two types, primary or attractive services, and secondary services. Primary services would include religious, educational, cultural, and judicial activities that brought rural residents into the city. While in the city, these individuals would need secondary services such as food, temporary lodging, or the use of a public bath or latrine. Secondary services would not attract the rural residents to the city (few presumably would travel to use a latrine), but would fulfill his needs during his stay.¹⁶⁵

The reason that the “service industry” was so important in Corinth was that the things that residents of the Corinthia could not get in the countryside they would be forced to travel to the city of Corinth to obtain.

The services available to visitors to the city were vast. The city offered religious “services” which required people to come and be present at the local temples to offer sacrifices and have rituals performed. Religious festivals also took place in the city where the temples were.¹⁶⁶ Also, Corinth was the home of the courts and center for tax-

¹⁶¹ Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 36.

¹⁶² Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 36.

¹⁶³ Wiseman, “Corinth and Rome,” 512.

¹⁶⁴ Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 36–37.

¹⁶⁵ Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 43.

¹⁶⁶ Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 44.

collection.¹⁶⁷ The city offered education through “philosophers and rhetoricians” as well as “primary schools, grammar schools and schools of rhetoric that would attract many children of wealthy townsmen residing in the countryside.”¹⁶⁸ It had “health and recreational services” in the forms of public baths, temples to healing gods (Asklepios and Hygeia), and the gymnasium.¹⁶⁹ Cultural and entertainment facilities also were found in the city, including a theatre and a smaller odeon (the latter built in the late first century CE).¹⁷⁰ Gladiatorial contests were also very popular, though they did not have their own permanent building until an amphitheatre was constructed in the late third century.¹⁷¹ There were also prostitutes to “amuse” those who wished for such entertainments as well as “a whole host of other entertainments.”¹⁷² The city had much to provide for its visitors and these services were likely the most important part of the city’s economy.¹⁷³

The ideal location between two harbours meant that Corinth was a perfect place to bring goods to sell or to purchase goods from other places. Duties were collected by the city for the privilege of doing so.¹⁷⁴ The massive movement of goods required not only services for the people who brought the goods into the harbours (food, lodgings, baths, religious services, and entertainments, among others) but also “services” concerning the goods themselves. Vessels needed to be loaded and unloaded and goods needed to be stored in warehouses or transported to the city or another harbour. Also repairs to vessels

¹⁶⁷ Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 44–45.

¹⁶⁸ Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 45.

¹⁶⁹ Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 47.

¹⁷⁰ Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 48.

¹⁷¹ Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 48. Engels notes that “The Corinthian enthusiasm for these spectacles was considered excessive by many of their compatriots, and may reflect the Italian cultural influences of Corinth’s first settlers.” Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 48. The excess is noted by Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 31.121, although in this example, even the Corinthians are not as bad as the Athenians.

¹⁷² Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 48.

¹⁷³ Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 50.

¹⁷⁴ Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 50. See also Strabo, *Geogr.* 8.6.20

and the “machinery” of transport (like wagons), pasturing of animals, and maintenance and repair of various “accessories” to shipping and harbour equipment were needed.¹⁷⁵ Other possible industry may have included ship-building itself.¹⁷⁶ The *diolkos*, as mentioned above, also would have been a major contributor to this aspect of the economy.¹⁷⁷

Another employment opportunity in Corinth would have been construction and maintenance of the structures of Corinth. As previously noted, the early years of the colony were a time of many building and rebuilding projects. Much of the construction from this period is done in the local sandstone (“poros”) and was destroyed in the earthquake of 77 CE.¹⁷⁸ When the city was again re-built, more of the construction was done in marble, which was more costly but also sturdier in the face of earthquakes.¹⁷⁹ This shows how prosperous the city had become. It was often as costly to transport the marble as to build the structures themselves.¹⁸⁰

The economy of the city of Corinth provided no shortage of opportunities for businessmen who wished to add to their wealth in the new colony. There also were many opportunities for those who had more modest aspirations. The needs of the city’s residents and the many travellers provided income for many entrepreneurs such as the socially and politically ambitious freedman discussed above. The backdrop of a bustling economy also provides a context in which to situate Pricilla, Aquila, and Paul, whom Acts describes as earning a living by tentmaking in the city. The implications of this trade

¹⁷⁵ Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 57.

¹⁷⁶ Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 57.

¹⁷⁷ See discussion Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 58–60.

¹⁷⁸ Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 62.

¹⁷⁹ Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 62.

¹⁸⁰ Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 62.

for Paul and the Christian community will be discussed later in this chapter and in Chapter 4.

First-Century Religious Climate

When considering the ancient world, an understanding of a society's religion is integral to understanding that society. Information concerning specifics of the religious practices of the city of Corinth is difficult to come by. The archaeological evidence suggests that those who re-founded the city placed some level of priority on restoration of the sacred places.¹⁸¹ Though it is evident, based on the priority of restoration of the temples, that religion played a large role in Corinth, this does not explain the details of how the Corinthians worshiped their gods. Engels notes,

Our knowledge of the religious beliefs and practices of the city is based on four primary sources: inscriptions concerning priests and votive or dedicatory offerings to divinities; legends and images of deities on the coinage of the city; the remains of temples; and the descriptions of religious cults by visitors to the city, especially Pausanias who visited Corinth about A. D. 165.¹⁸²

Engels further suggests that there may have been religious continuity of practice in the time between the Greek period and Roman period, but this should not be understood as an uninterrupted religious continuity. Rather this should be understood as more of an “antiquarian revival” of older practices by the new colonists¹⁸³ or, as discussed below, the colonists bringing distinct Roman practices to the worship of deities that both they and the Greeks before them were accustomed to. The religions of the city of Corinth fall into three categories: the Roman cults, the imperial cult, and religious influences from the

¹⁸¹ Wiseman, “Corinth and Rome,” 509.

¹⁸² Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 93.

¹⁸³ Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 94. This is also supported by Bookidis, “The Sanctuaries of Corinth,”

eastern part of the empire, including Christianity and Judaism.¹⁸⁴ Judaism has been briefly mentioned above and Christianity will be discussed in detail below, therefore this section will focus on Roman religion and the imperial cult.

The excavations of Corinth have revealed many temples to various gods of the Greek and Roman pantheon. Bookidis notes that there is evidence that some of the gods worshipped at Corinth by the Greeks continued to play a part in the Roman colony: “In the sense of reoccupation of the same site, this continuity can be seen in the resumption of worship of Aphrodite on Acrocorinth, of Demeter and Kore on the north slope, of Isis and Sarapis a little farther down, Apollo on Temple Hill, Asklepios on the north edge of the city, and Poseidon at Isthmia.”¹⁸⁵ Though some of the same gods were worshipped, it is possible that the form of worship did not stay the same from the earlier era of the city to the Roman period.¹⁸⁶ Unfortunately, the available evidence does not always provide specific details.

Though an understanding of the worship of any number of these gods and goddesses would prove to be interesting, for the purposes of this study two particular deities are important to explore further: Aphrodite and Asklepios. Aphrodite is significant because she appears to be one of the most prominent deities worshipped in the city. Asklepios is significant because 1 Cor 12 mentions “gifts of healing” and this must be considered in light of the place of Asklepios, the god of healing, in the city of Corinth.

¹⁸⁴ Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 95. Engels note that the imperial cult was really among the Roman cults, but it is mentioned explicitly here to highlight this feature of Roman religion.

¹⁸⁵ Bookidis, “The Sanctuaries of Corinth,” 257.

¹⁸⁶ Bookidis, “The Sanctuaries of Corinth,” 257. She suggests that changes in worship practices are typical in the Greco-Roman world. Bookidis, “The Sanctuaries of Corinth,” 256.

Aphrodite

Murphy-O'Connor notes that much is often made of the descriptions of the great Temple of Aphrodite and the thousands of temple prostitutes and slaves who served there.¹⁸⁷ New Testament scholars have, at times, used these prostitutes and the goddess Aphrodite as evidence that first-century Corinth was a hotbed of sexual iniquity. As has been noted above, citizens of Corinth may have had a reputation for loving the sensual, and that reputation may have extended into the first century, but the thousand temple prostitutes did not. Strabo's reference to this plethora of temple prostitutes is not to first-century Corinth, but to Corinth in the pre-146 BCE era.¹⁸⁸ There is much to cast doubt that such devotion to Aphrodite and temple prostitution existed in the city during Paul's day. The Acrocorinth housed only a small temple to Aphrodite after the city was refounded and it was not large enough to house such vast numbers of prostitutes.¹⁸⁹ Further, language which uses the name of the city of Corinth in derogatory slang is said to be "fashionable" during the fourth century BCE, but not during Paul's day or the first century CE.¹⁹⁰ Having said this, there is no reason to believe Corinth was prostitute-free and Plutarch notes that there was "a great army" of them in that location.¹⁹¹ Murphy-O'Connor tempers the statement, however, by noting that Corinth was not likely any worse than other port-cities of that time and place.¹⁹² Nevertheless, this devotion to the goddess of love, fertility, and seafarers played a major role in the lives of the people of Corinth.¹⁹³

¹⁸⁷ Murphy-O'Connor, *St. Paul's Corinth*, 55. Cf. Strabo, *Geogr.* 8.6.20c.

¹⁸⁸ Murphy-O'Connor, *St. Paul's Corinth*, 56.

¹⁸⁹ Murphy-O'Connor, *St. Paul's Corinth*, 56; Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 97, 226.

¹⁹⁰ Murphy-O'Connor, *St. Paul's Corinth*, 57.

¹⁹¹ Murphy-O'Connor, *St. Paul's Corinth*, 57. Cf. Plutarch, *Mor.* 768a.

¹⁹² Murphy-O'Connor, *St. Paul's Corinth*, 57.

¹⁹³ See Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 98; Roberts, ed., *Dictionary of the Classical World*, 49.

The importance of the sea for the region of the Corinthia helps to explain why Aphrodite was such an important deity in that area. Engels notes that “She [Aphrodite] provided a variety of spiritual needs, and was not only the goddess of erotic love. Her pervasive influence in the city was respected by both Greeks and Romans, and does not malign the character of the Corinthians as some modern interpretations have claimed.”¹⁹⁴ Bookidis further notes that the way Aphrodite is portrayed in remains recovered from the Roman period does not support her worship as being primarily done through prostitution:

Coins, a marble statuette from southeast of the forum, a wall painting from east of the theater, and two second-century CE lamps all reproduce an identical image of Aphrodite: standing semi-nude, and using a shield as a mirror. If this image is that of the cult statue, then her association with prostitution on Acrocorinth seems a thing of the past.¹⁹⁵

In fact, it may be questioned whether Aphrodite was ever worshiped through any kind of temple prostitution at all.¹⁹⁶ Lanci points out that the term Strabo uses to describe these thousand “prostitutes” is *ἑταῖρος* combined with *ιερόδουλοι* and this appears to mean something quite different than the more explicit word for “prostitute,” *πόρνη*.¹⁹⁷ Lanci finds no good evidence to suggest that the role of these thousand temple slaves was to act as prostitutes for those who wished to worship the deity.¹⁹⁸ In any case, there is no evidence of prostitution being used as a means to worship Aphrodite in the first century and so it is best to divorce any judgment of the sexual promiscuity of the first-century Corinthians from the worship of the goddess.

¹⁹⁴ Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 99.

¹⁹⁵ Bookidis, “Religion in Corinth,” 161.

¹⁹⁶ Cf. Murphy-O’Connor, *St. Paul’s Corinth*, 56; Lanci, “The Stones Don’t Speak,” 205–20.

¹⁹⁷ Lanci, “The Stones Don’t Speak,” 210.

¹⁹⁸ Lanci, “The Stones Don’t Speak,” 210–16.

Asklepios

The Temple of Asklepios was one of the first temples in the Roman city of Corinth to be repaired after the resettlement¹⁹⁹ and it is also one of the oldest temples to Asklepios that is known.²⁰⁰ Asklepios is the god of healing and worshippers came to his temple to petition him for cures of various ailments. Over one hundred votive offerings of terra-cotta body parts have been recovered from the excavations of the Asklepieion which would have been brought either in petition for healing or in thanksgiving for a successful cure.²⁰¹

When the temple was restored after the city was refounded, it was put into use on a smaller scale. The space used for incubation of worshippers in the Hellenistic period was no longer accessible and it is speculated that the Roman practices of worshiping Asklepios did not include incubation like the Greek period did.²⁰² There is also no evidence to support the widespread use of votive offerings during the Roman period, such as the terra-cotta body parts from earlier centuries.²⁰³

Wickkiser suggests that though the colonists certainly would have wanted to restore a relationship with a healing god for their city as soon as possible, the reasons why they so quickly restored this temple may go beyond a need for physical healing.²⁰⁴ She suggests that the colonists would have wanted to actively worship this god because

¹⁹⁹ Bookidis, "Religion in Corinth," 159; Wiseman, "Corinth and Rome," 510; Wickkiser, "Asklepios in Greek and Roman Corinth," 37.

²⁰⁰ Wickkiser, "Asklepios in Greek and Roman Corinth," 37.

²⁰¹ Wickkiser, "Asklepios in Greek and Roman Corinth," 43–45. These date to the fifth through fourth centuries BCE and not the Roman period.

²⁰² Wickkiser, "Asklepios in Greek and Roman Corinth," 52–53. Incubation was a period of time during the worshipper's visit to the temple where they were to sleep and dream of the god and their cure. Cf. M. Lang, *Cure and Cult*, 13–14.

²⁰³ Bookidis notes that "virtually no votives can be dated past 300 B.C." Bookidis, "The Sanctuaries of Corinth," 256.

²⁰⁴ Wickkiser, "Asklepios in Greek and Roman Corinth," 57.

Asklepios was a very popular god in the city of Rome. Out of gratitude for their refounding and a desire to honour the emperor and his city, the Corinthians would have wanted to have as many things in Corinth that resembled Rome as they could.²⁰⁵

Wickkiser is careful to note that there were differences in the way that the Romans worshipped Asklepios as compared to the way the Greeks did and so consideration must be given to which means of worship may have been instituted after the city's refounding. Given the fact that many of the early colonists of Corinth were Roman and also that the city had close connections to the Roman emperor who founded it, Wickkiser suggests that it is more likely that the worship of Asklepios in Roman Corinth more closely resembled Roman rather than Greek practices.²⁰⁶ The temple of Asklepios and its importance to Corinth may have influenced Paul to include the gift of healing in the list of spiritual gifts he mentions in 1 Cor 12. This will be discussed further in Chapter 4.

The Imperial Cult

In addition to the two major deities discussed above, another major religious influence in Roman Corinth was the imperial cult. Though the imperial cult was an important influence in the Roman Empire, there is "no such thing as *the* imperial cult."²⁰⁷ Each city that participated should be examined, as much as possible, as an individual case with individual circumstances. Galinsky notes, "It [the imperial cult] was not a centrally steered phenomenon, with the exception of the four provincial cults, two in the east and two in the west, established under Augustus, with his permission, at the initiative of the

²⁰⁵ Wickkiser, "Asklepios in Greek and Roman Corinth," 58–59.

²⁰⁶ Asklepios was seen as a patron god of Julius Caesar and Augustus. Wickkiser, "Asklepios in Greek and Roman Corinth," 59.

²⁰⁷ Galinsky, "Cult of the Roman Emperor," 3.

provincials.”²⁰⁸ The complexity of the imperial cult cannot be ignored and Friesen affirms Galinsky’s statements and wants to “underline—nay, underline, put in bold font, and change to all capital letters—Karl’s [Galinsky’s] argument that imperial cults were a multifarious phenomenon, woven into nearly every aspect of social life under the empire.”²⁰⁹ In order to take into account the complex religious and political phenomenon that is the imperial cult, information must be carefully sifted to determine how it functioned in each location.

As noted above, the idea of the imperial cult was not necessarily a centralized one. Orlin brings this into new light when he suggests that the imperial cult, along with Roman religion in general, was moving away from something based on location to something that transcended location.²¹⁰ Whereas once all Roman religious happenings occurred in Rome, as the empire grew and advanced, people “participated” in the traditional Roman religion from a distance. At the same time, other religions from different places were practiced within the Roman Empire.²¹¹ When applied to the imperial cult, Orlin suggests that this made the imperial cult more about the emperors and less about the place where the emperor resided.²¹² Orlin suggests that the mobility of the imperial cult to any place in the land, and not just a temple in Rome to which one had to make a pilgrimage, bound the empire together around a common object of worship.²¹³

Friesen notes that there were three different “sorts” of imperial cults that were established: those in Rome for hero worship, those in the provinces for the foreigners,

²⁰⁸ Galinsky, “Cult of the Roman Emperor,” 3.

²⁰⁹ Friesen, “Normal Religion,” 24. Friesen advocates for “imperial cults” rather than “imperial cult” because there is such diversity that it cannot be understood as a single phenomenon. Friesen, “Normal Religion,” 24.

²¹⁰ Orlin, “Augustan Religion,” 49–57. This is the point of the majority of his essay.

²¹¹ Orlin, “Augustan Religion,” 56–57.

²¹² Orlin, “Augustan Religion,” 57.

²¹³ Orlin, “Augustan Religion,” 57.

and those in the provinces for Romans.²¹⁴ Friesen expands on these by saying, “Thus, the implied reason for the existence of different systems of imperial cults was that they involved different kinds of hierarchical relationships: among Romans in Rome, between expatriate Romans and the imperial center, and between subjugated foreigners and the imperial center.”²¹⁵ Around 54 CE a provincial-level imperial cult was established in Corinth, though there were many other ways in which the Corinthians venerated the emperor.²¹⁶

Among the temples and other buildings in the Corinthian forum are several structures which may have been associated in large or small part with the imperial family and the imperial cult. These include the Temple of Octavia, the Julian Basilica, the Archaic Temple, and a statue base dedicated by inscription to the *divus* Augustus.²¹⁷ The presence of these structures, coinage, and many inscriptions suggests that the city of Corinth held the imperial cult in high esteem. Spaeth suggests two reasons for this:

First, Corinth was the capital of the province of Achaëa, and therefore presented the face of Roman power in Greece to its inhabitants. The provincial cult helped to maintain that power by asserting the connections between the provincial administration and the central government in Rome. The municipal cult, on the other hand, was more concerned with the needs of the inhabitants of Corinth itself. The city was founded as a colony by Julius Caesar, and the colonists maintained close connections with his imperial successors through the imperial cult, among other means . . . Through the rituals associated with the imperial cult, the people of Corinth regularly reaffirmed their ties to the emperor as their patron and through him to Rome itself.²¹⁸

Echoing at least part of this sentiment is Walbank. She notes that Roman colonies in general were heavily influenced by Rome in matters of religion and since Corinth was

²¹⁴ Friesen, *Imperial Cults*, 26.

²¹⁵ Friesen, *Imperial Cults*, 26.

²¹⁶ Keener, *Acts*, 2696–97. Cf. Winter, “Imperial Cult,” 94–95

²¹⁷ Murphy-O’Connor, *St. Paul’s Corinth*, 27.

²¹⁸ Spaeth, “Imperial Cult in Roman Corinth,” 76–77.

founded by Julius Caesar, and its inhabitants were primarily freedmen who could have seen this as a gesture of patronage, the inhabitants of Corinth may have sought to promote emperor worship even before Julius Caesar's deification in 42 BCE.²¹⁹ She writes, "The strong, quasi-religious bond between freedman and *patronus* would have made the payment of cult honours to members of the imperial family a natural development."²²⁰ The city of Corinth did this very thing not just at the beginning of its days as a Roman colony, but also in the years beyond as Spaeth's comments earlier suggested.

The imperial cult seems to have permeated every aspect of life in Corinth. Bookidis goes as far as to suggest that nearly every religious building, altar, or shrine in the forum had some connection with the state cult with the necessary sacrifices performed by state priests from time to time.²²¹ This combination of gods and emperors might seem, at first, to be odd. In contrast to this, Galinsky is careful to point out that "the cult of the emperor often was intertwined with that of other gods."²²² To fail to understand this is to misunderstand the religious practices in Corinth and other cities of the Roman Empire.²²³ The idea must be considered that Roman religion during the imperial period was not just polytheistic, but also somewhat pluralistic. This seems very much to be the case in Roman Corinth.²²⁴

It is difficult, if not impossible, to know exactly how the imperial cult was practiced in a given location if there are no explicit records of particular events or rituals

²¹⁹ Walbank, "Evidence for the Imperial Cult," 201.

²²⁰ Walbank, "Evidence for the Imperial Cult," 209.

²²¹ Bookidis, "Religion in Corinth," 157–58.

²²² Galinsky, "Cult of the Roman Emperor," 4.

²²³ Cf. Galinsky, "Cult of the Roman Emperor," 4–5.

²²⁴ Spaeth, "Imperial Cult in Roman Corinth," 66.

for that location. In general, however, the imperial cult was celebrated and observed through prayers, sacrifices, veneration of images, processions, feasts, and athletic contents.²²⁵ Through these rituals and celebrations individuals and cities showed their honour to the emperors past and present.

Conclusions

The above discussion demonstrates that religion was a prominent part of the life of the Roman Corinthians. This is evident from their large number of temples and the high importance the colonists placed on re-building those temples after the city was refounded. The city's residents also had a particular devotion to the imperial cult, perhaps due to the allegiance they felt to Julius Caesar for its refounding. These pieces of information create a general understanding of religious life in Roman Corinth and describe the religious climate into which Christianity would eventually emerge.

From Greco-Roman Context to Historic Christian Context²²⁶

The above description of the Greco-Roman context of Corinth in the first century has focused on aspects of geography, the city's people and their social interactions, politics, economy and religion. Each of these sections is related to all the others. For example, the description of geography informs the description of the economy with respect to the seaports and descriptions of the social phenomena of patronage and honour inform the description of politics and the expectation of public patronage. This first layer of description for the city of Corinth has laid important foundations for additional descriptive layers concerning early Christianity in the city. Just as aspects of the Greco-

²²⁵ Klauck, *The Religious Context of Early Christianity*, 313.

²²⁶ The distinction between the historic and immediate Christian contexts has been discussed in Chapter 2.

Roman context of Corinth were connected with each other, they are also connected with the early Christian context of the city. These connections will be explored below and in Chapter 4.

Historic Christian Context

The Trouble with Evidence

Understanding the context of first-century Christianity in Corinth would be easiest if there were archaeological remains of early Christian places of worship, inscriptions concerning its presence, or any sort of extant material evidence that showed definitively where and how these Christians spent their time. Thus far such evidence dating to this time period does not exist and for several reasons it is unlikely to be discovered apart from a spectacular accident.

One major reason for this is that the early Christians did not have dedicated buildings where they went to worship. The New Testament indicates that some early Christians met in large houses (e.g. Rom 15:6; 1 Cor 16:19; Col 4:15; Phlm 2) but, as E. Adams has convincingly demonstrated, it is possible that other places such as workshops and rented spaces may have been used.²²⁷ The term *οἶκος* need not refer to an actual house, but simply a person's home. For this reason, workshops where a shopkeeper both lived and worked would provide a suitable alternative location for Christian meetings.²²⁸ These *taberna* shops would have a large open area at the front used for business and perhaps a loft or back room, all of which could allow many people to gather for worship

²²⁷ According to E. Adams, the idea that homes were the primary meeting places of early Christians went largely unchallenged until recently. E. Adams, *Earliest Christian Meeting Places*, 1–5. E. Adams convincingly demonstrates that 1 Cor 11:22, 34 seem to indicate that not all Christian groups met in homes all the time. For his discussion on these verses see E. Adams, *Earliest Christian Meeting Places*, 24–30.

²²⁸ See discussion in E. Adams, *Earliest Christian Meeting Places*, 17–24.

and teaching.²²⁹ Such a location would have been a natural setting for Paul the tentmaker to ply his trade both in leatherwork and in preaching the gospel.²³⁰ Though these “other” locations are not explicitly mentioned in the biblical text in the same way that houses are, settings such as workshops, gardens, and public meeting spaces are very plausible.²³¹

Whether the Christians met in grand houses or modest workshops, unless the location was used over decades or centuries and “renovated” to include explicit Christian decor and symbols, there is no good way to determine if a space was used by Christians.²³² In the early stages of Christian worship, there was likely no “furniture” of worship (such as altars or candelabra) which would indicate the presence of early Christianity. They may have used items in their worship, but whether they would be readily identifiable as “Christian” artifacts is uncertain. Further to this, archaeology, by its nature, cannot always date items precisely enough to say, “This is a mid-first-century Christian artifact.” Something that originated in the mid-first century may have been in continuous use until the early second century and uncovered in a destruction layer that, at best, can be dated to the second century. It is quite possible that Christians would have left no traces behind from week to week and due to early persecution it may have been in the best interest of Christian groups to conceal their presence. All of this means that the best available evidence for early Christianity in most locations is literary evidence.

The Evidence of Acts

Literary evidence for early Christianity in Corinth in the period prior to the earthquake of 77 CE is primarily found in Acts 18:1–18 and in Paul’s letters to the Christians in that

²²⁹ E. Adams, *Earliest Christian Meeting Places*, 145–46.

²³⁰ Paul’s occupation as a tentmaker will be discussed below.

²³¹ Cf. E. Adams, *Earliest Christian Meeting Places*, 17–24.

²³² See for example Corbo, “The Church of the House of St. Peter,” 71–76.

city.²³³ Archaeological evidence exists which is useful in informing the literary evidence and will be examined as appropriate.

Acts describes Paul's first visit to Corinth on his so-called second missionary journey (Acts 18:1–18). According to the text he travelled there from Athens and soon encountered Priscilla and Aquila. As noted above in the section on Corinthian geography, this city was easily accessible by land and sea and was host to many visitors. There is no explicit mention that Priscilla and Aquila were already Christians; however, neither is their conversion recounted. From their early partnership with Paul in Corinth in their shared field of tent-making,²³⁴ it may be implied that they were already Christians,²³⁵ though it is possible that their shared trade and Jewish background brought this couple into contact with Paul and they became Christians under his influence.²³⁶

The comment that the couple was not originally from Corinth but came there from Rome when the Jews were expelled from that city (18:2) is significant in alerting the reader that they were not native Corinthians. The details of the expulsion of the Jews from Rome are subject to much debate. Two aspects of the discussion are relevant to this study: the extent of the expulsion and the year in which it took place. There is much debate as to whether all the Jews were expelled from Rome or only some, but as this study is focused on a thick description of Corinth and not the experience of Jews in Rome only a few brief comments will be made. It is probable that only some of the Jewish

²³³ Some information concerning the social status of the Corinthian Christians can also be gleaned from Romans and will be explored in Chapter 4.

²³⁴ For a book-length study on how and why Paul may have learned the trade of tentmaking see Hock, *Social Context*. It is possible that the term *σκηνοποιός* refers to leatherwork more generally but Hock suggests that artisans often had specialties and so we ought to picture Paul as specialized in tent making while possibly also making other related items. Hock, *Social Context*, 21.

²³⁵ Smallwood, *Jews under Roman Rule*, 211–12; Keener, *Acts*, 2711; Conzelmann, *Acts*, 151.

²³⁶ Keener, *Acts*, 2719. Witherington and Haenchen both suggest this is possible, but improbable. Witherington, *Acts*, 545; Haenchen, *Acts*, 533.

population actually left the city of Rome and also probable that only some were included in the expulsion order. Though expulsion orders were not unheard of, it would have been difficult to expel Jews who were Roman citizens and it also would have been difficult to enforce a full expulsion in any case.²³⁷ Whether by force or voluntarily the couple left Rome and ended up in the city of Corinth.

The debate concerning the date of the expulsion of the Jews from Rome informs a different issue in Acts 18: the date of the arrival of Pricilla, Aquila, and Paul in Corinth. Determining a precise date for these events is difficult. Suetonius mentions that the Jews were expelled from Rome by Emperor Claudius due to problems concerning “Chrestus.”²³⁸ Though another ancient source, Orosius, discusses the expulsion mentioned in Suetonius and states that Josephus dated it to 49, this cannot be corroborated by the existing manuscripts of Josephus.²³⁹ To further complicate the discussion, Dio Cassius (*Hist. Rom.* 60.6.6–7) notes that Claudius deprived the Jews of the right to assemble in Rome but did not drive them out because they were too numerous. This event seems to have occurred in 41 CE. Many have sought to harmonize the accounts of Dio Cassius and Suetonius as referring to the same event in an effort to clarify each of them, though Slingerland has convincingly demonstrated that these two accounts ought to be seen as two separate events with the restriction on Jewish assemblies in 41 CE and the expulsion of them from Rome at some later time.²⁴⁰

²³⁷ On the matter of the extent of the expulsion of the Jews from Rome, see Smallwood, *Jews under Roman Rule*, 215–16; Wendt, *Judaica Romana*,” 97–126; Slingerland, “Suetonius *Claudius* 25.4 and the Account in Cassius Dio,” 321.

²³⁸ Suetonius, *Claud.* 25.4.

²³⁹ Smallwood, *Jews under Roman Rule*, 210.

²⁴⁰ Slingerland, “Suetonius *Claudius* 25.4 and the Account in Cassius Dio,” 322.

A date of 49 CE for the expulsion of the Jews from Rome and subsequent arrival of Pricilla, Aquila and Paul in Corinth fits well with the record in Acts 18.²⁴¹ Nevertheless, there is reason for caution in assigning the expulsion to 49. Firstly Tacitus does not record such an expulsion for 49. Unfortunately, his annals for 41, another possible date for the expulsion, are lost.²⁴² Also, it is not certain that Pricilla and Aquila would have come directly to Corinth after being expelled and it is not certain what is meant by the word “recently” (προσφάτως) which is used to describe their arrival in Corinth. Even if the Jews were expelled from Rome in 49, that does not mean that they arrived in Corinth in the same year and it also does not mean that if the Jews were expelled from Rome at an earlier date that the couple did not arrive in Corinth a few years later. After weighing the evidence, Smallwood suggests that the date of 49 *should* stand, as there is no solid evidence (other than the absence of evidence) to suggest that it could not have happened then.²⁴³ Nevertheless, caution is needed and the difficulties must be kept in mind.²⁴⁴ It is not necessary to know exactly when Paul arrived; a range of dates is possible. It is safe to say that Christianity as a religion was still in its infancy when Paul came to Corinth and this is likely around the mid-point of the first century of the Common Era.

²⁴¹ These events fit with Acts 18 if Acts is taken to be historically reliable which is the assumption of this study. This assumption has been discussed in Chapter 2. Some (for example Pervo, *Acts*, 445–47; Slingerland, “Acts 18:1–18,” 439–49) would argue that the apparent conflict of the date of the expulsions of the Jews from Rome and the date of the proconsulship of Gallio make this account historically unreliable, however precise dating of these two events is not possible and if the potential date ranges for the two events are left open, there is nothing which categorically prevents the details in Acts 18 from being chronologically plausible. The text of Acts must be allowed to contribute to the discussion of the date of these two events and ought not be excluded simply because of its place in the New Testament.

²⁴² Smallwood, *Jews under Roman Rule*, 212.

²⁴³ See Smallwood, *Jews under Roman Rule*, 215. Cf. Keener, *Acts*, 2684, 2705–706; Wintherington, *Acts*, 545; Conzelmann, *Acts*, 151.

²⁴⁴ Slingerland rejects the evidence of Acts 18 and notes that any date between 42 and 52 is just as likely as 49. Slingerland, “Suetonius *Claudius* 25.4, Acts 18, and Paulus Orosius’ *Historiarum Adversum Paganos Libri VII*,” 127–44.

Paul's arrival shortly after that of Priscilla and Aquila may serve to indicate that prior to that time there was no significant Christian presence in Corinth. Priscilla and Aquila were likely converted elsewhere and may have been in the city only a short time—not likely long enough to have gathered a large Christian presence around them if any.²⁴⁵ Keener notes that the way in which Paul writes to the Corinthians suggests that he saw himself as the founder of Christianity in this city and that the Corinthian Christians would have agreed with that assessment.²⁴⁶

The text of Acts goes on to describe the development of a relationship between Paul, Priscilla, and Aquila. After meeting them, Paul stayed with the couple and plied his tentmaking trade with them. Though Acts does not say that this couple hosted Christians in their home while in Corinth, in 1 Cor 16:19 (from Ephesus) and Rom 16:4–5 (to Rome) the texts greet or send greetings from Priscilla and Aquila and the *ἐκκλησία* meeting in their *οἶκος*.²⁴⁷ From these texts it would seem that the couple hosted Christians in both Ephesus and Rome.

Their apparent ability to host Christians has led some to speculate that Priscilla and Aquila were wealthy as they were able not only to make several large moves throughout the empire, but also to host Christians in their houses in several locations.²⁴⁸

This need not be the case. As has been discussed above, the term *οἶκος* need not refer to a

²⁴⁵ Keener, *Acts*, 3:2681. In spite of his contention that there was a Christian presence in the city prior to Paul's arrival in Corinth and that the author of Acts "eliminates any such trace of it," Conzelmann agrees that Paul was the founder of the Christian congregation in that city. Conzelmann, *Acts*, 151.

²⁴⁶ Keener, *Acts*, 2681. Cf. 1 Cor 3:6; 4:15; Conzelmann, *Acts*, 151.

²⁴⁷ In the 1 Cor text the *ἐκκλησία* in their home in Ephesus greets the Christians in Corinth while in the Rom text Paul asks the letter's recipients to greet on his behalf the couple and the *ἐκκλησία* in their home in Rome.

²⁴⁸ Cf. Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 59; Haenchen, *Acts*, 538. Pervo suggests that they were "missionaries who specialized in the formation and nurture of house churches." Pervo, *Acts*, 451. This level of detail is not possible from the text. That they travelled, did mission work, and hosted Christians is evident; that this was their primary occupation or "specialty" is not clear.

large house, but simply denotes “home” which could imply a workshop or another similar humble abode. Corinth’s market boasted many shops and one of them may have been occupied by this trio of tentmaking artisans.

Artisans certainly would not have been wealthy to the standard of the elite, but they may have fared better than others of lower class. Keener comments, “most urban artisans were poor and despised by the elite but had an independence not available to the agrarian peasants who constituted most of the empire’s populace.”²⁴⁹ They were poor in comparison to the very rich, but some of them may have been seen as “wealthy” in comparison to others in their class. According to E. Adams, it is likely that the place where Paul stayed with Priscilla and Aquila in Corinth is a *taberna* dwelling (a workshop with modest living quarters) and it can be surmised that this is also the sort of “house” or “home” which later hosted Christians in Ephesus and Rome.²⁵⁰ Keener suggests that Priscilla and Aquila must have been more than simple shop-workers but instead were themselves “shop owners.”²⁵¹ While there is no way to know for certain, it is evident that this couple was in a position to invite Paul to live and work with them and this would imply that they were somewhat independent in their employment. Later, in both 1 and 2 Corinthians, Paul emphasizes that he took no money from the Corinthians for his service to them. Tentmaking is likely how Paul supported himself as he preached, rather than taking advantage of a patron as he would have had every right to do.²⁵²

²⁴⁹ Keener, *Acts*, 2715. On the social status of the artisan see also Hock, *Social Context*, 34–36.

²⁵⁰ E. Adams, *Earliest Christian Meeting Places*, 62. Cf. Keener, *Acts*, 2716–17.

²⁵¹ Keener, *Acts*, 2715. Haenchen would agree, suggesting that they had several other journeymen who also lived with them besides Paul. Haenchen, however, doubts that the couple were labourers themselves. Haenchen, *Acts*, 538.

²⁵² Some have questioned whether Paul, as a Roman citizen, would have lowered himself to a task like tent-making. Roman citizenship did not necessarily bring wealth, and Paul, in spite of his education and citizenship status, would have needed some way to support himself, especially prior to a congregation of Christians being established in a given location. Cf. Keener, *Acts*, 2728. See also Hock, *Social Context*,

Acts further describes how Paul went about founding a Christian community in Corinth. The text notes that he began at the local synagogue.²⁵³ The possibility of a modest Jewish population in Corinth has already been discussed. It is entirely plausible that a synagogue existed in the area and Paul would have a ready audience to hear his message.²⁵⁴ Acts 18:4 suggests that Paul not only sought to persuade Jews, but also “Greeks,” to become followers of Christ. The Greeks he interacted with, if they were also among the audience in the synagogue, may have been God-fearers.²⁵⁵ Gentiles who worshipped the Jewish God but who were not full-fledged converts to the faith. If they were not part of the synagogue group, then these may have been people that Paul encountered in the marketplace as he practiced his tent-making trade.

Acts 18:5 indicates that Paul was not alone in his work to bring the message of Jesus to the Jews and Greeks of Corinth. The work continued with the help of Silas and Timothy, coworkers of Paul’s who followed him from Macedonia. Silas and Timothy may have brought a financial gift from the churches in Macedonia which allowed Paul to focus more on his preaching and less on earning money to provide the necessities of life.²⁵⁶ The text of 2 Cor 11:8–9 indicates that while Paul was in Corinth the churches of

50–65 for a discussion of the means by which philosophers might have supported themselves in the ancient world, one of which was plying a trade.

²⁵³ Some scholars dispute the validity of this claim in Acts suggesting it is contrary to Paul’s own claim in his letters to be a missionary to the gentiles. It is the author of Acts who makes this assertion and it is not reflected in Paul’s own letters. For example Lüdemann, *Early Christianity*, 159, 185; Sanders, *Paul, the Law and the Jewish People*, 190. On the idea that such assertions in Acts are not incompatible with the information in Paul’s letters, see Hvalvik, “Paul as a Jewish Believer,” 123–33. This study assumes the historicity of Acts and accepts that Paul began his missionary efforts in the synagogue in Corinth.

²⁵⁴ Though an inscription has been discovered pointing to a *Συναγωγή Ἑβραίων*, it is dated too late for Paul’s visit and cannot be used as proof that a synagogue existed at the time Paul was in the city. Cf. Keener, *Acts*, 2738; Oster, “Use, Misuse, and Neglect,” 55–58; above discussion of Jews in Roman Corinth.

²⁵⁵ Keener, *Acts*, 2739.

²⁵⁶ Cf. 2 Cor 11:8–9; Keener, *Acts*, 2740; Pervo, *Acts*, 452.

Macedonia helped him financially in some way, whether it came to him via Silas and Timothy or not.

Acts 18:6 shows that at a point, the Jews were tired of hearing from Paul and they opposed him (*ἀντιτασσομένων*) and slandered him (*βλασφημούντων*). From this point on, Paul vowed to exclusively bring his message to the gentiles that he encountered. Paul subsequently left the synagogue and worked from the home of Titius Justus which was nearby (Acts 18:7). It is likely that Titius became a patron of the church at Corinth and allowed at least some of the Corinthian Christians to meet in his home, which may have been large and able to accommodate many.²⁵⁷ The importance of patronage in Greco-Roman society has been discussed above. Chow aptly notes, “If patronage formed such an important part of life in Roman Corinth, it would be most unrealistic to expect the Christians there to be wholly untouched by its influence and to behave in a completely new way immediately after their conversion.”²⁵⁸ Titius Justus may have been one of the first Christian patrons in Corinth.²⁵⁹ Another prominent early convert to Christianity at Corinth was Crispus²⁶⁰ who was the head of the synagogue (*ὁ ἀρχισυνάγωγος*). Other Corinthians also believed and were baptized (Acts 18:8).

²⁵⁷ There may have been multiple groups meeting and if Paul had begun meeting with some people in the shop where he worked with Priscilla and Aquila some Christians may have continued to meet there. Haenchen suggests that Paul moved his entire base of operation and his lodging to the home of Titius and ceased his work with Priscilla and Aquila (Haenchen, *Acts*, 539), but this is an unnecessary assumption. Conzelmann, *Acts*, 152; Lüdemann, *Early Christianity*, 203.

²⁵⁸ Chow, “Patronage in Roman Corinth,” 125.

²⁵⁹ Keener suggests that perhaps Titius Justus had originally been a patron of the synagogue and shifted his patronage to the church. Cf. Keener, *Acts*, 2747. This is possible but there is no textual evidence to support it. An example of another patron of the church in the Corinthia was Phoebe, who is mentioned in Rom 16:1 as being from Cenchreae.

²⁶⁰ Pervo states that in Acts the author “made Crispus a Jew” and thus changes material from Paul’s record in 1 Corinthians. Pervo, *Acts*, 448. In fact the text of 1 Corinthians does not imply that Crispus was not a Jew. Since the readers of the letter clearly knew him and his background, there was no need for Paul to specify whether he was Jew or gentile, even if such a distinction were important to Paul’s discussion in 1 Cor 1:14.

It is worth discussing here briefly what the role of the “head of the synagogue” may have been. The term is used almost exclusively in Jewish contexts.²⁶¹ Inscriptions suggest that these individuals were patrons of the synagogue and not religious leaders²⁶² and they need not have been Jewish.²⁶³ This might suggest that Crispus need not have been a Jew though this seems unlikely. The writer of Acts makes a note that Titius was not a Jew but makes no such distinction in the next thought concerning Crispus.²⁶⁴ Whether he was a religious leader or merely a financial benefactor, his conversion to Christianity must have been a blow to the synagogue, especially if he had any role beyond simply financial.²⁶⁵

The text of Acts records that Paul stayed in Corinth for a year and a half and spent his time there preaching about Jesus. Though Paul no longer worked out of the synagogue, he was still a thorn in the side of the Jewish population. In Acts 18:12, the text reports that the Jews brought Paul before Gallio, the proconsul, in order to have him charged.²⁶⁶ They were frustrated that Paul was persuading (ἀναπείθει) people to worship

²⁶¹ Rajak and Noy, “*Archisynagogoi*,” 78. Those few instances that are not Jewish in origin refer to the primary patron or founder of a religious association or craft guild. They are found only in communities on the north coast of the Aegean. Rajak and Noy, “*Archisynagogoi*,” 78.

²⁶² Murphy-O’Connor, *St. Paul’s Corinth*, 80; Keener, *Acts*, 2748; Rajak and Noy, “*Archisynagogoi*,” 84–89. Rajak and Noy note that women and children are given this title in inscriptions. Rajak and Noy, “*Archisynagogoi*,” 87.

²⁶³ Rajak and Noy, “*Archisynagogoi*,” 88–89.

²⁶⁴ Keener suggests that since Titius Justus did not receive the title of ἀρχισυνάγωγος it may suggest that at least in Corinth the title ἀρχισυνάγωγος was reserved for Jewish benefactors only. Keener, *Acts*, 2748. Of course this is only a sound line of reasoning if Titius was also a patron of the synagogue, which is only a speculation. The Theodotus Inscription records an ἀρχισυνάγωγος who was clearly a financial benefactor of the synagogue and also a priest in Jerusalem, though the inscription does not indicate if his priestly duties were also connected to the synagogue he helped to fund. For the text of the inscription see Catto, *Reconstructing*, 83. The implications of patronage to a group by an individual has been discussed above. It is also worth noting (contra Lüdemann, *Early Christianity*, 200) that there may have been more than one ἀρχισυνάγωγος at a time. See Witherington, *Acts*, 556; Acts 13:15.

²⁶⁵ Cf. Keener, *Acts*, 2748. Lüdemann suggests that his influential position may have enticed others to also convert to Christianity. Lüdemann, *Early Christianity*, 203–4. See also Witherington, *Acts*, 550.

²⁶⁶ Gallio’s position as proconsul of Achaia has been discussed above.

God “contrary to the law” (*παρὰ τὸν νόμον*). Whether they intended Gallio to understand this as Roman or Jewish law is unclear. By bringing the case to Gallio it seems that the Jews at least wanted Gallio to think that they were referring to Roman law. Gallio understood the actual meaning to be one of Jewish law.²⁶⁷ Keener suggests that a more likely underlying reason for these charges was that Paul had caused a division in the Jewish community and enticed away one or more of its patrons.²⁶⁸ This could have put the community in peril, depending on other social or economic factors which may have plagued it at the time.²⁶⁹ In the end Gallio was not interested in hearing their religious disputes and dismissed their case (Acts 18:14–17). Whatever the motivation the Jews had for bringing Paul’s case before the proconsul, it backfired on them and instead of Gallio’s wrath being directed toward Paul, it was directed to the Jews. They are thrown out of the tribunal and Sosthenes, an ἀρχισυνάγωγος, is beaten.²⁷⁰ Keener notes that the fact that the case was thrown out was not out of courtesy to Paul, the Roman citizen, but rather out of hostility toward the Jews either because they were Jews or because they wasted his time with a “baseless case.”²⁷¹

As noted above, records indicate that Gallio was proconsul for the Roman province of Achaia in the early 50s, though, as with the precise date of the expulsion of the Jews from Rome, there is some room for movement of the dates. His presence in

²⁶⁷ Pervo, *Acts*, 545; Conzelmann, *Acts*, 153; Witherington, *Acts*, 552. For Haenchen, the fact that Gallio, a Roman official, does not get involved in what he perceives to be an “internal affair” of the Jews speaks to the general historicity of the event, even if he does not think the text of Acts reproduces the events exactly as they may have occurred. Haenchen, *Acts*, 541.

²⁶⁸ Keener, *Acts*, 2765. Witherington makes a similar suggestion. Witherington, *Acts*, 550.

²⁶⁹ For example, food shortages are known to have occurred near this time period. Keener, *Acts*, 2765; Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 75; Tacitus, *Ann.* 12.43.1; Suetonius, *Claud.* 18.2.

²⁷⁰ It is uncertain whether Sosthenes was beaten by the Romans as punishment for the Jews for bringing their complaint to Gallio or whether the Jews beat their own leader because he encouraged the complaint against Paul.

²⁷¹ Keener, *Acts*, 2766. Similar sentiment is stated by Witherington, *Acts*, 554.

Corinth is to be expected as this was the capital of that region.²⁷² The date range of either 50–51 or 51–52 makes the incident reported in Acts consistent with the extrabiblical evidence of Gallio’s time in office, especially if the earlier date is chosen. It is also reasonable to think that the Roman proconsul would not want to be in the middle of what he perceived to be a Jewish religious dispute. Though the Jews were tolerated, there would not have been much to gain, especially outside of Palestine, from the Romans getting involved with this minority group.

The text of Acts does not give any further detail about the time that Paul spent in Corinth on his first visit, nor does it mention how many converts were there when he left for Ephesus, “many days” (ἡμέρας ἱκανὰς) after the incident with Gallio. What it does provide are basic details of the beginnings of Christianity in Corinth and some of its early successes and struggles.

From Historic Christian Context to Immediate Christian Context

The above description of Greco-Roman Corinth and the historic Christian context in that city has laid two important layers in the thick description of early Corinthian Christianity. Some aspects of the description in this chapter will be elaborated in the next chapter with particular concern for their effect on the immediate context of the Christians in Corinth when Paul wrote 1 Corinthians. Aspects of the description which will be further probed are the social classes represented in the Corinthian church, Corinthian social mobility (especially in regards to the prevalence of freedmen and resulting competition), and the concept of patronage.

²⁷² Cf. Tacitus, *Hist.* 2.1. Cf. Keener, *Acts*, 2684–85.

CHAPTER 4: THE PRIMACY OF LEADERS IN 1 COR 12:27–31

Introduction

This chapter will build on the thick description of the church at Corinth established in Chapter 3 and will further thicken that description with details about the immediate context of the Corinthian Christian community gleaned from the text of 1 Corinthians. This will complete the thick description of the Corinthian Christian community. The thick description will be used as a tool to analyse the text of 1 Cor 12:27–31 in order to explore the extent to which Paul's words concerning leadership functions in this text are in fact rooted in the historical context of the Christian community in Corinth. Special consideration will be given to the purpose that the leadership functions serve in the text and attitudes that Paul promotes concerning leadership in relation to these leadership functions.

Immediate Christian Context

Paul's first letter to the Corinthian Christians was written after Paul had spent considerable time in the city (Acts 18:1–17). It was sent to them from the city of Ephesus (1 Cor 16:8),¹ likely toward the end of Paul's lengthy stay in that city recorded in Acts 19 (cf. 1 Cor 16:5–9). The letter details both Paul's concerns over the conduct of the

¹ First Corinthians is addressed both to the church at Corinth and to all Christians everywhere (cf. 1 Cor 1:2). For Bailey, this suggests that the material is applicable to all Christians everywhere and very little of it is specific to Corinth. Bailey, *Paul through Mediterranean Eyes*, 26. It would be foolish to argue that none of the material in 1 Corinthians is applicable elsewhere, but given that the Corinthians are the primary addressees and that the personal notes at the end of the letter suggest a particular group of recipients, it is still appropriate to consider all the material in 1 Corinthians in light of the church at Corinth.

Corinthian Christians and also answers questions that the Corinthians have presumably asked of Paul (cf. 1 Cor 7:1).²

In 1 Cor 1 Paul introduces two concepts which set the stage for the interpretation of the rest of the letter and which shed light on the analysis of 1 Cor 12:27–31. These are the statement that there were divisions in the church (1:10–11) and the reminder that “not many” of them were powerful or “well-born” when they became Christians (1:26). The first of these ideas—that there was conflict in the church—is developed throughout the letter and addressing those conflicts is one of Paul’s main purposes in writing it. The second statement prompts the Corinthian Christians to remember who they are and where they have come from. Many commentators make statements to the effect that “If not many were well-born, then certainly *some* of them must have been.”³ Whether or not social class divisions directly contributed to the conflict at Corinth—though this possibility will be explored below—a knowledge of the kinds of people who made up the Corinthian Christian community will help to understand attitudes concerning the conflict and how the members of the community may have viewed each other and Paul.

The Social Status of Corinthian Christians

There has been debate over the years as to whether the Corinthian Christians were primarily from the lower classes or if there were a good number of people within the group who were from the more wealthy levels of society. Whereas Deissmann suggested

² There is much discussion concerning whether 1 Corinthians is indeed the “first” letter Paul sent to that community after he left them and whether remnants of more than two letters to Corinth are extant in the two canonical letters to Corinth. These issues are peripheral to this study and so will not be addressed directly. The text of 1 Corinthians provides details of the occasion for writing that particular letter. For some discussions on the issues relating to the number of letters to Corinth and their order, particularly as it pertains to 1 Corinthians, see Thistelton, *1 Corinthians*, 2–41; S. Porter, *Apostle Paul*, 248–51.

³ See discussion below.

that most of the Christians in Corinth were from the poorer classes,⁴ subsequent research has introduced the idea that there were more Christians from the higher levels of society than previously supposed. Judge says, “Far from being a socially depressed group, then, if the Corinthians are at all typical, the Christians were dominated by a socially pretentious section of the population of the big cities.”⁵ By this Judge does not mean that there were no Christians of lower classes. On the contrary, he surmises that Christianity spread in the cities among large households. The heads of these households, once converted, would bring the entire household into the Christian faith.⁶ According to Judge the lowest members of society, such as peasants and slaves who worked the land, would not have been part of these households and so this portion of society was largely unrepresented in urban Christianity.⁷

Theissen takes a perspective between these, saying, “Both opinions are probably correct, because . . . the Corinthian congregation is marked by internal stratification. The majority of the members, who come from the lower classes, stand in contrast to a few influential members who come from the upper classes.”⁸ Ultimately it is impossible to determine the exact social composition of the Christian community at Corinth, but it is likely that the Christians, like Corinthian society, were made up of several different social levels.⁹

⁴ Deissmann, *Light*, 246.

⁵ Judge, “The Social Pattern,” 43.

⁶ Judge, “The Social Pattern,” 24.

⁷ Judge, “The Social Pattern,” 44. The exception would be in Palestine where Christianity seems to have been a largely rural phenomenon. Judge, “The Social Pattern,” 44.

⁸ Theissen, “Social Stratification,” 69.

⁹ For example, concerning Corinth specifically see Horrell, *Social Ethos*, 100–01; Witherington, *Conflict and Community*, 22; Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 183. Meggitt notes that this way of thinking is a “new consensus” on the economic position of early Christians and he is quite opposed to this interpretation. Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty, and Survival*, 97–153. He is adamant that the Corinthian Christians, along with all Christians in the Pauline communities “shared fully in the bleak material existence that was the lot of the

The text which is often used to sort through the possibilities for the social stratification of the Christians at Corinth is 1 Cor 1:26: “For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth.”¹⁰ As previously stated, many scholars point out that “not many” implies that *some* of the Christians were of noble birth and this points to a higher social status.¹¹ That there were some individuals of higher status connected with the church is evident even without this statement, as Paul discusses individuals in Corinth who may have been patrons of the church and of Paul personally.

Certainly the God-fearer, Titius, who allowed Paul to preach from his home, could have been wealthy and prominent in the community. The ruler of the synagogue, Crispus, also would have been somewhat wealthy, as he was probably the patron of the synagogue group and needed to have suitable funds to support it. Both of these men would have gained public favour for their patronage. It is possible that Titius acted as a sort of patron to the Christians in the city, since he provided meeting space for them in his home.¹² Other wealthy individuals who are associated with the Christians in Corinth

non-elite inhabitants of the Empire.” Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty, and Survival*, 153. The concept of “status inconsistency” or “status dissonance” also ought not be overlooked. There may have been people who ranked “high” in some estimations of status and “low” in others. For discussion see Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 51–73 and Judge, “Ranks and Status,” 137–56. Making too much of status inconsistency and its effects on the Christian community in Corinth is unwise due to the fact that Corinthian society as a whole likely had a great deal of people who were “status dissonant” because of its higher-than-average population of freedmen. Even Meeks, who suggests that a large number of Christians and the Pauline communities were status dissonant, urges caution in applying this modern idea in the ancient setting. Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 55.

¹⁰ All biblical citations are from the ESV unless otherwise indicated.

¹¹ For example, Fee, *1 Corinthians*, 81–2; Witherington, *Conflict and Community*, 22; Theissen, “Social Stratification,” 72; Judge, “The Social Pattern,” 43. Both Judge and Theissen note that the verse in and of itself does not mean much in terms of shedding light on the social situation at Corinth and Paul includes it in order to demonstrate to the Corinthians that they had become too aware of their high social status to their own detriment. Cf. Theissen. “Social Stratification,” 73; Judge, “The Social Pattern,” 43. Meggitt maintains this verse cannot be made to imply that “some” members of the Corinthian Christian community were high-class because, among other things, the words are ambiguous. Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty, and Survival*, 105.

¹² The use of homes as places of early Christian worship has been discussed above.

and vicinity are Phoebe (προστάτις, Rom 16:1), Gaius (ὁ ξένος μου καὶ ὄλης τῆς ἐκκλησίας, Rom 16:23), and Erastus (Rom 16:23).¹³

As noted in Chapter 3 in the discussion of social classes in society in general, though the upper classes were small in number they were large in influence. This tiny portion of society held sway over all of it. Though the wealthy Christians were likely in the minority in Corinth, they may indeed have been very influential—or at least expected to be influential because this was the “norm” in society.¹⁴ Also as noted in Chapter 3, at least some of the upper classes in Corinth by the mid-first century were freedmen. There also were likely sons of the freedmen of the previous generation. It is reasonable to assume that some of these new aristocrats may also have been part of the Christian community.

It is important to consider how this small portion of newly wealthy upper class Christians might have affected the social dynamic of the Corinthian Christian community.¹⁵ Witherington writes, “It seems that in Paul’s time many in Corinth were already suffering from a self-made-person-escaped-humble-origins syndrome. Corinth was a magnet for the socially ambitious, since there were many opportunities for merchants, bankers, and artisans to gain higher social status and accumulate a fortune in this city refounded by freed slaves.”¹⁶ Because Corinth had this unusual opportunity for advancement, it stands to reason that there may have been an extra incentive to work hard

¹³ As noted above, the Erastus of Romans need not be the same Erastus of the Erastus inscription to have been an important Corinthian.

¹⁴ Theissen calls them “a dominant minority.” Theissen, “Social Stratification,” 73.

¹⁵ It must be noted that the number of wealthy people in the Corinthian Christian community was likely *small*. Witherington suggests that there may have been many people who were in a position to move up the social ranks due to accumulated wealth. He suggests this based on the fact that Paul collected surplus funds from Corinth to give to other churches. Witherington, *Conflict and Community*, 23. Cf. 1 Cor 16:1–4. The same instructions were given to the churches in Galatia so this cannot be a reliable indicator of the overall level of wealth in the Corinthian Christian community.

¹⁶ Witherington, *Conflict and Community*, 20.

to move toward the top of the social ladder. In addition to this, the regular Roman system of patronage was almost certainly present within the Christian church and a newly-wealthy patron may have pressed the advantage of status more fiercely and flaunted the position which had been obtained.¹⁷

The Conflict at Corinth

The second issue brought to mind in the opening chapter of 1 Corinthians is the division among the Christian community. In 1 Cor 1:10–11 Paul introduces the topic of division and conflict among the Corinthian Christians. The content of these divisions includes the factions concerning the identity of the “best” leader of the Corinthian Christians (Paul, Apollos, Peter, or Christ; 1:10–4:21),¹⁸ the role of marriage (7:1–40) and practices of sexual immorality (5:1–13; 6:12–20), lawsuits between believers (6:1–11), consumption of food sacrificed to idols and freedom of conscience (8:1–10:33), conduct during worship and the Lord’s Supper (11:1–34; 14:26–40), and the role of the *πνευματικά*¹⁹ (12:1–31; 14:1–25). Some of these are conflicts about which Paul has been informed and thinks he must address (1:11; 5:1) and others are matters that the Corinthians have inquired about and are asking for Paul to provide an opinion to help them settle their own dispute (7:1).

Though the root of each of these conflicts is complex and though various issues contributed to each one, a factor in some of them appears to be issues of social status. For example, the Corinthians are boasting in the leader that they deem to be most worthy of

¹⁷ The high level of competition that must have accompanied social movement in Corinth has been discussed in Chapter 3.

¹⁸ Apollos (Acts 19:1) and Paul are known to have visited Corinth. It is not known if Peter had visited the city or was known to the Christians there by reputation only.

¹⁹ The appropriate translation of this term (spiritual gifts or spiritual things) will be discussed below.

following. Since a person normally only boasts about things that bring him or her positive recognition, being connected with a particular leader seems to have been a way to elevate oneself.²⁰

The inequality in the way the Lord's Supper was celebrated also can be linked to the social stratification of the community. The text suggests that there are some who have plenty of food while others have little or nothing (1 Cor 11:21). Different suggestions have been made concerning the root of this problem and discerning the exact problem is indeed difficult, but a common thread among reconstructions points to divisions which are rooted in a difference of social status between members.²¹ In the case of the Lord's Supper conflict, it may be that the social status in question is the social status within the Christian community and not necessarily the status enjoyed in the wider world.²²

Also connected to social status within the Christian community and not necessarily status in the wider world is the status associated with the *πνευματικά* and *χαρισμάτα* which are introduced in 1 Cor 12 and are important parts of the text until

²⁰ That Paul would have viewed Christ as an acceptable "leader" of the church is evident from his words in 1 Cor 1:13–17. On the idea that social status of the leaders (and hence the social status of those associated with them) may have been a factor in the dispute concerning Paul, Apollos, Cephas, and Christ as leaders in the Corinthian church see Witherington, *Conflict and Community*, 100; Engberg-Pedersen, "Gospel and Social Practice," 561. Although Welborn focuses more on the potential political parallels in the conflict, he also notes that there is a social dimension to this aspect of the Corinthian conflict. Welborn, "On the Discord in Corinth," 95–96. Chow suggests that Apollos may have appeared to be more legitimate or attractive than Paul to some of the wealthy patrons of the Christian church in Corinth if he used a style of Hellenistic-Jewish rhetoric to which they were accustomed and if he allowed himself to be paid as a client of the wealthy patrons. Cf. Chow, *Patronage and Power*, 104–5.

²¹ For example, some suggest that the regular practice of separating guests by class and serving different amounts and qualities of food to different "levels" of guests is in mind here. Willis, *Idol Meat in Corinth*, 54; Witherington, *Conflict and Community*, 28–29. Thiselton suggests that those who are secure in their position within the group due to a connection with the host or patron enjoy the benefits of that connection without paying regard to those who do not enjoy this special status. Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 850; Winter, "Lord's Supper," 73–82.

²² This takes into consideration the implications of Winter's discussion which notes that the "have nots" in 1 Cor 11 may be those who are not part of a household within which they have security or that the household that they *are* part of is not a Christian one and so its head would not have provided them with food to bring to the feast associated with the Lord's Supper. By implication then, some of the "haves" may simply have been part of the household hosting the meal and thus, while not wealthy themselves, could access benefits of a higher social level within that particular setting. Cf. Winter, "Lord's Supper," 80–81.

1 Cor 14:25. Here the *πνευματικά* appear to be a point of concern either because Paul has received a report of problems with them or because the Corinthians have raised a question themselves.²³ Though this word is often translated “spiritual gifts,” the concept of “gift” is not explicit in the text and should not be brought into the translation.²⁴ The substantive adjective alone is better translated as “spiritual matters” or “spiritual people” but here “spiritual matters” better encompasses what is being discussed throughout the section of 1 Cor 12—14.²⁵ One of the “spiritual matters” Paul discusses is a series of gifts (*χαρισμάτα*) given to the church. Throughout this passage Paul is careful to demonstrate that there is equal dignity in each of the gifts presented. The implication of the text is that the Corinthians had been ascribing a greater level of worth to the people who exhibited the gift of tongues.²⁶

²³ Some suggest that the presence of the phrase *περὶ δὲ* indicate that this is one of the things about which the Corinthians have written to Paul. For example Bartling, “Congregation of Christ,” 67; Nichols, “The Problem of Two-Level Christianity,” 106. M. Mitchell has challenged this idea (“Concerning *περὶ δὲ*,” 233–234). For the purposes of this study it does not matter whether the concern over the *πνευματικά* comes from the Corinthians directly or whether Paul raises the issue based on information he has obtained from other sources.

²⁴ See Ong, “Is ‘Spiritual Gift(s)’ a Linguistically Fallacious Term?” 558–59.

²⁵ Ong, “Reconsidering the Meaning,” 338. Ong suggests that the translation of *πνευματικά* in 12:1 and 14:1 ought to be different based on a discourse analysis. At 14:1 a suitable translation is “spiritual gifts” or “spiritual practices.” Ong, “Reconsidering the Meaning,” 338.

²⁶ The contrast between the gift of prophecy and the gift of tongues in 1 Cor 14 indicates that tongues is not something the Corinthians ought to be striving for over other gifts. This is alluded to in 1 Cor 12 which will be discussed in greater detail below. On the idea that tongues are being too highly regarded by at least some of the Corinthians see Nichols, “The Problem of Two-Level Christianity,” 106; Bartling, “Congregation of Christ,” 68; Thiselton, “Realized Eschatology,” 523; Schmithals, *Gnosticism in Corinth*, 171–72. Shogren agrees that status is the issue in Corinth but suggests that those who are elevating the gift of tongues are actually low-status people who find “status” in the gift of tongues because they are therefore freed from the usual status competition in which they cannot hope to succeed. The gift of tongues makes them “special,” something which the upper class could not dispute. Shogren, “‘Ultracharismatics’ of Corinth,” 106–7. Shogren makes a good point when he notes that the ones participating in “tongues” could be those who otherwise had no status and that they valued tongues perhaps because it might have added a higher level of status to them. But since status and honour are awarded by the group (and not the individual’s perception of him or herself) then speaking in tongues cannot be something that is viewed as a special status indicator unless the whole group ascribes that value to it (elites and non-elites). If the non-elites did not (also) ascribe status to those who hold that gift, then there was no status associated with it. And if there was status associated with it, then there is no good reason why the elites would not also want to acquire some of it for themselves, no matter how strange they might “look” while participating in it.

It is evident, based on the historical and literary context, that at least some of the problems that Paul was addressing in the letter can be linked to social inequality and a desire among some of the Corinthian Christians to be seen as socially higher than other members of the Christian community. Holmberg says, “Thus what may look at first like theological and ethical problems and discussions are actually caused more by social factors like stratum-specific behaviour patterns operative in the everyday life of these Christians than by differing religious perspectives on theological traditions.”²⁷

Recognizing that there is a social dimension to these struggles helps the modern reader to better understand the reasons why Paul addresses the situation the way he does. Paul must remind the Corinthians of the need for every member of the Christian community and of the interdependence of the group.

This class struggle underlies Paul’s words to the Corinthians and sets the scene for 1 Cor 12 where Paul discusses the *πνευματικά*, the *χαρίσματα*, the importance of the body of Christ functioning as a unit, a hierarchy in leadership functions which build up the church, and the assertion that not everyone can be “at the top.” The different gifts that God has given are there to edify the group, not promote the gifted one. This extra layer of immediate Christian context gleaned from the text of 1 Corinthians helps to better explain the material that Paul is presenting in 1 Cor 12.²⁸

Shogren draws parallels with the modern Pentecostal movement in Latin America and its role in raising the status of the marginalized members of society within it. This is an important example of why sociological observations about modern cultures ought not be used as tools to interpret the ancient world. Though there may be some similarities between the two cultures there are also many differences which render the comparison suspect.

²⁷ Holmberg, “The Methods of Historical Reconstruction,” 261.

²⁸ Ruef notes that the whole of 1 Cor 12–14 is written in direct response to the historical situation in Corinth and that an interpretation of the text must keep this historical situation in mind. Ruef, *Paul’s First Letter to Corinth*, 125.

The layered thick description which has been created in the previous chapter and the beginning of this one shows that the early Christian community in Corinth existed in a city whose recent history included being refounded as a Roman colony with a large number of freedmen as the early colonists. This unusual social situation meant that freedmen, who normally would not have been able to rise to the higher levels of Greco-Roman society, were in fact able to become prominent citizens. This unusual opportunity for social advancement likely contributed to a heightened sense of social competition in an already competitive social world. The Corinthians who would eventually become part of the Christian community lived in and understood this social milieu.

Some members of the church were higher on the social ladder than others, though it is impossible to know how many Corinthian Christians belonged to each layer of Greco-Roman society. It is probable that there were more members among the poorer levels than among the wealthy, though the wealthy were represented. The wealthier members of the Christian community likely expected to maintain the same level in the social hierarchy of the church that they enjoyed in the rest of society. Members of the Christian community who were among the lower levels of society may have hoped to advance to a higher social level within the group than they held in society at large, but unless the more socially advanced members were willing to “give up” their high status so that the lower members could advance it seems unlikely that much actual social mobility would be possible. One exception to this might be if a “lower” ranked member came to possess some ability which was seen as especially valuable in the eyes of the Christian

community but not in the eyes of society at large.²⁹ In this case an individual's status in the Christian community might be raised.

By using the available evidence for ancient Corinth in this analysis, the idiosyncrasies of that city and the context of the Christian community in it can be felt. This is what Geertz highlights in his statement concerning the unique and the typical as discussed in Chapter 2. The advantage of a social description analysis over one produced by application of a sociological model is that it takes into consideration specific evidence concerning the time and the place under analysis and appreciates the uniqueness of a given situation.³⁰

Translation

The text of 1 Cor 12:27–31 can be translated as follows:

²⁷Now *you* are the body of Christ and each of you are members of it. ²⁸And God indeed assigned in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, guidance, and kinds of tongues. ²⁹Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? ³⁰Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? Certainly not! ³¹But be zealous concerning the greater gifts. And I will show you an even better path.

Analysis

This passage mentions three specific leadership functions (apostles, prophets, and teachers) along with six other gifts which God has given to the church.³¹ Some of these are repeated from previous verses but some that were previously mentioned are not listed

²⁹ For example, the gift of tongues, which will be discussed more below.

³⁰ Two examples of studies pertaining to Corinth whose methods do not allow for a study of the unique features of ancient Corinth are Barentsen's *Emerging Leadership*, which uses a social identity model of leadership and Shogren's "'Ultracharismatics,' of Corinth," which draws parallels between the ancient Corinthians and the modern Latin American Pentecostals.

³¹ Eight are mentioned in v. 28 with a ninth added in v. 30.

a second time.³² “Kinds of tongues” and prophecy are also mentioned several times in 1 Cor 14. While it is not possible to determine with any confidence why Paul should choose these nine items specifically to mention here, it would seem that the list as a whole achieves a particular purpose in light of the historical situation in Corinth. Each verse of this section will be examined in light of the thick description in order to determine the extent to which the text is grounded in the historical context, the purpose of the leadership functions mentioned within it, and the attitudes concerning leadership that Paul is promoting through it.

Verse 27

Verse 27 serves as transitional material between the detailed discussion of the body of Christ which immediately precedes it and the material which follows.³³ Here Paul reminds the Corinthians that they are a single body of Christ and yet each individual has a part to play within it. There is concern for both the diversity of the body (“each of you are members of it”) and unity (“you are the [single] body of Christ”).³⁴ This verse connects the material from vv. 4–11 with 12–26 and then moves the reader into the next section.³⁵

³² First Corinthians 12:8–10 lists σοφία, λόγος γνώσεως, πίστις, χαρίσματα ιαμάτων, ενεργήματα δυνάμεων, προφητεία, διακρίσεις πνευμάτων, γένη γλωσσών, and ἐρμηνεία γλωσσών. Five of these are repeated in 1 Cor 12:27–31.

³³ Some include this verse with what follows (Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 990; Bruce, *1 and 2 Corinthians*, 122; Lockwood, *1 Corinthians*, 450) while others place it with what precedes it (Ciampa and Rosner, *First Corinthians*, 608; Ruef, *Paul’s First Letter to Corinth*, 136; A. F. Johnson, *1 Corinthians*, 235).

³⁴ Cf. Witherington who says, “There is much debate as to whether the analogy with the human body is meant to stress the unity of the body to a fractured congregation or the diversity of gifts to a group enamoured of one gift in particular, namely, speaking in tongues. As the text progresses it appears that Paul is concerned about both issues—both diversity in unity and unity in diversity.” Witherington, *Conflict and Community*, 254.

³⁵ Fee, *First Corinthians*, 617.

Body of Christ

There is considerable debate concerning the origins of the concept of the body of Christ in Paul's writing. Fitzmyer notes that there are at least four places where scholars suggest Paul may have encountered such an idea.³⁶ The first is the Old Testament concept of a "corporate personality" where the whole people of God are seen as a single unit;³⁷ the second is the many votive offerings of body parts used in the worship and petitioning of Asklepios;³⁸ the third is "the idea of the *Urmensch*, or 'primal man' from the Gnostic myth of the Redeemer";³⁹ and the fourth is the concept of the state as a body from Greek philosophy.⁴⁰ This final idea has the most support among scholars and is the simplest and most likely solution.

Lee notes that the concept of the state as a "body" can be traced back to the Greek philosophers, Stoics in particular, and understanding this historical component sheds important light on Paul's use of the metaphor.⁴¹ Lee notes,

³⁶ On this summary see Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 475. The same list is described in Lee, *Paul, the Stoics and the Body*, 8–9.

³⁷ Cf. R. Martin, *The Spirit and the Congregation*, 23.

³⁸ Hill, "The Temple of Asclepius," 437–39; Murphy-O'Connor, *St. Paul's Corinth*, 190–91. Against this idea, see Oster, "Use, Misuse, and Neglect," 71–72. He asserts that the body parts in question were discovered in deposits dating to the fifth through fourth century BCE and were likely never seen by anyone in Paul's time. Oster, "Use, Misuse, and Neglect," 72.

³⁹ Schmithals, *Office of Apostle*, 198–99.

⁴⁰ Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 475. Fitzmyer concludes that the fourth option is the most likely source of Paul's ideas. Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 476. Cf. M. Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 157–59; Lee, *Paul, the Stoics and the Body*, 9. Some have suggested that Paul's body of Christ metaphor combined with the concept of unity in that body is a sacramental union or a union with the literal physical body of Christ. For example, Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 481–82. Caution should be taken with this approach as such a connection is not explicit in the text of 1 Corinthians and the text appears to be more metaphorical than literal. Cf. Gundry, *Sōma in Biblical Theology*, 225–26, 228–29.

⁴¹ Lee, *Paul, the Stoics and the Body*, 5. She is not the first one to make the strong connection between Paul and Stoicism. Engberg-Pedersen thinks that the key to finding coherence in Paul's writing is through Stoicism. Engberg-Pedersen, *Paul and the Stoics*, 1. He points out that the discussion of the connections between Paul and Stoicism goes "right back to the apocryphal exchange of letters between Paul and Seneca" but notes a particular prominence to the discussion throughout the twentieth century. Engberg-Pedersen, *Paul and the Stoics*, 11. The exact source of Paul's exposure to Stoic ideas is not a priority for Engberg-Pedersen, who says that to attempt to do so would only result in speculation. Engberg-Pedersen, *Paul and the Stoics*, 301.

The image was widespread in antiquity, with its best-known form that of the Menenius Agrippa fable, in which Agrippa persuaded the plebeians to cease their rebellion against the senate by arguing that since the state, like a body, is made up of a number of diverse parts, all of the parts perform a necessary function, including the senators, for the good of the whole.⁴²

Engberg-Pedersen notes that in the Eastern Mediterranean the kinds of Stoic ideas Paul was most likely exposed to would have been those also “heavily influenced by the Roman experience” such as Seneca, Cicero, Posidonius and Panaetius.⁴³ Further, he notes that in these regions Stoic concepts of the “ideal community” heavily influenced politics.⁴⁴ That Paul should have heard of these ideas, borrowed them, and adapted them for his own purposes is also quite reasonable.⁴⁵

Lee makes an important connection between the body of Christ metaphor and basic Stoic structure which is theorized by Engberg-Pedersen. Engberg-Pedersen presents a model for Stoic ideals which moves from an individual awareness to a group awareness. He calls it a change “from I to we.” At the “I” stage the individual is only concerned about his or her own needs and desires. A change occurs which brings a person to what Engberg-Pedersen calls the “S” stage where that person is still an individual but is now concerned about meeting the needs and desires of the group to which he or she has come to belong. The factor which changes an individual from the “I” to “S” level is known as “X.” The “X” comes from somewhere outside the self and profoundly influences the way the individual thinks of him or herself. For Stoics the X is reason; for Paul the X is God and more specifically, Christ.⁴⁶ Lee takes this model and

⁴² Lee, *Paul, the Stoics and the Body*, 9. For the Menenius Agrippa fable see Livy, *Hist. Rom.* 2.32.8–12.

⁴³ Engberg-Pedersen, “Stoicism in Philippians,” 268–69.

⁴⁴ Engberg-Pedersen, “Stoicism in Philippians,” 269.

⁴⁵ Cf. Lee, *Paul, the Stoics and the Body*, 13.

⁴⁶ Engberg-Pedersen, *Paul and the Stoics*, 34–35. See full explanation in Engberg-Pedersen, *Paul and the Stoics*, 33–44.

demonstrates how the concept of the body of Christ is a movement from the individual “parts” of the body to a single unit, with all parts functioning together.⁴⁷

In order to understand how the image of “body” was perceived by the readers of 1 Corinthians, it is helpful to know the manners in which they may have been used to hearing the images used outside of Christian contexts. Lee notes four different ways in which the body metaphor was used by philosophers. The first way involves highlighting one part of the body along with the function that it performed. Lee says, “This was often used when the author wanted to make a specific point about one person or part of a group. The person highlighted the function of one particular body part and compared that with the person or group under discussion.”⁴⁸ Lee notes that the head was frequently chosen as the body part for such comparisons and was portrayed as the “ruling or superior part of the body.”⁴⁹

The second common way in which the body metaphor was used involved some sort of disease or injury to the body. These could harm the whole body if not effectively “cured” in time. Under this method of comparison, a disease could be viewed as a “character flaw” of one of the group members.⁵⁰ Lee further notes that in curing these problems “concord” was seen as the necessary solution.⁵¹

The third way that the image of body was used is in relation to a distinction between body (or mind) and the soul. Lee notes, “The soul was generally seen as distinct from the body and often was the ruler over the body.”⁵² She also observes that “The

⁴⁷ Lee, *Paul, the Stoics and the Body*, 18.

⁴⁸ Lee, *Paul, the Stoics and the Body*, 39.

⁴⁹ Lee, *Paul, the Stoics and the Body*, 40.

⁵⁰ Lee, *Paul, the Stoics and the Body*, 40–41.

⁵¹ Lee, *Paul, the Stoics and the Body*, 41.

⁵² Lee, *Paul, the Stoics and the Body*, 41.

sharing of one soul could illustrate a particular closeness among friends or members of a community.”⁵³ She quotes Plutarch as saying, “In our friendship’s consonance (συμφωνίας) and harmony (ἁρμονίας) there must be no element unlike, uneven, or unequal, but all must be alike to engender agreement in words, counsels, opinions, and feelings, and it must be as if (ὡσπερ) one soul were apportioned among two or more bodies” (*Amic. Mult.* 96E, LCL).⁵⁴ The factions and divisions in the Corinthian church would have fractured the unity that Paul’s metaphor here advocates.

A fourth way in which the body metaphor was used in Greek literature is the “body as a unity made up of a diversity of parts.”⁵⁵ The implication is that these diverse parts work together for a common, overall good. This is particularly important for the image as it is used in 1 Cor 12. The need for diversity in unity and unity in diversity with a mutual respect and understanding that all “parts” are needed is not only pertinent to 1 Cor 12:12–26, but spills over into the next section which is under examination here. Paul expects his readers to have the body metaphor in mind as he illustrates the same principles using diverse gifts of leadership and service within the church.

Unity, Diversity, Equality, and Hierarchy in the Body of Christ

One of the reasons that this concept of a unified, yet diverse “body” would be particularly significant for the Corinthian Christians is that they were clearly a divided group which had particular views on what kinds of people were more important and what kinds of gifts were more desirable. Their factionalism and social stratification was undesirable,

⁵³ Lee, *Paul, the Stoics and the Body*, 42.

⁵⁴ Cf. Lee, *Paul, the Stoics and the Body*, 42. Additions of Greek text are her suggestions.

⁵⁵ Lee, *Paul, the Stoics and the Body*, 42.

and Paul, by putting forth this metaphor, seeks to demonstrate to them that all gifts and all people are needed in Christ's body.

It is tempting to use the metaphor as a means of saying that all people were "equally important." In a sense, this does seem to be the case as Paul demonstrates that all parts of the body are "needed." On the other hand, as D. Martin points out, though all the parts were important, there is no question that a head was more important than a foot.⁵⁶ Though demonstrating the need for all members of the body, the metaphor is still a hierarchical one. Though all parts of a body are needed for optimal performance, some things a body absolutely cannot live without. A. Clarke sees the body metaphor as one which promotes "unity, diversity and mutuality" but not equality as such.⁵⁷ He notes,

It is also significant, however, that Paul's expositions of the body metaphor are integrated with lists of leading positions within the Pauline communities (Rom. 12:4–8; 1 Cor. 12:4–31; Eph. 4:7–16). Consequently, a coherent understanding of the metaphor of the body and of Pauline ministry has to be able to accommodate an ecclesiology with leading figures, including prophets, pastors, teachers and deacons.⁵⁸

According to A. Clarke, the body metaphor is fully compatible with the concept of hierarchy and a structured leadership.⁵⁹ It is anachronistic to erase hierarchy completely from this metaphor or from early Christianity when Greco-Roman society was so stratified and hierarchy was very much a part of everyday life.⁶⁰ Hierarchy would not have been viewed as something negative but accepted as normal.

⁵⁶ Cf. D. Martin, "Tongues of Angels," 564–65.

⁵⁷ A. Clarke, *Pauline Theology*, 134. The one aspect of equality that is expressed by this metaphor is that the whole Christian community is equally able to be equipped by the spirit with various gifts as God so chooses. Those gifts, however "differ in their nature and significance." A. Clarke, *Pauline Theology*, 135.

⁵⁸ A. Clarke, *Pauline Theology*, 134.

⁵⁹ A. Clarke, *Pauline Theology*, 134–35.

⁶⁰ See discussion of social hierarchy in the thick description and A. Clarke, *Pauline Theology*, 89–95; Elliott, "Jesus Was Not an Egalitarian," 75–91; Elliott, "The Jesus Movement Was Not Egalitarian," 173–210.

Having said this, Paul worked to change the attitudes concerning the “less important” or “lower” members of the group. He promoted giving honour to the dishonourable parts and thereby raised the dignity of the “lower” members. D. Martin says, “Through his play on words, Paul both admits and denies the low status of the ‘weaker’ members of the body.”⁶¹ A. Clarke says that the metaphor suggests that the proper functioning of the body of Christ requires that all members—leaders and those who are not leaders—exercise their proper functions.⁶² When applied to the context of vv. 27–31, this strange reversal of roles allowed Paul to also reverse the hierarchy of gifts in the minds of the Corinthians: those gifts which may have been seen as less important (or at least less spectacular) are actually of great importance (apostles, prophets, teachers); those gifts which seem more impressive are actually less important (tongues).⁶³

Verse 28

Verse 28 continues Paul’s demonstration that God has appointed different kinds of leaders and gifts within the church. There is no indication in the text that his comments are intended to denote leadership functions and gifts exclusively appointed in the Corinthian church and so his comments should be understood more broadly.⁶⁴ Here he moves away from the body metaphor and calls back to mind the discussion of gifts (*χαρισμάτα*) and services (*διακονίαι*) which began at 1 Cor 12:4. Verse 28 begins with a list of three leadership functions, followed by five additional “gifts” or ways of serving in

⁶¹ D. Martin, “Tongues of Angels,” 568.

⁶² A. Clarke, *Pauline Theology*, 136.

⁶³ Cf. D. Martin, “Tongues of Angels,” 569.

⁶⁴ Cf. Barrett, *First Corinthians*, 293.

the church.⁶⁵ There is no indication in the text that the list of functions and gifts that Paul has chosen to include here should be seen as exhaustive; rather, this appears to be a sampling of some of the ways in which leaders and gifts are found in the church.⁶⁶ Other gifts and other leadership functions are mentioned elsewhere. What is significant is that Paul mentions eight very different ways of serving within this body of Christ and there seems to be at least some measure of hierarchy in mind.

A Hierarchy of Leaders and Gifts

The first three items in the list are explicitly ranked “first, second, third” and it is a mistake to think that this numbering is inconsequential.⁶⁷ There are two lines of questioning which need to be explored in relation to the ranking of these three items. First is how the three ranked leadership functions relate to the other five unranked gifts. Second is how these three ranked leadership functions related to one another.

In answer to the first question Fitzmyer notes, “The singling out of these three officeholders and the numbering of them imply that Paul understands some endowments to be more significant than others because of their role in the founding and governance of

⁶⁵ Fee breaks them down even further and notes that the first three are persons, the fourth and fifth items are gifts, and the sixth and seventh are “deeds of service” which are not “supernatural” in nature. Fee, *First Corinthians*, 618–19. The final item is tongues which is of a more spiritual nature. Fee calls it a “gift of utterance” and notes that it seems odd to include it with the preceding four items, presumably because it does not seem to fit thematically. Fee, *First Corinthians*, 622. Though some, like Fee, attempt to make such sharp categorization among the gifts mentioned in v. 28, the variety is evident without imposing further categories. Other than the distinction between leadership positions and gifts the text is not explicit and therefore caution must be taken before imposing extra categories.

⁶⁶ Cf. Bruce, *1 and 2 Corinthians*, 122; Hays, *First Corinthians*, 217; Fee, “Tongues,” 9. Fee elsewhere calls it a “heterogeneous” list. Fee, *First Corinthians*, 622.

⁶⁷ The numbering of these first three leadership positions is what demonstrates to many scholars that there is at least a hierarchy meant for the first three items on this list and that at least a general hierarchy of gifts is meant with the whole list (with tongues deliberately at the end of the list). Cf. Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 1015; Ciampa and Rosner, *First Corinthians*, 609. Not everyone agrees that there is a hierarchy in mind. For example, Ruef, *Paul’s First Letter to Corinth*, 137–39.

the church.”⁶⁸ To this Bartling would add that these three leadership functions have a primary position on the list because they are “gifts which magnify the Word of God’s grace and which assist in its proclamation to the world and its application to the life of the community.”⁶⁹ That these three leadership functions played a role in founding, guiding, and advancing the church speaks to the high value that they hold for the early Christians. Their great value to the church lends primacy to these three leadership functions.⁷⁰ This is in opposition to Schweizer’s assertion that the New Testament church made no distinction between “offices” like apostle and presbyter and charismatic gifts (like prophecy and glossolalia).⁷¹ The historical context of this passage suggests that there indeed was a distinction in the early period of Christianity. The other five gifts may also have been valuable, but their role in founding, guiding, and advancing the church was not as great.

The answer to the second question is unclear. Fitzmyer suggests that while the numbering certainly denotes importance of the first three items, it could simply reflect the order in which the leadership functions were brought into the church.⁷² Yet it seems unlikely that these numbers are meant to portray the order of inception of each leadership function.⁷³ Unless Paul has only Christian prophets in mind (and not also prophets from the Old Testament), then it would seem that prophets should be “first.”

⁶⁸ Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 483. Cf. Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 215; R. Martin, *The Spirit and the Congregation*, 31.

⁶⁹ Bartling, “Congregation of Christ,” 77. See also Ciampa and Rosner, *First Corinthians*, 609–10; Witherington, *Conflict and Community*, 261; Fee, *First Corinthians*, 619–20.

⁷⁰ Barrett, *First Corinthians*, 295; Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 598. Bruce agrees that it suggests these three are the most important positions. Bruce, *1 and 2 Corinthians*, 122. Cf. Lockwood, *1 Corinthians*, 452.

⁷¹ Schweizer, *Church Order*, 181, 184.

⁷² Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 482. Cf. Hays, *First Corinthians*, 217.

⁷³ Cf. Lockwood, *1 Corinthians*, 452.

Following the mention of these three leadership functions is a series of five gifts. The numbering sequence ceases and there is no sharp distinction made among the last five statements like there was for the first three. Although the final five items do not have an explicit hierarchy mentioned between them, they do follow the word “then” (ἔπειτα) which implies that they should be seen as falling after or “under” the first three in order.⁷⁴ A. Clarke notes that there is an implicit hierarchical ordering, even if not an explicit one. This ordering is not one that suggests some gifts are actually unimportant, but rather it is one that “is significantly linked with a reinforcement that the full range of gifts or body parts is essential to the functioning of the body.”⁷⁵ Based on the evidence, an implicit hierarchy should be read with this text, with the acknowledgement that the first three leadership functions are at the top of the hierarchy due to their value in building up the church.

The placement of the gift of tongues at the end of this list is significant and deserves special comment. Many commentators suggest that it is last in order to de-emphasize it because the Corinthians have placed too much value on it.⁷⁶ Paul takes great pains here to subtly (and then not so subtly in 1 Cor 14) demonstrate that this is not the most important gift that God has given to his church. Though Paul seeks to show that it is

⁷⁴ Barrett suggests that the reason that there is no explicit numbering of the five gifts is that Paul wishes to place these five things lower than the first three, but does not see a need to make a hierarchical distinction between these five lower gifts. Barrett, *First Corinthians*, 295. Cf. Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 483; Fee, *First Corinthians*, 619, 621; Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 598; A. F. Johnson, *1 Corinthians*, 236; Hays, *First Corinthians*, 217; Horsley, *1 Corinthians*, 173; Ciampa and Rosner, *First Corinthians*, 612 who suggest the slightly different order of gifts from earlier in 1 Cor 12 means that the order of these particular gifts is not meant to demonstrate any form of hierarchy. For Ruef, there is no differentiation of importance between the first three positions and the last five gifts. He says the lack of numerical differentiation with the last five gifts, “could mean that these gifts are less closely associated with specific individuals than the first three. Given Paul’s view of the interdependence of the members within the church, it does not mean that they are less important.” Ruef, *Paul’s First Letter to Corinth*, 138–39.

⁷⁵ A. Clarke, *Pauline Theology*, 134.

⁷⁶ For example, Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 484. Cf. Fee who is careful to note that it is at the end of the list simply because the Corinthians have placed too much value on it, not because it is indeed the least important gift. Fee, “Tongues,” 11.

not the most important gift, his placement of tongues at the end of the list should not be seen as him making it into a “harmful” or useless gift.⁷⁷ His point rather is that this gift belongs at a different rank than the Corinthian Christians had placed it.

Apostles, Prophets, and Teachers

Paul presents three leadership functions as being given to the church by God: the apostles, prophets, and teachers. A brief recounting of what was understood by each term is useful. The term *ἀπόστολος* is used to denote a messenger though not exclusively in the sense of a person sent specifically as a representative of another individual. Often it is used to describe a fleet of ships or other navy-related ideas.⁷⁸ There is also not a clear parallel in the Old Testament or LXX to use in tracing Jewish use of the term or idea.⁷⁹ Christians retained the sense of the personal messenger, but made it very specifically refer to a messenger of Jesus. These messengers are not self-appointed, but are commissioned by Jesus in some way. The Twelve and other followers of Jesus are counted as apostles in the New Testament based on their interaction with Jesus while he was on earth.⁸⁰ Paul argues for his own apostleship based on his having seen the risen Jesus and been commissioned by him to take the gospel to the gentiles.⁸¹ Apostles are generally not linked to a specific location in New Testament texts and only a narrow group of people are called by this title, though it is not limited to the Twelve exclusively. Paul, Barnabas, and possibly Andronicus, Junia, and James the brother of Jesus have also

⁷⁷ A. Clarke, *Pauline Theology*, 135.

⁷⁸ See LSJ 220, Supp 46. Cf. BDAG, 122.

⁷⁹ Cf. extensive discussion of research on the matter in Agnew, “The Origin of the NT Apostle-Concept,” 75–96.

⁸⁰ Cf. Acts 1:21–22; 1 Cor 15:4–10; Rom 16:7.

⁸¹ Cf. 1 Cor 9:1; 15:8–10; Gal 1:12, 16.

been suggested as others who fit into this category.⁸² The position of apostle stands at the top of the list in 1 Cor 12:28, demonstrating that it played a foundational role in Christianity at the time of the letter writing.⁸³

The second position listed is that of the prophet (προφήτης), a leader that was common in Greco-Roman religions, Judaism, and Christianity.⁸⁴ The prophets of the Greco-Roman religions were priests and oracles who discerned the will of the gods by various means and were often sought after for their abilities.⁸⁵ In Judaism the prophets were those who had special revelation from God and shared that revelation either by request of a political leader (such as a king) or by God's prompting even if the leadership of the nations of Israel and Judah had no desire to hear.⁸⁶ Finally, the New Testament includes reference to specific Christian prophets (Agabus in Acts 11:27 and 21:10; Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen, and Saul in Acts 13:1; and Judas and Silas in Acts 15:32), most of whom appear to be involved in various teaching and preaching activities, but at least one of whom (Agabus) foretells events of the future which were important to the early Christians. The term is also used in a general sense, as it is here, to refer to "prophets" as a group (1 Cor 14:29, 32; 14:37; Eph 3:5; 4:11). Like the apostles, the Christian prophets play a foundational role in the Christian faith of the first century and also are not necessarily linked to a particular location. Paul's further discussion of prophets and prophecy in 1 Cor 14, however, suggests that local Christians with prophetic gifts also existed and they seem to be the focus of his discussion in that

⁸² Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 482.

⁸³ Cf. Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 673.

⁸⁴ Cf. BDAG, 890, LSJ, 1539, L. Johnson, *Among the Gentiles*, 39–40.

⁸⁵ L. Johnson, *Among the Gentiles*, 39–40.

⁸⁶ Cf. Num 24:2; 1 Sam 11:6; 19:20; 2 Chr 15:1; Ezek 11:24; Dan 7:1; 1 Kgs 14:1–18; Friedrich et al., "προφήτης," 6:801.

section of the letter. There is no evidence to suggest that the prophets in 1 Cor 12 must be restricted to local prophets, even if that is what Paul has in mind in 1 Cor 14.

Very little is actually said about the role of the prophets in 1 Cor 12 and caution should be taken before particulars are attributed to the kinds of prophets and prophecy meant here. For example, Barrett notes that “It [prophecy] was uttered in ordinary, though probably excited, perhaps ecstatic speech.”⁸⁷ Thiselton is rightly critical of this perspective, especially since Barrett gives no evidence to support this claim and the text in question says nothing to this effect.⁸⁸ Further, Ciampa and Rosner suggest “Prophecy seems to be more highly occasion- or situation-focused . . . It is not about the passing on of traditional teaching and ethics, but the communication of a divine message that is understood to be especially given as a response to and tailored to the special needs and issue of those gathered to hear it.”⁸⁹ This is certainly a possibility, but the specifics of what kind of message a prophet might speak or the reason for doing so is not made clear in 1 Cor 12. Paul does not explain what he means by the leadership function of “prophet” and it is likely that he did not need to explain it; the Corinthians knew what he meant by the term and knew what role the prophet played in the early church. Unfortunately the modern reader is not privy to the same information.

The third leadership function in 1 Cor 12:28 is that of “teacher.” The term *διδάσκαλος* is not specific to Christianity and denotes no particular kind or level of teaching.⁹⁰ As with the position of prophets above, due to this general nature of the term and the lack of specific examples concerning what these individuals did or did not do in

⁸⁷ Barrett, *First Corinthians*, 286.

⁸⁸ Cf. Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 956.

⁸⁹ Ciampa and Rosner, *First Corinthians*, 581.

⁹⁰ BDAG, 241; LSJ, 421; L&N 1:415.

the Corinthian context,⁹¹ it is best not to speculate on the particulars of how or what these individuals may have taught.⁹² Also like the prophet, it seems evident that the Corinthians knew the specifics of what a Christian teacher did and Paul had no need to explain it.

It is tempting to attempt to differentiate between the precise role of the teacher and prophet. For example, Thiselton says, “Prophets perform speech-acts of announcement, proclamation, judgment, challenge, comfort, support, or encouragement, whereas teachers perform speech-acts of transmission, communicative explanation, interpretation of texts, establishment of creeds, exposition of meaning and implication and, more cognitive, less temporally applied communicative acts.”⁹³ Ciampa and Rosner also attempt to make a clear distinction between the two roles by saying,

The difference with prophets, then, would not be that the latter are the only ones applying the Christian faith, but that the teachers would pass on the traditional Christian theological and moral teachings that were valued and needed to be known by all believers everywhere, while the prophets were especially gifted at addressing the particular, context-specific needs of a gathered congregation with inspired pastoral insight.⁹⁴

Further to this, Dunn suggests that prophecy brings “a new word from God” while teaching provides new insight into previous revelations.⁹⁵ While none of these ideas is outside the realm of possibility, they are speculative and are difficult to substantiate from the scant evidence of 1 Corinthians. It is best not to attempt to clearly differentiate these roles based on this text. Either the Corinthians already knew the difference, or the difference was not important to Paul’s purpose. The former is more likely. Paul’s point in

⁹¹ Cf. Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 1017; Fee, *First Corinthians*, 621.

⁹² Lockwood links the mention of teachers here with the same term in Eph 4:11 and also with the positions of overseers and elders. Lockwood, *1 Corinthians*, 453. The brief mention of teachers here cannot sustain a detailed connection to these other positions.

⁹³ Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 1017.

⁹⁴ Ciampa and Rosner, *First Corinthians*, 612.

⁹⁵ Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*, 237.

listing these leadership functions is to highlight their abilities to build up the body of Christ, not to provide a clear job description for each one.

Gifts

Following these three leadership functions is a listing of five additional gifts which God has appointed in the church. As noted above, these are not numbered as the first three are, but stand after them. In addition to the lack of numbering another feature stands out for these final five items. Rather than leadership functions or “persons” being mentioned, the list instead consists of specific gifts.⁹⁶ For example, following teachers, the Greek states *ἔπειτα δυνάμεις*. Although this is sometimes translated as “then workers of miracles”⁹⁷ it more properly reads “then miracles.” For the five statements that follow the three leadership functions, the focus is on the gift itself and not on the “position” associated with the gift or the person who holds the gift. A brief look at each gift is warranted to see how they related to one another and the roles they may have played in the community.

Miracles and gifts of healing are often discussed together, though the fact that they are mentioned separately suggests that they do not refer to the same things.⁹⁸

Thiselton suggests, based on 1 Cor 12:10, that *ἐνεργήματα δυνάμεων* (the terms used in v. 10) may be strictly miraculous or may include the miraculous among other powerful

⁹⁶ Fee suggests that the first three items emphasize the persons while the last five focus on the “ministries” themselves. Fee, *First Corinthians*, 619. For Lockwood this shift indicates that unlike the first three positions, which should be seen as offices to which a person is called for life, the gifts may be bestowed on a person temporarily. Lockwood, *1 Corinthians*, 453.

⁹⁷ Cf. NIV.

⁹⁸ Fee, *First Corinthians*, 594–95; Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 467. Contra Ciampa and Rosner, *First Corinthians*, 578 who suggest that Paul may not have made much of a distinction between healing and miracles and would have connected both of them to the gift of faith mentioned in 1 Cor 12:9.

things.⁹⁹ The context of 1 Cor 12:28 suggests that the miraculous and not the ordinary is what is in mind in the later verse.

Just as he allows for the “ordinary” in the gift concerning “works of power” Thiselton also allows for the ordinary when it comes to healings. He says, “The plural, which implies **various kinds of healings**, should also be given its full scope. The **kinds** may appear to include sudden or gradual, physical, psychosomatic, or mental, the use of medication or more ‘direct’ divine agency, and variations which are not to be subsumed in advance under some stereotypical pattern of expectation.”¹⁰⁰ This is counter-intuitive and not in keeping with the context of use. Paul does not seem to be discussing “ordinary” healings here such as those that result from an illness simply running its course or those which might result from “routine medicine” (such as it was in the ancient world).¹⁰¹ It is more likely that the healing gifts are of a miraculous sort rather than simple medical ability.

When it comes to healings in the context of the city of Corinth, it is important to consider the temple of Asklepios located there and how the Corinthians would have perceived healings in light of the temple to this healing god. Certainly those who went to the temple for healing were expecting a divine cure. The rituals associated with attaining healing from Asklepios have been discussed in Chapter 3. The expectation of miraculous healing from the gods would resonate with gentile Christians in Corinth: “ordinary” healings would not have been much to talk about. This context lends more likelihood to the idea that Paul intends the healing gifts in v. 28 to be of a miraculous sort.

⁹⁹ Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 953.

¹⁰⁰ Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 948 (bold original).

¹⁰¹ Cf. Ciampa and Rosner, *First Corinthians*, 579.

The next gift listed is “helps” (ἀντιλήψεις). This has been compared to the role of the deacon, as one who serves or helps the other leaders.¹⁰² In fact, R. Collins finds it strange that Paul does not actually use the word διάκονος in this verse.¹⁰³ It is best not to draw too close a parallel between the two, as while the deacon certainly did “help,” there are conceivably others who also assisted in the church in many ways. These people may have cared for the sick and the weak,¹⁰⁴ or performed a kind of administrative assistance (in distinction from the next gift which is also sometimes translated “administration”).¹⁰⁵ It is best to leave the translation here non-specific, since Paul gives absolutely no indication of what the actual duties of such a person might have been.¹⁰⁶

The next gift mentioned is “guidance” (κυβέρνησις). This is sometimes translated as “administration”¹⁰⁷ but the uses of the Greek word go much beyond our modern concept of “administrative assistance” and so an alternative translation is preferred.¹⁰⁸ The word is used of those who steer a ship and the kind of “administration” which is therefore in mind in 1 Cor 12 is more of a management or leadership role which works to guide the church on a proper course.¹⁰⁹ Thiselton translates this as “ability to formulate

¹⁰² Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 1019; Barrett, *First Corinthians*, 295; R. Martin, *The Spirit and the Congregation*, 33, though he notes that this equivalence is at best “a guess.”

¹⁰³ R. Collins, *First Corinthians*, 469.

¹⁰⁴ Bruce, *1 and 2 Corinthians*, 123. Cf. Ciampa and Rosner, *First Corinthians*, 613 who also suggest this might have the idea of patron in mind, though this seems less likely. Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 483 also suggests a connection with charitable aid.

¹⁰⁵ For example, Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 1019.

¹⁰⁶ Fee’s general description accomplishes this when he says, “. . . it implies that some minister to the physical and spiritual needs of others in the community.” Fee, *First Corinthians*, 621. A. F. Johnson notes that this gift “should neither be limited to nor exclude official administrative aid to a church or organization.” A. F. Johnson, *1 Corinthians*, 238.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. BDAG, 573.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Fee, *First Corinthians*, 622; Witherington, *Conflict and Community*, 261. If the term is used in the sense of administration, then it is more in the sense of “senior management” than “clerical work.” Ciampa and Rosner, *First Corinthians*, 613.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. L&N, 1:465.

strategy”¹¹⁰ though this is perhaps too specific for the term. Barrett suggests “gifts of direction” in keeping with the idea of steering a ship, which is more general.¹¹¹ Bruce says these leaders were “‘helmsmen’ of the church, who directed its life and action.”¹¹² Though some have argued that this is a less “spiritual” position or gift than the previous ones,¹¹³ it is evident that individuals capable of guiding the young church in the proper direction would have been important and it is likely that this gift is meant to portray one who is more than a simple support worker.

Kinds of Tongues

The final gift mentioned in this list is by far the most controversial, both because of the highly spiritual nature and its apparent abuse by the Corinthian Christians. A brief consideration of what is meant by “kinds of tongues” (γένη γλωσσῶν) and what role this gift was playing in the church at Corinth are two important questions to consider when analysing this section of v. 28.

The ancient phenomenon referred to in the biblical text as “tongues” is generally understood to refer to one of two basic things. First, it can mean the ability to speak in a foreign language which the speaker previously had not known.¹¹⁴ This seems to be what is in mind, for example, in Acts 2:1–12. Alternatively, it can mean some sort of spiritual utterance which is not a recognized foreign language and not readily understood by the hearer or (perhaps) the speaker. Based on the context of use in 1 Cor 12:30 and also 14:5,

¹¹⁰ Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 1021.

¹¹¹ Barrett, *First Corinthians*, 295–96. He also likens it to the work of the bishops. This should be avoided as being too specific. R. Martin also makes this connection, but suggests it be kept tentative. R. Martin, *The Spirit and the Congregation*, 33.

¹¹² Bruce, *1 and 2 Corinthians*, 123.

¹¹³ Lockwood notes that “helpful deeds” and “gifts of leadership” are of a “more everyday, non-miraculous nature.” Lockwood, *1 Corinthians*, 453.

¹¹⁴ Cf. Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 974.

9, 13, and 27, it seems as though these “tongues” need special interpretation either by the speaker or by another who is given the gift of interpretation. This suggests that the tongues in 1 Cor 12 belong in the second category.¹¹⁵

There is much discussion about what exactly is meant by these “spiritual utterances.” Thiselton suggests four different things which could comprise this second category within the gift of tongues. He notes that they could be angelic languages (mentioned in 1 Cor 13:1 and the *Testament of Job*);¹¹⁶ “archaic or novel verbal idioms, usually with music, poetry, and rhythm” known or created by the educated;¹¹⁷ ecstatic speech most often compared to the oracular sayings and utterances in Greco-Roman prophecy;¹¹⁸ or unconscious language from deep within a person.¹¹⁹ Many thorough studies have been mounted on the topic and provide thoughtful background material.¹²⁰ Since the identification of the exact nature of the tongues mentioned in 1 Cor 12 is not integral to understanding Paul’s intent in this passage with regards to leadership, the details of these studies will not be discussed here.

What is more important for this study than the exact nature of the “tongues” is the role that they are playing in Corinth and the negative influence that they are having on the Christian community. It is clear from vv. 29–30 and from the extensive comparison between tongues and prophecy in 1 Cor 14 that tongues were being elevated to a status that Paul thought they ought not to have had.

¹¹⁵ Cf. Fee, *First Corinthians*, 598; Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 468.

¹¹⁶ Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 972–73. Fitzmyer specifically notes this is not what Paul has in mind in 1 Corinthians 12. Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 469.

¹¹⁷ Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 978.

¹¹⁸ Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 980.

¹¹⁹ Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 985.

¹²⁰ For example: Theissen, *Psychological Aspects*; Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*; C. G. Williams, *Tongues of the Spirit*; Forbes, *Prophecy and Inspired Speech*; Busenitz, “Are Tongues Real Foreign Languages,” 63–84; Macchia, “Sighs Too Deep,” 47–73; D. Martin, “Tongues of Angels,” 547–89.

The reasons why the Corinthians might have been promoting tongues as something to be prized is not immediately clear. In his examination of the conflict that arises between Paul and the Corinthians in the whole of 1 Corinthians, Forbes notes four major theories as to its source. First is Schmithals's view that the conflict can be traced back to disputes in the church over early Gnosticism.¹²¹ Second is the idea that the Corinthians have an "over-realized eschatology."¹²² This means that they supposed the final resurrection of the dead had already happened and thus they believed they were able to live in complete freedom without consequences.¹²³ This allowed them to participate in behaviours that otherwise would be seen as abhorrent. Third is the idea that the source of the conflict at Corinth is Hellenistic-Jewish speculation concerning the concept of wisdom.¹²⁴ In this view the Corinthians are overly-focused on wisdom and not concerned enough about the person and work of Christ.¹²⁵ None of these possibilities is convincing to Forbes as the actual source of the conflict in Corinth.¹²⁶ The reason that he remains unconvinced is that in his view none of these is easily related to the concept of ecstatic speech or spiritual utterances which seems to play a major role in the conflict.

A final, very popular suggestion for the ultimate source of the conflict is that the gentile Corinthian Christians, prior to their conversions, highly valued parallel ecstatic speech acts in Greco-Roman prophecy and transferred that value to the kinds of tongues

¹²¹ Forbes, *Prophecy and Inspired Speech*, 14, 102. Cf. Schmithals, *Gnosticism in Corinth*, 286.

¹²² Forbes, *Prophecy and Inspired Speech*, 14. Cf. See Nichols, "The Problem of Two-Level Christianity," 104–5; Fee, "Tongues," 8; Thiselton, "Realized Eschatology," 510–26.

¹²³ Cf. Thiselton, "Realized Eschatology," 512.

¹²⁴ Forbes, *Prophecy and Inspired Speech*, 14. Cf. Horsley, "How Can Some of You Say?" 203–31.

¹²⁵ Cf. Horsley, "How Can Some of You Say?" 229.

¹²⁶ Forbes, *Prophecy and Inspired Speech*, 14–15.

that Paul discusses in his letter.¹²⁷ Conflict arises between the Corinthian Christians and Paul when the Corinthian view does not coincide with Paul's view concerning this gift.

Forbes convincingly demonstrates that even this popular view of parallel phenomena in the Greco-Roman world is not without its problems. He finds the parallels often cited between the Greco-Roman concepts of ecstatic speech and the concept of Christian tongues to be dubious.

Three major kinds of parallels between speaking in tongues and Greco-Roman prophetic speech are often noted. First, the oracular sayings, such as those spoken by the Oracle at Delphi are suggested. A priestess would speak prophetic words in response to various inquiries made of her. These sayings needed to be interpreted by a prophet as their meaning was not always readily apparent.¹²⁸ This is likened to the one speaking in tongues who needed an interpreter to inform the hearers of the meaning of the words being spoken. There are important differences between these oracles and the phenomenon of Christian tongues. Forbes notes that the oracle is never said to speak in unintelligible words. Forbes says, "On the contrary, all our evidence suggests that she spoke in perfectly intelligible, though sometimes ambiguous Greek."¹²⁹ The kind of utterances that seem to be in mind in 1 Corinthians do not appear to be in a readily recognizable language. Another difference is that the oracle made pronouncements in response to specific questions posed to her by individuals. Christian tongues are never portrayed as a method of making direct inquiry to God and Christians did not pose questions to the

¹²⁷ Forbes, *Prophecy and Inspired Speech*, 89. Conzelmann is convinced that since the text of 1 Corinthians says nothing explicit about the phenomenon of tongues the most logical place to look for an explanation is "from comparable material in the history of religion." Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 234.

¹²⁸ Cf. Forbes, *Prophecy and Inspired Speech*, 103-4; Klauck, *The Religious Context of Early Christianity*, 187-90; Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 234.

¹²⁹ Forbes, *Prophecy and Inspired Speech*, 107. Similar sentiment is expressed by D. Martin, "Tongues of Angels," 558, though he is critical of the very conservative interpretation that Forbes has of parallel phenomena in the Greco-Roman world.

tongue-speakers in hopes of discerning God's will for a situation. The oracles are not a direct parallel to Christian tongues in the New Testament which means that they are not the best sources of comparison for the elevated status of those who speak in tongues in 1 Corinthians.

Another potential parallel to speaking in tongues is the kind of ecstatic speech found in the mystery cults such as those of Cybele or Dionysus.¹³⁰ These groups are known for enthusiastic displays of frenzy, ecstasy, or "inspiration." Forbes describes the behaviour manifested in these groups as "violent physical activity, particularly frenzied dancing or rushing about; shouts and cries, sometimes in the form of intelligible cries of invocation; 'supernatural' manifestations generally; more than human knowledge, and in many cases considerable alterations to the frame of mind of those inspired."¹³¹ Christian glossolalia in the New Testament is never *explicitly* described as exhibiting these frenzied traits, though some descriptions of them in 1 Cor 14 might imply that similar frenzied activities could have been part of the phenomenon.¹³² Though Forbes is not convinced that a parallel exists between the ecstatic speech of the mystery cults and Christian glossolalia, a tentative connection might be made between them.

A third potential source for the elevated view of speaking in tongues within the Corinthian church is the "spiritual underworld of antiquity" which is characterized by "wandering prophets and magicians and miracle workers."¹³³ These groups are said to have used various forms of ecstatic utterances and altered mental states to ply their trade and influence people. Some have argued that this indicates the commonality and

¹³⁰ Cf. Forbes, *Prophecy and Inspired Speech*, 124; Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*, 242–43, 304–5.

¹³¹ Forbes, *Prophecy and Inspired Speech*, 146–47.

¹³² For example 1 Cor 14:2 says those who speak in tongues "utter mysteries" and 14:23 notes that outsiders would think those who speak in tongues are "out of their minds."

¹³³ M. Smith, "Prolegomena," 181. Cf. Forbes, *Prophecy and Inspired Speech*, 149.

acceptance of ecstatic speech in antiquity.¹³⁴ Forbes counters these assertions with the argument that the evidence for these incidents is from mid-second century or later which makes its applicability to the mid-first century somewhat doubtful.¹³⁵

In spite of the fact that Forbes is not favourable toward any of the prevailing theories concerning why tongues were elevated to such a high status in Corinth,¹³⁶ he nevertheless agrees that there is a clear elevation of the phenomenon by the Corinthian Christians.¹³⁷ Forbes suggests that this is due, not to their previous experience and elevation of oracular sayings and utterances, but because they have learned about Christian tongues from Paul and have come to view it as a mark of the spiritually mature.¹³⁸ He says, “Glossolalia, and perhaps to a lesser extent prophecy (both practices related to direct communion with God, authoritative revelation and the great figures of the early days of both Christianity itself and their own congregational life), easily suggested themselves as the marks of a spiritual elite.”¹³⁹ In a society where elitism was much-sought-after, it is no wonder that the Corinthians were aspiring to speak in tongues and promoting those who did so as having a better gift than others.

While Forbes has demonstrated some flaws in the major theories concerning parallels between glossolalia and Greco-Roman religious utterances, it is unwise to completely throw the proverbial baby out with the bathwater when it comes to seeing

¹³⁴ Cf. Forbes, *Prophecy and Inspired Speech*, 149.

¹³⁵ Forbes, *Prophecy and Inspired Speech*, 152. D. Martin counters the exclusion of this material by saying that he sees no evidence that the prevailing views of society have changed between the mid-first and mid-second century when it comes to phenomena similar to the idea of Christian glossolalia. D. Martin, “Tongues of Angels,” 559.

¹³⁶ Cf. Forbes, *Prophecy and Inspired Speech*, 170.

¹³⁷ Forbes, *Prophecy and Inspired Speech*, 171–72.

¹³⁸ Forbes, *Prophecy and Inspired Speech*, 172–73.

¹³⁹ Forbes, *Prophecy and Inspired Speech*, 173.

influences from their prior religious lives on the thinking of the Corinthian Christians.¹⁴⁰ Perhaps an exact parallel to Christian glossolalia cannot be found in the ancient evidence for spiritual utterances, or perhaps the evidence for a parallel is tentative. Nevertheless, to say that there is absolutely no influence of the prior experiences of the Corinthian Christians is going too far.¹⁴¹ Corinth was home to many religious temples and the Corinthians could not help but be influenced by the practices in which they had previously participated.

There is no doubt that Greco-Roman religion contained at least some instances of divine messages being conveyed to the world through inspired individuals.¹⁴² These individuals were favoured by the gods and by implication honoured by those who sought and received the divine messages through them. There is also some evidence of divinely-inspired speech in the Jewish *Testament of Job*.¹⁴³ It is not so far-fetched to see that the Corinthian Christians may have made a similar connection in their new religion: those who spoke in tongues were favoured by God and so also ought to be honoured by people.¹⁴⁴ It may have been of little import that the method of speaking or acting when under inspiration was not exactly the same as what may have been common place in their former religious lives. Louw also points out that prior to their conversions to Christianity “many Corinthians experienced idols as mute gods. Therefore, the spiritual communication they encountered as Christians with a living God made glossolalia most

¹⁴⁰ Cf. D. Martin, “Tongues of Angels,” 558–59, where he is critical of the fact that Forbes dismisses any and all parallels between Christian glossolalia and the previous religious experiences of the Corinthian Christians.

¹⁴¹ Notably, Forbes does not say categorically that it is impossible to be based on prior influences, only that it is “most unlikely.” Cf. Forbes, *Prophecy and Inspired Speech*, 170. Though this is perhaps a fine distinction, it is an important one to consider.

¹⁴² Cf. the discussion of oracles and worshippers in the mystery cults above.

¹⁴³ Cf. D. Martin, “Tongues of Angels,” 559.

¹⁴⁴ Cf. Ciampa and Rosner, *First Corinthians*, 585; D. Martin, “Tongues of Angels,” 558.

attractive.”¹⁴⁵ Though Louw’s point is completely different from theories which attempt to create parallels between glossolalia and instances of inspired speech in Greco-Roman religions, it still provides a plausible reason why at least some Corinthian Christians viewed glossolalia as a highly-prized gift to be much sought-after. Some level of influence from previous religious experience is likely when it comes to the high view of tongues seen in the Corinthian church.

Determining exactly why the Corinthians elevated speaking in tongues to a higher status than other gifts of God may be impossible. Regardless of why they did, it is evident that the Corinthian Christians regarded speaking in tongues as an activity that brought high status. This understanding of the high value that the Corinthians placed on a gift that Paul did not see as particularly beneficial to the community helps to explain Paul’s words in 1 Cor 12:28 and the other gifts that he chooses to place ahead of tongues on his list. Paul elevates leaders like apostles, prophets, and teachers to the very top of the list, enumerating them as first, second, and third. They serve to build up the community. Though it has been noted above that there is not necessarily a hierarchical order meant for the last five gifts on this list, the placement of tongues very last is conspicuous. Paul begins to make his point here that tongues should not be regarded as the “most important” of the gifts. What is most important is the building up of the church through leadership of those such as apostles, prophets, and teachers.

Verses 29–30

Following the list of leadership functions and gifts Paul asks a series of rhetorical questions of his readers. Each of them begins with the negative particle μή and because of

¹⁴⁵ Louw, “The Function of Discourse,” 331.

this a negative answer is expected for each of the questions. Paul asks the readers “Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret?” Each of these questions corresponds with a leadership function or gift that has been previously mentioned in 1 Cor 12,¹⁴⁶ but not all the gifts that have been mentioned are included here, nor are they in the same order as they were previously.¹⁴⁷ This again demonstrates that these lists are meant to be seen as examples and not exhaustive, and that Paul is illustrating a general point about leadership functions and gifts and not making very specific statements about each one—perhaps with the exception of tongues which is most clearly part of the controversy in Corinth.

Barrett suggests that the reason Paul poses this list of questions to his readers is that a group of Corinthians may have thought they could hold all the gifts in one person.¹⁴⁸ It is more likely that many Corinthians wanted the more “prestigious” roles and were not interested in those things that they saw as lowly. This is more in keeping with the example of diversity in the body of Christ which Paul presents earlier in the chapter. At the end of vv. 29–30 the point is made with the reader regarding the expected diversity of the gifts and leaders within the Christian community. All gifts and all leaders are needed (a carry-over from 1 Cor 12:1–26) and yet not everyone has the same gifts and this should not be expected.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁶ See 1 Cor 12:8–10, 28.

¹⁴⁷ Fee suggests that nothing should be made of the different order of the gifts. Rather, the rhetoric of the questions themselves demonstrates Paul’s point. Fee, *First Corinthians*, 622.

¹⁴⁸ Barrett, *First Corinthians*, 296.

¹⁴⁹ Cf. Barrett, *First Corinthians*, 296. Bruce makes this same point and specifically notes that with this idea Paul quashes the idea that all spiritual persons must speak in tongues. Bruce, *1 and 2 Corinthians*, 123. On the need for diversity of gifts cf. Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 484.

Verse 31

Just as v. 27 is transitional and bridges the gap between what comes before and after it, so is v. 31.¹⁵⁰ This verse also has some interpretive difficulties, including what is meant by “greater” gifts, and whether Paul is issuing a command, making a statement, or asking a question with the verb ζηλοῦτε. These issues are intertwined and cannot be easily separated one from another. Several solutions have been offered as ways to understand this verse and its relationship to the material that comes before and after it.

One solution suggests that the phrase “desire the greater gifts” is a quotation from a letter the Corinthians have written to Paul and he is quoting it back to them with the sense of: “You say ‘Desire the greater gifts.’ I’ll show you a better way!”¹⁵¹ With this solution there is no need to determine what Paul means by “greater” gifts since the phrase comes from the Corinthians and not him. This view is criticised because there is no explicit evidence that Paul is quoting material directly from a Corinthian letter.¹⁵²

A second solution sees the verb as an indicative rather than imperative. This results in the understanding of “You are desiring the greater gifts. I’ll show you a better way.”¹⁵³ This solution also does not necessarily require identification of the “greater” gifts since Paul is pointing the readers away from whatever great gifts might be in mind and directing them to another way of thinking. The grammatical form of the verb makes

¹⁵⁰ In fact, some commentators place v. 31 as the beginning of the next section. Cf. Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 989; Ruef, *Paul’s First Letter to Corinth*, 139; Horsley, *1 Corinthians*, 173. Bailey calls it a “hinge” between the two sections. Bailey, *Paul through Mediterranean Eyes*, 355. Others place 31a with the preceding material and 31b with what comes after. For example, R. Collins, *First Corinthians*, 467; Hays, *First Corinthians*, 217.

¹⁵¹ Cf. Iber, “Zum Verständnis von 1 Cor 12:31,” 43–52; Baker, “Interpretation of 1 Corinthians 12–14,” 227; Bittlinger, *Gifts and Graces*, 73–75; R. Martin, *The Spirit and the Congregation*, 17–18, though he also works elements of a question into his translation.

¹⁵² Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 601.

¹⁵³ Bittlinger, *Gifts and Graces*, 73. Cf. Louw, “The Function of Discourse,” 334; Ruef who says, “Paul does not admonish the Corinthians to *desire the higher gifts*. Rather he points to the fact that they do. This he has just shown to be a mistake.” Ruef, *Paul’s First Letter to Corinth*, 141.

the indicative a possibility, but, as will be noted below, the imperative is more likely based on context.

A third solution is that Paul is not making a statement, but asking a question. This is in response to the idea that a person cannot legitimately desire or aspire to the greater gifts when God is the one who does the giving of the gifts in the first place. Due to the impossibility of legitimately striving for these gifts, Fitzmyer asserts that the phrase cannot be an imperative; a question is the only possibility.¹⁵⁴ He translates the first part of this verse as a question: “Are you desiring the greater gifts?”¹⁵⁵ The sense of the question is “Are you actually attempting to strive for those greater gifts? There is no point in trying.”¹⁵⁶ Paul then proceeds to tell the Corinthians what they ought to strive for instead: love.

A fourth solution interprets the verb as imperative but suggests that it does not relate to the preceding material.¹⁵⁷ Again, this removes the need to identify “greater” gifts out of the preceding list. Instead this solution suggests that the concept of “greater gifts” points ahead to the way that greatest gifts are to function: out of love (discussed in 1 Cor 13).¹⁵⁸

These first four solutions are driven by two concerns. First, if Paul uses an imperative which points back to previous material, it appears that Paul is advocating that the Corinthians strive for greater gifts which appears to be something that he has just finished telling them not to do. Second, there is a concern that one cannot legitimately be

¹⁵⁴ Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 484.

¹⁵⁵ Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 484.

¹⁵⁶ Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 484.

¹⁵⁷ Fee, *First Corinthians*, 624–25.

¹⁵⁸ Fee, *First Corinthians*, 624–25.

“zealous” or “desire” things that are granted by God only by his will and not due to the level of the zeal of anyone’s desire.

While both of these concerns are well taken and do need to be considered, neither necessitates any of these four proposed solutions. First of all, in the previous verses, Paul does provide a hierarchy of leadership functions and gifts. This has been established above. To direct the Corinthians toward the “greater gifts” in v. 31 is not incompatible with what Paul has just illustrated. The Corinthians are to desire or be zealous toward the greater gifts on Paul’s list and not their own list.¹⁵⁹

The second concern—the ability to actually desire something that can only come as a gift from God—is also not truly a problem. First of all, Bruce notes that v. 31 suggests that the Corinthians ought to “cultivate ambition for the other leading gifts, especially prophecy (14.1).”¹⁶⁰ One may desire or be zealous for the greater gifts without necessarily receiving them. Further to this, Garland points out that gifts may be given and taken away as God wills; the Corinthians ought to pray that God would allow them to keep the gifts they have been given.¹⁶¹ Also, the verb need not be taken as a command to pray for the “gift” to be given to an individual personally, but it represents a zeal for something. This zeal can be related to personal gifts or gifts benefitting the whole church.¹⁶²

Two more solutions to the conundrum of v. 31 need discussion. A fifth solution, put forward by Van Unnik, suggests that the verse ought to be divided at a different point

¹⁵⁹ See discussion of this option below.

¹⁶⁰ Bruce, *1 and 2 Corinthians*, 123–24.

¹⁶¹ Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 602.

¹⁶² For example, Thiselton notes, “Paul thus enjoins them to **continue** their **zealous concern about the ‘greatest’ gifts**, provided that they let him redefine what **‘greatest’** amounts to in practice. It means here *being busy at what is of deep concern*.” Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 1025, (bold and italics his).

than usual. He suggests that the first phrase should read: ζηλοῦτε δὲ τὰ χαρίσματα τὰ μείζονα καὶ ἔτι καθ' ὑπερβολήν. This means that καὶ ἔτι καθ' ὑπερβολήν is seen as an adverbial phrase modifying ζηλοῦτε.¹⁶³ This creates a translation something like “be zealously devoted to the greater gifts to the highest degree.” He says, “What Paul says in 12:31 and takes up again in 14:1 is that the Corinthians who have received the various gifts of the Spirit should be zealous in them, that is to say: zealously practise them, and that not in an ordinary way, but as much as they can, even to the highest degree (καθ' ὑπερβολήν).”¹⁶⁴ The distance of the phrase καὶ ἔτι καθ' ὑπερβολήν from the verb has led to criticism of this view.¹⁶⁵ Van Unnik notes that the question of why Paul addresses “greater” gifts and what those are can only be answered tentatively since the text does not provide concrete answers. He assumes, based on Paul’s attention to prophecy and glossolalia in 1 Cor 14, that these are the two gifts that ought to be understood as “greater.”¹⁶⁶ This assertion indeed must be seen as tentative. The rest of the context of this section suggests that Paul is attempting to lessen the Corinthians’ focus on glossolalia and yet Van Unnik suggests that it is one of the “greater gifts” which Paul is presumably promoting. Van Unnik’s ideas are not the most likely solutions for the interpretation of v. 31.

A sixth solution is more common and acknowledges that there are “greater” gifts which can be desired.¹⁶⁷ With this solution, the verb is seen as an imperative¹⁶⁸ which

¹⁶³ Van Unnik, “The Meaning of 1 Corinthians 12:31,” 149.

¹⁶⁴ Van Unnik, “The Meaning of 1 Corinthians 12:31,” 154.

¹⁶⁵ For example, R. Collins, *First Corinthians*, 474.

¹⁶⁶ Van Unnik, “The Meaning of 1 Corinthians 12:31,” 156.

¹⁶⁷ Garland points to the discussion of tongues and prophecy in 1 Cor 14 to demonstrate that Paul does see some gifts as having greater importance when it comes to the “proper function of the church.” Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 598. Cf. Hays, *First Corinthians*, 217.

refers back to the preceding verses and the “greater gifts” are those Paul deems to be “greater.”¹⁶⁹ Paul does not see the “greater” gifts in the same way that the Corinthians do. This he demonstrated through his words in the previous verses which have been discussed above. He invites the Corinthians to see the greater gifts as he sees them and not as they do.¹⁷⁰ Thiselton elaborates by saying, “The ‘greatest’ are not those that minister to status or to self, but those which *serve* the good of others and *build* the community.”¹⁷¹ As noted in the discussion on v. 28, the gifts which Paul promotes here as doing this very thing are the leadership functions of apostle, prophet, and teacher. In this verse Paul is encouraging the Corinthians to be zealous for these gifts for themselves and also their community. This means that though they might not be able to aspire to be apostles themselves, they could earnestly desire that the work of the apostles be done in their midst. They might aspire to be prophets or teachers, as these leadership functions did not necessarily have the same requirement of a concrete connection with the risen Christ and could potentially be bestowed on members of the Corinthian Christian community, or they might simply aspire to have true prophets and faithful teachers among them. Certainly they might personally aspire to any of the other gifts on the list, but Paul is impressing upon them that the most important “gifts” for the community are those foundational leadership functions.

¹⁶⁸ One reason for choosing an imperative here is that in 14:1 the same verb is used in the imperative and it is in a somewhat parallel context. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 601; Smit, “Two Puzzles,” 247; R. Collins, *First Corinthians*, 471.

¹⁶⁹ This is different than the rhetorical irony that Smit suggests where the author of a depreciatory speech pretends to agree with an opponent and uses irony to ridicule them. Smit, “Two Puzzles,” 251. Smit asserts that this is how 1 Cor 12:31a is functioning. See Smit, “Two Puzzles,” 246–64. Garland disagrees and says, “[1 Cor 12:31] expresses Paul’s sincere desire for them. No irony, no double-entendre, and no antagonism should be read into this appeal.” Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 602.

¹⁷⁰ Cf. Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 1024; Barrett, *First Corinthians*, 296; Bruce, *1 and 2 Corinthians*, 123–24; Ciampa and Rosner, *First Corinthians*, 616; Lockwood, *1 Corinthians*, 451; Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 601–2.

¹⁷¹ Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 1024. Cf. Witherington, *Conflict and Community*, 261; Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 215.

The last phrase of this verse both connects it to what has come before and also moves the reader into 1 Cor 13.¹⁷² The impression is left that, yes, it is good to desire the greater gifts, but yet there is something even better to which the community ought to aspire when it comes to learning to serve God and building up the Christian community.

Lockwood notes,

To be sure, he [Paul] has just encouraged the Corinthians to strive for the greater gifts. But he would have them aspire to something higher still. Whatever their gift may be, he would have them exercise it in the superior way of Christian love. Love must characterize everything they do; it must be their whole way of life. For only through love will the whole body of Christ be able to function smoothly and grow (Eph 4:16).¹⁷³

This sets the stage for the extensive discussion of love in the chapter that follows.¹⁷⁴

Conclusions

It has been demonstrated above that the discussion of leadership functions in 1 Cor 12:27–31 is rooted in the Greco-Roman context of first-century Corinth, the historic Christian context of the emergence of Christianity in that city, and the immediate context which occasioned the writing of 1 Corinthians. What follows is a summary of the essential points of these contextual connections.

¹⁷² Some, such as Barrett, have suggested that 1 Cor 13 was not originally composed for this letter and Paul simply inserts it here for his own purposes. This, Barrett says, explains the awkwardness of v. 31 and the transition to 1 Cor 13. Barrett, *First Corinthians*, 297. Cf. Titus, "Did Paul Write 1 Corinthians 13?" 299–302. There is no good reason to suggest that Paul haphazardly inserted 1 Corinthians 13 into the text of this letter without also making a suitable connection between it and the material that came before it. The sentence is awkward, but has several reasonable explanations for its interpretation. Horsley notes that this verse "is an integral step in a deliberative argument in which Paul shifts into the praise of a virtue as an illustration of his exhortation." Horsley, *1 Corinthians*, 147. This verse and the chapter which follows are not haphazard additions.

¹⁷³ Lockwood, *1 Corinthians*, 454. Similar sentiments about love as a greater priority are expressed by Ciampa and Rosner, *First Corinthians*, 609.

¹⁷⁴ It should be noted that "love" as described in 1 Cor 13 is not generally thought to be the "greatest gift" but rather a more fitting or excellent attitude which Paul is promoting. Cf. Fee, *First Corinthians*, 625; Lockwood, *1 Corinthians*, 454; Witherington, *Conflict and Community*, 261; Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 602–3.

The first-century Christian community in Corinth arose in a Greco-Roman city that had been destroyed by the Romans in 146 BCE and refounded by Julius Caesar in 44 BCE. It was just over a century later that Christianity first came to the area, most likely through the Apostle Paul and other travelling Christians such as Priscilla and Aquila. Apollos also would eventually visit and speak to the Christian community there. Corinth was on a major trade and travel route and so securing passage to and from this location for early Christian missionaries would have been relatively simple.

Corinth was home to a diverse population, including at least a modest Jewish presence and a higher-than-average percentage of freedmen. The Jewish presence is important because Acts notes that initially Paul used the Jewish synagogue in the city as a base for his missionary activity. The freedmen are significant because the larger-than-average percentage of freedmen in the population meant that these freedmen had opportunity to advance themselves socially in ways that they likely could not have done in other locations. This may have contributed to an even more pronounced level of social competition in the city than in other locations where freedmen were barred from advancing to positions such as *decurion*. A heightened level of social competition in Corinthian society cannot be overlooked when considering the competition within the Christian community which is apparent in 1 Corinthians.

While the Corinthian Christians appear to have had some conflict with the Corinthian Jews in the early days of Christianity in the city, a conflict with the Jews does not appear to be in view in 1 Cor 12:27–31. Nevertheless, the conflict with the Jews recorded in Acts 18:5–17 provides clues to the social status of two of the members of the Corinthian Christian community. Both Titius Justus and Crispus are significant early

Christian converts in Corinth. Titius offered his home as a meeting place for the Christians when the synagogue was no longer available. Titius may have been an early patron of the Christian church in Corinth. Crispus may not have been a patron of the Christians, though as an ἀρχισυνάγωγος he was most certainly a patron of the Jews—a patron they may not longer have had access to after his conversion.

These two men as part of the early Christian community in Corinth suggest that there were members of that community who had some level of wealth at their disposal. Another early Christian of some means was Erastus of Romans who appears to have been an important official in the city of Corinth. Additionally both Phoebe and Gaius are Corinthian Christians who seem to have some wealth at their disposal. It is impossible to know just how many in the Corinthian Christian community were wealthy and their number was likely small, but it is not wise to assume that all of the early Christians in that city were among the destitute. These potentially wealthier members suggest that the Corinthian Christian community, like the general Corinthian population, was stratified and it is likely that the same level of social competition that was found in general Corinthian society also made its way into the Christian community.

The social competition that was present in the Christian community is a contributing factor to many of the conflicts that Paul addresses in 1 Corinthians. In particular, Paul criticizes the elevated social level ascribed to those Christians that possessed the ability to speak in tongues. His words to the Corinthians concerning leadership functions in 1 Cor 12:27–31 are tied to their misconstrual of the level of importance of the gift of tongues.

In the text of 1 Cor 12:27–31 Paul has highlighted three leadership functions and five additional gifts that God gives to the church for its benefit. The list is meant as an example and not as a comprehensive inventory of all the gifts that may have existed. It cannot be said definitively that the leadership functions of apostle, prophet, and teacher are listed in 1 Cor 12:27–31 because they specifically and explicitly correspond to the conflict in view in the letter. Nevertheless, the differentiation between leadership functions (exemplified by the apostle, prophet, and teacher) and other methods of serving the Christian community (exemplified by the five additional “gifts” in the passage) is significant. Paul has a very specific purpose in offering such a list: he seeks to demonstrate that while all gifts are important to the church there are some gifts which particularly serve to build the church as a whole and these gifts ought to be given primacy. Since the Corinthians have been placing the wrong gifts at the top of the list, Paul must correct their way of thinking.

Paul lists the leadership functions of apostle, prophet, and teacher above gifts of miracles, healing, helping, guidance, and tongues. This serves to demonstrate that leaders who have been called by God and who can effectively communicate the gospel are of greater import than other gifts whose manifestations, wonderful as they may be, do not build up the church and spread its message in the same way—including the much-valued gift of tongues upon which the Corinthians were so fixated.

The cultural context helps to highlight that the real issue in this text is not about Paul prescribing leadership solutions. He does not dictate which leadership functions ought to be in place in Corinth and indeed the three leadership functions that are mentioned can all be argued to be itinerant leaders and not necessarily local ones. Paul

was not telling the Corinthians to appoint apostles, prophets, and teachers in their midst. Instead he promotes attitudes which honour leaders and the up-building of the whole church and not the self-promotion so common in the Greco-Roman world, the city of Corinth, and the Corinthian church.

CHAPTER 5: THE CITY OF EPHEBUS: GRECO-ROMAN AND CHRISTIAN CONTEXTS

Greco-Roman Context

Unlike the city of Corinth, which experienced a one-hundred-year period of large-scale abandonment, the city of Ephesus enjoyed several centuries of uninterrupted occupation. Also unlike Corinth, Ephesus was not a Roman colony, but rather a city whose territory Rome had conquered. These differences mean that the attitudes of the inhabitants of the two cities and their individual histories of economy, politics, religion, and social norms stem from different foundations. This means that Christianity emerged in Ephesus in a slightly different milieu than in Corinth.

The city of Ephesus had, over its long existence, been located on three separate sites in what is today western Turkey. These sites are all either on or near the Aegean Sea. The first location was on the coast of the Aegean, on a small cape.¹ This is sometimes referred to as the “Ionian Acropolis” and is an outcropping of the Panayırdağ, one of the two major mountains near the city’s locations.² The movement to the second location occurred under Croesus when he saw to the building of a new Temple of Artemis and moved the city to its immediate vicinity.³ The move to the third location was primarily a practical one: the land around the temple was not stable and the silting of the

¹ Scherrer, “Introduction,” 8.

² Murphy-O’Connor, *St. Paul’s Ephesus*, 10; Karwiese, “Ionian Acropolis,” 186.

³ Scherrer, “Introduction,” 10–11. Scherrer suggests a date of 560 BCE for this move while Murphy-O’Connor suggests the migration of the city to the new location did not begin until fifty years after the new temple was built. Cf. Scherrer, “Introduction,” 10; Murphy-O’Connor, *St. Paul’s Ephesus*, 18–19.

Caÿster River meant that the city was no longer on the Aegean coast as it once had been.⁴ This final move occurred under Lysimachus and took place in 294 BCE.⁵ This move saw the city once again on the coast, able to take full advantage of the easy access to the sea. At the time of Paul in the first century CE, the city had been located in the same place for approximately 350 years.

Though it had continuous occupation since its earliest days, Ephesus had been under various political leaders and influences.⁶ The Greeks, Romans, and others vied among themselves—and against each other—for control of the area over the centuries. The city came under Roman rule in 133 BCE⁷ and rode the wave of Rome's internal disputes until Augustus was victorious and subsequently made Ephesus the capital of the Roman province of Asia around 29 BCE.⁸ The political life of Ephesus became stable as the Roman Empire experienced peace.

One of the things that made Ephesus a desirable city for conquerors was its advantageous location both on the Aegean coast and land-based trade routes. The city's economy enjoyed stability because of its location. The silting of the Caÿster River, which caused the coastline to move farther out to sea over the decades, proved to be one of the cities greatest challenges in maintaining its coastal access. The continued silting of the river throughout history is the reason that the ruins of the first-century city, once on the coast, are currently about seven kilometers inland.

⁴ Magie, *Roman Rule*, 76. In fact, today the ruins of the Temple of Artemis are usually under water and any excavations must occur in the drier summer months. Even then, a suction pump must be used to dry the ground enough to dig. Bammer, Muss, and Thür, "Temple of Artemis," 55.

⁵ Magie, *Roman Rule*, 921. Cf. Pausanias, *Descr.* 1.9.7.

⁶ Scherrer's "Chronological Table" notes that the earliest evidence of occupation of the area around Ephesus dates to between the fifth and third millennia BCE. The founding of the city itself dates closer to the eleventh century BCE. It is from the founding of the city that a continuous occupation of the area is likely. Prior to this evidence is sparse. Scherrer, "Introduction," 11.

⁷ Magie, *Roman Rule*, 3.

⁸ Knibbe, "History," 22.

Ephesus had many centuries of occupation and the excavations of the area have been nearly continuous since 1898 under the *Österreichisches Archäologisches Institut* (Austrian Archaeological Foundation).⁹ The amount of evidence available concerning the site is staggering. For the purposes of this study, the details of Ephesus in the first century of the Common Era are of the greatest importance, as this timeframe encompasses both the time leading up to the emergence of Christianity in this area, as well as the early years of this group's presence in the city.

Geography

As with Corinth, the thick description of Ephesus will begin with a brief description of the city's geography. These physical features of the city and its location orient the rest of the material in the description. During the first century of the Common Era, the city of Ephesus was located on the Aegean coast. It also was at one end of the "common highway" which is described by Strabo as running east-west from Ephesus to India.¹⁰ There is also a major north-south route which stretched from the Cnidus Peninsula, north through modern Marmaris, Aydin, and Magnesia, before reaching Ephesus and continuing on toward modern Izmir.¹¹ These major routes would have brought many people to the city of Ephesus. Its location on a major crossroads made it an ideal location for the exchange of goods and information.¹² The terrain around the city is mountainous

⁹ Knibbe, "History," 37. There were some excavations previous to that under J. T. Wood on behalf of the British Museum from around 1863–1874 and there were breaks in the Austrian excavations in 1909–1910 (when Turkey refused to grant a permit due to political actions by Austria-Hungary), 1914–1925 (due to WWI and post-war conditions) and 1936–1954 (due to WWII and post-war conditions). Knibbe, "History," 36–37.

¹⁰ Strabo, *Geogr.* 14.2.29. Cf. Murphy-O'Connor, *St. Paul's Ephesus*, 36–37.

¹¹ Murphy-O'Connor, *St. Paul's Ephesus*, 37.

¹² Trebilco notes that Ephesus was an information center and home to a college of couriers (*tabellarii*). Trebilco, "Asia," 309.

and the first-century city was nestled in the valley between two peaks known as the Panayırdağ and the Bülbüldağ. The city also grew up their slopes.

The main road into Ephesus from the city of Magnesia (the north-south road previously mentioned) would have brought the first-century traveller to the Magnesian Gate.¹³ By following the road into the city from this point, the first major district that a traveller would come to was the “State Agora.”¹⁴ This was an area for doing business and for honouring the emperor and the gods.

On the north side of this agora stood a large basilica built in 11 CE by C. Sextilius Pollio and family,¹⁵ ostensibly for the purpose of conducting business affairs.¹⁶ Scherrer posits that the basilica was used more to promote the emperor than to conduct actual business transactions.¹⁷ This is in keeping with an inscription dedicating the basilica to “Artemis Ephesia, Emperor Augustus, and his adopted son and co-regent Tiberius.”¹⁸ As will be discussed below, the imperial cult was important in the city of Ephesus from the very beginnings of the empire.

Another important landmark in this area was the Prytaneum. It provided a banquet hall for honourable citizens and also important dignitaries from other places.¹⁹ It also was where the city’s “community hearth” burned, symbolic of hospitality and the goddess

¹³ Murphy-O’Connor, *St. Paul’s Ephesus*, 188; Scherrer, “Magnesian Gate,” 66. Murphy-O’Connor uses this location as the starting point for Paul’s first view of the city. It is a useful tool in organizing the data and so a similar order of material is used here.

¹⁴ This moniker is a modern description of the area, rather than an ancient place name. This is true for the names of many districts and structures in Ephesus, the Artemision being one important exception.

¹⁵ Scherrer and Thür, “Administrative District,” 80. The date of construction and the family who paid for it are given on the building’s inscription.

¹⁶ Murphy-O’Connor, *St. Paul’s Ephesus*, 190.

¹⁷ Scherrer, “City of Ephesus,” 5.

¹⁸ Wiplinger and Wlach, *Ephesus: 100 Years*, 112. Whether these are the exact words of the inscription or a summary of its contents is unclear from Wiplinger and Wlach.

¹⁹ Büyükkolancı and Yüğrük, “Prytaneum,” 86.

Hestia.²⁰ Next to the Prytaneum was the Temenos, a courtyard with colonnades on three sides.²¹ Scherrer suggests this was used as a place to offer worship to Artemis and Augustus.²² The juxtaposition of these two figures in one space is significant. Scherrer writes, “This combination of the powerful city goddess and the Roman emperor symbolized Ephesos’s existence as both a nominally free city and a part of Rome and its new world order.”²³ The citizens of Ephesos were anchored in their past traditions and embraced the new ideas of the empire.

The imperial cult was of great importance in this city and near this agora the remains of an imperial temple have been discovered. Based on inscriptions, this temple is identified with a “common temple of the emperors of Asia in Ephesus” which was first built in honour of Domitian and those who ruled before him.²⁴ The imperial cult’s prevalence in the city of Ephesus will be discussed further below.

As a person travelled out of this area toward the harbour, he or she passed between the city’s two mountains. Here they would encounter the two so-called “terrace houses.” They are called this because of the way they are built up the mountainside. These provide a glimpse into the domestic lives of the people. Both terrace houses are built in such a way that each “house” is divided into several individual dwellings around a common courtyard, somewhat like an apartment building.²⁵

²⁰ Murphy-O’Connor, *St. Paul’s Ephesus*, 191.

²¹ Scherrer, “Temenos (Rhodian Peristyle),” 80.

²² Scherrer, “City of Ephesos,” 5.

²³ Scherrer, “City of Ephesos,” 5.

²⁴ Thür, “Domitian’s Terrace,” 92.

²⁵ Evidence suggests that each unit was individually owned, much like a condominium. Krinzinger, Outschar, and Wiplinger, “Terrace House 2,” 108.

Terrace House 1 has six separate residences built into three terraces along the slope of the Bülbüldağ.²⁶ Though it is thought that the building dates to the first century BCE, it was in use until the seventh century CE and underwent many renovations.²⁷ Terrace House 2 also dates to the first century BCE.²⁸ It is larger than Terrace House 1 and had shops on the lower terrace with housing unit on the upper levels.²⁹ Terrace House 2 originally had six residential units as well, but was later renovated in such a way that one unit was divided into two, resulting in seven units total.³⁰ Both terrace houses are luxurious and this indicates that their occupants were wealthier than most.³¹

At the time that Paul visited the city, these two terrace houses would have been in use and Murphy-O'Connor suggests that these must have been just the sort of homes that Paul might have desired to use for meeting space.³² Having said this, Murphy-O'Connor is troubled that there was not space in any of these homes to accommodate the entirety of Christians at Ephesus.³³ It is possible that not all the Christians in Ephesus met as a single group, which would mean that a smaller group may have used a dwelling such as the terrace houses for their meetings. Additionally, the possibility that other kinds of dwellings were used as Christian meeting places has been discussed in Chapter 3 and will also be explored further below.

²⁶ C. Lang, "Terrace House 1," 100.

²⁷ C. Lang, "Terrace House 1," 100.

²⁸ Krinzinger, Outschar, and Wiplinger, "Terrace House 2," 108.

²⁹ Krinzinger, Outschar, and Wiplinger, "Terrace House 2," 106.

³⁰ Krinzinger, Outschar, and Wiplinger, "Terrace House 2," 111.

³¹ Cf. C. Lang, "Terrace House 1," 100; Krinzinger, Outschar, and Wiplinger, "Terrace House 2," 106.

³² Murphy-O'Connor, *St. Paul's Ephesus*, 192.

³³ Murphy-O'Connor, *St. Paul's Ephesus*, 196–97.

The next major landmark in the city as a person moved toward the west is the Tetragonos Agora (so described in an inscription) or the “Square Agora.”³⁴ One of the notable features of this agora is the South Gate which was erected by two imperial freedmen in the last days before the Common Era. This gate is dedicated in honour of the imperial family: Augustus, wife Livia, son-in-law Agrippa, and daughter Julia.³⁵ It is evident that freedmen could have influence in Ephesus and could become wealthy enough to erect such public monuments, though whether many of them ever ascended to public office is not certain.³⁶

Once a person passed through this gate and into the agora itself, it would have been clear that he or she had entered a major commercial area. A large number of shops and rooms for commercial purposes have been uncovered in this part of the city.³⁷ The importance of the emperor in this city is demonstrated by a statue of Emperor Claudius which was erected in the square in 43 CE by an association of merchants.³⁸ Other shops and *insulae* (though not as nice as the terrace houses) are found behind the Square Agora on “Marble Street,” creeping up the slopes of the Panayırdağ.³⁹ It is also likely that the rest of the slope of the Panayırdağ above this was covered in residential buildings.⁴⁰

Nearby this area was the Great Theatre. This is important to consider because Acts suggests that a riot of the Ephesian silversmiths over Paul’s teachings on “gods

³⁴ Scherrer, “Tetragonos Agora,” 140.

³⁵ Scherrer, Thür, and Karwiese, “South Gate,” 138; Scherrer, “City of Ephesos,” 6.

³⁶ Though there may have been ample opportunity for freedmen to make money in Ephesus, the situation was not the same as in Corinth. In Corinth there was an unusually large number of freedmen sent there as colonists and it was their sheer numbers, and a lack of available freeborn individuals, that allowed them to advance socially and politically. Even a very wealthy freedman in Ephesus would not have had those same opportunities because favour was given to the freeborn. For discussion of the view of freedmen, their social status, and the general low numbers of them in the eastern empire see Knapp, *Invisible Romans*, 170–95.

³⁷ Cf. Murphy-O’Connor, *St. Paul’s Ephesus*, 198; Scherrer, “Tetragonos Agora,” 140.

³⁸ Scherrer, “Tetragonos Agora,” 140.

³⁹ Murphy-O’Connor, *St. Paul’s Ephesus*, 198; Thür, “Marble Street,” 156.

⁴⁰ Thür, “Marble Street,” 156.

made by hand” took place in this location (Acts 19:29). The theatre’s existence cannot be confirmed prior to the first century BCE, but there is evidence that by 51 BCE there was at least a modest theatre holding various contests within it.⁴¹ The earliest form of the theatre was little more than a stage, orchestra, and a single row of seating.⁴²

Much expansion of the theatre took place during the first century CE. Heberdey and Wilberg estimate that the theatre was renovated at a slow pace and in various stages between roughly 40 and 112 CE.⁴³ Inscriptions indicate that an expansion was made to the theatre in the late first century,⁴⁴ but one of those inscriptions also indicates that the front façade of the stage house was dedicated in 66 CE,⁴⁵ suggesting that several other portions of the renovation must also have been completed by then.⁴⁶ Heberdey and Wilberg tentatively estimate that the renovation project may have begun as early as 40 CE.⁴⁷ The theatre in Ephesus was likely in the midst of this renovation project when Paul was conducting his missionary work in the city.

The harbour plain was not far from the Square Agora, and this area, along with the adjacent north slope of the Bülbüldağ, may have been the most densely populated areas of the city during the Hellenistic and Roman periods.⁴⁸ Many of the building projects at the harbour in the Roman period seem to have been completed under Trajan and Hadrian, at the end of or after the period that we are interested in.⁴⁹ The harbour was

⁴¹ Karwiese, “The Great Theatre,” 158. Cf. Wiplinger and Wlach, *Ephesus: 100 Years*, 26.

⁴² Cf. Karwiese, “The Great Theatre,” 158; Wiplinger and Wlach, *Ephesus: 100 Years*, 26; Heberdey and Wilberg, *Das Theater in Ephesos*, 16.

⁴³ Heberdey and Wilberg, *Das Theater in Ephesos*, 41–43.

⁴⁴ Raja, *Urban Development*, 72.

⁴⁵ Heberdey and Wilberg, *Das Theater in Ephesos*, 41.

⁴⁶ Heberdey and Wilberg, *Das Theater in Ephesos*, 41.

⁴⁷ Heberdey and Wilberg, *Das Theater in Ephesos*, 43.

⁴⁸ Evren et al., “Harbour Plain,” 151.

⁴⁹ Zabehlicky, “Preliminary Views,” 205.

key to the city's economy; it allowed the city to participate in maritime trade.⁵⁰ The water table still makes excavation in the actual harbour difficult and this is one of the reasons why little excavation has been done there. Some of it must be done under water under very low visibility due to murky conditions.⁵¹ An inscription confirms that the harbour was dredged to remove silt in 66 CE,⁵² which is in keeping with other literary evidence discussing the problems of harbour silting and the need to keep it cleared for ships.⁵³

Moving away from the harbour to the north would have moved a person toward the stadium and the road to the Artemision. The exact location of this ancient wonder had been lost to the modern world until it was finally discovered by John Turtle Wood on December 31, 1869 after seven years of looking.⁵⁴ The Temple of Artemis (or Artemision) was perhaps the most important landmark in Ephesus even though it was technically located outside the city's walls.⁵⁵ It was considered to be one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.⁵⁶ The famed "house of Artemis" was first built by Croesus and construction commenced around 560 BCE.⁵⁷ It was destroyed, rebuilt,⁵⁸ repaired,⁵⁹

⁵⁰ The economy of Ephesus will be discussed further below.

⁵¹ Zabehlicky, "Preliminary Views," 208.

⁵² Zabehlicky, "Preliminary Views," 205. Cf. *IvE* I 20, 1503; Tacitus, *Ann.* 16.23.

⁵³ Strabo, Livy and Pliny the Elder clearly describe the problem of harbour silting and the unsuccessful attempts to halt it. See Strabo, *Geogr.* 14.1.24; Livy, *Hist. Rom.* 37.14–15; Pliny the Elder, *Nat.* 5.31.115.

⁵⁴ Wiplinger and Wlach, *Ephesus: 100 Years*, 2. Wood began his quest in 1863 and excavated other locations in the city as well, in order to satisfy his financial backers. He finally discovered the Artemision's floor seven meters below the surface along the processional route encircling the Panayirdağ. Wiplinger and Wlach, *Ephesus: 100 Years*, 4–5. Cf. also Wood, *Discoveries at Ephesus*.

⁵⁵ The temple was located about 1.3 kilometers from the Coressian Gate in the city's eastern wall. Murphy-O'Connor, *St. Paul's Ephesus*, 199.

⁵⁶ Cf. Murphy-O'Connor, *St. Paul's Ephesus*, 160; Antipater of Sidon, *Greek Anthology*, 9.58.

⁵⁷ Bammer, Muss, and Thür, "Temple of Artemis," 50. There is evidence, however, of an older temple structure which was located in the place where the courtyard of the later Temple of Artemis would be. Little is known about who built this structure, but there is evidence that it was not the first temple on this site. Bammer, Muss, and Thür, "Temple of Artemis," 46.

⁵⁸ Ancient sources suggest that the temple was burned in 356 BCE by Herostratus (Strabo, *Geogr.* 14.1.22) on the night Alexander the Great was born. Later it was said that the goddess did not prevent her temple from being destroyed because she was elsewhere, attending to the birth of this conqueror (Plutarch, *Alex.* 3.6).

and renovated⁶⁰ many times until its final destruction after 400 CE.⁶¹ Further discussion of the temple and its importance to the economy and religious life of the city is found below.

As they did with Corinth, these geographical landmarks of Ephesus help to orient the material for the thick description of the city. This orientation highlights important features of the city which will be explored more below such as the theatre, the temple of Artemis and other religious monuments and inscriptions, the terrace houses, and the shops in the agoras. Also of importance is the location of Ephesus along major trade routes which brought many people into the city.

People of the City

Like Corinth, Ephesus was home to many sorts of people and an attempt must be made to understand the way they interacted in order to create a thick description of the city. What follows is an overview of the city's population and the social classes that comprised the populace. As with Chapter 3, a brief discussion of the Jewish population of Ephesus is included here, rather than in the religion section, in order to highlight their social and cultural interaction with the rest of the residents of the city. Finally, important social and cultural phenomena will be noted.

It must be stated at the outset that the continuous occupation of Ephesus means that there was a continuous presence of ideas which did not change overnight as one

⁵⁹ Strabo reports that the temple that was built after the 356 BCE fire was even greater than the one that was lost (Strabo, *Geogr.* 14.1.22). Bammer, Muss, and Thür report that evidence of the fire has been found in several parts of the temple's ruins from that time period. Bammer, Muss, and Thür, "Temple of Artemis," 51.

⁶⁰ For a general survey of the repairs, renovations and rebuilding up to the end of the first century CE, see Bammer, Muss, and Thür, "Temple of Artemis," 44–54.

⁶¹ Though the temple was plundered in 263 CE, Bammer, Muss, and Thür note that the ultimate destruction came later when the cult of Artemis was discontinued. Bammer, Muss, and Thür, "Temple of Artemis," 54.

group conquered and another faded into the background as was seen in Corinth. White advises that Ephesus as a city be seen as an “an evolving cultural ecosystem.”⁶² Further, he notes, “One should not view the so-called Hellenization, Romanization, and Christianization of Ephesos as distinct cultural phases that were deposited in neat sedimentary layers. They were, instead, part of an integral process of social change, each one building on and through the others, while the city itself underwent an organic process of urban development.”⁶³ The mid-first century may still have been in the midst of the transition from Hellenization to Romanization, but the phase of Christianization had not yet begun in earnest. Christianity was just emerging in Ephesus at that time and had not yet begun to influence the city as a whole.⁶⁴

Population

Trebilco notes that during the Roman period the population of Ephesus is estimated between 200,000 and 250,000.⁶⁵ Based on this estimate, the city of Ephesus was one of the largest in the Roman Empire during that time.⁶⁶ In spite of these numbers it is best not to visualize such a large population in the first century—at least not in the early decades of the century. White highlights this important fact: “Ancient sources indicate that Ephesos grew appreciably in size under Roman rule because of its prestige and geographic position.”⁶⁷ Understanding roughly when that growth occurred is important to provide us with a reasonable estimate of the population of Ephesus in the first century.

⁶² White, “Urban Development,” 30.

⁶³ White, “Urban Development,” 29–30.

⁶⁴ A possible exception might be the incident recorded in Acts 19:23–41 which will be discussed below. In any case this incident hardly would have transformed the entire city.

⁶⁵ Trebilco, *Early Christians*, 17; Broughton, “Roman Asia Minor,” 812–13. This estimate is for the mid-second century.

⁶⁶ Trebilco, *Early Christians*, 17; Broughton, “Roman Asia Minor,” 812–13.

⁶⁷ White, “Urban Development,” 43.

Getting exact numbers is an impossible task, but it is evident that the population of Ephesus grew as its prestige grew. That is, at the beginning of the Roman imperial period, Ephesus was *not* among the largest cities in the empire; it achieved that status over time. The city attracted many people and White suggests that given the conditions for life expectancy and infant mortality, the city's growth had to have come from massive immigration to the area.⁶⁸ It also seems likely, according to White, that the largest population growth would have coincided with a construction boom. There was a large amount of construction in the first century, but the second century, in White's opinion, saw the largest and most impressive growth.⁶⁹ Thus, in the first century of the Common Era, Ephesus should be envisioned as a large and growing urban center, but not as large as it would be by the second century.

Social Classes

Whereas Corinth was a colony with a disproportionately large number of freedmen, the population of Ephesus was likely more typically distributed among the various classes with a larger number of long-standing aristocratic families to populate the upper classes. This is due to the continuous occupation of Ephesus versus the colonization of Corinth. In first-century Ephesus there was regular representation of the higher echelons of Roman society: senators, equestrians, and decurions. These orders and their significance were previously discussed in Chapter 3. As with other Greco-Roman cities, the vast majority of the population would have been made up of the plebeians, including the freeborn, some freedmen, and slaves.

⁶⁸ White, "Urban Development," 45–48.

⁶⁹ White, "Urban Development," 54.

Jewish Presence

As in Corinth, there is evidence for a Jewish community in Ephesus in the first century. A discussion of the way in which Jews fit into first-century Greco-Roman society in general is found in Chapter 3. There is evidence for a Jewish community in Ephesus perhaps as early as the mid-third century BCE.⁷⁰ This would indicate that by the first century of the Common Era the community had been well-established. Trebilco argues for a significant Jewish presence during the first century of the Common Era based on a number of decrees recorded in Josephus and Philo which grant the Jewish population of Ephesus and Asia Minor special consideration concerning the practice of their faith.⁷¹ Although as of yet there have been no concrete remains of a synagogue found at Ephesus, literary evidence in Acts and Josephus suggests there was one in the city.⁷² Further to this, an inscription from the imperial period indicates *archisynagogoi* and presbyters.⁷³

The Jewish presence in Ephesus is pertinent to this study because, according to the record of Acts, Paul first made inroads for Christianity in the city's Jewish population. According to the Acts narrative, the Jews reject Paul and seek to distance themselves from Christianity. Nevertheless when there is a dispute about Paul's teachings concerning Artemis and "gods made by hand" the Ephesians do not want to hear anything

⁷⁰ Trebilco, *Early Christians*, 38; Smallwood, *Jews under Roman Rule*, 121. This is primarily based on several references in Josephus.

⁷¹ See Trebilco, *Early Christians*, 37–52. These include exemption from military service if they were Roman citizens, permission to keep their own customs, offer sacrifices, observe the sabbath, and collect and export the temple tax without penalty, and finally exemption from being compelled to appear in court on the sabbath. Trebilco, *Early Christians*, 38–39. Trebilco specifically notes that even though the accuracy of these historians is sometimes questioned, the material in question is "sufficiently accurate" to be used in these observations. Trebilco, *Early Christians*, 38. That the decrees recorded in Josephus ought to be taken seriously and should not be seen as forgeries is supported by Rajak, "Was there a Roman Charter?" 301–33.

⁷² Trebilco, *Early Christians*, 43. Cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 14.227; Acts 18:19, 26; 19:8–9. Further, Philo, *Legat.* 315 is addressed to Ephesus and assumes a Jewish population there who gathers together. This could imply a synagogue. Cf. Trebilco, *Early Christians*, 43.

⁷³ See *IvE* 1251.

from Alexander the Jew, possibly presuming Jews and Christians were essentially the same. This will be discussed more below.

Social Interactions and Customs

While Corinth was founded as a thoroughly Roman colony and gradually regained much of its previous Hellenistic flavour, Ephesus moved from being a long-standing Hellenistic city to one which felt more Roman influence as the decades of its occupation passed.

Both Greek and Roman cities were highly stratified. In Chapter 3 the values of honour, shame, and patronage were discussed; these were also active and important in Ephesus.

Men publically sought honours for themselves and both public and private patronage was exercised.

One way public patronage was exercised in Ephesus was sponsorship of “the games.” Both a social and economic phenomenon, the gladiatorial contests and the related gory displays of wild beasts being pitted one against another were part of the preferred entertainment in Ephesus. This preference for gore was not unique to Ephesus; indeed it was a phenomenon throughout the empire. Plutarch (*Lucullus*, 23) suggests that the city of Ephesus was “gifted” with games and gladiatorial contests by Lucullus in celebration of his bringing peace and order to the city in 69 BCE.⁷⁴ Robert also suggests that the theatre in Ephesus was such that it could easily have been converted as needed

⁷⁴ Cf. Wiedemann, *Emperors and Gladiators*, 43 for the suggested date. Though some have suggested that the games and gladiator contests were more common in the west due to higher numbers of amphitheatres discovered there, the evidence suggests that the eastern parts of the empire also hosted these spectacles regularly. This is suggested by inscriptions, gladiator cemeteries, and reliefs discovered in the east. Robert’s work, *Les Gladiateurs*, gives many examples of gladiator contests in the eastern empire. A gladiator cemetery has also been discovered at Ephesus which dates to the second and third centuries CE. Knibbe, “*Via Sacra Ephesiaca*,” 152.

into an appropriate space for such games.⁷⁵ Prior to the imperial period, “the games” were most often associated with commemorations of the dead, but Augustus seems to have promoted these contests in such a way that they became more common, no longer associated strictly with funeral honours, and tied more closely with honouring the living, specifically the emperor.⁷⁶ Meijer notes, “Emperor Augustus and his successors regarded the gladiator shows as good propaganda for the unity of the empire. In the imperial cities, the emperor cult and the gladiator games became increasingly bound up together. The priests of the emperor cult organised gladiator shows in honour of the living emperor.”⁷⁷ In a city so devoted to the imperial cult, it would seem strange if there were not regular games hosted in Ephesus. The games would have created jobs,⁷⁸ opportunities to exercise patronage,⁷⁹ social activities, and also would have created consequences for criminals.⁸⁰ It is important to consider these contests in light of Paul’s claims that he “fought wild beasts” at Ephesus (1 Cor 15:32).

A final point of interest concerning social customs in Ephesus is the high regard for teachers and education. The city was said to be a center of rhetoric.⁸¹ Some honourific

⁷⁵ Robert, *Les Gladiateurs*, 34. The stadium at Ephesus underwent massive renovation under Nero. Wiplinger and Wlach, *Ephesus: 100 Years*, 159. It is suspected that gladiatorial contests were held in the stadium, though perhaps not until after this renovation happened. Karwiese, “Stadium,” 166.

⁷⁶ Dunkle, *Gladiators*, 182.

⁷⁷ Meijer, *The Gladiators*, 33.

⁷⁸ The training and care of gladiators was big business throughout the empire. Gladiators were a commodity which brought their owners wealth and prestige. See Dunkle, *Gladiators*, 30–65 for a description of the training and work that went into producing a good gladiator.

⁷⁹ The games were often financed by wealthy patrons of the cities. Dunkle, *Gladiators*, 6.

⁸⁰ There are two potential ways that criminals could have been part of the gladiatorial contests. First, they may have been sentenced to become gladiators, fighting to the death. Meijer, *The Gladiators*, 39. Though most gladiators were forced into the occupation, some volunteered to be gladiators, usually because of bankruptcy and desperation, but at times out of a desire for mortal combat and glory. Dunkle, *Gladiators*, 36–37. Second, criminals and prisoners of war were frequently sentenced to be eaten by wild animals as part of the larger “games” of which gladiator contests were a part. See Dunkle, *Gladiators*, 9–10.

⁸¹ Cf. Tacitus, *Dial.* 15.3; Baugh, “Paul and Ephesus,” 126; S. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 2:85; Keener, *Acts*, 2827.

inscriptions concerning teachers at Ephesus shed light on these subjects. Judge talks about the “teacher” as a “moral exemplar” by using inscriptions found in Ephesus which bring honour to a patron who was also a teacher. A teacher who gave great knowledge (perhaps in addition being generous in sharing his wealth) was to be honoured. The inscriptions honouring such a person also encouraged the next generation to emulate such people in order to gain honour for themselves in a similar way.⁸²

An example of this is found in an inscription which acts as a funeral tribute to one Heraclides Didymus (first century CE). Judge writes,

Heraclides has been a benefactor of the people by reason also of the “power” (*dynamis*) and “trust” (*pistis*) shown in his “learning” (*mathema*). This can hardly be construed as another form of financial gift. We do not know anything of Heraclides apart from this monument, but he must surely have been a professor in one of the schools of Ephesus.⁸³

Judge notes that this ascription of honour due to Heraclides’s sharing of knowledge is unusual; more often inscriptions note the “piety” of a person towards the goddess Artemis and “goodwill” they had towards the city’s people.⁸⁴ Heraclides is honoured for both of those things *along with* his knowledge.

In spite of the fact that this may have been an unusual virtue to honour in an inscription, it is not the only example of such reverence for those who educated others. A letter from Attalus II of Pergamum was sent to the “Council and People of Ephesus” c. 140 BCE and praised one of their citizens (whose name is partially preserved as “Aristo . . .”) for his worthiness to educate the King’s nephew.⁸⁵ Also from that century are several preserved lines of a speech given by the students of one Diodorus, a

⁸² Judge, “Teacher as Moral Exemplar,” 176–77.

⁸³ Judge, “Teacher as Moral Exemplar,” 177.

⁸⁴ Judge, “Teacher as Moral Exemplar,” 177.

⁸⁵ Judge, “Teacher as Moral Exemplar,” 178.

gymnasiarch. They praise their teacher for his superb teaching and concern for his students' proper education and have determined that they will erect a statue in the gymnasium in his honour.⁸⁶ These three separate inscriptions demonstrate a history of holding great teachers in esteem, but also show that such esteem was still in the minds of the people of Ephesus in the first century.⁸⁷

Conclusion

During the first century, Ephesus was in the midst of a cultural and social transition: a Greek city-state under Roman control with inroads being made by Christians. As with Corinth, the population of Ephesus was comprised by a variety of peoples, including some Jews, and was highly stratified with a stark divide between upper and lower classes. Social values of honour, shame, and patronage were also practiced in Ephesus as in Corinth. A notable difference between the social hierarchies of the cities was that Ephesus had a more typical number of freedmen than did the city of Corinth. The city loved the gory displays of the games, including the gladiatorial contests, and public honours could be gained by sponsoring the event. Also worthy of public honour were teachers who shared both their wealth and knowledge with the city's inhabitants. The influence that each of these social factors had on the development of the Christian community in Ephesus and on Paul's visits to the city will be discussed below and in Chapters 6 and 7.

⁸⁶ Judge, "Teacher as Moral Exemplar," 178.

⁸⁷ Keener also notes that the Ephesians valued rhetoric and that Tacitus specifically notes students honouring their teachers of rhetoric in Ephesus. Keener, *Acts*, 2827. Cf. Tacitus, *Dial.* 15.

First-Century Political Description

As was true for Corinth, by the first century the ultimate power over the city of Ephesus was Rome and the emperor. One difference between these two locations, however, may have been the way this played out in a practical sense. The fact that Ephesus was not sacked and then refounded a hundred years later made its Roman take-over profoundly different than that of Corinth. In spite of possible tensions that could have arisen over the fact that Ephesus rebelled against Augustus's forces during the civil war period, the new emperor was willing to mend fences with the eastern peoples and he granted a good deal of autonomy to the city of Ephesus. This appears to have been the standard practice of Rome when conquering territory. Changes were made only as far as was necessary to promote Rome, but otherwise, local leadership was largely allowed to function as it previously had.

Abbott and Johnson provide a glimpse into this Roman policy. They write,

It would be impossible to outline, even in brief, the manifold forms of government found in the Greek cities. The ancient states had developed along individual lines, and all of them cherished their traditional customs with peculiar reverence. The Romans also had great respect for *longa consuetudo* [long custom], and since it was their policy to accept existing institutions as they found them, they contented themselves with modifying the powers exercised by the different branches of local government.⁸⁸

This meant that Ephesus was likely able to retain some of its previous political system, provided that it did not directly conflict with Rome. It also means that there was not a "standard" form of government in the Greek cities that Rome conquered.

According to Knibbe, Ephesus was not in need of military force to remain loyal to the empire and thus they were governed by the Roman senate under guidance of a proconsul. He describes their government in this way:

⁸⁸ F. Abbott and A. C. Johnson, *Municipal Administration*, 74.

So it was with Asia, whose governorship, one of the highest offices in a senatorial career, was reserved for particularly-well qualified men who enjoyed the emperor's favour. The governor, in the tradition of the Roman republic, had at his disposal a quaestor, who made the payments necessary for the administration of the province out of the senatorial treasury, and three legates who supported or deputized for him at assizes or days of legal jurisdiction in Ephesus and other cities of the province. The imperial procurators, appointed from among the knights (*ordo equester*) or second class of society in the empire, effectively functioned as governors in certain "procuratorial" provinces. They also looked after the affairs of the emperor in special areas, especially the imperial treasury (*fiscus*), and served at the same time as the eyes and ears of their master whose paid civil servants they were. This system of indirect spying gradually put an end to the collaboration between tax farmers (*publicani*) and governor which had operated to the advantage of both and to the detriment of the provincials. The practice, widespread in the time of the Roman republic, was no longer possible in imperial times and this led to the eventual disappearance of an increasingly less lucrative tax-farming industry that was replaced by direct imperial control. The honesty and clarity of the princeps' well-founded new regulation is one of the reasons—and not the least important—why the provinces flourished.⁸⁹

Ephesus is said to have a large number of public offices and reached its "zenith" in the mid-second century CE. The most respected of their public offices was the *πρύτανις*. He was the chairman of the Prytaneum which housed the eternal flame on the hearth of Hestia which was symbolic of the "life" of the city.

Next in importance came the *ἀγορανόμος* who supervised the market and provisions for the city.⁹⁰ He was followed by the *γραμματεὺς* who acted as the notary and held the secretarial offices in the people's assembly and the city's council.⁹¹ Concerning the *γραμματεὺς*, Sherwin-White notes:

In general the *γραμματεὺς τοῦ δήμου* or *γ. τῆς βουλῆς* was the chief administrative assistant, annually elected, of the magistrates; he had a staff of permanent clerks, responsible for the paper work of the city. In the decrees of Ephesus, where the civic administration is well documented, he appears in conjunction with the *strategoï* as a senior partner, acting as the director of affairs in council or

⁸⁹ Knibbe, "History," 23 (italics original).

⁹⁰ LSJ notes that this is the "Clerk of the market who regulated buying and selling." LSJ, 13.

⁹¹ Knibbe, "History," 23–24. There may have been more than one person who held this office in different areas at the same time. See also LSJ, 358–59 for this use of the term in Greco-Roman government systems.

assembly. The People's Clerk is given his name and titles in city decrees while the *strategoï*, whom he has effectively supplanted, are not distinguished by name.⁹²

Those who held this position would be powerful and worthy of respect.⁹³ In Acts 19 it is the city's *γραμματεὺς* who calms an angry mob of protesters.

Another group of important city leaders were the *ἀσιάρχαι*. Scholars have understood the *ἀσιάρχαι* either as high priests at the imperial temple (understanding *ἀρχιερεὺς Ἀσίας* as synonymous with *ἀσιάρχης*) or as some kind of high-ranking municipal officials.⁹⁴ In literary evidence, the term appears only in Acts and in Strabo's *Geography* (14.1.42) prior to the end of the first century CE.⁹⁵ Acts indicates that Paul was friends with some of the *ἀσιάρχαι* in Ephesus and Strabo notes that there had always been some who were called *ἀσιάρχης* in the city of Tralleis, near Ephesus.

According to Witetschek, most scholars hold to the view that the *ἀσιάρχαι* were synonymous with the high priests at the imperial temple.⁹⁶ Such an equation of the two titles is difficult to reconcile with the fact that the imperial temple at Ephesus was not founded until 89/90 CE (see discussion below), whereas Strabo and Acts mention the existence of *ἀσιάρχαι* before that period. Epigraphic evidence demonstrates that the term was used earlier than the late-first century and should not be equated with officials of the

⁹² Sherwin-White, *Roman Law*, 86.

⁹³ According to Knibbe the city may have had more than one *γραμματεὺς*. Cf. Knibbe, "History," 24.

⁹⁴ Witetschek, "Artemis and Asiarchs," 338–39.

⁹⁵ Kearsley, "The Asiarchs," 363. Cf. Trebilco, *Early Christians*, 166.

⁹⁶ Witetschek, "Artemis and Asiarchs," 338.

imperial temple.⁹⁷ A revival of the office after the establishment of the imperial temple can account for the increased use of the term in the later period.⁹⁸

Kearsley suggests that the ἀσιάρχαι were men who gave public benefaction to the city of Ephesus and that they participated in the civic administration of the city.⁹⁹ They often held the title of ἀσιάρχης along with other titles such as γραμματεὺς or πρύτανις.¹⁰⁰

Friesen notes that evidence from the second and third centuries confirms that even then the ἀσιάρχαι had a wider role than a connection with the imperial temple. He says, “In the second and third centuries CE, Asiarchs performed a variety of public services that were especially related to municipal life in Asia. Their duties were sometimes priestly and sometime involved provincial temples, but imperial cults were not a necessary component of the Asiarchate.”¹⁰¹ If the role of the ἀσιάρχαι in later centuries extended beyond a connection with the imperial temple, then it is possible that in the first century the office did indeed exist but of course had no connection to priestly duties at the yet-to-be-established imperial temple. Unfortunately the exact nature of the position in that time period is quite uncertain and it is best not to speculate. The evidence suggests only that they were wealthy and influential people, whatever the specific role that they played.¹⁰² The significance of this position for Paul in the city of Ephesus will be discussed below.

Even after it came under Roman control, the city of Ephesus was able to maintain its previous system of government. The leadership of the city was made up of those men in the upper classes of society who were able to provide the necessary public

⁹⁷ Kearsley, “The Asiarchs,” 368; Trebilco, *Early Christians*, 166; Friesen, *Twice Neokoros*, 106.

⁹⁸ Trebilco, *Early Christians*, 166; Friesen, *Twice Neokoros*, 107–8.

⁹⁹ Kearsley, “The Asiarchs,” 365–66. Cf. Witetschek, “Artemis and Asiarchs,” 340.

¹⁰⁰ Kearsley, “The Asiarchs,” 366. Friesen is critical of the view that the office of ἀσιάρχης was necessarily directly connected to these other offices. Cf. Friesen, *Twice Neokoros*, 110–12.

¹⁰¹ Friesen, *Twice Neokoros*, 113.

¹⁰² Cf. Trebilco, *Early Christians*, 166–67.

benefactions. This fact links the political life in Ephesus inextricably with the social customs governing honour and patronage. Of the major public offices that were present in the city, the most important and respected was the *πρύτανις* followed by the *ἀγορανόμος*. Another important official was the *γραμματεὺς* who functioned as secretary to the assembly and the city's council. The *ἀσιάρχαι* were another group of city officials whose role in first-century Ephesus is not clear, but who evidently were important. Both the city's *γραμματεὺς* and the mysterious *ἀσιάρχαι* are key figures in the events of Paul's stay in Ephesus recorded in Acts 19. These events and their implications for the thick description of Ephesus will be explored below.

First-century Economic Description

The economy of Ephesus was heavily dependent on trade. The location of the city both on major land and sea trade routes made it an ideal location. This is not unlike Corinth which also was strategically located to move goods and people. In addition to being a major trading center, Ephesus and its region were known as a wealthy area which boasted fertile land and prosperous mining industries. The wealth of the Lydian region where Ephesus was located was the best in Asia Minor. They were known for minerals, pigments, marble of various colours, and very fertile land.¹⁰³

The fertile land in the area surrounding Ephesus is important. Unlike Corinth, which needed to import food to feed its population since the surrounding land could not support it, Ephesus appears to have been able to sustain itself.¹⁰⁴ The fact that the city could rely on the outlying areas to sustain its inhabitants would make it both prosperous

¹⁰³ Magie, *Roman Rule*, 45–46.

¹⁰⁴ Magie, *Roman Rule*, 75.

and independent. If it did not need to rely on other locations to feed its inhabitants, then, as Magie suggests, it did not need to found colonies and it also was not as vulnerable to problems in shipping or disputes with trading partners.¹⁰⁵

Among the important industry in the area during the Roman imperial period was the manufacture of textile fabric. Magie notes, "At Ephesus, during the Roman imperial period, the existence of prosperous guilds of 'wool workers,' 'wool dealers' and 'cloak-dealers' attest the importance of the industry in the city."¹⁰⁶ Metal working and perfume manufacture also were important industries¹⁰⁷ and inscriptions indicate a guild of silversmiths was active in Ephesus during the time of Claudius or later.¹⁰⁸

Trade guilds were common in the Empire and though they might have functioned as a sort of "trade union" when the members felt threatened (see below), this was not their primary purpose.¹⁰⁹ Instead, the members of such guilds came together "for social reasons, providing a quasi-civic structure in which members could receive and bestow honours on their fellows."¹¹⁰ There is evidence that guilds were known to be disturbers of the peace when their artisan members felt their livelihood threatened and at times their activities were severely limited as a result.¹¹¹ One example of a public disturbance by a

¹⁰⁵ Magie, *Roman Rule*, 75.

¹⁰⁶ Magie, *Roman Rule*, 47. Cf. Trebilco, "Asia," 341.

¹⁰⁷ Magie, *Roman Rule*, 49.

¹⁰⁸ *IvE* 2212. It is an inscription found on a tomb belonging to one M. Antonius Hermeias, who is a silversmith, and his wife. The pertinent portion of the inscription (line 17) reads, "If anyone does dare to put in a corpse [other than those of the owners] or excise this text, he shall pay to the silversmiths at Ephesos 1000 denari . . . Responsibility for this tomb rests with the association of silversmiths, and Erotion dedicated 50,000 denarii." G. Horsley, *New Documents*, 4:7. Another inscription (*IvE* 636.9–10) also confirms a guild of silversmiths at Ephesus. Cf. Trebilco, "Asia," 341. Witherington also mentions *IvE* 425.10. Cf. Witherington, *Acts*, 590, n. 130.

¹⁰⁹ For an introduction to voluntary associations gathered around a common occupation (trade guilds) see Harland, *Associations, Synagogues, and Congregations*, 38–44.

¹¹⁰ Kloppenborg, "Edwin Hatch," 222; A. Clarke, *Serve the Community*, 63.

¹¹¹ Stoops, "Riot and Assembly," 83; Witherington, *Acts*, 593; A. Clarke, *Serve the Community*, 63. MacMullen notes that the amount of evidence for guilds and societies causing problems in the empire

guild in Ephesus occurs about a century after Paul. An inscription indicates that the baker's guild went on strike and left the city short of bread.¹¹² Though the precise reason for the strike is not stated, Trebilco suggests, "it seems almost certainly to have been economic at heart."¹¹³ In the city of Tarsus a similar disturbance concerning the local linenworkers' guild is recorded by Dio Chrysostom and likely took place at the end of the first century.¹¹⁴

One reason why the guilds were known to be disruptive could stem from the precarious social situation of the artisans that comprised them. Witherington notes that though they could have been wealthy, their wealth may well have been the only thing that allowed them to hold any kind of social status. He goes on to say,

Their lack of education or a proper family background meant they were looked down upon by the elite of society, especially for working with their hands. Anything that threatened their income also threatened the status and standard of living they had worked so hard to obtain in a highly stratified society. They were some of the more easily marginalized members of society, trying to be upwardly mobile, and their volatile reaction to an inflammatory speech such as Demetrius gave [in Acts] is quite believable.¹¹⁵

It is important to consider the precarious social position of artisans in the thick description of Ephesus. In particular it will help inform the claims made in Acts 19 concerning a riot involving silversmiths in Ephesus.

suggests "they must have constituted a perennial source of unrest." MacMullen, *Enemies of the Roman Order*, 175.

¹¹² Cf. Trebilco, "Asia," 339; *hE* 215.

¹¹³ Trebilco, "Asia," 339.

¹¹⁴ Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 34.21–22; Trebilco, "Asia," 340.

¹¹⁵ Witherington, *Acts*, 593. He refers to Plutarch's view on the artisans in Plutarch, *Per.* 2.1.

MacMullen points out that much of the status that an artisan could obtain socially was connected to his membership in a guild. Guilds functioned as social microcosms within which an individual craftsman might obtain a high status. As an individual in the greater social world the same status would not be attainable. MacMullen, *Roman Social Relations*, 75–77. Witherington thinks the actual effect Christians had on sales of shrines would not have been as significant as Demetrius led his listeners to believe. Witherington, *Acts*, 592.

Artemis and her temple were also important factors in the economy of Ephesus. Aside from money generated by pilgrims when they came to the city, the temple also served as a major bank for the entire province.¹¹⁶ Dio Chrysostom suggests the temple was impenetrable and so many deposited money there because of its perception of great safety.¹¹⁷ The goddess also owned many assets such as pastures, quarries, livestock, and fisheries which provided the temple with a regular income and because she was perceived as an heiress, Artemis also received regular donations.¹¹⁸ Another source of income was the interest earned on loans made by the temple.¹¹⁹ In addition to acting as a banking center, the temple also served as a mint from about 600 BCE–262 CE.¹²⁰ Money generated at the temple was used to maintain and finance activities for the temple but also provided funds for the city.¹²¹

Ephesus was a prosperous area which benefitted greatly from both agriculture and trade from land and sea. It also was home to manufacturing industries including textiles, perfume and metal work. Artisans who worked with such goods often formed trade guilds for social and economic reasons. Another important economic force in Ephesus was the Temple of Artemis which acted as a bank and brought in significant amounts of revenue.¹²² The role of trade guilds and their reputation for being disruptive and the role of Artemis in the city (both religious and economic) are all important factors in the

¹¹⁶ Trebilco, *Early Christians*, 25; Immendorfer, *Ephesians and Artemis*, 141; Oster, *Ephesus as a Religious Center*, 1717–19; Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 31.54; Strabo, *Geogr.* 14.1.22; Xenophon, *Anab.* 5.

¹¹⁷ Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 31.54. Such impenetrability is surely an exaggeration, though Immendorfer notes that the many attempts to steal the vast wealth of the temple failed. Immendorfer, *Ephesians and Artemis*, 141.

¹¹⁸ Trebilco, *Early Christians*, 26; Immendorfer, *Ephesians and Artemis*, 141–42.

¹¹⁹ Trebilco, *Early Christians*, 26.

¹²⁰ Immendorfer, *Ephesians and Artemis*, 142.

¹²¹ Trebilco, *Early Christians*, 26.

¹²² The temple as a religious center will be discussed below.

consideration of the riot of the silversmiths at Ephesus recorded in Acts 19 which will be discussed below.

First-Century Religious Climate

The religious diversity of Ephesus is not unlike that of Corinth. In addition to Artemis, some of the other gods and goddesses which are represented at Ephesus are Aphrodite, Apollo, Asklepios, Athena, Demeter, Zeus, and Dionysus.¹²³ Additionally, evidence of both Egyptian¹²⁴ and hero cults¹²⁵ has been found. Hestia ruled in the Prytaneion though other gods were also venerated there.¹²⁶ The two major temples, that of Artemis and the Sebastoi (a temple of the imperial cult), made Ephesus call itself “twice neokoros” or the “keeper of two temples.” This self-designation is found on two coins dating to the Domitian period.¹²⁷ This section will discuss the influence of Artemis and the imperial cult on the residents of the city of Ephesus.¹²⁸

Artemis

Artemis and Ephesus cannot be separated.¹²⁹ As noted above, the Artemision was famous for its grandeur and some form of this temple to Artemis was in the vicinity of Ephesus for most, if not all, of its history. As the goddess of the city, it has been suggested that

¹²³ Oster, *Ephesus as a Religious Center*, 1667–76, 1691–95.

¹²⁴ Oster, *Ephesus as a Religious Center*, 1677–81. Cf. Walters, “Sculptures of Gods and Heros,” 281–310.

¹²⁵ Including Alexander the Great, Androclus, Apollonius of Tyana, Pixodarus, and P. Servilius Isauricus. Oster, *Ephesus as a Religious Center*, 1682–87.

¹²⁶ Oster, *Ephesus as a Religious Center*, 1688–91.

¹²⁷ Trebilco, *Early Christians*, 32.

¹²⁸ Judaism in Ephesus has been discussed above and Christianity will be discussed below. Of the remaining religious influences in the city, Artemis and the imperial cult are the most significant for this study.

¹²⁹ Trebilco notes: “The origin of the worship of the goddess in Ephesus is shrouded in obscurity. Although Artemis of Ephesus is similar to the Artemis of the Greeks, there were substantial differences and the two are not to be identified.” Trebilco, *Early Christians*, 19.

Artemis also “ruled” from the Prytaneion, with Hestia.¹³⁰ Artemis was interpreted as the goddess of nature, the cosmos, fertility, and protector of the dead.¹³¹ She was thought to keep her followers safe and healthy¹³² and was seen as the guardian of the city.¹³³ The influence of the Artemision on the economy of the city has also been discussed above.

The designation of Artemis as chiefly a fertility goddess appears to be primarily based on later Christian polemics against Artemis and also the cult image of her featuring many egg-shaped objects which were interpreted as breasts.¹³⁴ It is doubtful that fertility was her primary role during the Roman imperial period.¹³⁵ Fleischer thoroughly reviews the evidence concerning the “breasts” of Artemis and determines that while nothing is conclusive, they most closely resemble a piece of heavy jewelry (which could possibly be ornamental breasts) and are likely not meant to be understood as the actual breasts of the goddess.¹³⁶ Whatever these objects were they cannot be used to support the view that Artemis was primarily a fertility goddess. As has been noted above, her worshippers viewed her as a much more all-encompassing goddess.

The worship of Artemis was an important part of community life for residents in Ephesus. S. Mitchell notes,

Religious activity in the cities of the empire was, with rare exceptions, explicit and public, often involving the whole community in unified celebration of the

¹³⁰ Knibbe, “*Via Sacra Ephesiaca*,” 146.

¹³¹ Knibbe, “*Via Sacra Ephesiaca*,” 142; Immendörfer, *Ephesians and Artemis*, 152–53.

¹³² Trebilco, *Early Christians*, 21. There were many descriptive names attributed to her such as “Lady (Κυρία), Saviour (Σώτεια), a heavenly goddess (οὐράνου θεός Ἄρτεμις Ἐφεσία), and the Queen of the Cosmos (Βασιληῖς κόσμου) . . . greatest (μεγίστη), great (μεγάλη), holiest (ἀγιωτάτη), and most manifest (ἐπιφανεστάτη).” Trebilco, *Early Christians*, 22.

¹³³ Oster, *Ephesus as a Religious Center*, 1700–1701.

¹³⁴ Trebilco, *Early Christians*, 23. Cf. Fleischer, *Artemis von Ephesos*, 81.

¹³⁵ Oster notes that eunuch priests at the temple, which may have pointed to a focus on fertility, had vanished by the Roman imperial period. Oster, *Ephesus as a Religious Center*, 1725. Though it may not have been her primary role, it seems as though there was some association between Artemis and fertility even apart from Christian polemics. Immendörfer, *Ephesians and Artemis*, 152–53.

¹³⁶ Fleischer, *Artemis von Ephesos*, 88. For his review of the evidence see Fleischer, *Artemis von Ephesos*, 75–88. For further discussion of the debate see Immendörfer, *Ephesians and Artemis*, 147–50.

gods. Its significance lay in rituals which all could observe and in which many citizens participated. These range from prayer, sacrifice, solemn ceremony and religious processions to feasts, games and festivals.¹³⁷

This is an accurate description of the ways in which Artemis was honoured in Ephesus. There were two major festivals to Artemis each year. One was the “Artemision” held during the month of the same name (March-April) and the second is the nativity of Artemis, celebrated on the sixth day of the month of Thargelion (May-June).¹³⁸ The observance of Artemision may have involved competitions of theater, athletics, and music. Xenophon of Ephesus notes that young men and women often chose spouses at this festival¹³⁹ and many visitors came to the city to celebrate it.¹⁴⁰ Part of the nativity celebrations involved parading her statue around the *via sacra*, a circular route around the Panayırdağ.¹⁴¹ Such processions were not unique to the nativity festival; they happened several times per year.¹⁴² This *via sacra* was originally a circular cemetery, but after the city moved to a new location away from the Artemision under Lysimachus, a portion of the route lay within the city itself.¹⁴³ From that point on only the portion of the route outside the city continued to function as a cemetery.¹⁴⁴

Of the first-century Temple of Artemis, Trebilco writes, “The temple which stood during the first century CE was the last and greatest of several temples built on the site, and was clearly the chief glory of the city.”¹⁴⁵ It was 130 meters by 70 meters in size and

¹³⁷ S. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 1:113.

¹³⁸ Trebilco, *Early Christians*, 24.

¹³⁹ Trebilco, *Early Christians*, 24. Xenophon of Ephesus, 1.2.2–4.

¹⁴⁰ Trebilco, *Early Christians*, 24. Xenophon of Ephesus, 1.2.2–4.

¹⁴¹ Knibbe, “*Via Sacra Ephesiaca*,” 142; Trebilco, *Early Christians*, 25.

¹⁴² Trebilco, *Early Christians*, 28. Examples included meetings of the assembly and other

festivals.

¹⁴³ Knibbe, “*Via Sacra Ephesiaca*,” 142.

¹⁴⁴ Knibbe, “*Via Sacra Ephesiaca*,” 142.

¹⁴⁵ Trebilco, *Early Christians*, 20. A description of the various temples of Artemis which existed at Ephesus over the centuries can be found in Immendörfer, *Ephesians and Artemis*, 125–34.

contained 127 massive columns each 2 meters in diameter and standing 20 meters high.¹⁴⁶ Trebilco notes that the size of this first-century Artemision was roughly four times the size of the Parthenon in Athens.¹⁴⁷ It was noted for its splendor and was called “the ornament of the whole province” in an inscription from 44 CE.¹⁴⁸

The popularity of Artemis began to show signs of waning in the second century when “traditional religion” seemed to no longer satisfy the people of the city.¹⁴⁹ The last Temple of Artemis on this site was damaged by fire at the hands of invading Goths in 262 CE and was never repaired.¹⁵⁰ It was completely dismantled by Christians later on.¹⁵¹

Concerning the importance of Artemis to Ephesus, Oster leaves no doubt when he says,

The quintessence of Artemis was forever related to the well being of Ephesus. Notwithstanding the individualistic and personal significance of the goddess, the principal force of her cult was upon the interrelated components of the city’s urban life, e.g., the civic, economic, educational, patriotic, administrative, and commercial facets. In this regard Ephesus provides a prominent example of urban civil religion in the Roman Empire. There was no other Graeco-Roman metropolis in the Empire whose “body, soul, and spirit” could so belong to a particular deity as did Ephesus’ to her patron goddess Artemis.¹⁵²

Artemis was their chief goddess, city protector, and source of major revenue in the city. It is certain that if she was threatened in any way that the inhabitants of the city would respond swiftly and harshly to her critics. The importance of Artemis to the inhabitants of Ephesus must be kept in mind when considering the Christian context below and opposition with which early Christian missionaries may have been met.

¹⁴⁶ Trebilco, *Early Christians*, 20.

¹⁴⁷ Trebilco, *Early Christians*, 20.

¹⁴⁸ Trebilco, *Early Christians*, 20. Trebilco cites *IvE* 17–19, and specifically 18b.1–3 for this information.

¹⁴⁹ Knibbe, “*Via Sacra Ephesiaca*,” 146.

¹⁵⁰ Trebilco, *Early Christians*, 20. Trebilco notes that the date is tentative which accounts for the one year difference between his date and that of Bammer, Muss, and Thür, “Temple of Artemis,” 54.

¹⁵¹ See discussion in footnotes above in the Geography section.

¹⁵² Oster, *Ephesus as a Religious Center*, 1728.

The Imperial Cult

The next most influential religious practice in Ephesus was the adherence to the imperial cult. The imperial cult was particularly prominent in Ephesus as they were home to one of the three provincially-sponsored temples of the imperial cult in Asia. These were located in Pergamum (established 29 BCE), Smyrna (established 26 CE), and finally Ephesus (dedicated 89/90 CE).¹⁵³ Also, when Augustus permitted the establishment of the provincial temple at Pergamum in 29 BCE, he established a temple for “Rome and Divus Julius” at Ephesus.¹⁵⁴ Trebilco notes that the temple in Pergamum was for the local Asian inhabitants, while the one in Ephesus was for citizens of Rome living in the province.¹⁵⁵ Competition for provincial-level cults in Asia was stiff and it was an honour for the city of Ephesus to house both a provincial level temple (dedicated in 89/90 CE) as well as a temple for resident Romans (established in 29 BCE).¹⁵⁶ These two temples of the imperial cult in Ephesus (the provincial temple and the one for “Rome and Divus Julius”) in the first century demonstrate the city’s dedication to Rome and the emperor.

Each temple of the imperial cult was dedicated to particular emperors. In Pergamum, the provincial temple was for Tiberius, his mother Livia (and also the widow of Augustus), and the Senate.¹⁵⁷ When the Asians requested a second provincial imperial temple it was most unusual. Friesen notes that at this time no province had two provincial

¹⁵³ Trebilco, *Early Christians*, 30–31. Another provincial temple was built in Miletus around 40 CE, but its use was discontinued after Gaius Caligula was assassinated about a year later. Cf. Trebilco, *Early Christians*, 31; Friesen, *Imperial Cults*, 39–41.

¹⁵⁴ Trebilco, *Early Christians*, 30.

¹⁵⁵ Trebilco, *Early Christians*, 30. Cf. Dio Cassius, *Hist. Rom.* 51.20.6–9; Friesen, *Imperial Cults*, 26.

¹⁵⁶ Tacitus notes that Ephesus was rejected as a location for the provincial cult established in 26 CE because its residents were deemed to be too occupied with Artemis worship. The city of Smyrna was given the honour. Tacitus, *Ann.* 4.55.

¹⁵⁷ Trebilco, *Early Christians*, 30–31.

imperial temples and some Roman provinces had none at all.¹⁵⁸ After much discussion the city of Smyrna was awarded permission to build a temple honouring Tiberius.¹⁵⁹ Pergamum was passed over because it already had an imperial temple and Ephesus was likewise passed over because of the prominent Temple of Artemis which already was part of that city.¹⁶⁰

Friesen notes that the third provincial temple for the imperial cult in Asia (after Pergamum and Smyrna), dedicated in Ephesus in 89/90 CE, is the only one of the three whose remains have been located.¹⁶¹ This temple was different than the other two.

Friesen notes,

The cult differed from Asia's first two provincial cults because it did not include the corporate figures of Rome or the Senate. Instead, the "Sebastoi" were venerated, and the cult focused only on the imperial family rather than on another corporate object of veneration. So the third successful provincial temple instituted changes in its cultic format, but it maintained continuity with provincial cult expectations through its worship of the collective "Sebastoi" and by its standard language of divinization.¹⁶²

Though the extant inscriptions concerning this temple do not mention specific emperors as being venerated, there is enough evidence to make some inferences about who they may have been. Friesen suggests that the strongest evidence points to Domitian, Titus, and likely Vespasian, and that Domitia (Domitian's wife) is also very possible whereas others females of the Flavian dynasty are "theoretical possibilities."¹⁶³ He further elaborates, "The temple was designed to be appropriate for the long term, and this aspect

¹⁵⁸ Friesen, *Imperial Cults*, 36.

¹⁵⁹ For a discussion of the decision process on which Asian city would have the right to build the temple see Friesen, *Imperial Cults*, 36–38; Tacitus, *Ann.* 4.55.

¹⁶⁰ Friesen, *Imperial Cults*, 37. The residents of the city were deemed to be fully occupied by the worship of Artemis. See Tacitus, *Ann.* 4.55.

¹⁶¹ Friesen, *Imperial Cults*, 43.

¹⁶² Friesen, *Imperial Cults*, 46.

¹⁶³ Friesen, *Imperial Cults*, 46. The other two imperial temples in Asia were dedicated to rulers of the Julio-Claudian line. Trebilco, *Early Christians*, 31.

of the institution served it well.”¹⁶⁴ This temple is found on local coinage to the third century.

Conclusions

In Ephesus, as in any Greco-Roman city, religion was a major part of life. The city was “twice neokoros”—the keeper of two temples. The first of these temples was that of Artemis, the goddess of the city whose influence over it cannot be underestimated. Artemis was inextricably linked to many aspects of life in Ephesus and defaming her reputation would not be tolerated. The second temple was that of the provincial imperial cult given to the city in 89/90 CE. Though this temple came to the city after Paul’s visits there, the city was active in participation in the imperial cult earlier in the century as well. The city’s dedication to Artemis and to the emperor will be discussed below as important factors in understanding the riot of the Ephesian silversmiths in Acts 19:21–41.

From Greco-Roman Context to Historic Christian Context¹⁶⁵

As noted in Chapter 3 concerning the city of Corinth, each aspect of the above description of the city of Ephesus is connected with each of the other aspects. The city’s geography, people, social customs, politics, economy, and religion are all intertwined and one cannot appreciate one aspect of the city effectively without also understanding the other aspects of it. This first section of the chapter has served to lay important groundwork for further descriptions of the emergence of Christianity in the city. The context layers concerning the emergence of Christianity will be explored below and in Chapters 6 and 7.

¹⁶⁴ Friesen, *Imperial Cults*, 46.

¹⁶⁵ See Chapter 2 for a discussion of the terms “historic” and “immediate” Christian context.

Historic Christian Context

Ephesus is a major location in the New Testament. This is not only a place where Paul spends a significant amount of time, but it is also the place where Paul sends two letters to Timothy while he acted as Paul's representative in the city.¹⁶⁶ The city is a key location in the early spread of Christianity but, as was the case with Corinth, physical evidence of very early Christianity is lacking and the best evidence that exists for the first century is of a literary nature.¹⁶⁷

Literary evidence for the emergence of Christianity in Ephesus is found in Acts 18:19—20:1.¹⁶⁸ It immediately follows the events of Acts which depict Paul in Corinth. Ephesus appears to be one of the locations to which Ephesians was written and also the location where the two letters to Timothy were sent.¹⁶⁹ First Corinthians 16:8–9 seems to indicate that Paul is in Ephesus when he writes to Corinth, and comments in that letter also provide a small glimpse into some situations he encountered in Ephesus. Further to this, 1 Timothy details the specific problem of false teachers among the Christians in Ephesus. The presence of these false teachers influences Paul's words to the Ephesians through his letters.

Though physical remains of Christians in Ephesus during the first century may not be available, again, as was the case with Corinth, the remains that do exist can serve to help to clarify the literary texts. In this section the material presented in the Greco-

¹⁶⁶ The authenticity of 1 Timothy as an assumption of this study has been discussed in Chapter 2.

¹⁶⁷ See Chapter 3 for a discussion of why physical evidence of first-century Christians is sparse and is likely to remain so.

¹⁶⁸ Ephesus is also mentioned in Acts 21:17–38 when, on his final trip to Jerusalem, Paul visits with the Ephesian elders in Miletus and recounts some of the happenings of his time among them. The implications of this text for the context of Eph 4:1–16 will be discussed in Chapter 6.

¹⁶⁹ For a discussion of these assumptions see Chapter 2.

Roman context section above will be applied to the historic Christian context in Ephesus and new material will be introduced to add further detail to particular situations.

The Evidence of Acts

The city of Ephesus first appears in Acts 18:19 when Paul spent a short time there following his lengthy stay in Corinth. After leaving Corinth, the group (which included Priscilla and Aquila) sailed to Cenchreae and then on to Ephesus. At Ephesus Paul went to the synagogue to “reason with” the Jews (διελέξατο τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις). He was well-received by them and was invited to stay longer, although he declined (Acts 18:19–20). At this point two significant things happened. First, Paul moved on, promising to return later if possible, yet Priscilla and Aquila remained behind.¹⁷⁰ Second, Apollos, a Jew from Alexandria who converted to Christianity, arrived in Ephesus and began speaking about Jesus to the Jews there (Acts 18:21, 24).¹⁷¹ Priscilla and Aquila became involved with the Jewish community in Ephesus, and they heard Apollos speaking in the synagogue and realized he did not know everything about Jesus that he should have known. Consequently, they spoke to him and explained carefully or accurately (ἀκριβέστερον) the way of God (Acts 18:26). Acts notes that prior to this Apollos had no knowledge of the baptism that Jesus commands for all, although his other information about Jesus was accurate (Acts 18:25).

These events in Acts 18 suggest that Paul was not the only person who passed through Ephesus and spent some time discussing Christianity with the Jews in that city.¹⁷²

¹⁷⁰ Cf. Acts 18:19, 26. Priscilla and Aquila remain in Ephesus after Paul leaves but it is not immediately evident whether they stay in that city of their own accord or because Paul asks them to stay.

¹⁷¹ This is before Apollos preaches in Corinth, as noted in Chapter 3 and in 1 Corinthians.

¹⁷² As noted above, Ephesus was located at a major crossroads for travel and trade. That many travelling teachers and philosophers passed through there is likely. On travelling “religious experts” see

These include Paul and Apollos and perhaps Priscilla and Aquila.¹⁷³ After a stay of some length in Ephesus, Apollos eventually moved on to Achaia, seemingly at his own direction. Thus, by the time Paul returned to Ephesus on his so-called third missionary journey, the people of the city had experienced Paul's teaching, Apollos's teaching, and perhaps also the teaching of Priscilla and Aquila in regards to Christianity. Thus, it is not surprising that when Paul returns he found some "disciples" (Acts 19:1). These disciples, however, must have been influenced by Apollos because they also did not know of Jesus's command concerning baptism and the coming of the Holy Spirit into believers' lives (Acts 19:3–7). It would appear that for some reason Priscilla and Aquila did not speak with these men as they had Apollos.

Once these disciples are baptized and receive the Holy Spirit, the text of Acts notes that they begin to speak in tongues and prophesy (Acts 19:5–6). It is noteworthy that none of Acts, Ephesians, or 1 and 2 Timothy (all associated with Ephesus) suggest that the presence of tongues at Ephesus created the same problems that it did at Corinth.

Paul's second visit to Ephesus was a lengthy one; Acts records that he was in the city for a period of about three years.¹⁷⁴ Acts also notes that while Paul began his second Ephesian visit by preaching and boldly speaking in the synagogue, after a period of three months, the Jews were no longer interested in listening to his message (Acts 19:8). Some

Wendt, "*Ea Superstitione*," 185–89. Note that Forbes's assertion that evidence for travelling religious experts dates only to the mid-second-century or later is specifically in reference to their use of ecstatic speech. See Forbes, *Prophecy and Inspired Speech*, 152.

¹⁷³ Though Priscilla and Aquila were Christians and appear to travel, it is not certain that their express purpose was to spread the gospel. See discussion in Chapter 3 concerning their possible expulsion from Rome and resultant travel.

¹⁷⁴ Acts 19:8–9 notes that once Paul leaves the synagogue (after a period of three months) he teaches in the lecture hall of Tyrannus for two years. In a later speech to the Ephesian elders in Acts 20:31, Paul states that he was in Ephesus for a period of three years. Allowing for a little more time than the explicit two years and three months recorded in Acts 19, a three-year stay in Ephesus is reasonable. Cf. Witherington, *Acts*, 576.

of them became obstinate or “hardened” (ἔσκληρύνοντο) and publically spoke ill of “the Way.” This resulted in Paul moving his base for teaching to the “lecture hall” (σχολή) of a man named Tyrannus for the next two years (Acts 19:9). During the time that Paul used this facility, he had great success. The text says, “all” (πάντας) those living in Asia heard his message (Acts 19:10).

The σχολή of Tyrannus

There are many questions in scholarship relating to Paul’s use of the σχολή. First, the exact sort of facility that the σχολή was is debated. Related to this is the social status afforded to Paul for his use of such a facility. Second, scholars wonder who Tyrannus was and what his relation was to the Christian community. Third, there is debate surrounding the actual frequency with which Paul taught at the σχολή and the extent of his actual audience.

There is much discussion among scholars as to what sort of facility the σχολή of Tyrannus actually was. According to Bauer et al., the term primarily has a connotation of leisure, but a leisure connected with intellectual pursuits.¹⁷⁵ L. Johnson notes that “it therefore came to mean also a ‘school,’ either in the sense of a gathering or of a place for gathering.”¹⁷⁶ Expanding on this idea, Keener adds that the favourite meeting places of such schools were rented rooms or homes.¹⁷⁷ G. Horsley insists that the term only rarely refers to an actual building and more readily refers to a group meeting under the sponsorship of an individual—in this case, Tyrannus.¹⁷⁸ In a similar vein, Malherbe

¹⁷⁵ BDAG, 982.

¹⁷⁶ L. Johnson, *Acts*, 339. Cf. Keener, *Acts*, 2827.

¹⁷⁷ Keener, “Spirit Filled Teaching,” 48.

¹⁷⁸ G. Horsley, *New Documents*, 1:129–30.

suggests that the *σχολή* is meant to be understood as a guild hall named for its patron, Tyrannus.¹⁷⁹ Alexander suggests it refers to “an auditorium used for lectures by visiting philosophers or rhetors, perhaps for regular classes; the name suggests that it was privately owned rather than a civic building.”¹⁸⁰ Witherington suggests that either a guild hall or public lecture hall is in mind, but not a dedicated school building.¹⁸¹ Others, like Marshall, are less-specific about the sort of building in question, leaving open the possibility of both a formal school or a simple room used for lectures.¹⁸² E. Adams suggests that it is not a guild hall, but that it is a building or room which was used for formal teaching.¹⁸³ In support of this, Keener also notes that inscriptions have shown guild halls were generally named for the guild itself and not the guild’s patron.¹⁸⁴

E. Adams goes further in his suggestions about what sort of room this *σχολή* might be. He demonstrates that it is possible that the *σχολή* in Acts 19 was located above a shop.¹⁸⁵ He posits that *tabernae*, shops, could have functioned as classrooms and gives several examples of evidence showing that they were indeed used in this context. In one instance in Pompeii, excavations have shown a *taberna* as a school.¹⁸⁶ E. Adams notes, “The front room of the *taberna* functioned as a shop, but the *pergula* [loft at the back] apparently served as a classroom.”¹⁸⁷ Though these were still humble teaching abodes,

¹⁷⁹ Malherbe, *Social Aspects*, 90.

¹⁸⁰ Alexander, “‘Foolishness to the Greeks’,” 235. Cf. E. Adams, *Earliest Christian Meeting Places*, 65.

¹⁸¹ Witherington, *Acts*, 574.

¹⁸² Marshall, *Acts*, 327.

¹⁸³ E. Adams, *Earliest Christian Meeting Places*, 65.

¹⁸⁴ Keener, *Acts*, 2828. In support of this he cites *IvE* 444, 547, 2076–80.

¹⁸⁵ E. Adams, *Earliest Christian Meeting Places*, 65.

¹⁸⁶ E. Adams, *Earliest Christian Meeting Places*, 144–45.

¹⁸⁷ E. Adams, *Earliest Christian Meeting Places*, 145.

they were “a step up” from the street corner.¹⁸⁸ As noted in Chapter 3, these *tabernae* would have been quite suitable for Christian meeting places and a shop also would have been a natural place to find Paul, the tentmaker.

Though each of the above ideas presents its own merits concerning what kind of *σχολή* is meant in Acts 19:9, there is not enough evidence to say for certain what kind of location the author of Acts had in mind. The only other textual evidence is from Acts 20:20 where Paul reminds the Ephesian elders that while he was with them he spoke both publically and privately. Stowers suggests that the “public” teaching was that done in the *σχολή*.¹⁸⁹

A public platform of some variety would be needed if Paul were going to attract the level of audience suggested by Acts 19:10. Witherington suggests, “In antiquity an orator or philosopher, in order to get a real hearing, needed to speak or teach in an appropriate place for such activities, whether it be in the home of a patron or in a public lecture hall.”¹⁹⁰ Keener notes that though street-corner preaching was common, those who could teach in halls had an elevated status.¹⁹¹ Further, he says, “Ephesus would have viewed Paul as a sophist or philosopher—the two forms of advanced education, hence those naturally associated with a lecturer speaking in a hall.”¹⁹² If Paul were welcomed

¹⁸⁸ E. Adams, *Earliest Christian Meeting Places*, 144. Stowers argues against the idea that Paul was primarily a street-corner or market-place teacher. Stowers, “Social Status,” 61.

¹⁸⁹ Stowers, “Social Status,” 61. Paul notes he taught “from house to house” but Stowers carefully points out that even lectures held in homes were considered private events by invitation only. Stowers, “Social Status,” 66. This would argue against the idea of the *σχολή* being in a private dwelling. Alexander agrees that the *σχολή* was a “public” place. Alexander, “‘Foolishness to the Greeks,’” 235.

¹⁹⁰ Witherington, *Acts*, 574. Cf. Stowers, “Social Status,” 68. Keener is careful to point out that not all ancient philosophers saw the private home or lecture hall as the most prestigious location to share ones ideas. He specifically gives Dio Chrysostom (who favoured public locations over private homes) and Tacitus (who favoured participation in legal conflicts in the city forum) as examples. Keener, *Acts*, 2828. Cf. Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 32.8–10; Tacitus, *Dial.* 10.

¹⁹¹ Keener, “Spirit Filled Teaching,” 51.

¹⁹² Keener, “Spirit Filled Teaching,” 51. Cf. Keener, *Acts*, 2825.

into a lecture hall of some variety, it would have provided him with legitimacy as a teacher that the synagogue could not have given him.¹⁹³ Further, he may not have been considered a religious speaker, but a moral philosopher because his message did not contain the typical kinds of cultic activities such as sacrifices, priests, and temple worship.¹⁹⁴ As was noted above it is not certain that the σχολή was actually a public lecture hall and so any elevated status that Paul might have received by teaching in such a place ought to be held loosely.

Another question regarding the σχολή is the identity of Tyrannus and his precise connection to it. Who exactly Tyrannus was is unclear. The name itself means “tyrant”¹⁹⁵ and Hitchcock implies that Tyrannus was a pagan, though this can be neither confirmed nor denied by the text.¹⁹⁶ We do not know if Tyrannus was sympathetic to Paul’s message or if he was just looking for some extra income (if he was the owner of the facility).

There is no known “lecture hall” of Tyrannus located in Ephesus,¹⁹⁷ but the name is found in first-century inscriptions from the city.¹⁹⁸ Trebilco notes, “In the 1st–2nd century CE it may have been used as a *cognomen* in successive generations of a small

¹⁹³ Witherington, *Acts*, 575. Some have suggested that his status as a tentmaker would have forced him to be relegated to a lower status even if he were a well-known teacher. In contrast to this, Keener says, “some wealthy artisans and a growing class of *nouveau riche* in Ephesus were challenging the status of the city’s traditional hereditary elite.” Keener, “Spirit Filled Teaching,” 51–52. Cf. Baugh, “Paul and Ephesus,” 64.

¹⁹⁴ Cf. Stowers who argues that Paul should not be seen as a street-corner preacher but rather as a more legitimate “philosopher” of his day who regularly taught in a school-room setting. Stowers, “Social Status,” 61–62. Further, Keener says, “he [Paul] could not have easily eluded the public perception that he spoke as a moral sage, probably a sort of philosopher.” Keener, “Spirit Filled Teaching,” 52. Cf. Judge, “Early Christians,” 125. Witherington, *Acts*, 575.

¹⁹⁵ Marshall, *Acts*, 327. Cf. Keener, *Acts*, 2828.

¹⁹⁶ This assertion seems to be an assumption which Hitchcock uses to demonstrate Paul’s positive relationship with “pagans.” Hitchcock, “Who Are ‘the People of Chloe’?” 167.

¹⁹⁷ At one time scholars suggested a site near the theatre of Ephesus for such a lecture hall, but subsequent excavation and study identified the site as a courtroom. Keener, *Acts*, 2828.

¹⁹⁸ Trebilco, *Early Christians*, 144; Witherington, *Acts*, 575. Cf. *IvE* 1001.5; 1012.4; 20b.40.

group of interrelated leading families in Ephesus.”¹⁹⁹ It is unlikely that any of these inscriptions point to the Tyrannus of Acts as it seems the name was common. The text of Acts also does not clarify if the Tyrannus in question is the owner of the facility or the regular orator speaking there. He may or may not have been Paul’s patron.²⁰⁰

The final question to be considered regarding the *σχολή* relates to the frequency of Paul’s teaching in that location and the extent of his audience. The text of Acts indicates that Paul reasoned daily in the *σχολή*. Scholars wonder if this should be understood literally or if it is an exaggeration. A somewhat related question is whether or not Paul and the Christians could have afforded rent on such a facility so often.²⁰¹ One of the most oft cited sceptics of Paul’s ability to daily teach in a rented facility is Haenchen. He does not think that Paul could have afforded the daily rent on the lecture hall and suggests that the wealthy Priscilla and Aquila or the congregation itself must have contributed to the costs.²⁰² In response to this, Marshall says, “These questions arise because Haenchen presses the literal meaning of the text (‘daily’) to an unwarranted extent and fails to reckon that Tyrannus may have been a Christian or a sympathizer who made little or no charge for the use of his premises (especially at a time when he would not be using them himself).”²⁰³ Keener agrees that a patron likely was covering Paul’s expenses, though he is not certain that Tyrannus was the patron in question.²⁰⁴ The possibility exists that Paul

¹⁹⁹ Trebilco, *Early Christians*, 144. Cf. Keener, *Acts*, 2829.

²⁰⁰ Witherington, *Acts*, 574–75; Marshall, *Acts*, 327; Conzelmann, *Acts*, 163; Keener, “Spirit Filled Teaching,” 49. He was not likely the guild’s patron if the building were a guild hall. Keener, *Acts*, 2828.

²⁰¹ Witherington, *Acts*, 575.

²⁰² Haenchen, *Acts*, 561.

²⁰³ Marshall, *Acts*, 328.

²⁰⁴ In support of his idea, Keener states, “Inscriptions reveal that some Asiarchs supported public lectures and education in return for civic respectability, and Luke tells us that some Asiarchs were Paul’s ‘friends’ (19.31), likely meaning patrons (one common sense of the term).” Keener, “Spirit Filled Teaching,” 49. He cites *LVE* 2065. Keener suggests that there are four possible ways the costs of the lecture hall were covered and he lists them in order from less-likely to more-likely: Paul, Priscilla and Aquila paid

was benefitting from a patron and that he did not in fact teach at the σχολή daily, but only “regularly” or “often.”

Adding to the many details to be considered concerning the use of this σχολή is that Paul may have been using the building in the “off” hours of the day. The western text of Acts specifies that the time Paul used the lecture hall was “from the fifth hour to the tenth”²⁰⁵ which would be from 11:00am–4:00pm.²⁰⁶ Metzger notes that this description may have been preserved accurately in oral tradition. He sees no reason why, if it were original, it should have been intentionally deleted.²⁰⁷ Further, Marshall notes that since it depicts Paul as “teaching” outside of regular business hours, it is less likely that the western text was intending to make Paul more legitimate. Rather, it shows he was not using the room when the best teachers would be lecturing.²⁰⁸ It affords Paul some status as a teacher, but not the highest of statuses.

Hitchcock cites Juvenal²⁰⁹ and Martial²¹⁰ to say that schools normally began before daybreak and were over before noon. Witherington notes that this was also true for general business affairs.²¹¹ The building would have been free for the afternoon hours and the textual variant implies that this is precisely when Paul used it. The use of the σχολή during non-regular hours also suggests that the regular students would have been free to learn from Paul. Perhaps more importantly those who were not free to attend regular

for the hall out of their earnings; either Tyrannus or the owner of the facility was sympathetic to Paul’s cause or perhaps was a convert; the cost of rent was lower during the afternoon hours which made the cost more affordable; or a patron or multiple benefactors paid for the costs. A combination of these factors is also possible. Keener, *Acts*, 2834.

²⁰⁵ τινος απο ωρας ε’ εως δεκατης (manuscript D).

²⁰⁶ Metzger, *Textual Commentary Second Edition*, 417.

²⁰⁷ Metzger, *Textual Commentary Second Edition*, 417.

²⁰⁸ Marshall, *Acts*, 327.

²⁰⁹ Juvenal, *Sat.* vii 222.

²¹⁰ Martial, *Epig.* 9.68.

²¹¹ Witherington, *Acts*, 574. Cf. Martial, *Epig.* 4.8.

lectures because they were working during normal business hours would also have been free to attend afternoon sessions.²¹² Witherington suggests the latter were more likely to be Paul's audience.²¹³

The extent of Paul's audience has also been debated. Did the "whole of Asia" really hear him? Whether the entire population of Jews and Greeks in the province heard Paul's preaching or not, it is reasonable to assume that a great number of people would have had the opportunity.²¹⁴ Aside from the connection with the school, the above description of the city of Ephesus has demonstrated that it was an important city in the province. With the Temple of Artemis located there and with it being located at a major cross-roads of both land and sea, many were sure to visit it.²¹⁵

The above discussion of the *σχολή* of Tyrannus has demonstrated that there are a range of possible facilities that could be indicated by the term ranging from a formal lecture theatre to a humble pergula at the back of a taberna shop. The author of Acts does not give details. This venue, whatever it may have been, gave Paul a public platform for his teaching on a regular basis which may have attracted many of the city's resident and visitors.

Paul and Miraculous Incidents

Following the mention of Paul teaching at the *σχολή* of Tyrannus, the text goes on to mention another reason that people were attracted to Paul and his message in Ephesus.

²¹² Witherington, *Acts*, 574–75; Keener, *Acts*, 2830.

²¹³ Witherington, *Acts*, 574–75. Cf. Keener, "Spirit Filled Teaching," 50.

²¹⁴ Trebilco notes that Luke likely uses some hyperbole in order to suggest Paul's great success in Asia and Ephesus. It is unlikely that "all of Asia" heard him or that "all of Asia" was moving away from worshipping Artemis (cf. Acts 19:26–27). Trebilco, *Early Christians*, 136. Cf. Keener, *Acts*, 2835–36. Nevertheless Paul did have opportunity to have significant influence. Cf. Keener, "Spirit Filled Teaching," 56–57.

²¹⁵ Ephesus's status as a major trading center and information hub has been noted above.

Apparently handkerchief-like cloths and workman's aprons (σουδάρια ἢ σιμικίνθια) were carried from Paul to the sick and they were healed (Acts 19:12). The text indicates that "extraordinary miracles" (δυνάμεις τε οὐ τὰς τυχούσας) were done by God through Paul.²¹⁶ The way the sentence is phrased serves to accentuate the miraculous occurrences that happened at a distance from Paul via the clothing that he had touched. The miracles that are mentioned are curing diseases and exorcisms.²¹⁷

Following the mention of these miraculous healings, the author of Acts focuses on one particular healing attempt in the city by a group of individuals not connected to Paul. The event and the resulting conversions and confessions work in a twofold manner. They serve to emphasize the popularity and renown of Paul in Ephesus, but also foreshadow the eventual riot in the city in connection with the Ephesian silversmiths. Acts reports that seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were in the practice of driving out evil spirits. They were apparently familiar with Paul's teachings and saw power in them. They invoked the names of Paul and Jesus as an exorcism formula in order to rid their clients of their demons. Though they used the name of Jesus, they simply associated him with Paul's preaching but did not call him their own Lord or master. The text also describes them as "Jews" and not as followers of the Way, or as disciples of Jesus or Paul. The text seems to imply that this formula had worked for at least some itinerant exorcists, but demonstrates that in at least one case it did not. In this instance the spirit questioned the authority of the sons of Sceva to be driving out demons. The demon purportedly said, τὸν

²¹⁶ This text is often translated "extraordinary" miracles, but is, in fact something similar to "miracles—not the ordinary sort." This is an example of litotes.

²¹⁷ Cf. Acts 19:12.

[μέν] Ἰησοῦν γινώσκω καὶ τὸν Παῦλον ἐπίσταμαι, ὑμεῖς δὲ τίνες ἐστέ;²¹⁸ While the demon knew of Jesus and Paul as figures with some reputation or authority in performing exorcisms, these men do not fall into the same category. The result was that the man who was possessed beat the sons of Sceva and they were forced to flee naked and bleeding from the scene.

Such a show of force on the part of the demon might be seen as a means of showing power and causing fear. Indeed, fear was shown by those who heard of this incident (both Jews and Greeks), but not fear of the demon. This incident serves to further Paul's cause and "the name of the Lord Jesus was held in high esteem (ἐμεγαλύνετο)." It may be of significance that the text does not say that many "believed anew," but only that Jesus was held in honour or esteem. This subtle difference in meaning may speak to the syncretistic religious views of the city.

A further result of this demon encounter was that Christians felt prompted to confess their evil deeds and sorcery. Acts 19:18–20 notes that believers burned their magic books in public. In total, the text notes that fifty-thousand drachmas worth of books were burned. The text implies that this was a great public spectacle and it seems unlikely that it would not have caused a commotion. This would have further served to spread the word about Jesus around the city. Trebilco concludes that this series of events, though not corroborated by outside sources, is a plausible historical scenario.²¹⁹

As support for his position, Trebilco notes that during this period the Jews had a particular reputation for performing exorcisms and also for the use of powerful magic.²²⁰ Witherington also notes that religious syncretism was common in the area and both Jews

²¹⁸ "I am acquainted with Jesus and I know who Paul is, but who are you?"

²¹⁹ Trebilco, *Early Christians*, 149.

²²⁰ Trebilco, *Early Christians*, 148. Cf. Witherington, *Acts*, 574.

and Christians “dabbled in the magical arts.”²²¹ Though there is no record of “Sceva” as a high priest, this should not discount the events described in Acts 19. It is possible that this Sceva was not actually an ἀρχιερεύς but rather a member of the Jewish aristocracy. The term ἀρχιερεύς is sometimes applied to these high-ranking members of society.²²² Alternatively, the “sons” of Sceva may simply have been using the term to describe themselves and to add authority to their activities even if there was no real priestly or aristocratic connection in their family.²²³

As for the prevalence of magic, magical incantations, and magical books in Ephesus, this also is reasonable.²²⁴ Trebilco and Immendörfer both note the fame of the “Ephesian Letters” (Ἐφάσια γράμματα) “which were thought to be words of power which could, for example, ward off demons and so could be used as written amulets or spoken charms.”²²⁵ Further, Trebilco notes references to magicians and curses in the inscriptions found in the city.²²⁶ Finally, public book-burning was also a known method of ridding a location of material that was “offensive, seditious, or dangerous, in order to repudiate the contents of the books concerned.”²²⁷ Though this was usually done by forcible removal of the books from their owners by a person in a position of power,²²⁸ it is not unfathomable that the Christian owners of magical books in Ephesus, convinced of their wrongdoing, may have chosen to publically burn their own books.

²²¹ Witherington, *Acts*, 574. Immendörfer, *Ephesians and Artemis*, 115 also notes the religious syncretism of Ephesus.

²²² Trebilco, *Early Christians*, 148–49.

²²³ Trebilco, *Early Christians*, 149.

²²⁴ For a discussion of the use of magic in Ephesus and a brief introduction to the debates surrounding its prevalence in the city see Immendörfer, *Ephesians and Artemis*, 112–16.

²²⁵ Trebilco, *Early Christians*, 150. Cf. Immendörfer, *Ephesians and Artemis*, 112–16.

²²⁶ Trebilco, *Early Christians*, 150.

²²⁷ Trebilco, *Early Christians*, 150.

²²⁸ Trebilco, *Early Christians*, 150–51.

Demetrius, the Silversmith

Sometime following the incident with the sons of Sceva, Paul determined that it was time for him to move on from the city of Ephesus (Acts 19:21). He sent two of his fellow workers ahead of him to Macedonia and remained for a short time in the province of Asia (Acts 19:22). As Paul was making these plans, a certain silversmith named Demetrius incited a riot over Paul's work in the city. He claimed that Paul was preaching that "gods made by hand are no gods at all"²²⁹ and this sentiment was negatively affecting the trade in silver shrines and discrediting the goddess Artemis (Acts 19:23–27).²³⁰

As has been described above, Artemis was the leading goddess in the city of Ephesus and was of the utmost importance in both its religious and economic activities.

Trebilco notes,

Given the widespread influence of the cult of Artemis in virtually all spheres of the city's life, we can well understand that any diminution of this influence was a serious matter for individuals in Ephesus (i.e. Demetrius) and for the city as a whole. Any factor which sidelined Artemis would effect [sic.] not only the religious, but also virtually all facets of the life of the city. It is quite understandable then that the possibility of harm coming to the cult and temple of Artemis because of Christian preaching would have evoked a response from people in the city of Ephesus, since their identity as a people was so bound up with Artemis.²³¹

²²⁹ οὐκ εἰσὶν θεοὶ οἱ διὰ χειρῶν γινόμενοι.

²³⁰ There has been considerable discussion concerning what kind of silver objects Demetrius was selling. The text says "shrines" or "temples" (ναοὺς) though the only shrines of Artemis's temple which have been found are made of terra cotta and marble. L. Johnson, *Acts*, 347; Trebilco, "Asia," 336; Witherington, *Acts*, 590. This has led many to suggest that Demetrius made silver statuettes of the goddess rather than shrines. The existence of small silver statues of the goddess are attested in the archaeological record which has led some to suggest that Demetrius made statues, not shrines (Trebilco, "Asia," 337; L. Johnson, *Acts*, 347). It is possible, however, that actual silver shrines did exist but the valuable silver was repurposed once Artemis was no longer a central deity. For further discussion on the possibility of silver shrines see Trebilco, "Asia," 337; Marshall, *Acts*, 335; Larkin, *Acts*, 280–81; Reeder, "Mother of the Gods," 423–40; Witherington, *Acts*, 590.

²³¹ Trebilco, "Asia," 329. Aside from the prominence of Artemis in literary evidence and archaeological excavations of the temple and environs, Kreizer suggests that numismatic evidence further confirms her importance in the city. He suggests that a series of commemorative coins (*cistophori*) were minted under Claudius in Ephesus around 50–51 CE which promote both Artemis and Claudius's marriage to Agrippina. Kreitzer, "A Numismatic Clue," 60–62. He says, "Such a rare imperial move as the minting

If indeed Paul's message of Christianity was as widespread as the text of Acts implies, then the stated threat both to Artemis and the related trade in silver shrines is consistent with the historical context. Any threat to Artemis would have raised concern in the city.

The statements of Demetrius the silversmith also suggest that Paul's message and influence was widespread in Asia (19:26). As noted above, Ephesus was a major trading and communication center and located both on land and sea travel routes. Many people would have come through Ephesus due to its location and news would have travelled from there to many places in the surrounding area with ease. Trebilco notes, "Paul's message would quickly be spread through the province, through the agency of people who had come to Ephesus for any number of reasons, had become Christians, and then returned to their homes, but also because people in the province would be used to hearing news from Ephesus."²³² It is possible that Demetrius exaggerates Paul's influence to suit his own purposes and some have suggested that Luke also exaggerates the influence of Christianity in the area; however, the historical context is consistent with the idea that Paul had some influence beyond the city of Ephesus itself.²³³

Further to this, it is known that in the early second century, the Christian influence in the area was noticeable enough to prompt Governor Pliny the Younger to write to

of commemorative *cistophori* may have helped to foster an aggressive pride among the Ephesians with regard to the temple of Artemis/Diana. Perhaps we see something of this patriotic fervour being made manifest in the riot of Acts 19." Kreitzer, "A Numismatic Clue," 66. This serves to further confirm the dedication that the Ephesians had toward Artemis.

²³² Trebilco, "Asia," 310–11.

²³³ Cf. Acts 19:26. Munck also suggests that Paul's influence could very well have been widespread. Munck, *Acts*, 197. His reason seems to stem more from the apparent major influence of Christianity on the area only about fifty years later, as recorded in a letter from Pliny the Younger to Emperor Trajan. Munck, *Acts*, 197. See discussion of this letter below. Marshall suggests that we must leave room for the tendency to exaggerate by the author of Acts and Demetrius "may have been guessing what might happen rather than describing what had already happened." Marshall, *Acts*, 334.

Emperor Trajan concerning the problem.²³⁴ This correspondence is a very interesting piece of evidence; Pliny would have no reason to want to inflate the influence of Christianity in his territory. It remains uncertain what kind of influence the Christians in the first century would have had on the cult of Artemis, but it seems that by the second century, their influence was significant.

If they felt a threat from the Christians, no matter how slight, it is very plausible that these tradesmen of Ephesus would take action. That tradesmen would band together over a common concern is also well-attested in the ancient world. Trade guilds, their presence in the Roman Empire, and their tendency to be disturbers of the peace have been discussed above.

Having gained the attention of enough people, the mob of tradesmen which gathered around Demetrius effectively kidnapped two of Paul's companions (Gaius and Aristarchus) and brought the whole dispute into the theatre (Acts 19:29–31). A city's theater was one of its most important meeting places and it would have been natural for a crowd to gather there, even without notice.²³⁵ Sherwin-White suggests that the theatre was exactly the right place for this mob to go if they wanted a hearing on their concerns as this was the regular meeting place of the people's assembly.²³⁶ The details of the Ephesian theater have been discussed above.

As is the case at many-a mob-scene, the text of Acts suggests that upon arriving at the theatre, the assembled group was not united in its purpose, and that many of the

²³⁴ Trebilco, *Early Christians*, 164. Pliny the Younger, *Ep.* 10.96. Witherington suggests that this is irrelevant to the discussion of Acts 19 as it takes place many years later. Witherington, *Acts*, 592.

²³⁵ Trebilco, "Asia," 349. Cf. MacMullen, *Enemies of the Roman Order*, 171–72.

²³⁶ Sherwin-White, *Roman Law*, 87. An inscription found in the theater of Ephesus notes that C. Vibius Salutaris donated statues which were to be set up in the theatre each time the assembly met there. Deissmann, *Light*, 112–13. Cf. *OGIS*, 480. The assembly has been discussed above and in Chapter 3.

people who were caught up in the crowd did not even know the purpose for which the group was assembled (Acts 19:32). Paul was made aware of the situation and desired to appear before the crowd, but the disciples and also the ἀσιάρχαι with whom Paul was friendly strongly advised against him going to the theatre (Acts 19:30–31). The ἀσιάρχαι and their role in the city have been discussed above. Though the nature of the position in the mid-first century is ambiguous, the inclusion of the title here demonstrates that Paul had important friends in the city who wanted to protect him from the potential consequences of engaging with this illegal mob.²³⁷ The text says that Paul acquiesced.

Back in the theatre, a Jew name Alexander was put forward by his fellow Jews to “make a defense” (ἀπολογεῖσθαι τῷ δήμῳ, Acts 19:33), though he was not actually permitted to speak.²³⁸ The Greeks (presumably) in the crowd were not interested in hearing anything from a Jew (Acts 19:34). The Ephesians may have seen Jews and Christians as essentially the same and this may have been the reason that the crowd refused to hear what Alexander wished to say.²³⁹ After silencing him, the mob began once again to appeal to their goddess, Artemis, and shouted “great is Artemis of the Ephesians”²⁴⁰ for two hours (Acts 19:34).

The arrival of the city’s γραμματεὺς had an immediate effect on the attitude of the mob. As noted above, this man was an important city official and one whom the mob would respect. Sherwin-White suggests that this high-ranking γραμματεὺς would be

²³⁷ Cf. Trebilco, *Early Christians*, 166–67.

²³⁸ It is likely that this man, assuming he was not a Christian Jew, would not have defended Paul so much as defended the Jews who wanted to distance themselves from Paul’s teachings. Cf. Barrett, *Acts*, 2:932; Marshall, *Acts*, 337.

²³⁹ Cf. L. Johnson, *Acts*, 352.

²⁴⁰ μεγάλη ἡ Ἄρτεμις Ἐφεσίων.

exactly the right person for the mob to approach in order to have their concerns heard; this man had the ability to make a ruling on the matter.²⁴¹

Though the gathering of the silversmiths could be seen as an impromptu meeting of the assembly, able to make a ruling on the concerns Demetrius raised, the γραμματεὺς was not impressed with the evidence. He stated that there could be no dispute about the superior position of Artemis and her temple within the city, that there had been no real wrong committed against her or her temple, and he instructed the mob to present their concern to a “regular” assembly (ἐννομος ἐκκλησία).²⁴² These regular assemblies may have been convened as many as three times per month, so the group would not have had to wait long to have their concerns heard.²⁴³

Ephesus was home to the provincial courts and so the statement of the γραμματεὺς is very much in line with what is known about the courts and the city of the time.²⁴⁴ Further, he tells the crowd that the riot they were involved in was putting the reputation of the city in danger by their disturbance. It is the city’s reputation in the eyes of the emperor that was so significant. The concerns of the γραμματεὺς were well-founded. At that time in history, according to Sherwin-White, the city assemblies were being phased out. The fact that they still existed in Ephesus, and yet the γραμματεὺς was concerned that

²⁴¹ Sherwin-White, *Roman Law*, 87.

²⁴² Sherwin-White, *Roman Law*, 88. Cf. Witherington, *Acts*, 597.

²⁴³ Sherwin-White, *Roman Law*, 87.

²⁴⁴ Ephesus was one of the major cities of the province in which regular court hearings were convened. Trebilco notes, “The Roman proconsul, or one of his legates, regularly held a judicial court in these principal cities of the province so that litigants and petitioners could bring cases to them for adjudication.” Trebilco, “Asia,” 309. The γραμματεὺς suggests that Demetrius ought to have gone through these proper channels in order to register his complaint against Paul and the Christians. See Acts 19:38.

the city would be charged with being disorderly, demonstrates that he feared that the emperor would take this privilege from them.²⁴⁵

After chastising the crowd, the γραμματεὺς dismissed them without incident and sometime shortly after this disturbance ended, Paul left the city for Macedonia (Acts 20:1). If the regular assembly agreed with Demetrius's claims, then Paul had good reason to want to leave Ephesus immediately to avoid having to answer to the charges.

Conclusion

The text of Acts 19 sheds important light on the context of the emergence of Christianity at Ephesus. When Paul arrived in the city for the second time, he found that Apollos had already been there teaching about Jesus but that his teaching was not the same as Paul's. The Ephesian disciples were receptive to Paul's additional teachings about Jesus and Paul was able to have a long and influential period of missionary activity in the city. In similar fashion to the situation presented concerning Corinth, Paul began among the Jews of the city but in short order they rejected him and he was forced to find another location from which to teach. Though the precise nature of the σχολή of Tyrannus cannot be determined, the text of Acts suggests that it was a location from which many were exposed to Paul's teachings and embraced them. Paul's reputation was further heightened by miracles performed via clothing he had touched. The failed exorcism in Paul's name by the Sons of Sceva gives rise to a mass burning of magical scrolls by Ephesian Christians. This devotion to magic is in keeping with the Greco-Roman religious context of the city and it remains to be seen whether the rejection of it by Ephesian Christians recorded in Acts 19 was long-lasting. As was noted in the Greco-Roman context section,

²⁴⁵ Sherwin-White, *Roman Law*, 84–85. Cf. Witherington, *Acts*, 597.

Ephesus was a city thoroughly dedicated to its goddess Artemis and complete rejection of her and associated rituals, activities, and beliefs would have been very difficult. The city's close ties to Artemis and her influence over the city are further demonstrated by the riot of the silversmiths over their perceived diminishing of Artemis by Paul and his message. The early Christians in Ephesus faced their most prominent opposition not from the Jews (as in Corinth) but from the city's adherents to Artemis.

Other Literary Evidence

Acts is not the only biblical source which sheds light on Paul's time in the city of Ephesus. First Corinthians 16:8 suggests that Paul wrote that letter from Ephesus. While not as explicit as the detail found in Acts, the material in 1 Corinthians provides important information and fills in a few of the gaps that Acts does not. Paul's words in this letter shed light on some of the situations that he faced while in Ephesus and also the general climate of the Christian community in the city at the time. First Corinthians 16:9 also notes that Paul had found great opportunity to share the gospel in Ephesus, but that there were "many adversaries." This is in keeping with some of the trials that Acts notes for him while he was there. Both controversy among the silversmiths and also his rejection at the synagogue are two of the many possible examples of adversity he faced in the city. Here the record of two separate sources indicates hostility toward Paul's work in Ephesus.²⁴⁶ This suggests that the opposition was not something that only Paul perceived but something that was significant enough for others, such as the writer of Acts, to observe or be made aware of by his sources.

²⁴⁶ Another source, Acts 20:19, will be discussed in Chapter 6.

First Corinthians also suggests the distinct possibility that Paul was with Priscilla and Aquila in a “house” in Ephesus. In 1 Cor 16:19, Paul notes that the church that meets in Priscilla and Aquila’s “house” greets those in Corinth. This confirms that Priscilla and Aquila were with Paul in Ephesus during his lengthy stay. This greeting also demonstrates that there may have been multiple “congregations” of Christians in Ephesus by the time Paul left the city since in 1 Corinthians he is specific about which group sends greetings to the Corinthians. Priscilla and Aquila are also mentioned in 2 Tim 4:19 and this also indicates that they were still in Ephesus (or had returned there) at the time that letter was written.

The “house” noted in 1 Cor 16:19 is also important. This house may not have been a “house” at all, but may have been a workshop of sorts where the tentmakers could live, work, and also share the gospel message. The possibility that the term “house” refers simply to a “home” and could indicate any number of different dwellings has been discussed above. Also pertinent to this part of the discussion is the statement Paul makes concerning working with his hands to provide for himself while in Ephesus (Acts 20:34–35). “Working with his hands” would imply that he was engaged in his tent-making trade while living in Ephesus.

First Corinthians also notes that Paul “fought wild beasts” (ἐθριομάχησα) while in Ephesus (1 Cor 15:32). The description of the Greco-Roman context above notes that animals were used as part of “the games” in Ephesus as punishment for criminals. While at first it might seem like Paul is referring to such activities in his letter, it is more likely that these beasts are metaphorical and not literal wild animals. Trebilco gives four reasons for this. First, there is evidence that the word θηριομαχέω was used

metaphorically in other literature of the day “to describe the wise man’s struggle against his own passions and against his opponents.”²⁴⁷ Second, if Paul had actually fought with animals in the arena, he would not likely have lived to tell about it.²⁴⁸ Third, in 2 Cor 11:23–29 Paul boasts extensively about hardships he suffered and never mentions fighting actual animals in Ephesus.²⁴⁹ Finally, Trebilco suggests that as a Roman citizen, Paul should have been exempt from this manner of punishment.²⁵⁰ Granted, Paul often does not call on his citizenship to save him when he legally could, but Trebilco suggests that had Paul actually been thrown to the wild beasts and survived to tell about it, he would have lost his citizenship²⁵¹ yet Acts indicates that Paul was still a Roman citizen in later years.²⁵² These reasons in support of metaphorical, rather than literal, beasts are quite reasonable.

The text of 1 Corinthians provides important additional details about the historical situation of Christians in Ephesus during Paul’s lengthy stay in the city. First Corinthians details both great opportunity and great challenge in the city regarding the spread of early Christianity. This mirrors the situation presented in Acts where there is great opportunity at the *σχολή* of Tyrannus but great opposition from the synagogue and the silversmiths. The metaphorical “wild beasts” that Paul mentions in 1 Corinthians may refer to these or other unnamed opponents in the city. The letter also shows that there may have been

²⁴⁷ Trebilco, *Early Christians*, 58.

²⁴⁸ Trebilco, *Early Christians*, 59. See also discussion of gladiatorial contests above.

²⁴⁹ Trebilco, *Early Christians*, 59.

²⁵⁰ This is of course only a valid argument if Paul was indeed a Roman citizen which has been debated by scholars. Examples of those who argue in favour of citizenship are Bruce, *Paul*, 37–40; van Minnen, “Paul the Roman Citizen,” 43–52; S. Adams, “Paul the Roman Citizen,” 309–26.

²⁵¹ There are instances of Roman citizens who were punished in ways from which their citizenship ought to have protected them but it remains unlikely that Paul would have been subject to these extremes for his activities. Trebilco, *Early Christians*, 59.

²⁵² Examples: Acts 22:25, 23:27, 25:11. If Paul wrote 1 Corinthians from Ephesus during his stay in that city recorded in Acts 19 and notes that he “fought wild beasts” at that time, then the claims to citizenship later in Acts suggest that he was not deprived of citizenship due to an earlier trial.

more than one group of Christians meeting in different locations throughout the city of Ephesus as one particular group, those meeting in the “house” of Priscilla and Aquila, greet the Christians in Corinth.

From Historic Christian Context to Immediate Christian Context

The above description of Greco-Roman Ephesus and the historic²⁵³ Christian context in that city has laid two important layers in the thick description of early Ephesian Christianity. These serve the same purpose as similar layers of context formulated concerning Corinth in Chapter 3. Aspects of the thick description of Ephesus begun in this chapter will be elaborated on in the next two chapters with particular concern for their influence on the immediate context of the Christians in Ephesus as Paul writes Ephesians and 1 Timothy. Aspects of the description which will be further probed are the influence of Artemis worship on the emerging church, potential continuing religious syncretism among the Ephesian Christians, and the opposition to Christianity in Ephesus. Aspects of general social customs such as honour, shame, and patronage will also be applied.

²⁵³ “Historic” Christian context as opposed to the immediate context of Christianity when 1 Corinthians was written. This distinction has been discussed in Chapter 2.

CHAPTER 6: THE GIFT OF LEADERSHIP FUNCTIONS IN EPH 4:1–16

Introduction

This chapter will build on the thick description of Christianity at Ephesus established in Chapter 5 and will further thicken that description with details gleaned about the immediate context of the Ephesian Christian community from the text of Ephesians and the text of Acts 20:17–38. The text of Eph 4:1–16 will then be examined in light of the thick description in order to determine the extent to which this text is grounded in the historical context, the purpose of the leadership functions mentioned within it, and the attitudes concerning leadership promoted through it.

Immediate Christian Context

Additional pieces of information concerning Christianity in the city of Ephesus must be considered before examining the text of Eph 4:1–16. These details further thicken the description that was established in Chapter 5. The first issue that must be explored is the additional detail provided by Acts 20:17–38 concerning the Ephesian situation. In this account Paul speaks to the elders of the church of Ephesus on his way to Jerusalem. His evaluation of the Ephesian situation is significant for understanding the immediate context of the letter he would later write them. The second issue is related to when Ephesians was written. The approximate length of time that had lapsed between Paul's visit to Ephesus in Acts 19 and the writing of Ephesians could have implications for understanding the historical situation at the time of the letter writing. The third issue to be explored is related to the continued influence of Artemis worship on the Ephesian

Christians and whether or not Paul addresses this in Ephesians. These three issues of immediate historical context help to illumine the purpose of Eph 4:1–16.

Paul and the Ephesian Elders

Following his departure from Ephesus the text of Acts suggests that Paul travelled through Macedonia, eventually coming to Greece where he spent three months. These travels may have taken a year.¹ By the time Paul summoned the Ephesian elders to meet with him in Miletus, likely more than a year had passed since he left the city.²

Paul's speech to the Ephesian elders in Acts 20:18–35 is unique among the speeches of Acts in that it is the only one addressed to a Christian audience. The speeches of Acts have been studied by many and perspectives on the historicity of them vary.³ As noted in Chapter 2, the assumption in this study is that Acts is historically reliable and so it will be accepted that there was indeed an encounter between Paul and the Ephesian elders at Miletus and that the content of the speech in Acts 20:18–35 reflects Paul's words to these individuals.⁴

¹ Witherington, *Acts*, 601; Bruce, *Acts*, 423; S. Porter, *Apostle Paul*, 57.

² S. Porter, *Apostle Paul*, 57–58. S. Porter presents a helpful timeline which presents possible dates for the events in Paul's life with alternatives shown for disputed events. In rough agreement with S. Porter's timeline on this series of events see Reicke, *Re-Examining Paul's Letters*, 37. An alternative timeline is suggested by Campbell, although he does not accept Acts as a reliable source and thus does not include this visit with the Ephesian elders in his scenario. He dates Paul's final visit to Jerusalem to 52 which is five years earlier than Acts might suggest. Campbell places the writing of Ephesians (which he calls "Laodiceans") prior to this trip, in mid-50. See Campbell, *Framing Paul*, 412–14.

³ Some general studies on the speeches of Acts include Dibelius, "Speeches in Acts," 138–85; Cadbury, "Speeches in Acts," 402–27; Bruce, *Acts*, 34–46; Bruce, "Speeches in Acts," 53–68; Evans, "Speeches in Acts," 287–302; L. Johnson, *Septuagintal Midrash*; Soards, *Speeches in Acts*.

⁴ This is not to say that they are Paul's exact words, only that the author of Acts has reproduced at least an accurate summary. Scholarship is divided over how much of the speech might be Paul's and how much is a creation of the author of Acts. Some would suggest that this speech is compiled by the author of Acts in order to serve his purposes. For example Haenchen, *Acts*, 590; Lüdemann, *Early Christianity*, 230; Conzelmann, *Acts*, 173; Watson, "Paul's Speech," 187. Witherington notes that "The case for labeling this a Paulinist but not a Pauline speech is weak, even in regard to the more disputable material in vv. 28–30." Witherington, *Acts*, 611. Bruce suggests the author of Acts heard Paul deliver the speech. Bruce, *Acts*, 429. That the use of the term *πρεσβύτεροι* is anachronistic and demonstrates that this speech was written in a time period after Paul is not a good argument. The term was used in first-century Judaism and does not

This speech is often compared to a “farewell discourse” where the speaker has his or her own death in view.⁵ While death may be in mind for Paul, the text does not state this explicitly. Instead of focusing on Paul’s death, the text points to the fact that Paul does not expect to see the Ephesian Christians again because he expects imprisonment and affliction to await him in Jerusalem (Acts 20:23). Witherington suggests that this text points only to Paul’s expectation that this is his final visit to Asia, not necessarily that he expects to die soon.⁶ Even if Paul does have his own death in view, he is not on his deathbed as the speech is made and so equating this text with a farewell discourse is not the best option. Paul discusses his “departure” in Acts 20:29 and suggests that after that departure the community will experience oppression from “fierce wolves.” This departure is more likely to be his departure from his missionary activity, rather than specifically his death. As will be discussed below and in Chapter 7, the Ephesian Christian community faced significant challenges prior to Paul’s actual death.

This encounter between Paul and the Ephesian elders contains important information which confirms that Paul faced opposition while in Ephesus and provides clues as to Paul’s perception of the state of Ephesian Christianity in the future. First, Acts 20:19 records that Paul’s time in Ephesus was filled with tears and trials and that he was subject to plots by the Jews. In Chapter 5 it was noted that Paul had many adversaries in Ephesus (1 Cor 16:9) and that he fought metaphorical “wild beasts” (1 Cor 15:32) while in that location. These descriptions combined with the riot of the Ephesian silversmiths

necessarily reflect a particularly long development of Christian ecclesiology. Witherington, *Acts*, 611–12; Malina and Pilch, *Acts*, 145–46. Contra Haenchen, *Acts*, 592–93; Pervo, *Acts*, 516–17, 524; Conzelmann, *Acts*, 173. This study’s assumptions concerning the reliability of Acts have been discussed in Chapter 2.

⁵ For example, see L. Johnson, *Acts*, 362–67; Malina and Pilch, *Acts*, 146; Lüdemann, *Early Christianity*, 226; Watson, “Paul’s Speech,” 185.

⁶ Witherington, *Acts*, 613, 618–20. Cf. Hemer, “Speeches of Acts,” 81–82; Kilgallen, “Paul’s Speech,” 112–21.

also discussed in Chapter 5 suggest that Paul's lengthy visit to Ephesus was anything but smooth and that Christianity emerged in that city amid much antagonism.⁷

Paul's persistence in sharing his message in Ephesus is also noted in his speech to the elders. The text states that Paul taught both in public and "from house to house" (Acts 20:20).⁸ This suggests multiple venues for teaching while he was in the city whereas Acts 19 explicitly emphasizes only the synagogue and σχολή. Paul's words in Acts 20:20 along with Demetrius's claim that "almost all of Asia" had heard Paul (Acts 19:26) suggests that there were multiple places that Paul's message may have been heard—beyond the early teaching from the synagogue and later regular instruction from the σχολή. Multiple venues for hearing Paul's message may also have given rise to multiple pockets of Christians meeting throughout the city. This is also suggested in 1 Cor 16:19 which was discussed in Chapter 5.

A final piece of information which can be gleaned from Paul's meeting with the Ephesian elders⁹ points ahead to what Paul anticipated would happen to the Christian

⁷ See Bruce, *Acts*, 430. Pervo suggests that Acts 19 paints only a rosy picture of the time Paul spends in Ephesus in contrast to a dismal picture in the epistles. Pervo, *Acts*, 515–16. It is not necessary to see the account of Paul's stay in Ephesus recorded in Acts 19 as in conflict with the later report of Acts 20:10 or of Paul's letters. It is true that Acts 19 documents some successes of Paul's time in Ephesus but it does not completely gloss over difficulties. Paul is rejected by the Jews. Christians mix magic with their newfound faith (that they would later repent of it this does not mean that there were no related trials for Paul prior to the point of repentance). There is a riot by local silversmiths over Paul's teachings and it is unlikely that the sentiments expressed by Demetrius and his supporters disappeared when the γραμματεὺς told them to take their case before a regular meeting of the assembly (see Chapter 5 for discussion). The reports of Acts 19; 20:19 and that of Paul's letters are not in conflict.

⁸ δημοσία καὶ κατ' οἴκους. This denotes teaching in both the public and private sphere. See L. Johnson, *Acts*, 360; Witherington, *Acts*, 617; Bruce, *Acts*, 431. Haenchen suggests that the "houses" should be understood as the "house churches." Haenchen, *Acts*, 591.

⁹ Here Paul addresses the πρεσβύτεροι whom he later calls ἐπίσκοποι. He also describes the relationship between these men and the Ephesian Christians with the verb ποιμαίνω. This is an instance where the same men are described with two (or three if ποιμαίνω refers to the activity carried out by those leaders described with the noun ποιμήν) different leadership functions. This may indicate that the tasks associated with these three separate functions could be carried out by one person, that the tasks of these three functions overlapped and were sometimes performed by the same person, or that these three functions were synonymous. The text does not provide enough evidence to make concrete assertions. To determine

community in Ephesus in the future (Acts 20:29–31). His pronouncement was grim: “wolves” would come and destroy the “flock” and some of the Christians would begin to twist the message of Christianity and draw adherents away. If Paul anticipated these eventualities, it suggests that the adversaries he encountered while in Ephesus were still problematic after he left. Bruce suggests that the plea for the elders to “remember” all that Paul did for them while he was with them indicates that already, in Paul’s year-long absence, his adversaries had been attacking him and his ministry among the Ephesians.¹⁰

Witherington specifically notes that the statements concerning future conflict in the Ephesian Christian community are general statements and should not be linked with later gnostic tendencies.¹¹ While the assertion that Paul is pointing to a non-specific kind of conflict is well taken, this does not mean that Paul did not have an inkling that there would be problems in Ephesus because of his previous experiences there. As has been noted, Paul experienced opposition while in Ephesus as evidenced by Acts 19:1–41, 20:19, 1 Cor 15:32, and 16:9. Paul brought these difficulties to the minds of his hearers in Acts 20:19 and they cannot be forgotten when considering Acts 20:28–31.¹² In fact, Kilgallen suggests that the very purpose of this unusual meeting between Paul and the Ephesian elders is found in vv. 25 and 28 and the warning of conflict in vv. 29–30 further

what tasks were associated with each leadership function and its relationship with other leadership functions is beyond the scope of this study. It is worth noting, however, with Barrett, that if ever Paul (or the author of Acts) wanted to emphasize apostolic succession or the institution of offices in the early church, this would be a perfect place to do so. Significantly, the text does no such thing. See Barrett, “Apollos,” 35–36; Witherington, *Acts*, 615; Bruce, *Acts*, 433.

¹⁰ Bruce, *Acts*, 430.

¹¹ Witherington, *Acts*, 619. Those who support this as reference to Gnosticism in Ephesus include Haenchen, *Acts*, 593; Lüdemann, *Early Christianity*, 227.

¹² Pervo suggests that here the author of Acts presents a very different picture of Paul’s time in Ephesus than in Acts 19. This has been refuted above. Pervo attributes this apparent contrast to the author of Acts using Paul’s letters as a source for the material in Acts 20:19. That the author of Acts gives no indication that he knew Paul’s letters is supported by Bruce, *Acts*, 430; Witherington, *Acts*, 611–12.

explain the warning issued in v. 28.¹³ He says, “While one may rightly see this discourse as a farewell speech, it is a speech principally concerned to urge pastoral care in a time when Paul cannot help and a particularly sinister threat to the community is imminent.”¹⁴ As will be discussed below, striving for unity is a major theme of the letter to the Ephesians. The fact that the Christian community in Ephesus seems to have been fraught with problems from the beginning suggests that a letter addressing a need for unity is quite fitting of the Ephesian situation.

The Time of the Writing of Ephesians

Paul’s letter to the Ephesians was written from prison (Eph 3:1) sometime after he left the city in Acts 20:1 and after his meeting with the Ephesian elders in Acts 20:17–38. The letter itself gives no indication of when or where Paul wrote, though Paul is known to have been in prison in Philippi (one night, Acts 16:23–26), Jerusalem (for a short time only, Acts 21:33–23:22), Caesarea (two years, Acts 23:23–26:32), and Rome (two years, Acts 28:11–30).¹⁵ The location from which Paul wrote Ephesians, if it can be determined, would also indicate the approximate time when he wrote the letter. Most

¹³ Kilgallen, “Paul’s Speech,” 119. He argues that v. 28 ought to be considered as equally significant to the purpose as v. 25 which others have suggested is the center of a “chiastic” or inverse parallel structure. For example see Exum, “Structure of Paul’s Speech,” 233–36.

¹⁴ Kilgallen, “Paul’s Speech,” 121. Soards also points to the fact that this speech’s “major concern” is the future. Soards, *Speeches in Acts*, 105.

¹⁵ It has also been suggested that Paul was in prison in Ephesus though there is no explicit record of it in the New Testament (though it is noted in *Acts of Paul* 6). It is not likely that Paul wrote to the Ephesian Christians from prison in Ephesus. Since it is assumed here that Ephesus was either the intended destination for Ephesians or at least one of the intended destinations (see discussion in Chapter 2), an Ephesian imprisonment as the letter’s place of origin seems unlikely. It has also been suggested that Paul was in prison in Corinth before his case was heard by Gallio (Acts 18:12–17), though there is also no record of such an imprisonment in the New Testament. See brief discussion in S. Porter, *Apostle Paul*, 67. Even if this imprisonment occurred, it would have been prior to Paul’s visit to Ephesus and the resulting growth of Christianity in that city so there would have been no reason to send a letter. If the account of Acts is accepted, then there were no Christians in that city known to Paul and there may not have been any Christians there at all (cf. Acts 18:19–21).

scholars suggest, if Paul indeed wrote Ephesians, that it was written from Rome.¹⁶ If this is true, then somewhere between five and seven years would have passed between Paul's visit to Ephesus in Acts 19 and the writing of the letter to the Ephesians.¹⁷ This could help explain why Paul appears not to know the recipients of the letter: much time had passed since he had been in Ephesus and the Christian community may have undergone many changes in membership.¹⁸ Sufficient time had passed that Paul was no longer intimately acquainted with the individual Christians there. Even if Paul wrote Ephesians from Caesarea, a period of two to five years may have passed between visit and letter. The longer the period between Paul's visit and the sending of the letter the more sense his seemingly detached remarks make if indeed the letter was targeted at the Ephesians specifically.¹⁹

Artemis Worship and the Letter to the Ephesians

The final piece of immediate historical context to examine here is the potential influence that the cult of Artemis had on the recipients of Ephesians. Chapter 5 discussed the importance of the goddess to the city and her great influence over many aspects of life. Those living in the city of Ephesus could not help but be affected by Artemis worship; her influence was inescapable.

Two studies are of particular note for finding in the language of Ephesians a clear polemic against Artemis. These are Immendörfer's *Ephesians and Artemis* and Arnold's

¹⁶ See discussion in S. Porter, *Apostle Paul*, 62–63.

¹⁷ For potential timelines for when Paul visited Ephesus and when he wrote Ephesians, see S. Porter, *Apostle Paul*, 55–60. Campbell does not accept the testimony of Acts and places the writing of Ephesians (which he calls "Laodiceans") at the same approximate time as the founding visit to Ephesus. Campbell, *Framing Paul*, 413.

¹⁸ See discussion in Immendörfer, *Ephesians and Artemis*, 73.

¹⁹ As noted in Chapter 2, there may have been several locations which received the letter and that possibility must remain open.

Ephesians: Power and Magic. Arnold views Ephesus as a city that is rooted in magic and mystery cults.²⁰ These were common in Asia Minor in the first century and this is important background for his understanding of the context in which *Ephesians* was written.²¹ Arnold sees a “power motif” running through *Ephesians*.²² This is significant to his study because he suggests that the Ephesians looked to Artemis, who held power over the demons of the underworld, to protect them from these spirits which they greatly feared.²³ Arnold thus concludes that God is portrayed in *Ephesians* as the one whose power can surpass that of Artemis and her influence.²⁴ Arnold suggests that *Ephesians* “is a response to the felt needs of the common people within the churches of western Asia Minor, who perceived themselves as oppressed by the demonic realm.”²⁵ Arnold’s study is not without criticism,²⁶ but the concept of Artemis as a spiritual “force” in Ephesus which might negatively influence Ephesian Christians is important to consider in the analysis of Eph 4:1–16.

Immendorfer also studies the text of *Ephesians* and attempts to discern there a connection with Artemis worship. Immendorfer concludes, based on his literary analysis of *Ephesians* and texts pertaining to Artemis worship in Ephesus, that the author of *Ephesians* and the Ephesian Christians had a significant amount of common knowledge

²⁰ Arnold, *Ephesians*, 13–16.

²¹ There is debate as to whether Ephesus was any more involved in these practices than other cities. See Immendorfer, *Ephesians and Artemis*, 112. Cf. Arnold, *Ephesians*, 14–20; Schwindt, *Weltbild des Epheserbriefes*, 77–87; Strelan, *Paul, Artemis and the Jews*, 86–87. For this study it is not so important to prove that the practice was more prevalent in Ephesus as it is to understand that it was indeed a factor in Ephesus.

²² Arnold, *Ephesians*, 1.

²³ Arnold, *Ephesians*, 22–28.

²⁴ Arnold, *Ephesians*, 72, 122.

²⁵ Arnold, *Ephesians*, 171.

²⁶ See Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 101; Strelan, *Paul, Artemis and the Jews*, 83–94.

concerning Artemis worship in that city.²⁷ Further, he finds a range of allusions to cultic practices of Artemis worship in the letter.²⁸ In order to bolster his case he also examines Colossians for similar allusions to determine if Ephesians was unique in its allusions to Artemis. He determines that “Both cities have the same general religious context. However, specific elements of the context of Ephesus which played no role for Colossae can be found in Ephesians, but not in Colossians. This indicates that these specific passages in Ephesians show a distinct authorial intent.”²⁹ According to Immendorfer’s study, the letter to the Ephesians ought to be read as specifically speaking to the needs of a group of Christians whose religious background was Artemis worship and who still lived in a city which was inextricably tied to the worship of that deity. He concludes,

In view of this historical background, one has to conclude that Ephesians intends to lay the foundation for a new world-view and identity. If one considers its readers’ former dedication to Artemis, the strong Christological emphasis of Ephesians makes sense. Two aspects are remarkable. First, Ephesians makes it clear that readers have all (and more) in Christ than they could have expected formerly from Artemis, for example, in terms of blessing, protection, power, belonging, identity and glorification. This also shows that the author knew the thinking and needs of his readers very well. Second, Ephesians lists things that Christ accomplished *for believers*, which correspond to things that the followers of Artemis formerly accomplished *for their goddess*. In other words: what the Ephesians did for Artemis, Christ did for the church.³⁰

This strong connection between the letter to the Ephesians and Artemis worship is important to consider in examining Eph 4:1–16. The pull of Artemis cannot be overlooked when considering the divisions and struggle that Paul faced while in Ephesus and also the impending problems that Paul foresaw for the Ephesian Christians and

²⁷ Immendorfer, *Ephesians and Artemis*, 299.

²⁸ Immendorfer, *Ephesians and Artemis*, 306–7.

²⁹ Immendorfer, *Ephesians and Artemis*, 311.

³⁰ Immendorfer, *Ephesians and Artemis*, 320.

articulated during his visit with the Ephesian elders. These factors underlie the text of Eph 4:1–16.

Summary of Immediate Christian Context

The thick description which has been created in the previous chapter and the beginning of this one shows that the Ephesian Christians lived in a city that was ruled by influences that were typical of the Greco-Roman world and also those that were unique to their location. They could not escape the values of honour, shame and patronage (discussed in Chapters 3 and 5); these were some of the core values of their society. They also could not escape the unique influence that Artemis had on the city. Paul's successes in Ephesus during his lengthy visit to the city brought him into conflict with Artemis worshippers and even prior to that the Christians struggled to leave behind their pre-conversion practices relating to magic—also connected to the cult of Artemis. Though Acts 19 records that the Christians burned their magic scrolls and turned away from such practices, it is not at all certain whether these Christians were able to maintain their new commitment to Christianity exclusively or whether they might have fallen back into their old habits. It is also possible that subsequent converts could have struggled to resist the same pull toward mixing Artemis worship with their new-found Christian beliefs. The situation in Ephesus when Paul left it was such that over a year later when he met with the Ephesian elders at Miletus, he saw fit to warn them that trouble was coming for the Christians of Ephesus both from outside the church and within it. Indeed, some of Paul's words to the elders could imply that trouble already existed in the Christian community there. All of these details, combined together, set the stage for the situation in Ephesus when Paul writes to them during his Roman imprisonment several years after his initial

encounters with them: the Ephesian Christians are very likely facing internal and external conflicts, some or all of which have connections to the pervasive influence of the cult of Artemis.

Translation

Ephesians 4:1–16 can be translated as follows:

¹Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, urge you to live in a manner in keeping with the calling to which you have been called. ²Do this with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, ³being eager to protect the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.

⁴You have been called into one body and one spirit, just as you have also been called in one hope of your calling. ⁵You have been called into one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶one God and Father of all who is the one who is above all and through all and in all.

⁷Now, to each one of us was given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. ⁸For this reason, it is written:

“After ascending to the heights, he took captivity captive and he gave gifts to humanity.”

⁹And what does “he ascended” mean except that he also descended to the lower regions of the earth? ¹⁰The one who descends is also the one who ascends above all the heavens in order that he might make everything complete. ¹¹And he himself gave the apostles, and the prophets, and the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers, ¹²for the training of the saints, for the work of service, and for the building up of the body of Christ. ¹³This work will continue until we all are able to reach unity of the faith and knowledge of the son of God, an adult-like maturity, and the measure of the fullness of Christ ¹⁴in order that we might no longer be infants who are tossed by waves and carried about by every wind of teaching resulting from the deception of humanity and the scheming of deceit.

¹⁵Instead, speaking the truth in love, we should grow into all that he, Christ the head, is. ¹⁶With him the whole body is joined together and is held together through all ligaments of support according to the working in the measure of each individual part which makes the body grow into the building up of itself in love.

Analysis

The letter to the Ephesians can be loosely divided into two broad sections exclusive of the introductory remarks and the final greetings: 1:3–3:21 and 4:1–6:20.³¹ The first part of the letter is often described as focusing on “doctrine” or “theology” though Lincoln points out that this is a simplistic label for the complex content of the first section. He says, “Within the framework of an extended thanksgiving these chapters [1–3] contain a reminder to the Gentile Christian readers of the privileges and status they enjoy as believers in Christ and members of the Church, reinforcing for them their significance in God’s plan for history and the cosmos.”³² The first section of the letter reminds the readers from where they have come—their ‘trespasses and sins’ (2:1)—and where they now are: in Christ (2:13).

The text of Eph 4:1–16 falls at the beginning of the second portion of the letter, often referred to as the *paraenesis*.³³ This refers to a section of teachings or exhortations. This shift in the letter’s focus is marked by the phrase “Thus, I, the prisoner of the Lord,

³¹ There are many perspectives on where other sub-divisions lie, but a break at 4:1 is almost universal. Many of the differences in structure hinge on whether the analysis is guided by epistolary theory with a prescript, body, and postscript, or rhetorical theory with exordium, narratio, exhortatio, and peroratio. See Lincoln for a side-by-side discussion of the differences in the two possible structures. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, xxxvi–xlvi.

³² Lincoln, *Ephesians*, xxxvi.

³³ That the letter is divided into two major sections at this point, and that the second half of the letter is focused on teaching or exhortation, is a common conclusion of commentators. For example: Barth, *Ephesians 4–6*, 452; Bruce, *Epistles*, 333; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 224; Roark, “Interpreting Ephesians 4–6,” 32; S. Porter, *Apostle Paul*, 399; Martin, *Ephesians, Colossians and Philemon*, 9–10; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 64–69. Not all use the term *paraenesis*. Schnackenburg prefers the term “paraclesis.” Schnackenburg, *Ephesians*, 158. For discussion of the use of *paraenesis* in general and how it is used in this letter see Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 226–27. Winger does not agree with this division and rejects the idea that there is a change from a doctrinal focus to an ethical focus. Winger, *Ephesians*, 424. Rather, he sees the text in Eph 4 and following as further developing the epistle’s argument instead of changing its direction. Winger, *Ephesians*, 479. That the second half of the epistle continues to advance the argument of the letter can be accepted without also having to deny the possibility of a change in tone to exhortation.

exhort you . . . ”³⁴ Paul uses his identification as the “prisoner of the Lord” to lend weight to the exhortation that he is about to make to the readers.

In Eph 4:1–16 Paul is reminding the Ephesian Christians of the calling that they have to live as Christians and he also demonstrates to them that God has given them gifts to be able to do this. They have been called to live in a worthy manner, with humility, gentleness, patience, and love in order to protect the unity of the spirit and the bond of peace. This unity, which also demonstrates maturity, is the ultimate goal for the Christian community in Ephesus. The passage further notes that God gives gifts to the people in order to help them achieve these goals. One of the gifts given is the gift of Christian leaders. In this passage the leaders in view are the apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastors and teachers.³⁵ For the purposes of this analysis, the gift of leaders who can assist the Ephesian Christians in living up to that calling is the focal point.

The thick description of Christianity at Ephesus created in Chapter 5 and at the beginning of this chapter helps to highlight the particular meaning of some of these concepts in the eyes of the first-century Ephesians. The following analysis will consider the concepts of calling, humility, gentleness, patience, unity, and gifts in addition to the five leadership functions mentioned in the passage in light of the thick description.

The “Call” of the Ephesians and Paul’s Authority (4:1–3)

In the beginning of the passage, Paul asks or “urges” the Ephesian Christians to live in accordance with the task or calling that God has given to them. Further to this, he gives them direction on the attitudes they should hold while seeking to live out this calling. That they should live according to their calling is not an unusual thing for him to say; in

³⁴ Παρακαλῶ οὖν ὑμᾶς ἐγὼ ὁ δέσμιος ἐν κυρίῳ (Eph 4:1a).

³⁵ The potential relationship between pastors and teachers will be discussed below.

the Greco-Roman world it was expected that a person live up to the expectations for the role that he or she played in society.³⁶ Thus, for the Ephesian Christians reading Paul's words, it would not seem abnormal that they are being reminded to live in a particular way because of the fact that they were Christians. In contrast to this "normal" request, two aspects of the initial verse of this passage stand out as unusual. First, Paul reminds the readers that he is a prisoner. Normally a prisoner would have no social status and certainly would not be in a position of authority to make demands on anyone. Second, Paul urges them to live out their calling by adhering to certain virtues (humility, gentleness, patience). As will be discussed in more detail below, these "virtues" were at worst counter-cultural and at best extremely difficult to live up to. He also urges them to hold to these virtues while bearing with one another in love and peaceably protecting the unity of the spirit. The following section will discuss the concept of a "calling" in the Ephesian context, Paul's unusual circumstances as a prisoner who appears to hold authority, and the strange virtues that Paul promotes to his audience.

The Ephesian Calling

When Paul addresses the idea of the Ephesians and their "calling" he uses the words κλήσεως and ἐκλήθητε. Louw and Nida suggest these words are within a semantic domain which conveys the meaning of "to urgently invite someone to accept responsibilities for a particular task, implying a new relationship to the one who does the calling."³⁷ They also note that the noun κλη̃σις can refer to "the station in life or social role which one has."³⁸ Here we see that Paul is referring to both the station or rank assigned to the Ephesian

³⁶ Cf. discussion of social positions and the expectation of benefactions and patronage which went with certain roles from Chapters 3 and 5.

³⁷ L&N, 1:423.

³⁸ L&N, 1:732.

Christians and also the action of being called or summoned to take on the tasks associated with the role.

Culturally and socially, these words may have brought two ideas to the forefront of the minds of the original hearers or readers. First, the Ephesian Christians have been summoned to a particular task by their God, a being upon whom they would place power and authority. Second, having accepted that responsibility, they exist in a particular station in life. The way they might perceive this “calling” could be analogous to a particular social standing or division in society. The various social classes carried with them certain expectations and responsibilities and in first-century Ephesus the distinction between social classes and the special rights of citizens appear to have been very important.³⁹ It is appropriate to see this Christian calling, which Paul brings to their minds, as also carrying a unique set of responsibilities and expectations.⁴⁰ Because the Ephesians would have been used to carrying out responsibilities designated by their social roles, they may also have been convicted to take seriously the responsibility they had in their role as Christians.⁴¹

In order to appreciate the effect of these words and concepts on the Ephesian Christians, it is necessary to understand not just the various social classes extant in the city of Ephesus during the first century, but also some of the other social systems that were prevalent in the Greco-Roman world. Although every attempt has been made to present material specific to Ephesus, it is not always the case that enough Ephesus-

³⁹ See discussion of social classes in Chapters 3 and 5.

⁴⁰ The calling of God brings with it a corresponding responsibility. Barth notes, “The nature and effect of calling may be compared with the bestowal of a title or a patent of nobility. Those made God’s own people and servants (1:14 etc.) are equivalent knights of God. According to Paul they are bound to a specific code of honor and conduct.” Barth, *Ephesians 4–6*, 454. Cf. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 235; Schnackenburg, *Ephesians*, 162.

⁴¹ Particularly those who were devoted to their Christian faith and who earnestly wanted to become exemplary members of the group.

specific information is available, nor is it always the case that social situations in every city were different. Such is the case in regards to the honour and shame principles which existed in the Greco-Roman world in the first century. These have been discussed in Chapters 3 and 5. Though different facets of society may have associated a different level of honour or shame with any given activity, the notions that honour existed, that it was in limited supply, and that one wanted to attain as much honour as possible for oneself were fairly standard across the first-century Mediterranean world.

Romans, Jews, and Christians all found honour in different activities. Indeed at times what Romans found dishonourable (like humility and servitude) was actually seen as having honour in Christian circles.⁴² Even though Christians may not have found honour in the same activities that their fellow non-Christian citizens did, they still could not escape the social concepts of honour and shame completely. It is more likely that Christians promoted different ideas of honourable behaviour than that they dismissed the concept of honour all together.

As noted above, honour is a group concept and can be ascribed to or acquired by a group or an individual. Malina asserts that honour could be ascribed to a group (such as the Christians) by God.⁴³ If God, as a divine patron, ascribed honour to the Ephesian Christians, then they owed him honour in return. They also would be encouraged to continue to seek honour in the sight of God, rather than in the sight of society at large. In some ways, this is what Paul is doing at the beginning of this passage.

A final piece of the honour puzzle which is relevant to this study is the honour which is bound up in patron-client relationships. This has already been discussed in

⁴² Cf. Pitt-Rivers, "Honour and Social Status," 22; Hess, "διακονέω," 3:545; Beyer, "διακονέω," 2:82.

⁴³ Malina, *New Testament World*, 34.

Chapter 3 and does not need repetition here. This concept assists in understanding the way Christians viewed their relationship with God. The relationship between God and the Ephesian Christians can be viewed as a sort of patron-client relationship.

There are thus three pieces of information which knowledge of the honour-shame dynamic provides in relation to this discussion of Paul and Eph 4. First, the fact that honour was a virtue which individuals sought for themselves helps to explain Paul's urging the Ephesians to live their lives in a worthy manner. Second, the idea of collective honour in a group helps to explain one reason behind Paul's push for unity of the Christian group at Ephesus which will be discussed further below. Third, the way in which patron-client relationships contributed to the furthering of honour both for individuals and for groups helps to explain how the Ephesian Christians may have viewed their relationship to God as their patron, and also perhaps to Paul, his representative and their teacher.

In relation to individual honour in the Eph 4 passage, Paul is reminding his readers that they have been placed by God into a particular station or calling in life and further, he is asking them to live their lives in a way that is worthy of the responsibilities and privileges that go along with that station. As noted in Chapters 3 and 5, social classes were very important to the Ephesians and the higher the class that a person belonged to, the more honour a person had. Understanding the devotion that the Ephesians may have had to their social class system helps to explain the seriousness with which the Ephesians would accept the challenge of living their Christian lives in a fitting and suitable way. To fail to live up to the social expectations placed upon a group would have brought shame

to both the individual and the group as a whole. To be in good standing with the group and with the world depended on a person maintaining or increasing their personal honour.

In addition to the underlying social dimension to the concept of “calling” which is discussed above, another component to the calling of an Ephesian Christian would have included being called “to” Christ and “away from” Artemis. As noted in Chapter 5 and in the beginning of this chapter, the likelihood that some Ephesian Christians still struggled with the pull of Artemis is great. Paul, in 4:1, reminds these Christians of the responsibility they have as Christians to completely turn away from Artemis and her influences.

Paul’s Authority as an Imprisoned Leader

By virtue of his writing to the Ephesian Christians and admonishing them to follow his directions, Paul assumes that he has a good standing with the group of Ephesian Christians. That he *should* have such authority and good standing with them, in spite of his status as a prisoner, is at first somewhat surprising. The first question that must be explored in relation to this is where Paul received his initial authority and the second is how he managed to maintain it in light of his shameful status as a prisoner.

Although Paul may have eventually held authority or maintained it among the Christians in Ephesus because of the belief that he was called by God as an apostle,⁴⁴ he

⁴⁴ Schütz asserts that Paul perceived of his own authority in two ways: “(1) The legitimacy of an apostle lies in the combination of his calling to preach the gospel and his being granted a resurrection vision, but for Paul his *authority* has as its starting point the call to preach. All authority is possible only on the grounds that it is an extension of this original commission. (2) Such extension permits the apostle to continue his responsibility for the Christian community. Paul shows a marked preference for thinking of his extended authority in particular reference to those communities which he ‘fathered,’ but I Cor. 3 shows that an apostle can also build on another man’s foundation.” Schütz, *Apostolic Authority*, 281. Paul’s perception of his own authority may indeed follow these patterns, but Paul only has as much authority in Ephesus as the Ephesians allow him. Therefore, the factors which may have influenced the Ephesians to accept Paul as authoritative must be considered.

could not have exercised this claim to authority until there was a group of Christians who were willing to concede God the authority to choose Paul. For this reason, before he could use any apostolic claims of authority, Paul would have had to convince people of the truth of the gospel. Only after the people subscribed to the gospel message would they have allowed Paul any authority based on his status as an apostle.

As a Jew, Paul may have commanded a good level of authority among the Jewish Christians due to his training and work as a Pharisee (cf. Acts 23:6; 26:5; Phil 3:5). He clearly was well-versed in the Jewish faith and could effectively and clearly articulate Jesus as the Jewish Messiah. His fellow Christian converts from Judaism may have placed extra authority on him because of these credentials. The gentiles who heard Paul's message, on the other hand, would not have so easily given him authority based on his status as a Jewish Pharisee—at least not until they were convinced of the truth of his message.

One key to making sense of Paul's authority as a leader is the status afforded to philosophers and teachers in the city of Ephesus.⁴⁵ This has been discussed in Chapter 5. Meeks suggests that philosophical schools are one of four potential models upon which Paul's churches may have been based.⁴⁶ This allows for a possible analogy for Paul's authority in Ephesus. Though Paul initially is said to have preached in the synagogue of Ephesus (Acts 19:8), after clashing with people there, Paul left the synagogue, took his

⁴⁵ Even if Paul was not looked on as a "great" teacher by the higher echelons of Ephesian society, it is reasonable to assume that those whom Paul influenced with the Christian message would have seen him as a "great" teacher and afforded him a high status from their perspective because of it.

⁴⁶ Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 81–84. The other three possible models are voluntary associations, the household, and synagogues. See discussion in Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 74–84. The idea that Paul himself could be viewed as the teacher of a philosophical school has been discussed in Chapter 5.

converts with him, and had discussions in the σχολή of Tyrannus (Acts 19:9–10).⁴⁷ This gives a small piece of evidence which helps explain how Paul managed to gain support for his message and likely further status or authority for himself even after being rejected by the synagogue.

If Paul taught in the σχολή of Tyrannus, and through his time there managed to set himself apart as an honourable teacher (at least in the eyes of his own students and those familiar with the venue), this could explain why gentile Ephesians may have come to hear his message.⁴⁸ A connection with such a “school,” in combination with a high regard for those who gifted the city with their knowledge, would have allowed Paul to make initial inroads in the city of Ephesus and gain enough honour among the Christian converts there that his later imprisonment could not negate it. Paul clearly had the needed social and religious authority to admonish the Ephesians to live in a particular manner.

The second aspect of Paul’s authority to exhort the Christians of Ephesus concerns not how he gained the authority, but rather how he did not lose that authority on becoming a prisoner. The manner in which Paul uses the identifier of “prisoner” throughout the letter seems to suggest that his purpose in doing so is to heighten his level of authority in relation to those who are reading the correspondence. This is strange, as imprisonment would not normally have added to a person’s honour; it almost certainly would have diminished it.⁴⁹

To be imprisoned would not only bring shame and dishonour upon the prisoner, but also place considerable pressure on the prisoner’s family and associates to distance

⁴⁷ This has been discussed in Chapter 5 in detail.

⁴⁸ The idea that more reputable teachers taught in homes or lecture halls by invitation is discussed in Chapter 5. Even if Paul is teaching from a more “modest” σχολή such as a shop, this is still a “step up” from the street corner. Its own clientele would have seen it as a reputable place.

⁴⁹ Rapske, *Book of Acts*, 284.

themselves from him.⁵⁰ These individuals, too, would feel the social sting of being associated with a deviant.⁵¹ Given the social stigma attached to prisoners, and the potentially lasting implications for continued association with them, it is especially odd that Paul reminds his readers of the imprisoned status that he holds.

A potential key to understanding this apparent reversal in the context of this Christian letter is the teachings of Jesus on the subject of imprisonment. Though the gospels may not have been recorded or circulated at the time of Paul's writings, it is reasonable to assume that the teachings of Jesus contained within them were known and promoted by the apostles. In Matt 25:31–46, Jesus tells the parable of the returned Messiah separating his true followers from those whose devotion was insufficient. Those who are condemned are cited for their lack of attention to the king while he was a prisoner: “[I was] sick and in prison and you did not visit me” (Matt 25:43b). Though the condemned, like the righteous chosen ahead of them, denied ever knowing that their king had been imprisoned, their excuse is not sufficient. Jesus tells them, “Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me” (Matt 25:45). The implication, then, is that although prisoners are socially unacceptable outside of Christian thinking, they are not to be overlooked, perhaps especially so when they are fellow believers.⁵² In his Sermon on the Mount Jesus also informs his listeners that when they are persecuted because of their association with him they can be assured of a great reward in heaven (Matt 5:11–12). Paul's imprisonments would surely fall into such a category. In a similar vein, Heb 13:3 reminds the Hebrews that they are not to be concerned with the opinions of the outsider, but to continue to support the suffering and imprisoned:

⁵⁰ Rapske, *Book of Acts*, 293.

⁵¹ Rapske, *Book of Acts*, 293.

⁵² Cf. Rapske, *Book of Acts*, 294–95.

“Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body.”⁵³ Clearly the Christians in Ephesus are expected to do the same and not abandon Paul, an important teacher and apostle, simply because he is in prison.⁵⁴

Further to this, in Eph 3, where Paul first reminds the Ephesians that he is a prisoner, Paul takes great pains to demonstrate to them that his status as a prisoner is actually a form of glorification for the Ephesians: “So I ask you not to lose heart over what I am suffering for you, which is your glory” (Eph 3:13). Sherwood notes, “Due to the ultimate result (v. 13) of Paul’s role in God’s eschatological plan, his apostleship and even imprisonment bring honor to the gentile audience, and therefore Paul asks that they not be discouraged by an imprisonment that is interpreted to prove the efficacy of God’s plan.”⁵⁵ Paul demonstrates the positive effects and the divine purpose that his imprisonment brings and this serves to prompt the Ephesians not to abandon him as an important authority. It also serves to preserve Paul’s honour in their sight. Thus Paul can be seen as one with both honour and authority which gives him the ability to instruct the Ephesian Christians in their conduct.

Qualities of Living out the Calling

Following the initial reminder to the Ephesians to live in accordance with their calling and station in life as Christians, Paul describes the qualities that might be found in such a life. These virtues are difficult to emulate. Paul asks them to be humble, gentle, and

⁵³ Though the location of the recipients of the letter to the Hebrews is uncertain, the letter can still be seen as a source which reflects early Christian teachings.

⁵⁴ For the purposes of this study it is not particularly important whether Hebrews was written before or after Paul’s time in Ephesus or whether the Ephesian Christians were familiar with its text. The message that is portrayed in the document could easily have been generally promoted by both Paul and his workers in Asia Minor.

⁵⁵ Sherwood, “Paul’s Imprisonment,” 108.

patient. While they do these things they are to bear with one another in love and peaceably work to preserve the unity of the spirit. Paul asks them to hold to these values as part of their Christian calling and as part of the unity that is also key to their calling as Christians.

Witherington highlights the fact that humility was not a virtue in the eyes of the Greeks. Humility (*ταπεινοφροσύνη*) was “associated with craven cowering or the obsequiousness of a slave, was placed first in a list of qualities not to be commended, and was seen as the attribute of a weak person.”⁵⁶ In contrast, the idea of humility was seen as virtuous by the Jews.⁵⁷ Lincoln notes, “It [humility] takes on positive connotations in Jewish thought, however, where it is associated with the piety of the *ʿānāwīm*, the poor, and there are numerous OT references to God’s activity in bringing down the proud and arrogant and exalting the humble.”⁵⁸ Though the idea that Christians should be humble may not have been foreign to the Jewish members of the Ephesian church, it certainly would have been strange to the ears of the gentile converts. Hoehner suggests that Paul may mention this particular virtue in order to promote unity (“pride provokes disunity whereas humility engenders unity”⁵⁹) or because he was aware of prideful actions in their past and wanted specifically to emphasize the importance of humility as Christians.⁶⁰

Though the idea of “humility” is not readily seen as virtuous in Greco-Roman thought, the value of the concept of “gentleness” (*πραΰτητος*) is somewhat mixed. Barth

⁵⁶ Witherington, *Letters*, 284. In support of his statements he cites Epictetus, *Diatr.* 1.9.10; 3.24.54–57. Cf. Barth, *Ephesians 4–6*, 458; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 505–6.

⁵⁷ Winger, *Ephesians*, 429.

⁵⁸ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 235. Cf. Winger, *Ephesians*, 429.

⁵⁹ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 506.

⁶⁰ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 506. Neither can be proven as Paul’s motives but both are reasonable speculations.

suggests it was, like humility, not seen as virtuous.⁶¹ Winger suggests that the terms *ταπεινοφροσύνη* and *πραΰτητα* are “nearly synonymous.”⁶² Barth also connects this particular concept with that of the Hebrew *עָנָו* and notes that there were positive connotations with this concept allowing the New Testament writers to have examples of “traditions of the positive evaluation of meekness.”⁶³ Lincoln suggests it was also valued by the Qumran community.⁶⁴ In contrast, Witherington notes, “Gentleness or meekness was occasionally commended in the Greek tradition, but normally only as the behavior of the superior toward an inferior.”⁶⁵ Interestingly, Aristotle categorizes it as a “moral” virtue, suggesting that it may not have been entirely frowned on in greater society.⁶⁶ Though it is associated with being gentle, in Christian writings this term should not be equated with weakness. Instead, the idea of “self control” might be more fitting.⁶⁷

Hoehner notes that “patience” (*μακροθυμίας*) is not often found in classical writings.⁶⁸ When it is used, it can be understood as a sort of longsuffering endurance related to a particular task or situation.⁶⁹ Morgan notes that “endurance” is commended in the writings of Valerius and Aelian, though it should be noted that *μακροθυμίας* is not

⁶¹ Barth, *Ephesians 4–6*, 458. Winger suggests that none of the qualities listed in vv. 2–3 are considered virtuous, but does not elaborate on it further. Winger, *Ephesians*, 483.

⁶² Winger, *Ephesians*, 429.

⁶³ Barth, *Ephesians 4–6*, 458. Cf. *DCH* 6:503.

⁶⁴ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 236.

⁶⁵ Witherington, *Letters*, 284.

⁶⁶ Aristotle, *Eth. Nic.* 1.13.20. Cf. Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 506. Aristotle uses *σωφροσύνη* which is different from *ταπεινοφροσύνης*. The comparison should be made with caution.

⁶⁷ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 506–07.

⁶⁸ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 508. Cf. Horst, “*μακροθυμία κτλ.*” 4:374. Hoehner cites only Menander and Strabo as examples: Menander, *Frag.* 549.2; Strabo, *Geogr.* 5.4.10.

⁶⁹ Horst, “*μακροθυμία κτλ.*” 4:374–75.

always the word that is used to express it.⁷⁰ Though this sentiment is often connected with military endurance, it still demonstrates that it was something a person ought to work to attain.⁷¹ Its appearance in biblical texts is more common than in classical literature. In the Christian and Jewish context the word connotes a high level of patience such as that of the patient farmer waiting for harvest, or God's patience as he endured humanity's sinful behaviour.⁷² Hoehner suggests that not only is patience, and the resulting stemming of vengeance, an important Christian virtue for its own sake, but it is even more vital when considered against the possible backdrop of Jewish and gentile tensions within the church.⁷³ Indeed it may be key to enabling these two sometimes opposing groups to work together to maintain that all-important Christian unity.

Following the call to humility, gentleness, and patience, Paul discusses bearing with one another in love and preserving unity. Hoehner describes the thrust of the first participial phrase (*ἀνεχόμενοι ἀλλήλων ἐν ἀγάπῃ*) as tolerating differences between believers with a spirit of love (which would prevent feelings of anger and resentment as a result of the forced "toleration").⁷⁴ This may be directly related to the previous exhortation to patience, or it could be a more overarching statement that pertains to the whole effort of living life in a way befitting the Christian calling. Either way it is no easy task.

The next participial phrase deals with protecting the unity of the spirit (*σπουδάζοντες τηρεῖν τὴν ἐνότητα τοῦ πνεύματος ἐν τῷ συνδέσμῳ τῆς εἰρήνης*). The

⁷⁰ Morgan, *Popular Morality*, 137. She cites Valerius Maximus, *Facta* 3.3 ext 1 and Aelian, *Var. Hist.* 9.33. Valerius is early first century and writes in Latin. He uses the word *patientia* for patience. Aelian is late second/early third century and uses the word *ἐγκατερήσας* in this reference.

⁷¹ Morgan, *Popular Morality*, 137.

⁷² Cf. Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 509; Winger, *Ephesians*, 430; Rom 2:4.

⁷³ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 509. Cf. Witherington, *Letters*, 825.

⁷⁴ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 509–10.

Ephesians are commanded to make every effort to preserve the unity of the spirit. This is not something they should take lightly, but something they must be zealous to accomplish.⁷⁵ The spirit in question is the Holy Spirit and not the spirit of the individual Christians or of the Christian community.⁷⁶ It is the Holy Spirit that provides the unity and the Ephesian Christians are to strive to preserve it. Hoehner notes that the bond of peace does not give unity; it is the Holy Spirit who gives the unity.⁷⁷ Instead, “It is better to consider *ἐν* as denoting the place or sphere in which the unity of the Spirit is to be preserved and manifested, namely, the bond of peace.”⁷⁸ This phrase introduces the next theme of the passage: unity.

What Paul asks of these Christians is no easy task. The virtues they are to espouse that are in keeping with their calling as Christians are difficult and at times counter-cultural. Whether they were seen as undesirable (like humility) or potentially virtuous (like gentleness and patience) within the wider Greco-Roman world, these attitudes that Paul asks the Christians of Ephesus to embody are not easy to emulate. Each would take considerable effort and go against a person’s natural tendency to arrogance, harshness and impatience, especially under difficult circumstances, but they would also promote unity of the group rather than selfish ambition. Paul is asking much of those to whom he writes but perhaps this is because much is at stake. These words set the stage for the next portion of the text where Paul begins to expound on the idea of unity and the importance that this concept has to the Christian life and community. All of this is important groundwork for the later reference to Christian leaders.

⁷⁵ On the nature of the word *σπουδαζοντες* and the connotation of a fully-devoted effort, see Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 511. Cf. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 237.

⁷⁶ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 512; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 237; Winger, *Ephesians*, 432.

⁷⁷ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 512. Cf. Winger, *Ephesians*, 431; Witherington, *Letters*, 285.

⁷⁸ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 512. Cf. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 237.

Unity in the Body of Christ (4:4–6, 13–16)

After he has established the importance of living a life worthy of the Christian calling, Paul is explicit about why such a life with such peculiar virtues ought to be lived: the protection of the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. Unity is the key theme here. The Christians are to be unified and must work to protect that unity.

Immediately after encouraging them to “be eager to protect the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace,” Paul reminds the readers that they are called into “one body and one spirit . . . one hope of your calling . . . one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father” (Eph 4:4–6). The context in which this “unity” is mentioned is the unity and oneness within the diverse body of Christ mentioned later in the passage. The goal appears to be “unity of faith” (4:13), which is fully-grown and mature (4:13–14), with Christ at the head, holding the body together, allowing it to grow in love (4:14–16). Though these concepts may at first seem to point in several different directions, they all can be loosely understood as various manifestations of the Greco-Roman philosophical idea of “the body” as a metaphor for society.⁷⁹

This concept of the body of Christ and its connection with Stoic philosophy was discussed at length in Chapter 4, focusing primarily on the work of Lee. Though she is most focused on the idea of the body of Christ in 1 Cor 12, the same metaphor is used in Ephesians and some similar observations can be made as there were similar philosophical influences in Ephesus and Corinth. As established above, the Ephesians appear to have valued education, and the philosophical idea that a given group could be seen as a “body” which functioned together would also be familiar to the Christians in that city.

⁷⁹ See previous discussion in Chapter 4.

In Chapter 4, four uses of the body image were noted and discussed. Each of them resonates with Paul's use of the body metaphor in Ephesians. The first use involved highlighting one body part and its function, particularly the head as the ruling part of the body. This corresponds well to Ephesians, since Paul emphasizes Christ as the "head" in Eph 4:15.

The second use involved noting disease or injury to the body which then affected the entire body if not quickly cured. This disease was often portrayed as a character flaw. This could be roughly equivalent to the "flaws" of being "tossed by waves and carried about by every wind of teaching" (Eph 4:14), apparent lack of maturity (4:13), and the disunity that Paul seems to be speaking against with his reminders of being "one" (4:2–6).

The third use of the image was in making a distinction between the body (or mind) and the soul. In Eph 4, Paul discusses the idea that there is "one spirit" (*πνεῦμα*). Though he is likely referring to the Holy Spirit, his use of the term in conjunction with the image of the body of Christ may be seen as somewhat analogous to the idea of the "soul" and a physical body in the Greco-Roman philosophical metaphor. The terms *πνεῦμα* and *ψυχή* do have overlapping semantic domains when it comes to the idea of "inner being."⁸⁰ Whether or not such words would have been interchangeable in the philosophical metaphor, Paul may have chosen to use this particular image with his own twist. This seems even more likely with Lee's assertion that the sharing of a soul was a mark of particular closeness of a group. This is very much in keeping with Paul's call for

⁸⁰ L&N, 1:320–22 where *πνεῦμα* is listed in domain 26.9 as "inner being" and *ψυχή* is listed as 26.4, "inner self."

unity among the Ephesian Christians: they are followers of one God and they must act as one united body with a single spirit.

The final use of the metaphor has to do with a unified body being made up of a diversity of parts which work together for the common good. This was particularly important for the image as it is used in 1 Cor 12. Ephesians 4:16 also discusses briefly that all the parts of the body are joined together through Christ, the head, and all of these parts work together to make the body grow and build itself up in love. A major difference in the way the metaphor is used in 1 Cor 12 and Eph 4 is that in Eph 4 the focus is very distinctly on unity while 1 Cor 12 also emphasizes diversity.

Based on the analysis of Lee, it seems as though the reference to “body of Christ” in Eph 4 brings together a whole host of images commonly associated with this idea in the philosophies of the time. It might be that these images all resounded with the Ephesians. It is possible that they heard in Paul’s words that their Christian community should have the same admirable qualities as were desired for society around them. One major difference, however, would be that instead of the emperor as the “head” of the body, in the Christian “body” the head is Christ. With Christ as the head, rather than the emperor, this allows for the further implication that the things of Christ should permeate this body, rather than the things of the emperor.

By using the body of Christ metaphor here Paul further demonstrates admirable and honourable qualities that the individual Ephesian Christians should attempt to bring to their group. The idea that a group should function as a solid unit, with a head deserving of honour, and without dissention in the ranks, would have been an honourable goal for

any group. The next portion of the text goes on to discuss the gifts that God has given the Ephesians in order to help them achieve these goals.

Gifts of God: Leaders Helping to Achieve Unity (4:7–12)

Another important theme in this passage that first appears in v. 7 is the concept of being given a gift from God. The gift of grace is one of the gifts that Paul mentions as coming from God, as well as the gifts of the apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastors and teachers. The gift of grace is given to each Christian,⁸¹ but the gifts of Christian leaders are given as gifts to the church as a group.⁸²

These leadership functions are “gifts” by virtue of the fact that they were “given” (αὐτὸς ἔδωκεν). This verb and the direct objects which follow it do not imply that people were summoned to these tasks, but that the very task or function itself is a gift (αὐτὸς ἔδωκεν τοὺς μὲν ἀποστόλους . . .). To use a verb that implied “calling” would have fit naturally into this passage as it is used at the beginning of the text in question to describe the role in life or the station in life which belonged to the Ephesian Christians (ἐκλήθητε, τῆς κλήσεως). Instead, in v. 11 Paul notes that God “gave” apostles; he did not “call” apostles. Though it could be argued that elsewhere in the New Testament and even in Paul’s writings the idea of “calling” apostles or other leaders may be in place, here such a concept does not appear to be in mind.⁸³

⁸¹ Cf. Barth, *Ephesians 4–6*, 430; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 241; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 522; Schnackenburg, *Ephesians*, 175.

⁸² Schnackenburg, *Ephesians*, 175; Bruce, *Epistles*, 345; Witherington, *Letters*, 290; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 248; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 538; Winger, *Ephesians*, 449; Snodgrass, *Ephesians*, 202.

⁸³ Some have suggested that the notion that God “gave” the leadership functions as gifts implies that these are indeed “offices” and that this suggests a high degree of institutionalization for the church in Ephesus. (For a brief discussion, see Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 111.) This need not be the case. As noted in Chapter 1, there is no textual evidence in the New Testament that leadership functions such as apostle or evangelist had developed into formal offices in the first century although some later would develop in that

Since these leadership functions are given as gifts to the church in Ephesus, it is important to consider the social implications of gift-giving in this historical and social context. In this time and place the receipt of gifts did not come without expectations on the part of the recipients. A gift, once given, required an unending sequence of reciprocity between giver and receiver.⁸⁴ As noted in Chapter 3 in the discussion of patronage of an individual to a group, when given a gift from a benefactor the group was expected to reciprocate public honour to that benefactor lest the group be branded “dishonourable.”⁸⁵

If God is seen as the patron of the Christians in Ephesus, and he gifted members of the collective with something, then appropriate reciprocation is necessary.⁸⁶ In exchange for these gifts the Ephesians must live their lives in a way that is suited to their station as Christians. The unity that Paul has been promoting in the passage thus far is one way in which these Christians could show their reciprocated honour to God.

way. The mention of the leadership function alone is not enough to suggest any kind of formal development. See Chapter 1 for further discussion of the use of the term “leadership function.”

⁸⁴ Cf. Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 24–39. Barclay’s work is not about gifts in general, but more specifically on the concept of grace as a gift. Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 562. For his study, the idea of grace/gift is virtually synonymous; he is looking at a particular context of use of the word *χάρις* in Paul’s writing. Cf. Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 66–67, 575–79. The present study instead looks at “gift” in a wider context. The gift of grace is one gift among many that the church may be given by God. Nevertheless, Barclay’s work provides important background on the concept of gifts in the ancient world and importantly notes that the modern idea of a “pure” or “free” gift did not exist in the first century. Cf. Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 51–63.

⁸⁵ This public honour can be seen as “returning” the gift given by the patron. Once returned, however, the patron could be required or expected to once again bestow a gift. The obligation to return the gift is not a legal obligation but nevertheless it is a very strong social obligation. Cf. Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 183.

⁸⁶ To cast God as the “divine patron” would not have been an unusual concept for the Ephesian Christians to understand; it was something that was very familiar to them from their pre-Christian days. Barclay notes, “Relations between humans and the gods are closely modeled on the expectations of gift-reciprocity at the human level, even where the relationship is acknowledged to be grossly asymmetrical. Fundamental to the structure of Greek religion is, in fact, the acknowledgement of the gods as benefactors (to nations, cities, and individuals), distributing their favours (*χάριτες*) with appropriate discrimination, while humans, in prayer, in dedicatory gifts, and, above all, in sacrifice, participate in the reciprocatory cycle of gifts.” Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 27.

Paul further demonstrates that the source of the gift is God through his use of a quotation of Ps 68 with a unique twist on the Hebrew text: the subject gives gifts to humanity (whereas the Hebrew text notes that the subject receives gifts). This quotation serves to demonstrate the connection of Jesus with the Old Testament Messiah and shows that Jesus is the source of the gifts being given in Eph 4.

The particular text Paul is using from Ps 68 does not correspond directly to either the Hebrew or LXX text of the Psalm. It may be a text known to Paul but for which we have no other evidence.⁸⁷ Alternatively Paul may have created this particular text to serve his own theological purposes by employing the accepted methods of scriptural interpretation in his day.⁸⁸ Verses 9–10 which follow the quotation are likened to a midrash⁸⁹ on the text where Paul demonstrates that gifts come from the Messiah.⁹⁰ Through the use of this Psalm and the subsequent interpretation of it, Paul heightens the authority of Christ by setting him up as the highest of patrons.⁹¹

After presenting the idea that God has bestowed the gift of grace on individual Christians, that he also gives gifts of leadership functions to the collective group of

⁸⁷ For example Schnackenburg, *Ephesians*, 176–77; Taylor, “The Use of Psalm 68:18,” 329. Most often it is noted that the only evidence for this kind of wording is from the targums. For example Bruce, *Epistles*, 342; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 242–43; Rubinkiewicz, “Ps LXVIII 19 (=Eph IV 8),” 219–24; Witherington, *Letters*, 287.

⁸⁸ Cf. Lunde and Dunne, “Paul’s Creative and Contextual Use,” 99, 115–17. Cf. W. Wilder, “The Use (or Abuse) of Power,” 187–88.

⁸⁹ Witherington, *Letters*, 287; Schnackenburg, *Ephesians*, 177; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 225–26. Bruce describes the method of interpretation as “Peshet.” Bruce, *Epistles*, 343. Lunde and Dunne combine the two concepts and describe it as “midrash peshet.” Lunde and Dunne, “Paul’s Creative and Contextual Use,” 116. Cf. Taylor, “The Use of Psalm 68:18,” 328–29.

⁹⁰ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 225–26; Barth, *Ephesians 4–6*, 430; Schnackenburg, *Ephesians*, 177. For detailed discussion on the use of Ps 68 in Eph 4:8 see Ehorn, “The Use of Psalm 68(67).19 in Ephesians 4.8,” 96–120; Lunde and Dunne, “Paul’s Creative and Contextual Use,” 99–117; Rubinkiewicz, “Ps LXVIII 19 (=Eph IV 8),” 219–24; Taylor, “The Use of Psalm 68:18,” 319–36; W. Wilder, “The Use (or Abuse) of Power,” 185–99.

⁹¹ Verses 9–10 have generated much discussion concerning the locations and order of the ascent and descent mentioned. For discussion on the issues relating to these questions see Witherington, *Letters*, 287–89; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 244–47; Harris, “The Ascent and Descent,” 198–214; Harris, *Descent of Christ*; Bales, “Descent of Christ,” 84–100. These questions are not explored here as they are not directly related to the topic being discussed.

Christians, and that God is the patron *par excellence*, Paul then goes on to demonstrate that specific gifts of leadership have been given to the church: apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastors and teachers.

Ephesians 4:11 may seem a simple enough verse detailing a list of leadership functions, but the implications of some of the grammatical features have proven quite difficult to interpret. The major issue is how to interpret this list which includes a lengthy μέν/δέ construction: Καὶ αὐτὸς ἔδωκεν τοὺς μὲν . . . τοὺς δὲ . . . τοὺς δὲ . . . τοὺς δὲ . . . καὶ . . . Some interpret this as a simple list (And he gave the apostles and the prophets . . .)⁹² and others suggest that the article is serving as a demonstrative pronoun⁹³ and the nouns as predicate accusatives implying the verb “to be”⁹⁴ (And he gave some to be apostles and some to be prophets . . .).⁹⁵ At times the idea of “some to be apostles and others to be prophets” is chosen as a way to introduce contrast between the different gifts which is thought to be indicated by the μέν/δέ construction,⁹⁶ but some have argued that the καί at the end of this list negates the possibility that contrast is intended.⁹⁷ One of the

⁹² Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 223; Winger, *Ephesians*, 424. Schnackenburg translates in this way (Schnackenburg, *Ephesians*, 170), but notes that the other “usual” translation of “He gave some to be . . .” is also possible. Schnackenburg, *Ephesians*, 180.

⁹³ Or a substantive representing ἀνθρώπους. Cf. Winger, *Ephesians*, 450; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 249. Note that neither Winger nor Lincoln supports this view, though they do discuss it.

⁹⁴ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 538.

⁹⁵ Barth, *Ephesians 4–6*, 425; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 540; Bruce, *Epistles*, 339; J. A. Robinson, *Ephesians*, 97 translate it as “And he gave some as . . .”

⁹⁶ Cf. Barth, *Ephesians 4–6*, 425; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 540.

⁹⁷ Winger, *Ephesians*, 449–50. Witherington advocates against the idea of “some” being included in the translation though thinks “we should make something of the *men . . . de* construction here.” Witherington, *Letters*, 290. He adds the idea of “on the one hand” to each noun in order to mark more sharply the distinction between them. Robertson extensively discusses the uses of μέν to show contrast and notes that although the most common instances of this use occur with δέ, it sometimes occurs with καί. A list of several contrasting things, similar to the list in Eph 4:11 is found in Luke 8:5–8 and Mark 4:4–8 with the Parable of the Sower. Here, each of the soils is introduced with the word καί. Robertson, *Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, 1152. This discussion in Robertson demonstrates that καί can be used in conjunction with μέν to show contrast, but the list of Eph 4:11 still presents a conundrum because of its mixing of the two conjunctions and the lack of article with διδάσκαλος. See discussion below.

differences in interpretation that arises from these different translations is who or what exactly are the gifts. Does God give the gift of individual apostles (“some to be apostles”) or does he give the whole group of the apostles (“the apostles”) to the church for their benefit?⁹⁸ The difference in nuance is slight, but significant. Paul here is not discussing spiritual gifts⁹⁹ or specific gifts given to specific individuals;¹⁰⁰ his focus is the unity of the church and on the leadership functions that God gives to the whole church in order to help it achieve that unity.¹⁰¹ Thus the phrase should be translated and understood as meaning God gave “the apostles and the prophets, and the evangelists . . .” to the church. This translation is also a much simpler reading of the grammar and does not negate the idea that a contrast is implied by the μέν/δέ construction.¹⁰²

The curious lack of either δέ or an article before the final leadership function (διδάσκαλος) has also led to much debate over the significance of that absence for understanding the nature of the leadership function in question. The contention by some is that pastors and teachers should be seen as a single “office” or position: “teaching-shepherds” or the like.¹⁰³ Understanding each of the leadership functions as a technical term or “office” is not advisable, as has already been discussed, and creating a theology of “teaching-shepherds” as a single unit ought to be done with caution. The combination of the shift to καί from δέ and a lack of article seems to indicate a relationship between

⁹⁸ A simple way of phrasing this could be that God gave the apostolic “office” to the church, as opposed to individual apostles, but the term “office” is a loaded one and should be avoided in this discussion. The idea of church offices is not developed in the first century in the way that it was in later centuries and to refer to this list as a list of “offices” creates more problems than it solves.

⁹⁹ Schnackenburg, *Ephesians*, 180. Though he notes that these gifts are certainly “mediated” by the Holy Spirit.

¹⁰⁰ The idea of “spiritual gifts” could be implied at v. 7 but not necessarily at v. 11. R. Martin, *Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon*, 49.

¹⁰¹ Cf. Neufeld, *Ephesians*, 179; Best, “Ministry in Ephesians,” 160–61.

¹⁰² For a discussion of the use of μέν to show contrast and its use with δέ, see Robertson, *Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, 1152.

¹⁰³ Barth, *Ephesians 4–6*, 438; Bruce, *Epistles*, 348–49; Roark, “Interpreting Ephesians 4–6,” 34.

the two nouns in this particular list but the same is not true for other instances of the nouns.¹⁰⁴ For example, in 1 Cor 12:28 διδάσκαλος appears on its own, without ποιμήν.¹⁰⁵ The phrasing here suggests a relationship but does not define that relationship. For this reason, the nouns have been translated as two separate functions but do not have a comma between them.¹⁰⁶

Aside from understanding how the list of terms fits together, it is also important to consider what would be understood by the Ephesians by the mention of these particular leadership functions.¹⁰⁷ The words that are so easily translated into “Christian” understanding as apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastors and teachers, were not exclusively Christian terms. A brief understanding of their use in non-Christian contexts is useful.

The terms ἀπόστολος and προφήτης have already been discussed in Chapter 4. The apostles have been appointed by Jesus to share his message. The reference to apostles here in Eph 4:11 is a general one; no specific apostle is in mind. God has given apostles to the church to help it grow.¹⁰⁸ The inclusion of the term προφήτης in Eph 4 may serve to

¹⁰⁴ Not all scholars agree that a relationship must be seen between these two nouns. For example Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 250; Winger, *Ephesians*, 452; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 544.

¹⁰⁵ Unfortunately Eph 4:11 is the only instance of this particular use of ποιμήν in the New Testament.

¹⁰⁶ This is in contrast to translations such as “teaching shepherds” or “shepherd-teachers” and the like. Because a specific relationship cannot be deduced from the scant evidence in the text, the two nouns will be examined separately in the examination of the functions below.

¹⁰⁷ The term “office” is purposefully not used here in order to avoid confusion with the idea of office which developed later in Christianity. Some of these terms developed into formal “offices” later, but whether they were considered to be “offices” at this early stage is much debated and there is not enough evidence to make a certain judgment.

¹⁰⁸ Much discussion has been made about the continuation of some of the leadership functions in this list into later Christian use. Whether the leadership function of apostle continued into later centuries or what other “office” may have absorbed it during later periods is not relevant to the understanding of this text for the Ephesian Christians in the first century and will not be discussed here. For the Ephesian Christians the apostles were a present reality and Paul makes no mention that he expects the apostles to either disappear or transfer their authority to others in this text. The same reality holds for each of the functions described in this list. For the Ephesian readers it does not matter if the prophets ceased to exist

call to mind not only the Christian prophets with whom the Ephesian church may have been acquainted personally or by reputation, but also the Old Testament prophets. The writings of the Old Testament prophets served to teach and build up the unity of the first-century church. Both Jewish and gentile Christians in Ephesus would have easily understood the concept of prophets and prophecy and while Christian prophets would have brought distinctly Christian messages, even the gentiles would have understood the idea that the gods might communicate to people through specially gifted individuals.

Whereas the concept of prophets was a readily understood religious term in both Christian and non-Christian circles in the first century, the concept of “evangelist” was not. The term *εὐαγγελιστής* was seldom used outside of Christianity and if there is a case of Christians “coining” a leadership function, this might arguably be it. Though its root *εὐαγγελ* is common enough, the addition of *-ιστής* makes the term unique. There are no good references to it which can be satisfactorily dated to pre-Christian use¹⁰⁹ and even its Christian use is limited to three occurrences (Acts 21:8, Eph 4:11, and 2 Tim 4:5). It is not, however, as though Christians simply created a word out of nothing. The verb and other related nouns make it easily definable as “one who brings good news” and in the context of Paul’s writings that good news is the message of Jesus. Other related words (*εὐαγγελίζομαι, εὐαγγέλιος, εὐαγγέλιον*) help to create this meaning.¹¹⁰

after a generation, whether the evangelists and pastors were itinerant or local leaders, or the exact relationship of the pastor and the teacher. This is meant to be a list of examples of leadership functions and not a list describing future or current practices of the Ephesian community.

¹⁰⁹ It has one attestation on an inscription from Rhodes which describes “one who proclaims oracular sayings.” Friedrich, “*εὐαγγελίζομαι*,” 2:737. The usefulness of this inscription in gaining any understanding of the Christian use of the term has been called into serious question. Spicq questions whether we know enough about the inscription to have it be of any use at all (Spicq, *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament*, 2:91) and Marshall questions whether the term can even be found prior to its Christian use due to the disputed nature of this inscription. Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 804.

¹¹⁰ LSJ, 705. As with the discussion of prophets and teachers in 1 Corinthians, there is not enough information given by Paul in Eph 4 to determine what the particular role of the *εὐαγγελιστής* might be. It

Another word that is rarely used in reference to leadership in the New Testament is ποιμήν.¹¹¹ Though the word itself appears in the New Testament eighteen times, it is only used in reference to Christian leaders in Eph 4:11. Other instances are to actual shepherds or to Jesus as shepherd. The metaphorical sense of the term as a “shepherd of the people” is found in Greek literature¹¹² and so the metaphorical sense was not invented by Christians. Given the single use of the word in reference to general Christian leadership in the New Testament, it can hardly be said that it had attained any sort of “technical” status by the first century. Nevertheless, its use in Eph 4:11 without further explanation by Paul as to its meaning suggests that the idea of a shepherd-leader is familiar to the readers and needed no further explanation for them.

The final leadership function that is mentioned in the list is teacher: διδάσκαλος. Unlike the other terms in this list which have a particular religious connotation in their Christian use, if not their Greco-Roman or Jewish use, “teacher” is a fairly generic term. As noted in Chapter 4, the term itself does not denote any particular kind of teaching, but simply one who imparts knowledge. In the context of Eph 4:11, the teacher presumably teaches concerning the Christian faith, though “teacher” never becomes a technical term for any Christian office. This makes it unique in the list of leadership functions but still falls within the realm of the purpose of the list: to demonstrate the kinds of leaders that God has given the church in order to help it grow and maintain its unity. Any one of the preceding terms could have an element of teaching bound up within it but Paul makes the

must be surmised that Paul did not need to explain this function further as the Ephesians would have known what it meant. It is best not to speculate as to the specific role of the εὐαγγελιστής. The specific role of this individual is not directly relevant to understanding Paul’s purpose in this passage.

¹¹¹ The potential relationship between the ποιμήν and διδάσκαλος has been noted above. There is not enough information in the text to define their relationship and so they have been treated separately here.

¹¹² BDAG, 843; LSJ, 1430.

idea of teacher explicit by adding this term to this list. As discussed in Chapter 5, Ephesus appears to have placed great value on teachers and education and so it is perhaps fitting that Paul makes the concept of education explicit here in case there had been any doubt in the minds of his readers.

Having provided a list of examples of leaders that God has given to the church, Paul goes on to describe their purpose in being given. Verse 12 has sparked many heated debates. The verse consists of three prepositional phrases and the relationship between these three phrases is the crux of the problem.

The verse reads: *πρὸς τὸν καταρτισμὸν τῶν ἁγίων εἰς ἔργον διακονίας, εἰς οἰκοδομὴν τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ*. The first phrase follows the preposition *πρὸς* and the latter two both follow *εἰς*. Do these three phrases act independently or are they in fact dependent on each other in some way? Hoehner helpfully articulates four possible renderings of these phrases: (1) they are coordinating phrases each relating back to the main verb, *ἔδωκεν*, in v. 11;¹¹³ (2) the first phrase is the main one which provides the “ultimate” purpose of the main verb (to train the saints) while the other two phrases are parallel with each other and represent “immediate” purposes of the main verb (by means of works of service and building up the body);¹¹⁴ (3) the first and third prepositional phrases relate back to the main verb, but the second phrase is dependent on the first, creating two purposes: training

¹¹³ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 457. Cf. Gordon, “‘Equipping’ Ministry,” 69–78; Hamann, “Translation of Ephesians 4:12,” 42–49; Page, “Whose Ministry?” 26–32; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 253.

¹¹⁴ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 458. Cf. Bruce, *Epistles*, 349; Witherington, *Letters*, 291. Winger also prefers that the second two sit subordinate to the first but says, “With due recognition given to the distinctiveness of each phrase, the three are essentially parallel in describing the benefits conveyed to the church by the ministerial work.” Winger, *Ephesians*, 482.

the saint for service and building up the body;¹¹⁵ or (4) the first prepositional phrase gives purpose to the main verb, the second phrase is dependent on the first, and the third is dependent on the second.¹¹⁶

The major points of debate in this discussion are centered on three main issues: first, what is implied by the change in preposition from *πρός* to *εἰς*, second, whether or not the word *καταρτισμὸν* requires a complement, and third, whether or not the text includes a distinction between clergy and laity.

First, the prepositions must be considered. According to S. Porter, the prepositions *πρός* and *εἰς* have a close relationship, with *πρός* being broader in its scope.¹¹⁷ Both prepositions carry similar categories of use and can indicate “purpose.”¹¹⁸ This is the sense that both prepositions are thought to carry in this context. The question is whether the change in preposition alone can indicate that one phrase is dependent on another.

Many who do not see these phrases as coordinate point to the change in preposition as one indicator that there is another meaning in view.¹¹⁹ It is possible that the two prepositional phrases beginning with *εἰς* could be seen as parallel to each other and having a different relationship to the main verb than the preceding phrase beginning with *πρός*. This relationship is usually described as a difference between the “ultimate” (*πρός*)

¹¹⁵ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 458. Cf. T. Abbott, *Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 119; Granados Rojas, “Ephesians 4.12,” 81–96; Hendriksen, *Ephesians*, 197–98; Mitton, *Ephesians*, 151–52. Also NA28, ESV, NASB, NRSV.

¹¹⁶ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 458. Cf. Barth, *Ephesians 4–6*, 478–79; Schnackenburg, *Ephesians*, 182–83.

¹¹⁷ Porter, *Idioms*, 172. For an extensive discussion of the use of *πρός* see Robertson, *Grammar of New Testament Greek*, 622–26.

¹¹⁸ Porter, *Idioms*, 146, 172. Cf. Robertson, *Grammar of New Testament Greek*, 596.

¹¹⁹ For example, Barth, *Eph 4–6*, 479; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 549.

and “immediate” (εἰς) purposes of the leaders.¹²⁰ Lincoln, however, is adamant that the shift in preposition is not enough to make these assertions. He states, “The change of preposition cannot bear the weight of such an argument [that the phrases are not coordinate] and there are, in fact, no grammatical or linguistic grounds for making a specific link between the first and second phrases.”¹²¹ The shift in preposition is not enough evidence to suggest that these phrases must not be coordinate.

Another reason given for the second prepositional phrase being dependent on the first is the meaning of the noun *καταρτισμόν*. Some suggest that the noun requires a complement which is provided by the second prepositional phrase. This is a consideration for understandings three and four above. The noun is rare, found only here in the New Testament, and its meaning is difficult to ascertain. Bauer et al. note that it relates to *καταρτίζω* and *κατάρτισις* in the sense of being related to “setting” of bones, “preparation,” and “restoration” but that glosses such as “training” or “discipline” ought to also be in view.¹²² These notes are in addition to the gloss of “equipment” and “equipping” which are the main suggestions in the entry.¹²³ Those who suggest that the second prepositional phrase is dependent on the first view the second phrase as describing the purpose of the equipping. Criticisms of this view focus on the way in which the word *καταρτισμόν* is translated and assert that the word does not need to be translated in such a way as to require a “further explanation” by the following

¹²⁰ For example Olshausen, *Biblical Commentary*, 223; Hodge, *Ephesians*, 164; Eadie, *Ephesians*, 316. This is not to be confused with Mayes who suggests that the two εἰς phrases indicate the means by which the *πρός* phrase is realized. Mayes, “‘Equipping the Saints?’” 11. This does not appear to be a usual meaning for εἰς and it is absent from both S. Porter’s and Robertson’s discussion of the word. See S. Porter, *Idioms*, 151–53; Robertson, *Grammar of New Testament Greek*, 591–96.

¹²¹ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 253. See also Winger, *Ephesians*, 459.

¹²² BDAG, 526.

¹²³ BDAG, 526.

prepositional phrase.¹²⁴ For example, if it is rendered “to equip” then a complement seems required and is supplied by the next prepositional phrase “for the work of ministry.” Critics, however, note that examples of use of *καταρτισμόν* and related words are ambiguous and none of them prove that a complement is required for this word.¹²⁵ While criticisms along these lines are important to consider, it is also true that just because *καταρτισμόν* does not *need* to be rendered with a complement does not mean that it *could* not be. The meaning of the noun *καταρτισμόν* should not be used to support dependence of the second phrase on the first due to the ambiguous nature of the evidence.

The final issue to be considered in this debate is the one that tips the scales in a particular direction for many in light of inconclusive grammatical and lexical evidence. This issue is whether or not a distinction between clergy and laity is in view in this text and thus whether the prepositional phrases ought to be arranged so as to support a distinction or remove it. The issue of clergy/laity distinction seems more often to be less about the ancient text and more about the modern perceptions of this concept.¹²⁶ Just as there is not likely a well-developed concept of “office” at this point in church history, there is also not likely a well-developed concept of clergy or laity—at least not in the modern sense. The distinction between clergy and laity is rooted in a difference in authority, calling, and hierarchy and many modern churches have sought to down-play such a distinction and maintain that clergy and laity are on level ground. The result of extreme interpretations of this levelling is that either everyone is “clergy” or everyone is

¹²⁴ Mayes, “‘Equipping the Saints’?” 7–15; Page, “Whose Ministry?” 26–46; Hamann, “Translation of Ephesians 4:12,” 42–49.

¹²⁵ For example, see Page, “Whose Ministry?” 32–34; Hamann, “Translation of Ephesians,” 43–44.

¹²⁶ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 253. It is notable that in Hoehner’s discussion of the four possible ways to render Eph 4:12 he specifically uses the level of clergy/laity distinction in each as criteria for evaluation. Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 547–49.

“laity” and there are no special tasks associated with clergy from which lay-people are excluded. The desire to downplay a distinction between clergy and laity in the modern world is often rooted in a decided dislike for anything hierarchical associated with the church.

These same convictions were not true in first-century Ephesus or anywhere else in the Greco-Roman world. As noted during discussions of honor, patronage, and benefaction there was a strong concept of hierarchy in this ancient society. There is no reason to think that first-century Christians would have been different in this respect. Certainly within the church there would have been deep respect for the authority of those who had known or interacted with Jesus. This would have given a legitimately higher level of authority to some people than others within the first-century church. In all likelihood this debate concerning a clergy/laity distinction would be foreign to the first-century Christians not because there was no distinction between leaders and those who were not leaders, but rather because the fact that there should not be a distinction would never have occurred to them.¹²⁷

While the modern reader may need to wrestle with this passage in conjunction with others in order to settle the question concerning the roles of clergy and laity in the modern church, the Ephesian recipients of Paul’s letter did not have to wrestle with this conundrum. Paul’s explicit purpose in this letter is to impress upon the members of the Ephesian church that they are lacking in their unity and that God has not left them to muddle through their deficiencies alone; he has sent them the gift of Christian leaders to

¹²⁷ The idea that there is no support for a clergy/laity distinction in the New Testament (cf. Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 549) may be a true statement in terms of an explicit distinction. Rather, it falls into the area of an implicit, underlying aspect of first-century society that is not explicitly stated because it does not need to be said; all who read the letter would have understood such a distinction between authoritative leaders and other members of the church.

help them learn and grow in unity. In saying these things he is not wresting all the work of the church from the hands of the people (which is sometimes thought to be implied if the text is translated in ways which promote a perceived “clergy-laity distinction”¹²⁸) but rather speaking to a particular issue which is at hand.¹²⁹

Of the four options for translation presented above, the two which are the most reasonable are options one and four. Option one has each phrase parallel and option four has each phrase dependent on the one that is before it. According to Hoehner, option one also highlights strongly the role of the leaders over that of the rest of the Christian community while option four removes the distinction.¹³⁰ As has been discussed above, grammar is not very helpful in making a firm decision on this matter. The context of the passage lends a little more material to work with. Paul is discussing gifts of leadership and so it makes sense that the purposes he describes in v. 12 are in relation to the role of those leaders and not the church at large. This supports the idea of three parallel prepositional phrases. This, coupled with the notion that the early Christians in Ephesus would not have thought it strange for Paul to set these leaders apart from the rest of the church, makes this option slightly more favourable than translating it as one compound purpose (option four). Therefore, the three purposes that Paul assigns to these leaders are “the training of the saints,” “works of service,” and “building up the body of Christ.”¹³¹

¹²⁸ Cf. Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 547–49. For each of the four translation possibilities, he comments on the rigidity with which a clergy-laity distinction is maintained, ultimately choosing the translation that he perceives best eliminates it (i.e. the fourth).

¹²⁹ The idea that the average Christian should sit back and be an observer in the life of the church is not supported by the New Testament. For example, in Matt 25:31–46 Jesus’s parable condemns those who did not serve the poor and needy among them as part of their devotion to God. Also, Paul’s image of the body of Christ and discussion of spiritual gifts in 1 Cor 12 he impresses upon the Corinthians that all members of the church have important—though diverse—roles to play.

¹³⁰ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 457, 459.

¹³¹ Nevertheless, due to the ambiguous nature of the grammar, the possibility must be left open that one large compound purpose for the leaders is also acceptable.

Verses 13–14 seem to provide further explanation to the purpose behind these gifts of leaders:¹³² they are to help the group reach unity, gain increased knowledge of the Son of God, and reach a level of spiritual maturity where they are able to withstand the “winds” of false teaching that may arise. Instead of being affected by these false teachings, Paul suggests that the goal is to speak the truth (about Christ) with the same love that he earlier asked them to possess, and to strive to “grow into Christ” (in maturity, presumably) as a group, which is all bound together.

Each of these further purposes (reaching unity, gaining knowledge, and reaching maturity to resist false teachings) is in keeping with the situation in Ephesus as established in the thick description. Clearly there were struggles in the church at Ephesus while Paul was among them. Paul also anticipated that the Christians in Ephesus would face more pressure both from within and from outside the church and warned the Ephesian elders to be on their guard against this when he met with them at Miletus.¹³³

Unity at Ephesus is never explicitly addressed in the other New Testament writings that we have, but glimpses into some of the struggles that Paul faced while in Ephesus demonstrates that there certainly could have been dissention among the Christians there. First, Paul had “many adversaries” in Ephesus according to 1 Cor 16:9 and he “fought wild beasts” there (1 Cor 15:32). These may have come from outside the church, but it could refer to those within it as well. Second, 1 Timothy, also written concerning problems in the Ephesian congregation, explicitly notes difficulties with false teachers in their midst. It is not unreasonable to think that the Ephesians could have had difficulties maintaining Christian unity even from an early point.

¹³² The notion that these leadership functions are gifts given by God to the church has been discussed above.

¹³³ See discussion above.

In regards to their need to gain knowledge, the Ephesians were initially influenced by teachers (such as Apollos) who did not know as much about Jesus as they could have, including the baptism that he commanded. Paul spent more than two years in the city educating the people and preaching the gospel, but there was undoubtedly more to learn both for those who had been followers of Jesus for a long time and for those who were newly converted.

This knowledge also would contribute to the development of spiritual maturity. Those who know the teachings of Christianity well and are thoroughly convinced by them are less likely to stray when a new teaching comes along that is not quite compatible. The Ephesians had succumbed to mixing teachings previously when they tried to mix Christianity with magical arts. In a city like Ephesus with many pagan temples and a particular regard for both the imperial cult and the cult of Artemis, it is not unreasonable to surmise that the gentile Christians there might not have left behind all their previous practices and may have been willing to entertain various syncretistic ideas concerning Christianity. The spiritually mature would not so easily have fallen victim to these ideas.

Conclusions Concerning Leadership in Eph 4:1–16

It has been demonstrated above that the discussion of leadership functions in Eph 4:1–16 is rooted in the Greco-Roman context of first-century Ephesus, the historic Christian context of the emergence of Christianity in that city, and the immediate context of the Christian community prior to its reception of Ephesians. What follows is a summary of the essential points of these contextual connections.

The first-century Christian community in Ephesus emerged in a Greek city that had been under Roman control since 133 BCE and had been the capital of the Roman province of Asia since 29 BCE. Christianity first came to the area in the mid-first century of the Common Era and seems to have been introduced to the Jews in the city by the Apostle Paul and his companions, including Priscilla and Aquila, on a short visit recorded in Acts 18:19–20. Before Paul returned to the city as he promised he would, Apollos came to the city and also began to share the Christian message. After a time, Apollos moved on to Corinth and Paul returned to Ephesus, finding a small group of disciples there. After supplementing the teaching that Apollos gave to these converts, they were baptized and Christianity began to grow in the city. Like Corinth, Ephesus was located on major trade and travel routes and so it is not surprising that these early Christian missionaries came and went from the city with apparent ease.

The city of Ephesus was home to many people and the distribution of social classes would have been typical of most Greco-Roman cities. This is unlike Corinth which had a higher percentage of freedmen than most places. Corinth also had been destroyed and refounded only a century prior to Paul's first visit to the area. Ephesus, in contrast, was a more deeply established city than Corinth and had stood occupied on the same location for roughly 350 years before Christianity emerged within it. Traditions in Ephesus also were likely to have run very deep and this extended to the entrenched social divisions and the worship of Artemis, the city's chief deity.

As they did in Corinth, the Jews of Ephesus initially welcomed Paul and his message but they soon threw him out of the synagogue. In Corinth Paul was welcomed into the home of one of his converts, Titius Justus. In Ephesus the text of Acts stipulates

that Paul began teaching out of the *σχολή* of a man named Tyrannus. It is not clear whether this man was a Christian or simply someone who wished to rent his facility for Paul's use. In Corinth Paul experienced further conflict and confrontation with the Jews in the city, but in Ephesus the bigger conflict came from another avenue: the worshippers of Artemis.

Two incidents during the early period of Christianity's emergence in the city are noteworthy when considering the former religious convictions of the Christian converts. The first incident involved the burning of magic scrolls by Ephesian Christians who had become convinced that they should not mix their former magical practices with their newfound Christian beliefs. While this incident in Acts serves to demonstrate how these Christians turned away from their former religious practices, it also shows that prior to this incident a number of Ephesian Christians chose to combine magic and Christianity. It is unlikely that after this incident all Christian converts completely left behind their old religious lives and it is reasonable to assume that continued religious syncretism was practiced by at least some of the Ephesian Christians.

The second incident related to the former religious convictions of Christians in Ephesus is the riot of the Ephesian silversmiths over their perception that Paul and his Christian message had injured the reputation of the city's great goddess, Artemis. Most of the Christian community in Ephesus were likely worshippers of Artemis prior to their conversion and with every conversion to Christianity the number of dedicated followers of the goddess in the city diminished. It must be noted that the number of Christian converts was likely quite small in comparison to the overall number of Artemis worshippers; nevertheless the text of Acts suggests that Demetrius and the other

silversmiths perceived a threat, however small. Even if some Christian converts continued to honour Artemis along with Jesus, Paul's official message was that Artemis was not a real god. It was Paul and his contention that "gods made by hand were no gods at all" that the Ephesian silversmiths were particularly incensed over. Though the charges that Demetrius and the rioters brought against Paul were dismissed by the city's *γραμματεὺς*, this incident demonstrates opposition to Christianity in the city of Ephesus at the hands of devotees to Artemis from very early in its existence.

That there was opposition to Christianity and its message in Ephesus is also supported by Paul's own statements about his time in the city recorded in 1 Corinthians. In 1 Cor 16:9 Paul notes that while there was great opportunity for sharing the gospel in Ephesus, there were also many adversaries there. Paul does not go into detail concerning who these adversaries were, but Artemis—or more specifically her followers—may have been among the adversaries that Paul had in mind.

After Paul left Ephesus following the riot of the silversmiths he did more travelling. He passed by Miletus more than a year later and summoned the Ephesian elders to meet with him there. The meeting that he had with them also provides more clues as to Paul's perception of the Ephesian Christian community while he was among them and what he saw in their future. Acts 20:19 indicates that Paul endured tears, trials, and plots by the Jews while in the city. These struggles, combined with the above mentioned opposition by the Ephesian silversmiths in the name of Artemis serve to paint a rocky picture of the emergence of Christianity in Ephesus. Paul also foresaw a rocky future for them: there would be opposition within the Christian community and also from outside of it.

It was likely at least two or three more years before Paul wrote to the Ephesians from prison. The letter itself does not outline a specific conflict or problem that prompted Paul to write to the Ephesians. It is not like 1 Corinthians where Paul had heard reports of unchristian behaviour or had inquiries from the Christian community itself. Nevertheless the language of the letter seems to indicate a polemic against Artemis worship and speaks to a Christian community which was in a struggle to exist in a city which was so influenced by the worship of this deity.

The text of Eph 4:1–16 urges the Christians to live their lives in a manner that is worthy of their calling as Christians. Paul's appeal to live in a worthy manner would have resonated with their strong sense of an individual's social status which also carried particular responsibilities and a certain level of honour. The Christians had also been called away from the worship of Artemis to live in unity with the rest of the body of Christ in their community. Paul had foreseen divisions among the community in his meeting with the Ephesian elders at Miletus and this text prompts the Ephesian Christians to resist such divisions as part of their Christian calling.

The calling of the Ephesian Christians was to live as a unified and mature body of Christ. The qualities that Paul described as being necessary for living out the calling (humility, gentleness, and patience) were difficult to emulate and the Greco-Roman world may have looked askance at the virtue of humility in particular. But each of these qualities called the Ephesian Christians, to put themselves aside, act in a loving way toward their fellow Christians and focus instead on protecting the unity of the Christian community (cf. Eph 4:2–3).

Paul demanded these difficult attitudes and actions because he wanted the Ephesian Christians to hang on to the unity of the church given by the Holy Spirit. One way he illustrated the way in which this unity functioned was through the metaphor of the body of Christ. The body metaphor was a common one in Greco-Roman philosophy and was also used in 1 Cor 12:27–31, however each text uses the metaphor with a different purpose. In 1 Corinthians the thrust of the metaphor was to highlight that each member of the body of Christ, with his or her individual gifts, was important. Yet it was also emphasized that there was a hierarchy of leaders within the Christian community who were vital to its proper functioning. The Corinthians were guilty of elevating the gift of tongues to an inappropriate level of influence and needed to be reminded that even those without this gift were important—especially the leadership functions of apostle, prophet and teacher. In 1 Corinthians there was an emphasis both on unity and diversity within the body of Christ. In Ephesus, the body metaphor served a different purpose. Paul emphasized Christ as the head of the body who joins all the parts together. The emphasis in Ephesians was on the unity of the body working and growing together under Christ; diversity among its members is not highlighted. The concepts of unity in the body with Christ at the head are particularly meaningful when read against the backdrop of a Christian community which was under pressure from a city devoted to Artemis worship and possibly also had internal factions. Where the Ephesian Christians may have been struggling with factions within their midst, the metaphor prompted them to be unified as a single body. Where some Ephesian Christians may have been tempted to split their allegiance between Christ and Artemis, the metaphor reminded them that Christ alone was to be their head.

The text of Eph 4:1–16 sets Christ up as the divine patron who has provided the Ephesian Christians with the gifts of apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastors and teachers. These leadership functions were put in place in order to assist the Christian community in the midst of their struggles. The leadership functions that Paul mentions here are suited to a general reminder of the kinds of leadership functions that God had given in the church. There is not enough known about the details of the situation in Ephesus to concretely tie these specific leadership functions to it. Three of the functions mentioned in Eph 4:1–16 are the same as those mentioned in 1 Cor 12:27–31 but the addition of the evangelists and the combination of pastors with teachers are different. It could be that Paul needed only the three functions to adequately make his point in 1 Corinthians but thought a more comprehensive list was warranted in Ephesians. It also could be that the pastors (or shepherds) were mentioned in connection with the Ephesian elders in Acts 20:28–29 who Paul says have charge over a “flock,” though this is speculative. A safer interpretation is that Eph 4:11 is a list of leadership functions which are both local and itinerant and that all of these functions work together in order to equip the saints, do works of service, and build up the body. These three purposes of the leadership functions would help the Ephesian Christians as they struggled against the pull of Artemis (or any other things that sought to pull them away from the faith). In exchange for the gift of these leadership functions the Ephesian Christians “owed” a gift back to their divine patron to honour him. They could reciprocate the honour they owed him by making good use of the leaders that they had been given and actually living out their calling as Christians.

The attitudes concerning leadership that are promoted here can be connected with the idea that the leadership functions were to be seen as a valuable, divine gift to the Christian community. These leadership functions serve a particular three-fold God-given purpose in the Christian community and were to assist the Ephesian Christians in living their lives in a manner worthy of their callings. By actually living in a manner worthy of the Christian calling and by accepting the help given to the Christian community by the leadership functions, the Christians were giving honour to God, their divine patron, who had given them the gift of leaders. The attitudes concerning leadership are linked to the historical context because the Ephesians were in need of help in maintaining their Christian unity. The pull of Artemis and any internal factions among them would have made it difficult to fulfil their calling in Christ without the assistance of solid leadership. They needed help and needed the reminder that this help came from God.

In this passage then, Paul is more concerned about the state of the faith of the Ephesian Christians than the particular leaders that they have among them. The list of leadership functions he mentions is not given in order to command that such leadership functions must exist in Ephesus, only that such functions were meant to assist the church in Ephesus in growing in their maturity and in living in ways that were in keeping with their callings as Christians.

CHAPTER 7: QUALITY LEADERS IN 1 TIM 3:1–13

Introduction

This chapter will continue the analysis of leadership functions in Ephesus and will consider Paul's words to the Ephesian Christians concerning leadership functions in 1 Tim 3:1–13. These verses will be analysed in light of the thick description already created in Chapters 5 and 6 and will further thicken that description with details of the immediate context of the Ephesian Christian community at the time of the writing of 1 Timothy. The text of 1 Tim 3:1–13 will be explored with an eye to discerning how far it is in fact rooted in the historical context of the Christian community at Ephesus. As in Chapters 4 and 6, special consideration will be given to the purpose served by the leadership functions in the text and the attitudes concerning those leadership functions which are promoted by the text.

Immediate Christian Context

The date of the writing of Paul's first letter to Timothy is open to much debate even among those who consider the work to be authentic.¹ The writing of the letter is not easily situated within Paul's known travels in Acts and this creates difficulties for those who consider it to be written during the lifetime of Paul. It is therefore either situated during one of the time periods in Acts about which the record is silent or after the time

¹ That this study assumes the authenticity of 1 Timothy has been discussed in Chapter 2. Those who regard this letter as pseudonymous situate its writing after the lifetime of Paul. Because this study assumes authenticity, the various perspectives on the date of the writing of a pseudonymous 1 Timothy will not be discussed. For thorough discussions of the issues at stake in dating an authentic 1 Timothy see Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 15–54; S. Porter, "Pauline Chronology," 65–88.

period of Acts.² That Paul may have been released from his Roman imprisonment which is recorded in Acts is suggested by Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.* 2.22.2–8) who records two Roman imprisonments for Paul.³ The record of Acts also does not record Paul's execution and so leaves room for the possibility of a release. If Paul was released, he would have been able to write 1 Timothy before a second Roman imprisonment during which he was ultimately executed. This is the position taken here and thus 1 Timothy is situated chronologically after Ephesians, written perhaps two to four years later. This means that information regarding the historical context of the Christians in Ephesus at the time of the writing of 1 Timothy describes an Ephesian Christian community which has already received Ephesians.

Chapters 5 and 6 have already laid considerable groundwork for interpreting 1 Tim 3:1–13 in their thick description of the historical situation. Chapter 5 noted that Ephesus was an important Greco-Roman city located on major trade routes. It had a bustling economy and was home to the famed Temple of Artemis. The city also had a diversity of gods worshipped by its inhabitants but the most influential of them was Artemis. This is the context into which early Christianity emerged in the city.

Acts 19:1–41 reports that Paul spent a lengthy period in the city during which he spread his message in the Jewish synagogue (Acts 19:8), at the *σχολή* of Tyrannus (Acts

² Some scholars have situated 1 Timothy within the timeframe of Acts. For example, J. A. T. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament*, 67–85 (who places it in autumn 55); Reicke, *Re-examining Paul's Letters*, 51–59 (who places it in summer/fall 56); Towner, *Timothy and Titus*, 12–15 (who places it in a year-long gap perceived between Acts 19:20 and 19:21). Campbell, who proposes dates for Paul's letters based on a reading of the epistles instead of Acts does not include 1 Timothy in his timeline as he considers it pseudonymous. See Campbell, *Framing Paul*, 412–14. Examples of scholars who accept 1 Timothy as written by Paul between two Roman imprisonments are Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 17–20; Witherington, *Titus, 1–2 Timothy and 1–3 John*, 65–68; Oden, *Timothy and Titus*, 12.

³ Eusebius also notes that this release is suggested by 2 Tim 4:16–17. For a discussion of other ancient evidence concerning a second Roman imprisonment see Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 17–20; S. Porter, "Pauline Chronology," 73.

19:9), and, as noted in Chapter 6, perhaps also “from house to house” (Acts 20:20). When Paul wrote 1 Corinthians he was in Ephesus and he reported to the Corinthian Christians that though there was much opportunity for him in Ephesus, there were also many trials and difficulties. One major difficulty Paul encountered was the conflict with Demetrius the silversmith who incited a riot in Ephesus over the influence of Paul and the Christian message he taught. Demetrius perceived that this message had negatively affected the trade in silver shrines of the goddess Artemis, and that the reputation of the goddess herself had been called into question. Though the *γραμματεὺς* who heard the complaint dismissed the rioters, he told them to bring their evidence on another day when the regular assembly was meeting. Whether they did so or not is not recorded but this incident suggests that at least portions of the non-Christian population of Ephesus was hostile to Christianity from an early stage in its development.

In Chapter 6 it was noted that when Paul met with the Ephesian elders at Miletus (Acts 20:17–38) he anticipated that the Christian community in that city was going to experience struggles from outside the church and from among its own ranks. The letter to the Ephesians also suggests that the Christians in Ephesus were experiencing problems with unity and maturity. It was also suggested in Chapter 6 that the influence of Artemis on the Ephesian Christians continued to be strong and was a contributing factor to the message that Paul spoke in Eph 4:1–16 concerning leadership functions.

Chapter 6 also highlighted that God provided the gift of leaders in the Ephesian church (apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastors and teachers) in order to assist the Christians in that city in overcoming their struggles. In particular, Eph 4:12 states a threefold purpose for these leadership functions: “for the training of the saints, for the

work of service, and for the building up of the body of Christ.” The leadership, by carrying out these purposes, would assist the Christians in Ephesus in maintaining unity and reaching maturity which was lacking in their group. All of these details are important background for the historical situation at Ephesus at the time of the writing of 1 Timothy.

False Teachers in 1 Timothy

After Paul’s opening greetings to Timothy, the first section of 1 Timothy highlights the presence of false teachers within the Ephesian Christian community.⁴ This establishes the problem and occasion for which Paul is writing the letter. The section following the establishment of the problem of false teachers includes various instructions of how the church ought to function. These instructions should be viewed as being given in light of the fact that there are problems in the community. These instructions include admonition to pray for all people and the manner in which prayer ought to be carried out (2:1–15). It also includes qualifications for the leadership functions of overseers, deacons, and women leaders (3:1–16).⁵ In 1 Tim 4, the focus shifts to Timothy as an individual. Much of 1 Tim 4 contains admonitions to Timothy as a leader and his personal conduct among the Christians in Ephesus. In 1 Tim 5—6 Timothy is instructed on how to interact with

⁴ There does not appear to be consensus on the outline of the structure of 1 Timothy and commentators differ in their assessment of where exact shifts occur in the letter’s structure. Compare the different structures suggested by S. Porter, *Apostle Paul*, 43; Guthrie, *Pastoral Epistles*, 63; Quinn and Wacker, *1 and 2 Timothy*, 47–48; Dibelius and Conzelmann, *Pastoral Epistles*, 12; Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, viii–ix; Towner, *Timothy and Titus*, 70–74; Witherington, *Titus, 1–2 Timothy and 1–3 John*, 181. Nevertheless, a similar progression of ideas presented in the letter is seen among the various proposals concerning its structure. That there is a break after the end of 1 Tim 1 is accepted by each of the commentators noted above. Though the method of dividing the material in 1 Tim 1 is not universal among them, they are also all agreed that a major thrust of 1 Tim 1:3–20 concerns the heresy that exists in the Ephesian Christian community.

⁵ Some commentators note that 1 Tim 3:14–16 ought to be viewed separately from 1 Tim 3:1–13. See Guthrie, *Pastoral Epistles*, 63; Towner, *Timothy and Titus*, 71. Indeed these last verses of 1 Tim 3 contain not instructions for selecting leaders, but Paul’s explanation of why he has written such instructions and the note that he plans to visit them soon. Notably Quinn and Wacker isolate 1 Tim 3:14–4:5 and call these verses “a piece in pause.” Quinn and Wacker, *1 and 2 Timothy*, 47.

various groups within the Christian community (people of all ages, widows, elders, and slaves) and to stand firm in the face of false teachings.⁶

The text of 1 Timothy, particularly 1 Tim 3:1–13, must be read in light of the existence of the false teachers in Ephesus. Mounce notes,

Chap. 3, perhaps more than any other chapter in the [Pastoral Epistles], has been interpreted as a church manual written apart from a specific historical situation . . . However, the message of the chapter is missed if the reader does not interpret it in light of the Ephesian situation. Almost every quality Paul specifies here has its negative counterpart in the Ephesian opponents.⁷

The very reason that Paul wanted Timothy to remain in Ephesus when Paul went to Macedonia was in order to address the very issue of these false teachers (cf. 1 Tim 1:3).⁸

By the time 1 Timothy is sent, it is evident that Paul's admonitions in Eph 4 have not had the desired effect. The text of 1 Timothy both explicitly and implicitly addresses the problem of false teachers among the Ephesian Christians and is perhaps indicative of a leadership crisis.⁹ Paul notes that some people are "teaching different doctrines" (ἐτεροδιδασκαλεῖν, 1:3) which pertain to myths (μύθοις) and genealogies (γενεαλογίαις) which promote useless speculation (ἐκζητήσεις) rather than faith (1:4; 4:7). They spark fruitless discussions (ματαιολογίαν, 1:6) and may include teachings concerning Jewish law which Paul explicitly states they do not actually understand (μὴ νοοῦντες, 1:7).¹⁰

⁶ With the exception of Quinn and Wacker, who note a break at 4:6, the above-noted commentators also all identify a shift in the text at 4:1. Their divisions of the rest of the letter, however, are all slightly different. Cf. S. Porter, *Apostle Paul*, 43; Guthrie, *Pastoral Epistles*, 63; Quinn and Wacker, *1 and 2 Timothy*, 47–48; Dibelius and Conzelmann, *Pastoral Epistles*, 12; Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, ix; Towner, *Timothy and Titus*, 72–74; Witherington, *Titus, 1–2 Timothy and 1–3 John*, 181.

⁷ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 153. Cf. Towner, *Timothy and Titus*, 260; Witherington, *Titus, 1–2 Timothy and 1–3 John*, 232.

⁸ If 1 Timothy dates to a time after Paul's first Roman imprisonment, as is the contention here, then Paul must have visited Ephesus subsequent to his release and left Timothy behind when he moved on.

⁹ Towner, *Timothy and Titus*, 239.

¹⁰ Mounce notes that these individuals were likely teaching Jewish law, but it is unlikely that they were part of the mainstream of Judaism at the time since such individuals would not be accused of not understanding the law. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 27. What exactly these teachers were teaching about the

Additionally, all who teach falsely are conceited or “puffed up” (τετύφωται, 6:4) and understand nothing (μηδὲν ἐπιστάμενος, 6:4). They crave controversy (νοσῶν περὶ ζητήσεις, 6:4) and quarrel over words (λογομαχίας, 6:4) and this produces envy, dissention, slander, evil suspicions, and constant friction (φθόνος ἔρις βλασφημίαι, ὑπόνοιαι πονηραί, διαπαρατριβαί, 6:4–5). These false teachers also view being godly as a means of bettering themselves financially (νομιζόντων πορισμὸν εἶναι τὴν εὐσέβειαν, 6:5).

The result of such teachings is serious. Paul notes that these teachers have moved away from faith and pure consciences (πίστιν καὶ ἀγαθὴν συνείδησιν, 1:19) and some have “shipwrecked” their faiths because of it, namely Alexander and Hymenaeus (1:19–20).¹¹ These two men are guilty of blasphemy (βλασφημεῖν) and Paul has “handed them over” to Satan for punishment (1:20).

In addition to these specific charges concerning false teachers, there is other questionable conduct among the Ephesian Christians. This conduct may be directly related to the false teachers but may also describe attitudes that are generally prevalent among the Christians in Ephesus as a result of the prevailing worldviews. These attitudes include those who are devoted to deceitful spirits and demonic teaching (πνεύμασιν πλάνοις καὶ διδασκαλίαις δαιμονίων, 4:1), are hypocrites (ὑποκρίσει, 4:2), are liars

law can only be speculated and it is likely that the teaching was meant to pertain to both Jewish and gentile Christians. The only clear reference about the content of the teachings is the abstinence from certain foods mentioned in 4:3, although this statement is not explicitly connected with the false teachers.

¹¹ All four references to “Alexander” which pertain to Paul in the New Testament are also linked to Ephesus (twice in Acts 19:33; 1 Tim 1:20; 2 Tim 4:14). This may indicate that they all refer to the same false teacher in Ephesus, although the name was a common one. Cf. Towner, *Timothy and Titus*, 160. Knight agrees that it is possible but not certain that these references all refer to the same man. Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 110–11. The reference in 2 Timothy explicitly notes that Alexander is a “metal worker” (χαλκεύς) which might suggest he is the same Alexander who was involved in the riot at Ephesus where Demetrius the silversmith and others of like profession were attempting to bring charges against the Christians (cf. Acts 19:23–41; discussion in Chapter 5 above). The Alexander of 2 Timothy and Acts is not likely to be a Christian. If this is the case, then the Alexander in 1 Tim 1 is a different individual. Cf. Quinn and Wacker, *1 and 2 Timothy*, 812; Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 413.

(ψευδολόγων, 4:2), have seared consciences (κεκαυστηριασμένων τὴν ἰδίαν συνείδησιν, 4:2), forbid marriage (κωλύοντων γαμεῖν, 4:3), abstain from eating certain foods (ἀπέχεσθαι βρωμάτων, 4:3), require some form of bodily training as part of the faith (4:8),¹² desire wealth above all (βουλόμενοι πλουτεῖν, 6:9–10),¹³ participate in worthless empty talk (τὰς βεβήλους κενοφωνίας, 6:20), and embrace contradictions which are mistakenly considered “knowledge” (ἀντιθέσεις τῆς ψευδωνύμου γνώσεως, 6:20). Further to this, in discussing the treatment of widows in the community, Paul notes the tendency of some younger widows who have the benefit of community charity to become idle gossips and busybodies (ἀργαί, φλύαροι, περίεργοι, 5:13) and also to allow their passions to lead them astray into marriages which take them from the faith (5:11–12).¹⁴ Paul also is careful to note that those who have family or household members who are in need must support them rather than leaving the church to do so; those who fail in this are worse than the unbelievers (5:8).

These comments made by Paul concerning the false teachers and unchristian attitudes in the Ephesian Christian community suggest a couple of things. First, the comment that some of the false teachers are devoted to myths and that some Ephesian Christians are devoted to deceitful spirits and demonic teaching bring to mind practices connected to Artemis worship in the city. Chapters 5 and 6 have discussed the level of influence that Artemis had in the city and it is difficult to think that these comments in

¹² Paul notes that such “training” is not a bad thing in and of itself however it is not as good as actual godliness, which always has value (4:8).

¹³ It is not wealth itself that is the problem so much as the desire to attain it. For those who are already wealthy, Paul admonishes Timothy to encourage them to trust in God rather than their wealth and not to flaunt it (6:17–19).

¹⁴ Paul encourages such young widows to get married and keep from idle busyness by managing a household and bearing children (5:14). Remarriage in and of itself cannot be what Paul is against in this passage. Those who are drawn away from faith by marriage may be pursuing marriages which would be unsuitable for a Christian. Cf. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 290.

1 Timothy have no connection to her whatsoever. Second, the comments that the false teachers are making statements concerning Jewish law might also suggest that there is some level of influence of Judaism on these false teachers. Although it is not likely the only factor influencing the false teachers and the general unchristian attitudes of some of the Ephesian Christians, it seems that religious syncretism was a contributing factor to the problems facing the Ephesian Christian community when 1 Timothy was written.

Religious syncretism was a problem in the Ephesian Christian community in Acts 19, and, although many Christians repented of it by burning their magic scrolls, 1 Timothy suggests that this either continued to be a problem or once again became a problem in the Ephesian Christian community.

The immediate Christian context presented here and the previous thick description of the Ephesian Christian community in Chapter 5 and 6 need to be read together when considering the text of 1 Tim 3. They demonstrate that the false teachers in Ephesus who are mentioned in 1 Timothy are indicative of a continuing series of problems and struggles in a Christian community which, from its beginning, faced many challenges. The ongoing problems in the community or the continued relapse into new struggles may be the reason for the thoroughness with which Paul treats the qualifications connected to leadership functions in this text. It is perhaps not so much that the ecclesiology in 1 Timothy is well developed, but that the Ephesian problems are long-standing.¹⁵ It is through the thick description of a Christian community in regular or continued struggle

¹⁵ A too-highly-developed ecclesiology in the pastoral letters is often given as a reason that they must be dated to a period well after the lifetime of the apostle.

which is facing a present difficulty with false teachers and un-Christian behaviour that the words of 1 Tim 3:1–13 should be read.¹⁶

Translation

1 Tim 3:1–13 can be translated as follows:

¹This word is true: whoever aspires to be an overseer, they desire a noble task. ²Therefore it is necessary for overseers to be irreproachable, one-woman men, temperate, self controlled, respectable, hospitable, and skillful in teaching. ³They must not be drunkards nor brawlers, but instead kind and peaceable. They must not be money-lovers and ⁴must manage their own house well, having their children in submission, and being dignified in all things ⁵(for if anyone does not manage their own house, how will they take care of the church of God?). ⁶They also must not be newly converted so that they do not become puffed up and fall into the same condemnation as the devil. ⁷It is also necessary for them to have a good reputation among outsiders so that they do not fall into disgrace and the trap of the devil.

⁸Deacons, likewise, must be worthy of respect, not hypocritical, not devoted to a lot of wine, and not greedy for money. ⁹They must hold to the mysteries of the faith with a pure conscience. ¹⁰Also, these people must be tested first, then let them serve if they are found to be above reproach.

¹¹The women, likewise, must be worthy of respect, not slanderers, temperate and faithful in all things.

¹²A deacon must be a one-woman man and they must manage their children and own households well. Those who serve well will acquire a good rank for themselves and great confidence in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.¹⁷

¹⁶ Of course, not all scholars agree that there is any real historical situation for 1 Timothy as they view it as pseudonymous and written well after Paul and Timothy were concerned about the situation of the church in Ephesus. For example, Dibelius and Conzelmann state, "The real interest of the author, however, is directed not to instructing the disciple of the apostle, but rather to the ethical admonition of the bishops and those who are to become bishops." Dibelius and Conzelmann, *Pastoral Epistles*, 50. The plausibility of Pauline authorship and thus of a real historical situation for 1 Timothy has been discussed in Chapter 2.

¹⁷ In v. 1 *τις* is translated as "they." The Greek text concerning overseers is in the singular. Though the patriarchal context of the ancient world suggests these leaders were likely men, there are no explicit masculine pronouns used in this part of the passage. The word *τις* has the same form in both the masculine and feminine. The English translation has here been pluralized in order to more easily use gender-inclusive language. In v. 2 the translation of "bishop" has been purposefully avoided. The term "overseer" is preferable in order to avoid bringing to mind the office of bishop which developed in later decades and centuries. Many favour a general translation here, including Deer, "Translating the Word *Episkopos*," 440. Though there may have been a well-established church order which included "bishops" by the time of Ignatius (early second century), it is impossible to determine from the text of the New Testament that such levels of development existed in the first century. In fact, the New Testament says very little about what an overseer does and the relationship to the other leadership functions. For this study it is important to consider the *ἐπίσκοπος* in light of what is said concerning them in this context specifically, rather than what might have become commonly associated with the term over the next forty to fifty years and beyond. That

Analysis

The text to be examined in this study falls into the first half of 1 Timothy where Paul provides instructions for Timothy in guiding the church in the midst of their problems. Specifically, 1 Tim 3:1–13 provides instructions for selecting individuals to fulfill particular leadership functions in the community.

First Timothy 3:1–13 is a list of virtues which Paul commends to Timothy in order to aid in selecting appropriate leaders. The lists do not describe the tasks these leaders are to do, but rather what kinds of people ought to be chosen to fill the role. The reason that Paul focuses here on the moral qualities of the leaders can be directly connected to the historical situation at Ephesus and the pronounced difficulties the church is facing due to false teachers and other immoral behaviour. Some of these offenders may themselves be among the church's leadership and may need to be replaced. These guidelines that Paul offers will assist in selecting new, better-suited leaders for the Ephesian Christians. Table 1 (at the end of this chapter) summarizes the qualities of the ideal leaders, the activities of the false teachers, and other undesirable qualities found among the Ephesian Christians. This table will be useful in creating comparisons in the textual analysis.

Mounce provides a similar table comparing desirable and undesirable qualities of leaders and opponents in the Pastoral Epistles as a whole.¹⁸ The table below is different

διάκονος is used in v. 8 in a technical sense rather than in a general sense of “servant” is commonly accepted. Cf. Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 151. The translation of “deacon” is preferred, though great care must be taken not to read into this term the duties and connotations that would later become associated with the office of deacon. Whereas the term “overseer” is neutral (as opposed to “bishop”) but still somewhat portrays a particular leadership function, there is no satisfactory neutral term that would easily portray the same idea relating to a *διάκονος*. For the translation of *γυναίκα* in v. 11, see discussion below under Verse 11. The switch from the Greek singular to the English plural in v. 12 is done to accommodate the gender-neutral pronoun as in v. 1.

¹⁸ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 156–58.

than Mounce's in four respects. First, comparisons are deliberately confined to 1 Timothy out of a desire to limit material to the Ephesian context at the time of the writing of 1 Timothy. To go beyond this time period and geographic location in this study would skew the results of analysis. Second, Mounce conveys all the problems listed in the Pastorals as resulting from "false teachers." As noted above, not all of the problems in Ephesus were necessarily directly connected to the false teachers and the table here attempts to demonstrate this. Third, at times Mounce finds comparisons with which I disagree and they are not included here. For example, he suggests the possibility that the "false teachers" are against childbearing based on Paul's statements in 2:15 that women will be saved through childbearing.¹⁹ Finally, the table here separates the qualifications of the "women" from those of the "deacons" whereas Mounce combines them. The rationale for this will be discussed below.

Verse 1

First Timothy 3 begins with "a trustworthy saying" that those who aspire to be overseers desire a noble task.²⁰ In Greek literature before the time of the New Testament the term *ἐπίσκοπος* denoted someone who exercised a role of oversight and care for a task or a group of people.²¹ It is often translated as "one who watches over, guardian, overseer."²²

¹⁹ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 156.

²⁰ Some commentators group the initial words *πιστός ὁ λόγος* with the previous material: Dibelius and Conzelmann, *Pastoral Epistles*, 51; Quinn and Wacker, *1 and 2 Timothy*, 243; Malina and Pilch, *Deutero-Pauline Letters*, 117. It seems better to see this as introducing the "saying" which follows it concerning the function of overseer: Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 153; Lock, *Pastoral Epistles*, 35; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 167; Towner, *Timothy and Titus*, 248; Witherington, *Titus, 1–2 Timothy and 1–3 John* 234. For a detailed discussion of the phrase *πιστός ὁ λόγος* here see Knight, *Faithful Sayings*, 50–61.

²¹ Beyer, "ἐπισκέπτομαι, κτλ.," 2:608–9. L. Porter notes that this meaning is one of two that developed for the term, the other being that of a definite office holder with technical duties. L. Porter, "The Word *ἐπίσκοπος*," 105.

It was used of the gods and their oversight of the various facets of the world²³ and of people in various roles of oversight.²⁴ The term ἐπίσκοπος was also used in ancient Greek literature as a designation for many different offices.²⁵ These offices included both state and local officials, but these do not seem to have any kind of religious involvement.²⁶ The exact duties of these individuals are impossible to discern and they appear to be varied.²⁷ The New Testament uses ἐπίσκοπος only five times: Acts 20:28; Phil 1:1; 1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:7; and 1 Pet 2:25. With the exception of 1 Pet 2:25, where the ἐπίσκοπος is Jesus, they all appear to refer to a leadership function within the Christian communities of Ephesus (Acts, 1 Timothy), Philippi (Philippians), and Crete (Titus). Tracing a full development of the use of the term is impossible with such scant evidence. It is true that the instances of the term seem to point to some kind of official designation, though caution must be taken against over-theologizing the term or reading too much into its use. The early Christians appear to have simply adopted a widely used term for oversight.

According to 1 Tim 3:1, it is honourable to want to be among this group of leaders. Due to the important and noble character of this function, certain virtues must be found in the people who fill it. The rest of 1 Tim 3:2–7 describes in detail the qualities needed in a person who is an overseer.

²² LSJ, 657. Deer suggests that in both the LXX and in other Greek writing the term ἐπίσκοπος is most often used in a general sense to denote a variety of things. Deer, "Translating the Word Episkopos," 439.

²³ Beyer, "ἐπισκέπτομαι, κτλ.," 2:609; L. Porter, "The Word ἐπίσκοπος," 105. Cf. Homer, *Il.* 22.255; Pindar, *Ol.* 14.5; Aeschylus, *Sept.* 272. Artemis is also called ἐπίσκοπος in Plutarch, *Mor.* 302.C.

²⁴ Beyer, "ἐπισκέπτομαι, κτλ.," 2:610. Cf. Homer, *Od.* 8.163; Plato, *Leg.* 784A.

²⁵ Beyer, "ἐπισκέπτομαι, κτλ.," 2:611. L. Porter suggests that the earliest instance of ἐπίσκοπος being used in a technical sense in terms of an "office" in Greek literature is in Aristophanes, *Av.* 1022–54. This dates to the fifth century BCE and features an official from Athens (the ἐπίσκοπος) who comes to offer his services to the imaginary land in the play. Cf. L. Porter, "The Word ἐπίσκοπος," 109.

²⁶ Beyer, "ἐπισκέπτομαι, κτλ.," 2:611–14.

²⁷ Cf. Dibelius and Conzelmann, *Pastoral Epistles*, 54.

Source and Purpose of Lists in 1 Tim 3:2–13

That Paul should propose a list of virtues for Christian leaders rather than a list of duties is not surprising.²⁸ As previously noted, the virtues prescribed correspond to difficulties that the Ephesian church was experiencing. Additionally, this list parallels the kinds of virtue and vice lists that were common in the Greco-Roman world.²⁹ There were both general lists of virtues and those associated with particular professions.³⁰ Lists of virtues and vices are found in many sources. Fitzgerald notes that general lists were found in philosophical discussions, works of satire and diatribe, rhetorical and astrological works, and also inscriptions.³¹ Some of the more specific lists which contain virtues desirable to particular professions are somewhat parallel to the lists in 1 Tim 3.³² Easton³³ provides examples of lists for kings (c. 120 CE),³⁴ generals (before 50 CE),³⁵ and midwives (early second century).³⁶ Another similar example dating to the third century is the description of a “wise man” in Diogenes Laertius.³⁷ Further, Lucian (second century) offers a description of a dancer which may be parallel.³⁸ Of these examples, only Onosander’s list

²⁸ S. Porter classifies these as “vice” lists because he sees more negative than positive in their contents. He acknowledges that they might also be considered lists of virtues. S. Porter, “Paul, Virtues, Vices,” 380. Ultimately it does not matter if they are virtues or vices for the purposes of this study; they are lists of qualifications for leaders which both commend and forbid certain behaviours.

²⁹ That such lists were common in Hellenistic, Jewish, and Christian literature is demonstrated by Fitzgerald, “Virtue/Vice Lists,” 857; S. Porter, “Paul, Virtues, Vices,” 370. That the list in 1 Tim 3 parallels others known at the time is demonstrated by Easton, *Pastoral Epistles*, 197–99; Dibelius and Conzelmann, *Pastoral Epistles*, 50–51; Towner, *Timothy and Titus*, 240; Malina and Pilch, *Deutero-Pauline Letters*, 118–19.

³⁰ The latter are sometimes referred to as *Berufspflichtenlehren*.

³¹ Fitzgerald, “Virtue/Vice Lists,” 857.

³² For detailed comparisons of Paul’s list and others, see Easton, *Pastoral Epistles*, 199–201; Dibelius and Conzelmann, *Pastoral Epistles*, 158–59.

³³ Easton, *Pastoral Epistles*, 197–99. In regards to such lists of virtues Guthrie says, “The qualities required for Christian administrators are strikingly similar in many particulars.” Guthrie, *Pastoral Epistles*, 91.

³⁴ Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 1.15–35.

³⁵ Onosander, *Strat.* 1.

³⁶ Soranos, *Gyn.* 1–2.

³⁷ Diogenes Laertius, *Vit. phil.* 7:117. Cf. Bernard, *Pastoral Epistles*, 57.

³⁸ Lucian, *Salt.* 81. Cf. Goodrich, “Overseers as Stewards,” 78.

for generals is likely to have been written prior to 1 Timothy but the others are all dated before the third century. Even though three of the lists are dated after 1 Timothy, they still help to demonstrate the prevalence of such lists in society.³⁹ Lists of virtues and vices would have been known to the Ephesian Christians and they would have been able to readily identify with Paul's suggestion of such a list for Christian leaders.

Some commentators suggest that Paul knew and copied existing lists of virtues.⁴⁰ Paul may well have been aware of existing lists, but discerning the actual source of Paul's lists is difficult and does not contribute greatly to the discussion here.⁴¹ Even if Paul used sources, he did not copy them exactly or thoughtlessly and many of the virtues Paul mentions for the Christian leaders directly correspond to the challenges the Ephesian church is facing. This suggests that the virtues are deliberately chosen and not simply copied.⁴² This will be demonstrated in more detail below.

Before looking at the content of these lists in detail, it is important to consider the purpose of them. First, they are lists of character qualifications, not lists of duties. Paul's

³⁹ Cf. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 166–67.

⁴⁰ For example Dibelius and Conzelmann, *Pastoral Epistles*, 51–52; Bernard, *Pastoral Epistles*, 57.

⁴¹ Mounce notes, "The qualities are those that all people, Christians and non-Christians, hold as laudable. That is the common denominator among the lists, and searching for a common source is at best tentative and not helpful in determining meaning." Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 167. Goodrich has suggested that rather than being parallel to virtue and vice lists, these qualifications in 1 Timothy paint the overseer as a "domestic steward." Goodrich, "Overseers as Stewards," 77–97. Paschke suggests that they have a closer parallel to the "care of manners" (*cura morum*) lists detailing prerequisites for Roman Senators. Paschke, "Cura Morum," 105–19. Whatever the source or inspiration for the lists of 1 Timothy, the focus for this study is on their connection to the false teachers of Ephesus.

⁴² Towner, *Timothy and Titus*, 241; Mappes, "Moral Virtues," 212. For agreement that Paul adapted sources for his own purposes, cf. S. Porter, "Paul, Virtues, Vices," 386; Goodrich, "Overseers as Stewards," 79. Dibelius and Conzelmann suggest that the writer of 1 Timothy (not Paul in their perspective) knew of Onosander's list and copied it without adding anything specifically "Christian" to the requirements. Dibelius and Conzelmann, *Pastoral Epistles*, 51–52. Mounce is against the idea that Paul based his list on Onosander. He notes, "The similarity between the list in 1 Timothy and Onosander is explained by noting the function of the list in the [Pastoral Epistles]: Paul wants the church leaders to possess at a minimum those basic, observable traits that were highly regarded in pagan society. One would be surprised if Paul did not choose some of those qualities that were the common stock of the society to which he was appealing." Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 166. Cf. Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 151–52.

major concern with providing these lists was the character of the leaders and not their duties or their gifts.⁴³ This means that caution must be exercised when trying to discern the duties that each of the leaders may have performed.⁴⁴ It is possible, for example, that either the overseers or deacons or both had some connection with the church's finances since they are both forbidden to be greedy for money.⁴⁵ On the other hand, it is possible that neither of them had a direct connection to the church's financial assets but that Paul simply sees greed as unbecoming of a Christian leader. Second, it must be realized that these list should not be viewed as definitive checklists where candidates for the leadership functions must be able to demonstrate each quality exactly.⁴⁶ For example, both overseers and deacons are required to be "one-woman men" and to manage their children (plural) and households well. It does not necessarily follow from this that they were *required* to be married and to have at least two children.⁴⁷ It is more likely addressing the fact that most men would be married, most marriages included children, and that men in those "normal" circumstances must demonstrate integrity and skill in relation to their families. Understanding the purpose of these lists assists in understanding how to best interpret their meanings.

⁴³ Towner, *Timothy and Titus*, 239; Witherington, *Titus, 1–2 Timothy and 1–3 John*, 233. Towner suggests that Paul assumes each candidate also displays suitable gifts and abilities. Towner, *Timothy and Titus*, 239.

⁴⁴ Mounce attempts to discern many potential duties of these individuals. Cf. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 159. While his suggestions, and others like them, may indeed be plausible, nothing can be said for certain from this text alone.

⁴⁵ Cf. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 159; Quinn and Wacker, *1 and 2 Timothy*, 259, 281.

⁴⁶ That these were meant to be general lists with suitable guidelines for choosing leaders and not "definitive" checklists is supported by Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 166; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 158–59, 161; Witherington, *Titus, 1–2 Timothy and 1–3 John*, 234.

⁴⁷ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 158–59. See also discussion below.

Verse 2

The first virtue listed for overseers is that overseers must be “irreproachable” (ἀνεπίληπτον). Many commentators note that this first quality serves as a summary and that all the other descriptors that follow explain what exactly is meant by “irreproachable.”⁴⁸ It is important to note that being “above reproach” does not mean “sinless” but is rather a comment on the overseer’s general reputation in the community.⁴⁹

The next phrase, however, is not so easily understood. The words μιᾶς γυναικὸς ἄνδρα create controversy because γυνή can mean either woman or wife and ἀνὴρ can mean either man or husband. Additionally, the implications of μιᾶς are unclear.⁵⁰ The context must dictate what is meant in any given situation. The phrase could be translated as “one-woman man” (with broad implications) or “husband of one wife” (with more narrow implications).

Some understand this phrase as a prohibition of polygamy. This is possible. Some Jews were known to practice polygamy at this time and it was not outlawed by the Romans until the early third century.⁵¹ Some have suggested, however, that Greeks and Romans were more likely to keep a mistress in addition to a wife rather than practice polygamy.⁵² Even if polygamy was known it is hard to know how common Jewish or

⁴⁸ For example Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 155–56; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 169–70; Quinn and Wacker, *1 and 2 Timothy*, 256; Towner, *Timothy and Titus*, 241, 250; Witherington, *Titus, 1–2 Timothy and 1–3 John*, 237.

⁴⁹ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 170; Oden, *Timothy and Titus*, 141.

⁵⁰ The identical phrase is found at 3:12 in relation to the deacons. The same issues are at stake in both locations.

⁵¹ Knight notes that some Jews were known to practice polygamy and needed special dispensation from the Romans to continue the practice when it was outlawed under Roman law in 212 CE. Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 158. Cf. Josephus *Ant.* 17.1.2.14; Justin Martyr, *Trypho* 134.

⁵² Mounce notes that in Greco-Roman society, marital infidelity was common. He quotes Demosthenes as saying, “Mistresses we keep for the sake of pleasure, concubines for the daily care of the

Greco-Roman polygamy really was during this period and how pertinent a prohibition of polygamy would have been for Christian leaders in Ephesus.⁵³ Other possibilities must also be explored.

Some have understood this phrase as excluding unmarried men from being overseers. Elsewhere, however, Paul promotes celibacy,⁵⁴ and he and Timothy are both presumed to be unmarried. It seems unlikely that this phrase excludes unmarried men from serving.⁵⁵ Lock also notes that no one would be reproached for being unmarried, and if Paul's purpose behind this list is to promote "irreproachable" leadership, making marriage a requirement is unlikely.⁵⁶

These words have also been interpreted as forbidding remarriage in the case of the death of a spouse or a divorce.⁵⁷ In spite of this possibility, there is no such prohibition for widowed women⁵⁸ and it is unlikely that widowed men alone would be asked to hold to such a requirement.⁵⁹ It is possible that this phrase is meant to forbid re-marriage after

body, but wives to bear us legitimate children." Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 171. Cf. Demosthenes, *Or.* 59.122. Though Demosthenes is a fourth-century BCE Greek writer, casual adultery was still common among Greco-Roman men in the first century. Cf. Gibson, "Ephesians 5:21-33," 167-68. In fact, adultery was so problematic that it was criminalized by Augustus through a series of laws that were designed to promote marriage and child-bearing in an effort to create a stronger society and more citizens for the army. Cf. D'Angelo, "Roman 'Family Values,'" 527-29. Adultery was not eliminated by this law though the longer the law was in effect the more it was necessary that those with ambitions to climb the social ladder not be caught, as a conviction could lead to exile or loss of property. Cf. D'Angelo, "Roman 'Family Values,'" 530.

⁵³ That Jewish polygamy was known but rare is supported by Towner, *Timothy and Titus*, 250; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 171.

⁵⁴ 1 Cor 7:32-38.

⁵⁵ Towner, *Timothy and Titus*, 250; Glasscock, "Husband of One Wife," 246.

⁵⁶ Lock, *Pastoral Epistles*, 36.

⁵⁷ Towner, *Timothy and Titus*, 250. Quinn and Wacker and Malina and Pilch say it prohibits remarriage no matter the circumstances. Quinn and Wacker, *1 and 2 Timothy*, 256-57; Malina and Pilch, *Deutero-Pauline Letters*, 119. Dibelius and Conzelmann note that this admonition has nothing to do with the Christian views of a proper marriage because the source of the list is seen as Roman. They further note that some Greco-Romans also revered those who married only once, even after the death of a spouse. Dibelius and Conzelmann, *Pastoral Epistles*, 52. Cf. Malina and Pilch, *Deutero-Pauline Letters*, 119.

⁵⁸ 1 Cor 7:8-9; Rom 7:1-3.

⁵⁹ Glasscock, "Husband of One Wife," 246-47.

divorce,⁶⁰ but nothing in the context of this passage would commend that particular interpretation over another.⁶¹

The simplest solution, which allows for a large number of implications to be read at once, is that the overseer must be faithful in his marriage in every respect.⁶² This prohibits polygamy, adultery, and divorce, though it does not necessarily rule out remarriage in particular circumstances.⁶³ The translation of “one-woman man” allows for this understanding better than “husband of one wife.” A virtuous marriage for overseers is important in light of the false teachers who may be forbidding marriage or seeing it as a less-worthy station in life (cf. 4:3).⁶⁴ In 1 Timothy, Paul promotes marriage and family as positive pursuits, provided that they are pursued within the confines of the Christian faith.⁶⁵

The next qualification for overseers is that they must be “temperate” (*νηφάλιον*). Some have noted that this term can refer to temperance in regards to alcohol consumption, but also can refer more generally to a person’s behaviour in regards to all things. In this case “temperate” or “level-headed” are suitable translations.⁶⁶ Here it is

⁶⁰ Cf. Matt 5:31–32.

⁶¹ Glasscock, “Husband of One Wife,” 249.

⁶² Towner, *Timothy and Titus*, 250; Witherington, *Titus, 1–2 Timothy and 1–3 John*, 237; L. Johnson, *1 and 2 Timothy*, 229; Glasscock, “Husband of One Wife,” 249. Knight says the statement is analogous to “You shall not commit adultery.” Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 158. Cf. Oden, *Timothy and Titus*, 141.

⁶³ Lock, *Pastoral Epistles*, 36–37. It would be unwise to draw conclusions about what situations do or do not allow for remarriage based on this text alone.

⁶⁴ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 170.

⁶⁵ It is probably going too far when Mounce suggests that the fact that marital faithfulness is second on the list of requirements for overseers indicates that “marital faithfulness is a serious problem in the Ephesian church.” Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 170. See also Quinn and Wacker, *1 and 2 Timothy*, 257. Paul seems to emphasize false teachers as their major problem, yet the qualification regarding ability to teach is seventh on the list. Mounce himself says the ability to teach is “one of the more significant requirements of an overseer.” Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 174. It is best not to speculate which requirements were more important or which problems were more prevalent based on the order of the text.

⁶⁶ BDAG, 672. Contrary to most, Lock says that this reference does have to do with sobriety in relation to alcohol, though acknowledges that it can also be figurative. Lock, *Pastoral Epistles*, 38.

fitting to translate the term in the more general sense because later in the passage (v. 3) Paul explicitly addresses the person's alcohol consumption.⁶⁷ It seems unlikely that he would address the same issue twice at two different locations in the same list.

The next qualification is that an overseer must be self controlled (*σώφρονα*). This person is not given to extremes and carefully considers his or her own actions, seeking to act in a responsible way.⁶⁸ Aristotle writes, "The temperate man (*ὁ σώφρων*) desires the right thing in the right way at the right time" (*Eth. Nic.* 3.7.9–10, LCL). This would certainly be a desirable quality to have in a Christian leader.

The next qualification is "respectable" (*κόσμιον*). This word describes a highly regarded person who is honourable.⁶⁹ This person is well thought of and may display characteristics that would gain honour under the system of honour and shame which has been previously discussed. In addition, according to L. Johnson, "In antiquity authority was positively correlated with dignity in bearing."⁷⁰ If a dignified person is also one who commands authority, then this quality is important for the Ephesian leaders to have. A certain level of authority would be needed in order to combat false teachings that ran rampant in the community. A similar requirement is made of the deacon in v. 8 and, no matter their relationship to the overseer, they, too, would need to exercise a level of authority.

These last three qualifications (temperate, self controlled, respectable) can be read in direct opposition to the false teachers who allow themselves to be drawn into idle

⁶⁷ Towner, *Timothy and Titus*, 251.

⁶⁸ BDAG, 987.

⁶⁹ BDAG, 561.

⁷⁰ L. Johnson, *1 and 2 Timothy*, 227. He makes this comment in connection with the word *σεμνούς* which is a desirable quality for a deacon, but the similarity in meaning makes it an appropriate consideration also for the qualification of *κόσμιον* for the overseers. The words *κόσμιον* and *σεμνούς* have similar semantic domains. L&N, 1:747.

disputes and discussions (1:4, 6). These qualifications also stand in contrast to the other members of the church who may participate in worthless, empty discussions (6:20) and allow themselves to become idle gossips and busybodies (5:13). Someone who is level-headed, in control of their actions, and respectable would not be so easily drawn into gossip and potentially inflammatory discussions which could damage the church and the faith of those who are weaker in their Christian convictions.⁷¹

The next quality Paul addresses is that of hospitality (*φιλόξενον*). In Greco-Roman society hospitality was a much-praised virtue.⁷² Wealthy travellers could expect hospitality through their relationships of patronage and friendship.⁷³ To disregard these obligations would be to bring shame upon self and family. Paul here impresses upon the Christian leaders in Ephesus their duty to be hospitable—perhaps to Christian travellers regardless of their social connections⁷⁴ and also to the Christian community in Ephesus through use of the leader's home for gatherings.⁷⁵ These are certainly possible activities of the overseer which cannot be excluded, but the qualification does not necessitate that these activities occurred. There is also no clear evidence that the false teachers were being inhospitable or promoting attitudes of inhospitality. For any person to be inhospitable in ancient Ephesus would be disastrous for his or her reputation. Paul may

⁷¹ These three positive traits could also be read in opposition to some of the other negative traits associated with the false teachers or church members. Not every one of the virtues has a clear, direct opposite vice listed in 1 Timothy, but the virtues as a whole answer nicely to the vices which are recorded.

⁷² Meeks, *Origins of Christian Morality*, 104.

⁷³ Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 109.

⁷⁴ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 173; Towner, *Timothy and Titus*, 252.

⁷⁵ Marshall, "Congregations and Ministry," 110. Though possible, as is mentioned elsewhere, the text does not necessitate that the leaders have large homes or host gatherings in them. Other venues for Christian meeting places are possible. It is important to note, however, that many groups in Greco-Roman society did depend on the hospitality of patrons to provide them with meeting places. Meeks, *Origins of Christian Morality*, 44.

simply be reminding the Ephesian overseers of their duty to be hospitable in a general sense.

The next qualification, skillful in teaching (*διδασκτικόν*), strikes at the heart of the issue the church is having with the false teachers.⁷⁶ In order to combat false teaching, an overseer must be able to teach. In 1 Timothy, Paul describes the false teachers as “teaching contrary to the truth” (*ἐτεροδιδασκαλεῖν*). The possible content of their false teaching and the behaviour of others who cling to false teachings have been discussed above.

It is notable that that the deacons and the women (in 3:8–13) have no requirement that they be skillful in teaching. Many have suggested, based on this, that the overseers were the main teachers for the Christian community and the deacons did not perform this task. This requirement is thus one of the things that set the overseers apart from the other two groups.⁷⁷ It may well be true that the overseers were the primary Christian teachers but it does not necessarily follow that the deacons (or women) were forbidden from teaching.⁷⁸ As has already been stated, it is not wise to attempt to make too detailed a list of duties from these lists of virtues.

⁷⁶ Cf. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 158; Oden, *Timothy and Titus*, 143. Some take this term as meaning “teachable.” Cf. Quinn and Wacker, *1 and 2 Timothy*, 258. Such an understanding would imply that the overseers Timothy selects must be receptive to correct teaching rather than the false teachings that were being promoted in the Christian community.

⁷⁷ For example, Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 167; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 159. Dibelius and Conzelmann dismiss the idea that overseers had a special role in teaching. They say, “The teaching office is still carried on charismatically, teaching cannot be presupposed as a *special* function of the bishop.” Dibelius and Conzelmann, *Pastoral Epistles*, 55.

⁷⁸ If the deacons can be connected with the seven individuals chosen in Acts 6 to assist the apostles, then it must be considered that at least Stephen and Philip taught in some way (Acts 6:8–7:53; Acts 8:26–40). Not everyone is comfortable making a connection between the deacons of 1 Timothy and the men in Acts 6. See discussion in 1 Tim 3:8 below.

Verse 3

After the requirement that overseers be able to teach, Paul forbids overseers to be drunkards (“not addicted to wine,” *μὴ πάροινον*). A similar requirement is made of the deacons in 3:8. Clearly this is not an outright prohibition of the consumption of alcohol as Paul later encourages Timothy to use a little wine to help with his stomach problems (5:23).⁷⁹ In the absence of clean water, alcohol provided a beverage which may indeed have kept people healthier.⁸⁰ However, those who were given to consuming vast quantities of alcohol were poor examples and likely were not dependable in performing their duties.⁸¹ Nowhere does Paul suggest that drunkenness was a particular problem in the Ephesian church,⁸² but one who is temperate in alcohol consumption is more likely to be able to maintain a good reputation in the community and also remain “above reproach.”

Following the caution on alcohol use is a prohibition against violent behaviour (*μὴ πλήκτην*) which is immediately contrasted (*ἀλλά*) with the ideas of being “kind” (*ἐπιεικῆ*) and “peaceable” (*ἄμαχον*). Paul here contrasts violent people who might give the church a bad reputation and who may not be trusted by the members of the church with those who are kind and peace-loving.⁸³ The kind and peaceable individual would

⁷⁹ Witherington, *Titus, 1–2 Timothy and 1–3 John*, 237; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 175.

⁸⁰ Cf. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 319 who says, “The beneficial aspects of a little wine were common knowledge in the ancient world.”

⁸¹ They were seen as prone to violent behaviour. Cf. Towner, *Timothy and Titus*, 253. Plutarch portrays those who prefer wine to water as being self-indulgent and irresponsible. Too much wine “intensifies the disturbances of the body, and exacerbates and irritates the contused parts, which are in need of the comfort and alleviation that water best supplies.” Plutarch, *Mor.* 132D, LCL.

⁸² Contra Mounce who says, “The fact that the same injunction [against drunkenness] is repeated in all three lists [overseers, deacons and the elders in Titus] suggests that this was a serious problem in the Ephesian church; evidently the opponents were well known for their drunkenness even though they were ascetics with respect to their food (1 Tim 4:3).” Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 175. There is no explicit evidence for this in the text, however possible it may be.

⁸³ Towner, *Timothy and Titus*, 252–53.

promote a positive view in the eyes of society and also would foster trust between the members of the Ephesian church and its leaders. These qualities might be contrasted with the false teachers who crave controversy over peace (6:4), who quarrel over words (6:4), and who give rise to envy, dissention, slander, and the like (6:4–5). Though none of these negative results of the false teachers necessarily breed violence, they are certainly not kind nor do they promote peace. Again it is evident that Paul's list of virtues corresponds with the negative results of false teaching in the community.

The next quality, not a money-lover (*ἀφιλάργυρον*), is also echoed in the requirements for deacons (cf. 3:8). That these words imply that leaders should not be tempted to line their own pockets from the church's purse, seek greedily after wealth by any means, nor see their role in Christian leadership as a means of getting rich can all be read with this requirement. The Greco-Roman world may have revered wealth (patron-client relationships depended on there being wealthy people) but gaining it deceitfully or at all costs was not considered virtuous. There were some Christians in Ephesus who apparently desired riches (6:9), but some of the false teachers evidently also saw the pursuit of godliness as a legitimate means to obtain wealth (6:5). Paul notes that a leader should be paid and should not be expected to work for free (cf. 1 Tim 5:18) but Paul also does not see Christian leadership as a place to get rich or that wealth is a necessary reward for following God.

A common discussion point concerning the overseer's view of wealth is whether or not such leaders might be required to already *have* a great deal of it.⁸⁴ Some have suggested that the overseer and perhaps also the deacon must be wealthy individuals who

⁸⁴ This is also often linked with the next two verses which detail the overseer's management of home and family. This will be discussed below.

are prepared to use their wealth in ministry and host the church in their presumably large homes.⁸⁵ If these individuals already had money, they would not need to be paid or to pursue wealth in other ways.⁸⁶ If this were the case, their entire occupation could be to support the Christian church through their existing wealth. This is certainly a possibility, but only one of many.⁸⁷ Paul gives instructions to those who already have wealth, saying that they should not become conceited because of it but should use it to do good works and be ready to share it (6:17–19). Wealth in and of itself is not a bad thing and it may be that some Christian leaders had wealth and would use it to help the church. On the other hand, those who did not have great wealth may very well have been suitable overseers. As has been demonstrated in Chapter 5, it should not be assumed that all Christians, including those in Ephesus, necessarily met in large houses. An overseer of more modest means who led a group of Christians meeting in a workshop or another similar place could certainly fit the criteria of an overseer.

Verses 4–5

To this point, most of the qualifications that are listed have been short phrases or single words. The reasons for their inclusion on the list may have been self-evident to Timothy and those others who read the letter in Ephesus. The next four verses not only describe additional qualities, but give specific reasons as to why these qualities must be expected in the church's leadership.

⁸⁵ Malina and Pilch, *Deutero-Pauline Letters*, 117. Malina and Pilch see this as a requirement of office based on the fact that similar community leaders were expected to be patrons of the communities where they held office. Cf. Marshall, "Congregations and Ministry," 106.

⁸⁶ Quinn and Wacker, *1 and 2 Timothy*, 259; Towner, *Timothy and Titus*, 252, 254, 267.

⁸⁷ Towner says, "In both contexts [Jewish and Roman], it was natural that the successful heads of households—those having social prestige, honor, and wealth—would gravitate to the functions of authority within the various communities and groups. While it is not necessary to think that the Pauline communities would have followed these patterns rigidly, it is reasonable to believe that what was customary would naturally have exerted a significant influence on matters of organization." Towner, *Timothy and Titus*, 243.

First, Paul notes that overseers must manage their homes and children well.⁸⁸ Their children must be in submission and they must be dignified in all things.⁸⁹ A similar requirement is made of the deacon in 3:12. These are necessary qualities if a person is to manage the church of God (3:5). This requirement is related to the way households were run in the Greco-Roman world. The *paterfamilias* or father was considered to be the head of the household and as such he held ultimate authority over his wife, children, and slaves. The members of his household were expected to give him respect and obedience without question.⁹⁰ Mounce writes, “It was a well-known maxim that whoever could manage his own household could manage the state.”⁹¹ Sophocles and Plutarch both contain examples of this sentiment.⁹² If his home is in shambles then he certainly will not do a good job of managing public affairs.⁹³ The state of the overseer’s household, including the behaviour of the children, attests to the overseer’s abilities to manage the church of God.

⁸⁸ The term *οἶκος* can refer to home or family (BDAG, 698) and may refer to a large household containing family and slaves. BDAG, 699; Towner, *Timothy and Titus*, 254. Towner suggests that a man’s responsibilities to his “household” would also extend to any patron/client relationships he might be part of. Towner, *Timothy and Titus*, 254.

⁸⁹ Some suggest that the “dignity” refers to the conduct of the children and not the father. Since the list points to the qualifications of the father, it seems more natural to see this as referring to him. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 177, 179. Nevertheless, the possibility that the children’s dignity in bearing also reflects positively on the father must be kept in mind. Making a solid determination is difficult. Cf. Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 162.

⁹⁰ Keener, “Family and Household,” 357–58; A. Clarke, *Serve the Community*, 90–95.

⁹¹ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 180. Cf. Keener, “Family and Household,” 357.

⁹² Plutarch, *Mor.* 70C (cf. Towner, *Timothy and Titus*, 256); Sophocles, *Ant.* 658–661 (cf. Witherington, *Titus, 1–2 Timothy and 1–3 John*, 238).

⁹³ This requirement to manage home and family well is also somewhat in contrast to the judgement that Paul passes on those who have means but choose not to support their needy family members. He says these individuals are “worse than unbelievers” (5:8).

Verse 6

Another thing that Paul is concerned with is the state of an overseer's faith; this individual ought not be a new convert (*νεόφυτον*).⁹⁴ This term is often noted as meaning "newly planted" and the Christian use of the term here is thus metaphorical.⁹⁵ Much is made of the fact that Paul does not make similar requirements of leaders in other locations (such as Crete). This suggests that the church in Ephesus had existed long enough that there were definite differences in the maturity of faith between early and more recent converts.⁹⁶ In a location where the church was only in its infancy, many, if not all, members were "newly converted" and other leadership requirements might be needed in those places.

The reason that Paul explicitly notes that the Ephesians should not have new converts as overseers is because such persons would be in danger of becoming conceited (*τυφωθείς*) and falling into the condemnation of the devil. Though there is much discussion as to whether this is the same condemnation the devil is under (objective genitive)⁹⁷ or actual condemnation by the devil (subjective genitive),⁹⁸ the thrust of the statement remains: newly converted Christians, when given too much authority, may

⁹⁴ Mounce notes "It cannot refer simply to a young person; otherwise Timothy would be disqualified (1 Tim 4:12, although Timothy is not an overseer)." Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 181. Dibelius and Conzelmann note that since this requirement has specific bearing on Christian requirements for the function of overseer, they must have been added by the author of the epistle to the source material. Dibelius and Conzelmann, *Pastoral Epistles*, 53.

⁹⁵ It is best to not translate the concept as "newly baptized" as the text says nothing about baptism explicitly and to make it seem as though Paul is directly connecting leadership qualities with baptism is misleading. Contra Quinn and Wacker, *1 and 2 Timothy*, 264.

⁹⁶ Cf. Guthrie, *Pastoral Epistles*, 94; Quinn and Wacker, *1 and 2 Timothy*, 264; Witherington, *Titus, 1–2 Timothy and 1–3 John*, 239. It may have been ten years from Paul's lengthy stay in Ephesus in Acts 19 to the writing of 1 Timothy. Paul's initial, short visit to Ephesus (Acts 18:19) where he first made some inroads into the Ephesian Jewish community was prior to that. See S. Porter, *Apostle Paul*, 55–60 for a potential timeline.

⁹⁷ Cf. Guthrie, *Pastoral Epistles*, 94; Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 164.

⁹⁸ Quinn and Wacker, *1 and 2 Timothy*, 265. Towner notes, "Although in choosing one solution over the other little is lost, the active role of the devil in 3:7 favors putting him into an active role in this statement." Towner, *Timothy and Titus*, 258.

have it go to their heads and their faith may be the worse for it. Better to have someone in leadership who has more experience in the faith. This sentiment echoes the statements Paul makes in Eph 4 where he specifically notes that the mature in faith are able to withstand false teaching, deceptions, and schemes. Presumably these individuals are also better able to weather the temptation to let authority make them conceited.

Like so many of the requirements already examined, the need for experienced Christians to be in leadership may correspond with the situation of the false teachers. These individuals are described as being conceited (τετύφωται, 6:4)⁹⁹ which is just what Paul says might happen to overseers who are “new converts.” It should be noted that the false teachers are never explicitly said to be newly converted, only that their behaviour corresponds with the potential behaviour of newly converted overseers. Even if the false teachers had been Christians for some time, the caution against putting new converts into leadership functions is still well-founded. If someone who has been part of the faith for many years can succumb to such condemnation, how much more those who are new to it.

Verse 7

The discussion of the qualifications for overseers ends with the admonition that they must have a good reputation with outsiders so that they do not fall into disgrace or the devil’s trap. Again the role of Satan in attempting to derail the church of God is highlighted. The reputation of the church’s leadership also has an effect on how society viewed the church.¹⁰⁰ Malina and Pilch note, “The concern about the opinions of outsiders, that is,

⁹⁹ Cf. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 180.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 153; Oden, *Timothy and Titus*, 144; Towner, *Timothy and Titus*, 240. Guthrie notes that “The injunction was essential to protect the church from unnecessary abuse, for the non-Christian world has generally respected the noble ideals of Christian character, particularly ministers

those who do not belong to the Jesus-group, is an essential element in the core value of this culture, namely, honor, reputation, esteem.”¹⁰¹ If the overseer has a good reputation, is not in disgrace, and has avoided the devil’s trap, then the church will appear to be a positive and inviting place to those outside of it. By contrast the false teachers and all of the negative things that Paul has been describing concerning their behaviour (and that of other members of the church) bring the church into disgrace in the eyes of the community and do not make it appealing for members of the greater Ephesian populace.

Verse 8

In v. 8 Paul shifts his focus from overseers to deacons. The most basic and general meaning of the noun *διάκονος* is “servant”¹⁰² and the most common use of the word is in connection with the idea of “waiting at table.”¹⁰³ When used in a Greco-Roman cultic setting, the idea of meal service is still at the forefront. Christian use of the term seems to go beyond meal-related activities and so there does not seem to be a direct link between Greco-Roman cultic use of the term and the Christian use of the term in the New Testament.

The word *διάκονος* appears in the New Testament twenty-nine times with twenty-one of them being in the Pauline epistles. While the idea of service is evident, the term is not, in and of itself, more specific than that. Louw and Nida note, “In rendering *θεράπων*, *ὑπηρέτης*, and *διάκονος* in the sense of ‘servant,’ it is important to avoid a term which

and leaders, but has persistently condemned professing Christians whose practice is at variance with their profession.” Guthrie, *Pastoral Epistles*, 94.

¹⁰¹ Malina and Pilch, *Deutero-Pauline Letters*, 120.

¹⁰² Cf. LSJ, 398; L&N, 2:59; BDAG, 229–31.

¹⁰³ Cf. J. Collins, *Diakonia*, 75. T. Wilder also notes that it is sometimes used of an envoy or courier. T. Wilder, “Phoebe, the Letter-Carrier,” 44. He cites Aeschylus, *Prom.* 942; Sophocles, *Phil.* 497; Plato, *Resp.* 370e; Josephus, *Ant.* 7.201. He notes that in some cases the word has been translated as “servitor” in these works rather than courier. T. Wilder, “Phoebe, the Letter-Carrier,” 44–45.

would be too specific, for example, ‘one who serves meals’ or ‘one who works around the house.’ It may, in fact, be necessary to use an expression which means essentially ‘helper.’”¹⁰⁴ This is to say that *διάκονος* is not a specific term and context of use must dictate the specific meaning.

Of the occurrences in Paul’s letters, there are only three clear instances where the word can be understood as being used in a technical sense to describe a function of leadership in the Christian church: Phil 1:1 and 1 Tim 3:8, 12.¹⁰⁵ Unlike its use in Greco-Roman literature, the Christian use of the term, no matter the context, does not suggest that the “servant” performs menial, unimportant tasks or that their work is in any way degrading.¹⁰⁶ Instead, the function of serving is elevated to one of importance.¹⁰⁷

When the term *διάκονος* is used in Christian contexts to denote a leader, it appears that such individuals work in some sort of supporting relationship with the overseers.¹⁰⁸ As the centuries progress, a clear picture of what sort of relationship the two functions had emerges; however, there is not enough information about either function in the New

¹⁰⁴ L&N, 1:459–60.

¹⁰⁵ LSJ, 398; Beyer, “*διακονέω* κτλ.,” 2:89; L&N, 2:59; Hess, “*διακονέω*,” 3:546. There are three other instances which *may* be examples of technical uses where the word refers to individuals (other than Paul) and their status of “servants” or “deacons” of the church: Col 1:7 (Epaphras); Eph 6:21 (Tychicus); Rom 16:1 (Phoebe).

¹⁰⁶ In the Greco-Roman use of the term, the idea of “serving” and “servant” is often associated with a low station and menial tasks. Beyer, “*διακονέω* κτλ.,” 2:82. Cf. Plato, *Gorg.* 491e; Papaderos, “Liturgical Diakonia,” 134. But see J. Collins who suggests menial service was not always in mind when the *διάκον-* group of words was used. J. Collins, *Diakonia*, 89.

¹⁰⁷ For example, Matt 20:26; 2 Cor 11:30; 12:10.

¹⁰⁸ By definition, the term “overseer” seems to suggest those in this function had some level of “oversight” in the church and perhaps over other leaders who worked with them. Cf. Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 150–51. Also, the term “deacon” derives from a word which primarily means “service” and so the concept that those who were deacons were in a supporting role of some variety also seems evident. Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 151; Oden, *Timothy and Titus*, 139; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 163; Quinn and Wacker, *1 and 2 Timothy*, 279; Malina and Pilch, *Deutero-Pauline Letters*, 122. Mounce is careful to note, “While overseers are over the church and deacons serve, nowhere in the PE does Paul teach a two-tiered structure of church authority, much less the three-tiered one found in Ignatius.” Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 163. Cf. Towner, *Timothy and Titus*, 242. Mounce is opposed to the idea that deacons might be in some way subordinate to the overseers. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 196. Cf. Witherington, *Titus, 1–2 Timothy and 1–3 John*, 240–41. Other than this simple distinction, there is no way to determine what sort of relationship there was between overseers and deacons.

Testament to discern exactly what kind of a relationship existed in the first century.¹⁰⁹

Appeals to information concerning the diaconate of later centuries should not be read back into 1 Tim 3, as there is no way of knowing how developed the function was in the first century. It was likely in its infancy and, like the overseer, likely underwent much change and refinement over the decades following the writing of 1 Timothy.¹¹⁰

The section concerning deacons in 1 Tim 3 begins “Deacons, likewise, must be . . .” (3:8). The grammar necessitates that the reader recall the verbs at the beginning of 3:2 in order to complete the thought: *δεῖ οὖν . . . εἶναι*.¹¹¹ A list of qualifications for deacons follows with many of the qualities echoing those of the overseer described in 3:2–7 (see Table 1 for comparisons).¹¹²

First, deacons are required to be worthy of respect (*σεμνούς*). Another way to translate this term is “noble, dignified, serious.”¹¹³ This is in parallel with the requirement that the overseer be respectable (3:2, *κόσμιον*)¹¹⁴ and also answers the concern Paul has for the distinctly disrespectable attitudes and actions of the false teachers and some other members of the Christian community.

¹⁰⁹ Some would connect the deacons in 1 Tim 3:8–13 with the seven individuals chosen to assist the apostles in Acts 6. Cf. Guthrie, *Pastoral Epistles*, 95; Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 167; Oden, *Timothy and Titus*, 147; Quinn and Wacker, *1 and 2 Timothy*, 284. Others are reluctant to make any connection between them. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 196; Towner, *Timothy and Titus*, 261.

¹¹⁰ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 196.

¹¹¹ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 197. The shift from the singular *ἐπίσκοπον* to the plural *διακόνους* may be stylistic or may imply that a single overseer was needed for a given group of Christians, but a plurality of deacons was possible. The context of 1 Tim 3 1–13 does not provide enough evidence to allow for firm conclusions of the matter.

¹¹² As with the overseers, Dibelius and Conzelmann do not think that the list of qualifications for deacons is rooted in any Christian source. They say, “This too is a traditional list of duties . . . It is only in v 9 that peculiarly Christian conditions relating specifically to this office are named.” Dibelius and Conzelmann, *Pastoral Epistles*, 58.

¹¹³ BDAG, 919.

¹¹⁴ The word *κόσμιον* has been discussed above.

The next qualification listed is “not hypocritical” (μὴ διλόγους, 3:8). This is a prohibition rather than a requirement. The term is used only once in the New Testament and is also infrequent in extra-biblical Greek which makes determining an appropriate translation difficult.¹¹⁵ The term “hypocritical” effectively captures the concept of “saying one thing and meaning another.”¹¹⁶ Towner notes that such a quality is condemned in Proverbs, Sirach, and Philo “as a danger to the community and relationships.”¹¹⁷ Paul describes some of the Ephesian Christians as being “given to hypocrisy” (ὑποκρίσει, 4:2). There would be considerable damage done to the church both within its ranks and to its reputation with outsiders if its leaders were found to be hypocritical.

A second prohibition is “not devoted to a lot of wine” (μὴ οἴνω πολλῷ προσέχοντα, 3:8). This corresponds with the similar qualification of the overseer from 3:3, although the wording is different. The implications of drunkenness for both the Christian community and a person’s ability to effectively lead the church have been discussed above.¹¹⁸

The third and final prohibition is “not greedy for money” (μὴ αἰσχροκερδεῖς, 3:8).¹¹⁹ This corresponds with the charge to the overseers to not be lovers of money (3:3). Towner notes, “The reference is general enough to encompass most kinds of financial

¹¹⁵ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 199.

¹¹⁶ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 199; L&N, 1:766.

¹¹⁷ Towner, *Timothy and Titus*, 263. Cf. Prov 11:3; Sir 5:9, 14, 15, 28:13; Philo, *Sacr.* 32.

¹¹⁸ Quinn and Wacker read too much into the text when they assert, “The phraseology at the point may suggest that diaconal tasks exposed these men to overindulgence as they visited homes raising funds or distributing food and drink (recall the abuses at the Corinthian celebration of the Lord’s Supper, 1 Cor 11:20–22, 33–34).” Quinn and Wacker, *1 and 2 Timothy*, 280–81.

¹¹⁹ BDAG, 29.

misjudgment and abuse.”¹²⁰ As with the prohibition against drunkenness, the connection of this requirement to the activities of the false teachers and the effect it would have on the leadership of the church in Ephesus has been previously discussed.

Verse 9

Verse 9 states that deacons must “hold to the mysteries of the faith with a pure conscience” (ἔχοντας τὸ μυστήριον τῆς πίστεως ἐν καθαρᾷ συνειδήσει). Though not identical, this can be seen as somewhat analogous to the requirement that overseers not be new converts (3:6). Most often, the phrase τὸ μυστήριον τῆς πίστεως is seen as referring to the Christian faith and the mysteries revealed to Christians.¹²¹

This faith is to be held “with a pure conscience.” This state of having a “pure conscience” is not a requirement of perfection or sinlessness,¹²² but that the individual has sought forgiveness for sin and is confident in that forgiveness.¹²³ The specifics of the false teachers and the need for firm Christian commitment by the leaders have been discussed above under 3:6.

¹²⁰ Towner, *Timothy and Titus*, 263.

¹²¹ Witherington, *Titus, 1–2 Timothy and 1–3 John*, 241; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 199–200; Towner, *Timothy and Titus*, 264; Houlden, *Pastoral Epistles*, 80; Dibelius and Conzelmann, *Pastoral Epistles*, 58; Magee, “Uncovering the ‘Mystery’,” 249. It is taking things too far when Hanson says, “So the word here [μυστήριον] probably means not only the Christian faith itself which the deacons are to preserve intact, but also the Christian sacraments, baptism and specially the eucharist, in which in early times deacons played a prominent part.” Hanson, *Pastoral Letters*, 43. The context of the text does not immediately suggest that Paul has the sacraments in mind and it is more likely that he is pointing to the Christian faith in general.

¹²² Although he is not explicit, it appears that Mounce would have the deacon be free from sin entirely when he says, “that knowledge [of the faith] must be accompanied with the appropriate behavior, in this case, a conscience that is clear from any stain of sin.” Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 200. This would seem an impossible task and a more nuanced understanding of the text is preferable.

¹²³ Hauck, “καθαρός, κτλ.,” 3:425.

Verse 10

Verse 10 further elaborates on the state of the deacons' commitment to the faith and how their commitment might be discerned. It reads, "These ones must be tested first, then let them serve if they are found to be above reproach" (οὗτοι δὲ δοκιμαζέσθωσαν πρῶτον, εἶτα διακονείτωσαν ἀνεγκλητοὶ ὄντες). There are two things to consider here: first, the implication of the testing, and second, the qualification that they be "above reproach." Some have speculated that this "testing" refers to a probationary period¹²⁴ or something similar to a modern "background check,"¹²⁵ though the text is not specific about the process of such "tests."¹²⁶ The testing could be exclusively related to the person's faith or could encompass the overall character of the individual which might be indicated by the next phrase in the verse.

The second phrase in connection with the testing of the deacons is "then let them serve if they are found to be above reproach" (εἶτα διακονείτωσαν ἀνεγκλητοὶ ὄντες). The imperative διακονείτωσαν can be translated as "serve" (GNB) or "serve as deacons."¹²⁷ Though either is possible, translating the imperative as the more general "serve" prevents giving the impression that the text explicitly mentions deacons at this point.

¹²⁴ Oden, *Timothy and Titus*, 148.

¹²⁵ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 201; Guthrie, *Pastoral Epistles*, 96; Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 170; Witherington, *Titus, 1–2 Timothy and 1–3 John*, 241. Dibelius and Conzelmann suggest it was a general evaluation rather than a particular kind of test. Dibelius and Conzelmann, *Pastoral Epistles*, 58. Lock echoes a similar sentiment saying it is "probably not any definite examination or by a time of probation, but only in the same way as the ἐπίσκοπος (καὶ οἱ τοὶ δέ), by the opinion of the church judging his fitness by the standard just laid down." Lock, *Pastoral Epistles*, 40.

¹²⁶ L. Johnson, *1 and 2 Timothy*, 228. It is unknown whether Timothy, the whole church, the ἐπίσκοποι from the previous section, or some other group was involved in implementing this testing. Lock, Knight, and Mounce suggest that it was done by the opinion of the church: Lock, *Pastoral Epistles*, 40; Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 170; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 201. This is quite possible, but there is no way to know for sure.

¹²⁷ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 202; ESV; KJV; NASB; NRSV; NIV.

There are conditions placed on the service of these individuals. Their service may only begin if they are found to be above reproach—which implies they have passed the testing mentioned in the first half of the verse.¹²⁸ A similar requirement of blamelessness is made of the overseers in 3:2 (*ἀνεπίληπτον*)¹²⁹ but it is not connected with any sort of test and it serves as a sort of summary for the whole set of overseer requirements.¹³⁰

Verse 11

One of the biggest points of controversy in this text revolves around the meaning of v. 11. It begins with the words *γυναῖκας ὡσαύτως* just as v. 8 began with *διακόνους ὡσαύτως*. As with v. 8, the verbs from v. 2 must be recalled in order for the text to be understood.¹³¹ In v. 8 the topic shifted from overseer to deacon; in v. 11 the topic again appears to shift to the *γυναῖκας*.¹³² The challenge with this word, as discussed in relation to v. 2, is that it can be translated as either “women” or “wives” and the context is the sole determining factor as to how specific a meaning is intended.

Scholars are divided concerning the translation and interpretation of the word *γυναῖκας* in this verse. There are three basic ways in which this text can be understood: (1) the wives of the deacons; (2) deaconesses with the same duties as the male deacons; or (3) women in ministry whose service is distinct from the male deacons. Translation of the text is influenced by the interpretation of its meaning.

¹²⁸ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 202.

¹²⁹ Cf. Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 167.

¹³⁰ Mounce suggests that a similar testing of overseers can be assumed. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 195. Some suggest that the reason overseers need not be tested is because they would all be chosen from the ranks of the deacons who had already been tested and no further testing would be required. This is unlikely. It will be discussed in detail under v. 13 below.

¹³¹ Witherington, *Titus, 1–2 Timothy and 1–3 John*, 241; Stiefel, “Women Deacons,” 447–48; Towner, *Timothy and Titus*, 266.

¹³² Given that the comments on the *γυναῖκας* comprise only one sentence and that the following sentence again is explicitly discussing *διάκονοι*, it is possible that the women should be seen as a sub-category of the deacons (women deacons) or closely related to them.

Those who view the *γυναῖκας* as the wives of the deacons translate the text as “their wives must be . . .” There are many arguments in favour of this interpretation. First, unless the text refers to the deacons’ wives, then there is an awkward shift in topic from deacons (v. 10) to women (v. 11) and back to deacons (v. 12).¹³³ If it is understood that the women are the deacons’ wives then no shift in topic is required. On the contrary, the restatement of “deacons” in v. 12 is quite unnecessary if the topic has not really shifted away from deacons in the first place.¹³⁴

A second argument in favour of an understanding of “wives” in v. 11 is that because *γυνή* unambiguously refers to the deacon’s wife in v. 12 the chance that the same meaning should be read in v. 11 is heightened.¹³⁵ While this is possible, it is still not certain because the context of v. 12 is clear while that of v. 11 is not.¹³⁶

A third argument is that since there was no office of “deaconess” at the time of the writing of 1 Timothy, this cannot be what Paul has in mind in v. 11.¹³⁷ This argument from silence is not convincing. The use of *διάκονος* in conjunction with Phoebe in Rom 16:1 is very clearly a *possible* reference to the female deacon.¹³⁸ Also, even though there is no mention of a female diaconate, this does not mean that one did not exist.

Fourth, it has been argued that a feminine form of *διάκονος* could have been used if Paul intended to refer to a “deaconess” but instead he uses *γυναῖκας* which thus ought to be understood as “wives.”¹³⁹ It must be noted that there is no evidence for a feminine

¹³³ Lewis, “‘Women’,” 171; Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 172.

¹³⁴ Cf. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 203.

¹³⁵ Cf. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 203; Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 170.

¹³⁶ Cf. L. Johnson, *1 and 2 Timothy*, 228.

¹³⁷ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 203.

¹³⁸ Cf. L. Johnson, *1 and 2 Timothy*, 229; Witherington, *Titus, 1–2 Timothy and 1–3 John*, 252.

¹³⁹ Cf. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 203.

form of *διάκονος* in the first century.¹⁴⁰ Nevertheless, it is true that Paul had options available to him if he wanted to be more explicit about a meaning of “female deacons” for *γυναῖκας* in 1 Tim 3:11. He might have created a feminine noun or used the feminine version of the noun if one did indeed exist at the time. He might have used the masculine noun but in some way disambiguated the reference by adding a feminine article or combining it with *γυναῖκας* in some way.¹⁴¹ Any of these would be more explicit to the modern reader in determining the meaning of the passage as it would clearly indicate the presence of “female deacons.” The ancient readers, however, would not have needed such an explicit reference. They would have been aware of what role these women played and so such explicit differentiation would not be needed for them to understand exactly what Paul meant. *Γυναῖκας* would have sufficed. Nothing would force Paul to use a word equivalent to the modern “deaconess” in order to convey that idea to his ancient audience and so this fourth argument is also not convincing.

A final argument for a translation of “wives” states that, due to the fact that 1 Tim 5:3–16 refers to an order of widows, no other leadership function specific to women is needed. Therefore, the deacons’ wives are in mind in 1 Tim 3.¹⁴² This argument is unsatisfactory because it is by no means certain that 1 Tim 5:3–16 refers to any “order” of widows. Rather than discussing an order of widows, this passage seems to describe the appropriate means of evaluating which widows were eligible to receive help from the

¹⁴⁰ The feminine form, *διακονισσα*, did not emerge in the known literature until the fourth century. Cf. LSJ, supp 88.

¹⁴¹ In Rom 16:1 Paul refers to the female Phoebe with the masculine noun (*Συνίστημι δὲ ὑμῖν Φοίβην τὴν ἀδελφὴν ἡμῶν, οὗσαν [καὶ] διάκονον τῆς ἐκκλησίας τῆς ἐν Κεγχραεῖς*). Though this is a different sort of situation, it seems that Paul was not adverse to using the masculine noun to refer to a woman and might have found a way to do so here if indeed he saw it necessary to be explicit.

¹⁴² Houlden, *Pastoral Epistles*, 80; Hanson, *Pastoral Letters*, 43.

Christian community.¹⁴³ Even if it were a recognized leadership function, however, the possibility of a second function for women cannot be excluded. Clearly there was more than one function available for men (overseers and deacons at the least) and so there is a possibility that women could serve in multiple ways as well. None of these arguments for a translation of “wives” are convincing.

In contrast, there is good evidence to suggest that the word should not be limited to describing the deacons’ wives. Proponents of this view translate the text as either “women” or “deaconesses.” Because both of these translations assume that the women are involved in leadership in some way, their arguments will be treated together. The first argument in support of this perspective is grammatical. Because this section begins with an accusative subject plus *ῶσαύτως*, it suggests that 3:11 presents a new category of leader just as was presented in vv. 2 and 8: the *γυναῖκας*.¹⁴⁴ If a new category of leader is in mind, then “wife” does not fit this context. A second argument in favour of this view is that characteristics required of these women are very similar to those required of the men.¹⁴⁵ The repetition suggests that a third category of leader is in mind. Third, since there is no requirement concerning the overseers’ wives in 3:2–7, it is unlikely that Paul would place the deacons’ wives under such close scrutiny.¹⁴⁶ It does not seem logical that a deacon’s wife should be under more scrutiny than the wife of an overseer.¹⁴⁷ This difficulty is removed when the word is translated as “women.” Fourth, the lack of a

¹⁴³ Cf. Fee, “Reflections on Church Order,” 144, 148.

¹⁴⁴ Towner, *Timothy and Titus*, 266; L. Johnson, *1 and 2 Timothy*, 228; Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 170; Lewis, “‘Women’,” 168.

¹⁴⁵ See Table 1 and cf. L. Johnson, *1 and 2 Timothy*, 228–29; Lock, *Pastoral Epistles*, 40; Oden, *Timothy and Titus*, 149.

¹⁴⁶ Towner, *Timothy and Titus*, 266. It has been suggested that the deacon’s wife needed to be scrutinized and the overseer’s did not due to differing duties of the functions. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 204. This is unconvincing since this passage does not speak to duties at all but simply to characteristics.

¹⁴⁷ Since the topic in v. 12 is also deacons, it does not seem likely that the *γυναῖκας* of v. 11 could refer to both the wives of the overseers and the deacons.

possessive pronoun or an article linking the deacons and the women leaves the passage ambiguous.¹⁴⁸ If such a grammatical feature were present, *γυναῖκας* would more easily be linked to the deacons and the term “wives” would be a more convincing translation.

Making a conclusion concerning this issue is difficult and neither translation can be made without reservation.¹⁴⁹ Translating the text as “women” is preferred here because it allows for possible interpretations to be left open.¹⁵⁰ Thus my translation of v. 11 begins, “Likewise the women must be...”

The “women” may have been a combination of deacons’ wives and other women in leadership. They also might be seen as a sub-category of deacon. This could be argued based on the fact that in v. 8 and v. 12 deacons are clearly in mind which suggests that the “shift” in v. 11 with *γυναῖκας ὡσαύτως* is only a partial shift. Instead of shifting to an entire new category, the *γυναῖκας* are a sub-category. This same argument is used to support the translation of “deacons’ wives” but might also be good reason to see the text as referring to female deacons.¹⁵¹ It is evident that in the second and third centuries deaconesses served Christian women in ways which men could not. This included anointing for baptism, visiting, and baptismal instruction.¹⁵² These practical considerations may also loosely support the idea of women as leaders in the New

¹⁴⁸ Towner, *Timothy and Titus*, 266; Stiefel, “Women Deacons,” 446. Some have argued that Paul did not necessarily feel the need to specify this relationship and that it can be established without pronouns and articles. Cf. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 204.

¹⁴⁹ Cf. Dibelius and Conzelmann, *Pastoral Epistles*, 58; Malina and Pilch, *Deutero-Pauline Letters*, 122. Lewis also suggests that this could be understood as referring to “unmarried women.” Lewis, “‘Women,’” 173–75. Cf. Quinn and Wacker, *1 and 2 Timothy*, 286. There is nothing in the text to explicitly suggest this, though it is possible.

¹⁵⁰ A translation of “deaconess” is not advisable since this implies that the text is explicit. It is likely that these women could legitimately be called “deaconesses,” but it is more likely to cause confusion than clarification to use this term in a translation. Cf. Oden, *Timothy and Titus*, 149. Quinn and Wacker are certain that “women ministers” are in mind, but do not use the term deaconess. Quinn and Wacker, *1 and 2 Timothy*, 279.

¹⁵¹ See above for discussion of deacons’ wives as a possible translation of v. 11.

¹⁵² See Olson, *Deacons and Deaconesses*, 41–42.

Testament. Women may have been needed to serve female Christians in particular ways in the first century, but due to lack of evidence this can only be speculated.¹⁵³

A series of requirements for these women follows the introductory phrase. The first requirement is being worthy of respect (σεμνάς). This is identical to the first requirement of the deacons in v. 8 and has been discussed above. After this is a prohibition against slander (μὴ διαβόλους). This has no exact parallel in the requirements of the deacon, but it is similar to the prohibition of hypocrisy (μὴ διλόγους) in v. 8. These women ought to guard their words and speak with truth and integrity. This requirement is important as Paul notes that the false teachers are guilty of blasphemy (1:20) and they are liars (4:2).

The third qualification for the women is temperance (νηφαλίους). As noted above, this word can mean moderation in relation to alcohol consumption or a person's ability to be "self-controlled."¹⁵⁴ The same qualification is prescribed for overseers in v. 2 and in that case the latter definition of the term was preferred due to context. The other definition, in relation to alcohol, parallels the prohibition given to deacons in v. 8 and overseers in v. 3. A translation of "temperate" is best in this case and could be understood to imply both temperance in relation to alcohol and character. The importance of temperate behaviour in relation to all aspects of life along with its connection to the false teachers has been previously discussed.

The final requirement of the women is that they be "faithful in all things" (πιστὰς ἐν πᾶσιν). Though this might refer to a general state of trustworthiness and dependability

¹⁵³ While this need should be acknowledged, imposing specific services on the women of 1 Tim 3 (as does Guthrie, *Pastoral Epistles*, 97) is unwise due to lack of explicit evidence.

¹⁵⁴ BDAG, 672; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 204; Stiefel, "Women Deacons," 444.

concerning their work as a servant of the church, it might also be a comment on their level of commitment to the teachings of the faith.¹⁵⁵ The latter idea is similar to the requirement that that deacons “hold the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience.”¹⁵⁶ One possibility does not negate the other and both should be kept in mind.

Verse 12

Verse 12 focuses back on the deacons as a whole. If “women” are a sub-category of deacon, then v. 12 brings the reader back to focusing on both categories rather than the women alone. Curiously, this shift does not include another *ὡσαύτως* introduction, but simply begins with the command that “deacons must be . . .” (*διάκονοι ἔστωσαν*). The lack of *ὡσαύτως* may imply that the topic of “deacon” is not so different from what was discussed in v. 11, which supports the idea that the “women” of v. 11 are a sub-category of deacon.

Verse 12 gives some similar qualifications to the deacons as were given to the overseers in the previous verses. The deacons, like the overseers, are required to be “one-woman men” (*μῑᾱς γυναικὸς ἄνδρες*).¹⁵⁷ The debate concerning this phrase in v. 12 is the same as it was in v. 2 and has been previously discussed. Also, just as the overseer is required to properly manage children and home, so must the deacon. Though the wording is different in v. 12 than v. 4, the implications for both groups are the same. For the

¹⁵⁵ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 204. Towner suggests that this is a possibility that need not be seen as separate from the woman’s faith. Towner, *Timothy and Titus*, 267.

¹⁵⁶ Stiefel, “Women Deacons,” 444; Towner, *Timothy and Titus*, 267.

¹⁵⁷ If indeed there are women deacons then this requirement needs interpretation in order to be applicable to them. It could be that women were expected to be single while they were serving in this role and so no application is needed. It could be that women were expected to be faithful wives just as the male deacons were expected to be faithful husbands. It also could be that men were more commonly involved in polygamous marriages or extra-marital affairs and no such requirement was needed of the women.

overseer the implications are made explicit: if you cannot manage your home you cannot manage the church (v. 5). For the deacons this is implied but not stated.

Verse 13

Verse 13 serves as a wrap-up to the section. It lists no further requirements, but rather discusses the results of faithful service. The deacons are said to earn a “good rank” for their service done well. It has been suggested that this refers to a deacon who moves up the ranks to become an overseer,¹⁵⁸ but this interpretation seems to be influenced by information about the later diaconate and is not based on this text itself.¹⁵⁹ A more likely interpretation is that deacons who serve well have a “good rank” concerning their reputation within the Christian community.¹⁶⁰

In addition to this “good rank” deacons are also said to gain “great confidence in the faith which is in Christ Jesus” (πολλὴν παρρησίαν ἐν πίστει τῇ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ). This might refer to an ability to speak confidently about the teachings of Christianity¹⁶¹ or a confident or strong relationship with Christ.¹⁶² Another suggestion is that in their good service to the church the deacons confidently express their commitment to the faith.¹⁶³ As with other interpretations in this section, these different ideas are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Ultimately there is a positive effect on the deacons’ own faith for their good service.

¹⁵⁸ Lock, *Pastoral Epistles*, 41; Oden, *Timothy and Titus*, 149; Quinn and Wacker, *1 and 2 Timothy*, 282–83.

¹⁵⁹ Cf. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 205. Also against the idea that this implies a “promotion” to the office of overseer are Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 174; Witherington, *Titus, 1–2 Timothy and 1–3 John*, 242–43; Dibelius and Conzelmann, *Pastoral Epistles*, 58–59.

¹⁶⁰ Witherington, *Titus, 1–2 Timothy and 1–3 John*, 242–43; Dibelius and Conzelmann, *Pastoral Epistles*, 58–59; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 205.

¹⁶¹ Hanson, *Pastoral Letters*, 44.

¹⁶² Towner, *Timothy and Titus*, 268; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 205.

¹⁶³ L. Johnson, *1 and 2 Timothy*, 230.

Conclusions

It has been demonstrated above that the discussion of leadership functions in 1 Tim 3:1–13 is rooted in the Greco-Roman context of first-century Ephesus, the historic Christian context of the emergence of Christianity in that city, and the immediate context which occasioned the writing of Ephesians. The text of 1 Tim 3:1–13 is also rooted in the additional layer of immediate context which occasioned the writing of 1 Timothy. A thorough summary of the essential points of contextual connections between the first three layers of context is found in the conclusion to Chapter 6. What follows here is a summary of essential points linking the immediate context of 1 Timothy to the earlier layers of context and any points of from the entire thick description which are important to the analysis of 1 Tim 3:1–13 specifically.

By the time of the writing of 1 Timothy, the Ephesian Christian community had been in existence for perhaps a decade and this letter likely arrived between two and four years after Ephesians. In Ephesians Paul summoned the Christian community to live their lives according to their calling as Christians. He described a need for unity and maturity in the body of Christ which was lacking among them and described the leadership functions of apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastors and teachers as being given by God in order to assist the Christian community in living out its calling. Specifically these leadership functions were put in place in order to train the saints, do works of service, and build up the body of Christ. In Chapter 6 it was noted that God was set up as the divine patron in Eph 4:1–13 and that the Ephesian Christians could show honour to God by following and respecting the Christian leaders that he placed among them. The immediate context of 1 Timothy suggests that the Ephesian Christians were still in crisis—or once

again in crisis when the letter was written. There were false teachers in their midst and some of those false teachers may have been among the leadership of the Christian community.

The thick description of the Christian community in Ephesus has highlighted that the Christians in Ephesus were subject to conflict from outside of their community almost from the beginning of their existence. One of the major sources of conflict seems to have been Artemis and her followers. Acts 19:21–41 records the conflict between Paul and the Ephesian silversmiths over the teachings of Christianity and a perceived threat to the goddess, Artemis. Also, the pull of Artemis and the practice of magic among the citizens of Ephesus may have weakened the commitment of some of the Ephesian Christians to their new faith. It appears that the letter to the Ephesians was written to a group of Christians who was engaged in a struggle against the pull of Artemis. In 1 Timothy, these same conflicts may be contributing factors to the false teachings and the undesirable practices of the Ephesian Christians. The false teachers are concerned with myths (1 Tim 1:3). Some of the Ephesian Christians are also devoted to deceitful spirits and demonic teaching (1 Tim 4:1). Both of these things can be easily connected to Artemis and her influence over the city of Ephesus and the struggle the Ephesian Christian had separating themselves from her influence.

A second source of external conflict in Ephesus was the Jews. Acts 19:9 records Paul's initial conflict with the Jews in Ephesus. Here he left the synagogue as his main teaching venue and moved to the *σχολή* of Tyrannus. Later, in Acts 20:19, there is evidence that the Jews actively plotted against Paul. In 1 Tim 1:7 Paul indicates that some of the false teachers desired to be "teachers of the (presumably Jewish) law" but yet do

not understand the law that they were teaching. It was noted above that these teachers were likely not part of mainstream Judaism, but Paul's comment in 1 Tim 1:7 still demonstrates some Jewish influence as a contributing factor to the immediate problem of false teachers in the Ephesian Christian community.

Internal conflict in the Ephesian Christian community was also part of the history of the group. Paul's words to the Ephesian elders at Miletus suggest that the seeds of internal conflict were already brewing at that time. The text of Ephesians suggests a divided group in need of unity. The situation of a Christian community struggling against false teachers which is presented in 1 Timothy is consistent with the thick description of the Ephesian Christian community which battled with internal and external conflict from the early days of its existence.

The text of 1 Tim 3:1–13 addresses these conflicts within the Ephesian Christian community by providing Timothy with a list of qualifications for leaders which would correct or minimize the false teachings the community was experiencing. In this text there are two leadership functions mentioned, the overseer and the deacon, with a likely sub-category of women deacons also in view. Unlike the texts of 1 Cor 12:27–31 and Eph 4:1–16, which mentioned leadership functions that appeared to be primarily itinerant, the text of 1 Tim 3:1–13 discusses leadership functions that were very closely tied to the local community. The leadership functions that are mentioned in 1 Tim 3:1–13 appear to already exist in Ephesus; Paul nowhere indicates that these positions are new to the community. Also, when Paul met with the Ephesian elders at Miletus he also called them *ἐπίσκοποι*. This suggests a relationship between (and possible equation of) the leadership functions of elder and overseer, though this relationship cannot be defined based on the

scant New Testament evidence. What this connection does do, however, is imply that a leadership function referred to as “overseer” did exist in Ephesus prior to the writing of 1 Timothy. The discussion of the local leadership functions of overseer and deacon (male and female) is done in connection with the problem of false teachers in the Christian community in Ephesus. Properly qualified individuals to fulfil these functions are portrayed as a solution to that problem. The thoroughness of the qualifications for individuals fulfilling the leadership functions may indicate a community with a long-standing problem in need of a well-developed solution rather than a community with a well-developed ecclesiology.

The attitudes concerning leadership that Paul promotes in this text are linked to the qualifications which are prescribed for each of the leadership functions. It must be remembered that the lists in 1 Tim 3:1–13 are not discussions of leadership tasks; they are lists of moral virtues which are qualifications for leadership. For this reason attempting to derive a set of duties for each function is unwise as the text does not provide enough evidence concerning duties to allow the reader to do any more than speculate. These lists of qualifications indicate that leaders are to be selected with care and that potential leaders ought to meet certain standards. The standards for leadership in 1 Timothy are connected to the particular leadership function in mind and the specific problems the community is facing. The community’s leadership needs to be able to respond to its needs and struggles. The close ties between the qualifications of the leaders and the community’s struggles suggests that the qualifications listed here should not be thoughtlessly applied to another Christian community facing different struggles and there

is no indication that this is intended as a universal list of qualifications for the leadership functions of overseer and deacon.

Table 1: Comparison of desirable qualities for leaders and undesirable qualities in false teachers

Overseers	Deacons	“Women”	False teachers	Other negative qualities
Above reproach (3:1, ἀνεπίλημpton)	Above reproach (3:10, ἀνέγκλητοι)			
“One-woman man” (3:2, μιᾶς γυναικὸς ἄνδρα)	“One-woman man” (3:12, μιᾶς γυναικὸς ἄνδρα)			Forbid marriage (4:3, κωλύόντων γαμεῖν)
Temperate (3:2, νηφάλιον)		Temperate (3:11, νηφάλιους)	Idle disputes (1:4, ἐκζητήσεις); idle discussion (1:6, ματαιολογίαν)	Worthless, empty talk (6:20, τὰς βεβήλους κενοφωνίας); idle, gossips, busybodies (5:13, ἀργαί, φλύαροι, περίεργοι)
Self-controlled (3:2, σώφρονα)				
Respectable (3:2, κόσμιον)	Worthy of respect (3:8, σεμνούς)	Worthy of respect (3:11, σεμνούς)		
Hospitable (3:2, φιλόξενον)				
Skillful in teaching 3:2, διδακτικόν)			Teaching falsely (1:3, ἑτεροδιδασκαλεῖν); Promote myths and endless genealogies (3:4, προσέχειν μύθοις καὶ γενεαλογίαις ἀπεράντοις)	Devoted to deceitful spirits and demonic teaching (4:1, πνεύμασιν πλάνοις καὶ διδασκαλίαις δαιμονίων)
Not addicted to wine (3:3, μὴ πάροιον)	Not devoted to a lot of wine (3:8, μὴ οἴνω πολλῶ προσέχοντας)			
Not a bully (3:3, μὴ πλήκτην)			Crave controversy (6:4, νοσῶν περὶ ζητήσεις); quarrel over words (6:4, λογομαχίας); [producing] envy, dissention, slander, evil suspicions, and constant friction (6:4–5, φθόνος ἔρις βλασφημίαι, ὑπόνοιαι πονηραί, διαπαρατριβαί)	
Kind (3:3, ἐπιεικῆ)				
Peaceable (3:3, ἄμαχον)				

Not a money-lover (3:3, ἀφιλάργυρον)	Not greedy for money (3:8, μὴ αἰσχροκερδεῖς)		See godliness as a means of financial gain (6:5, νομιζόντων πορισμὸν εἶναι τὴν εὐσέβειαν)	Desire to be rich (6:9, βουλόμενοι πλουτεῖν)
Managing own house well (3:4, τοῦ ἰδίου οἴκου καλῶς προϊστάμενον)	Managing own children and house well (3:12, τέκνων καλῶς προϊστάμενοι καὶ τῶν ἰδίων οἴκων)			Cf. 5:8 for those who do not support those in their households and families
Not a recent convert (3:6, μὴ νεόφυτον)	Having the mysteries of the faith in a pure conscience (3:9, ἔχοντας τὸ μυστήριον τῆς πίστεως ἐν καθαρᾷ συνειδήσει); they first must be tested (3:10, δοκιμαζέσθωσαν πρῶτον)	Faithful in all things (3:11, πιστάς ἐν πᾶσιν)	Do not understand (1:7, μὴ νοοῦντες); understand nothing (6:4, μηδὲν ἐπιστάμενος); do not have faith and a good conscience (1:19, πίστιν καὶ ἀγαθὴν συνειδήσιν)	Seared consciences (4:2, κεκαυστηριασμένων τὴν ἰδίαν συνειδήσιν); contradictions which are mistakenly considered “knowledge” (6:20, ἀντιθέσεις τῆς ψευδωνύμου γνώσεως)
Not puffed up (3:6, μὴ τυφωθεῖς)			Puffed up (6:4, τετύφωται)	
Avoid falling into the temptation of the devil (3:6, εἰς κρίμα ἐμπέση τοῦ διαβόλου)			Two are “handed over to Satan” (1:20, οὓς παρέδωκα τῷ σατανᾷ)	Some women have been turned away after Satan (5:15, τινες ἐξετράπησαν ὀπίσω τοῦ σατανᾷ)
Good reputation (3:7, μαρτυρίαν καλὴν ἔχειν)				
	Not insincere (3:8, μὴ διλόγους)			Given to hypocrisy (4:2, ὑποκρίσει)
		Not slanderers (3:12, μὴ διαβόλους)	Blaspheme (1:20, βλασφημεῖν)	Liar (4:2, ψευδολόγων)

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

In this study I have employed methods of social description in an analysis of the Christian communities in first-century Corinth and Ephesus. I explored the hypothesis that Paul's discussion of specific leadership functions with respect to each city is rooted in the historical context of each Christian community and therefore Paul mentions leadership functions and promotes attitudes concerning leadership which are in keeping with the circumstances of each community and does not necessarily promote uniform practice in all places. In order to investigate this, I created thick descriptions of the Christian communities in Corinth and Ephesus consisting of three layers: the Greco-Roman context, the historic Christian context, and the immediate Christian context. The preceding chapters have considered how these descriptions influence the interpretation of the discussions of specific leadership functions mentioned in the texts under examination.

In the introductory chapter it was noted that many of the existing studies on leadership in the New Testament focus on over-arching theologies or descriptions of leadership which combine all Paul's discussions of leadership in one study without adequate attention being paid to the influence of individual locations and historical circumstances.¹ Further, when historical issues are addressed, they are most often done through the use of sociological models which run the risk of imposing modern concepts on the ancient society being studied.² When historical study does focus on social

¹ For example, Schweizer, *Church Order*.

² For example, Holmberg, *Paul and Power*; MacDonald, *Pauline Churches*; Barentsen, *Emerging Leadership*.

description, sometimes only one portion of the society is examined.³ Finally, Ephesians and 1 Timothy have not always been used in the discussion at all⁴ or have been assigned late dates⁵ due to the perception that they are pseudonymous. This study has assumed the authenticity of both letters and also Ephesus as a location for Ephesians. This allowed the contents of these letters to be studied as early evidence concerning leadership functions in Christianity within the context of the city of Ephesus.

This study has sought to consider a wide selection of historical evidence pertaining to the cities of Corinth and Ephesus in order to create thick descriptions of their Greco-Roman contexts and the context of Christianity as it emerged and developed in each location. The location-specific research, when tied to texts containing specific leadership functions, allows a picture to emerge of factors contributing to Paul's discussion of leadership functions with the Christian Communities in Corinth and Ephesus. Being able to read what Paul said against the historical context of the Christian communities to which he wrote is essential. This sort of study allows for each text to be interpreted individually and prevents interpretive assumptions based on other texts written to and in different historical situations to colour the analysis. Before comparisons can be made or links created between texts, it is imperative to thoroughly establish what each text means in its own historical situation.

There are different layers presented in the historical context of both Ephesus and Corinth. The thick description sections moved from the broad Greco-Roman layer to the historical context of the emergence of Christianity to the immediate context of the writing

³ For example, Burchaell, *From Synagogue to Church*; Stewart, *Original Bishops*.

⁴ For example, von Campenhausen, *Ecclesiastical Authority*; Holmberg, *Paul and Power*; A. Clarke, *Serve the Community*.

⁵ For example, MacDonald, *Pauline Churches*.

of the letters. Though there were similarities in both the Greco-Roman context of the cities and some of the ways in which Christianity emerged in each location, there were also subtle differences which provided an overall unique context for Christianity in each location. Even where details of the context were not unique, such as in relation to social values like honour and shame, the way in which those factors informed each text in combination with other details of context created unique situations. The particular texts under analysis and the larger topics which they addressed also dictated which details of the thick description were the most relevant for consideration in understanding the texts. Not all details of context were relevant in the same way to each text. Evidence indicating that Paul's discussion of leadership functions was rooted in the historical context of each Christian community is not always found at the broadest contextual level. In fact rarely is it found there. The combination of relevant details from each layer of the thick description is what shows that each discussion is contextual and creates some distinctions between the discussions of leadership functions in the texts under examination.

Leadership Functions in the Corinthian Context: 1 Cor 12:27–31

In Chapter 3 the context of the city of Corinth was examined with some specific focus on the Greco-Roman context and the historic context of the emergence of Christianity within the ancient city. This created a general backdrop against which to examine specific passages of material directed to Corinth. Then, in Chapter 4, some immediate context concerning the situation of the Corinthian Christians at the time of the writing of 1 Corinthians was added to further thicken the description. This thick description served as an interpretive lens when examining 1 Cor 12:27–31.

Social stratification was a major factor in Greco-Roman life. Chapter 3 discussed the various social classes within Greco-Roman society and the great imbalance of power and wealth that was typically found between the elites and the plebeians. Moving up the social ladder was normally quite difficult but if it could be accomplished, it would bring great social honour to the one who managed it. Social stratification also meant an acceptance of a social hierarchy. That some people were ranked higher than others in society was accepted as a fact of life. Social competition and social hierarchy were factors in both Ephesus and Corinth.

Social competition in Corinth, however, took on a different dimension than Ephesus. As noted in Chapter 3, the city of Corinth may have seen even more heightened levels of competition due to the greater-than-average number of freedmen in the city when it was refounded in 44 BCE. This meant that while still difficult, moving up the social ranks was comparatively easier in Corinth and the label of “freedman” was less of a liability. Further to this, the church appears to have had at least a few members from the upper classes of society and though they may have been small in number, they would have held a high level of influence in the congregation due to the way in which the social ladder of the first-century city functioned. The Corinthian Christian community was one that was fragmented at the time of the writing of 1 Corinthians. Though there were many factors contributing to that fragmentation, issues of social hierarchy seem to be at the heart of at least some of the divisions.

In 1 Cor 12:27–31 the particular division in view concerns the level of importance ascribed to various leadership functions and other gifts held by Corinthian Christians. The Corinthians were elevating particular gifts above others and perhaps also were

ascribing greater honour to those who held the “greater” gifts. Immediately prior to this passage Paul emphasized the concept of the body of Christ as a unity whose diversity was a strength and that all parts of the body were important to the proper functioning of that body. First Corinthians 12:27–31 builds on that idea by discussing the importance of particular leadership functions and spiritual gifts and demonstrating that those gifts that the Corinthians viewed as most important were, in reality, much less important than they thought.

In 1 Cor 12:27–31 Paul notes three leadership functions that God has appointed and numbers them first, second, and third. Following this, he notes five additional gifts that are found in the church. The last of these gifts is the gift of tongues. It is evident that the Corinthians have elevated this particular gift and Paul, in this passage, is demonstrating that it should not hold such a high position in Corinthian thinking.

As noted above, social competitiveness was spilling over into the church and some of the Corinthian Christians were engaged in activities which were further stratifying an already socially stratified group. The elevation of the gift of tongues is one example of this kind of behaviour. Those Christians who were placing the gift of tongues at an elevated level were also placing those who had this gift at a high level of importance. Paul points out the flaw in their reasoning. Though tongues is a perfectly good spiritual gift, there are other gifts which are more important, namely apostles, prophets, and teachers whose work builds up the church and edifies its members. This is something that tongues cannot do. Paul writes that God appointed these three leadership functions as “first, second, and third” in the church. The text of 1 Cor 12:27–31 serves to demonstrate that while all members of the body of Christ are important and all spiritual

gifts help the church to function at its maximum potential, the foundational and vital gifts of apostle, prophet, and teacher allow the church to grow in maturity—something that is sorely lacking in the Corinthian congregation.

The text of 1 Cor 12:27–31 highlights the importance of leaders in the church who build up the body of Christ and help it to reach maturity. The apostles, prophets, and teachers are given as three examples and these particular leadership functions cannot be explicitly linked to the situation in Corinth. However, the examples provided by these three leadership functions serve to promote an attitude toward such leadership functions which elevates their importance. The primacy of these three leadership functions demonstrates that good leaders who build up and influence the whole church in a positive way are more important than spectacular spiritual gifts, such as glossolalia, which benefit only a few. Here Paul is concerned that the leadership functions of apostle, prophet, and teacher are given a higher level of authority than other gifts which are not leadership functions. The text does not say that Corinth has resident apostles, prophets, or teachers, or that individuals be appointed to fill these leadership functions in that community. Instead, what can be inferred is that when such leadership functions are present in the community they ought to be honoured as of primary importance. Also, v. 31 suggests that the Corinthians ought to be zealous for these greater gifts and desire them for their community. The passage mentions other spiritual gifts or activities, but its purpose is not to highlight them so much as it is to promote leadership as more important than the gift of tongues.

Leadership Functions in the Ephesian Context: Eph 4:1–16 and 1 Tim 3:1–13

In Chapter 5 the Greco-Roman context of the city of Ephesus was examined along with the early Christian context of that city. This was the beginning of the thick description of Ephesian Christianity. In Chapters 6 and 7 additional material on the immediate context of the writing of Ephesians and 1 Timothy was added to further thicken the description. This description of the Ephesian situation was then used to analyse Eph 4:1–16 and 1 Tim 3:1–13.

One of the biggest social factors that needed to be examined when considering the city of Corinth was the social stratification in the city and the heightened social competition that resulted from the higher than usual percentage of freedmen in that city. While the city of Ephesus was home to many people, including freedmen, their numbers in Ephesus were likely more typical of most Greco-Roman cities.

Another important difference between the two cities was the length of time they had been established. Corinth had been refounded about a century prior to Christianity's emergence in the city. Ephesus, by contrast, had been on the same site for approximately 250 years. This undoubtedly helped to cement traditions within the city and one of the most important traditions of the city of Ephesus affecting the Ephesian Christians was the worship of Artemis. The influence of Artemis on the early Christians in Ephesus will be noted more below.

As in Corinth, Paul initially began his work in Ephesus among the Jews, and also like Corinth, it was not long before the Jews opposed his message and he was forced to make alternate arrangements. After leaving the synagogue, Paul taught in a σχολή

somehow connected with a man named Tyrannus, though this may not have been the only location from which he taught or where Christians met.

As noted above, one of the major challenges for the Christian community in Ephesus was the cult of Artemis. Acts 19 records a major conflict between her followers and Paul. Although the case is thrown out by the *γραμματεὺς* it is doubtful that the conflict between the Artemis worshippers and the Christians ended with the dismissal of the rioters.

More than a year after leaving Ephesus, the text of Acts records a meeting between Paul and the Ephesian elders at the city of Miletus. This meeting provides important clues concerning the state of Ephesian Christianity. Acts 20:19 indicates that Paul's time among the Ephesian Christians was fraught with challenges and Paul also foresees future challenges for the Ephesian Christian community both from among their own ranks and from outside it.

It was noted in Chapter 6 that Ephesians appears to be written to a group of Christians that were struggling in the face of pressure from the cult of Artemis in the city. The deep hold that Artemis had over the city and its inhabitants is a key factor for understanding the texts of Eph 4:1–16 and 1 Tim 3:1–13.

The text of Eph 4:1–16 opens by urging the Ephesian Christians to live lives that are in keeping with their calling as Christians. Though the text is not explicit, when read against the backdrop of the thick description of the city, it is reasonable to consider one of the underlying implications of this statement is that these Ephesians have been called to Christ and away from Artemis. Paul urges the Christians to display virtues such as humility, gentleness, patience, and unity as they seek to live in a manner worthy of their

Christian calling, none of which would have been easy tasks. Christian leaders, such as those who fulfilled the leadership functions of apostle, prophet, evangelist, and pastor and teacher, were set in place to assist the Ephesians in achieving these goal.

In order to illustrate the idea of unity in particular, Paul borrows from the philosophy of the day and uses the body of Christ metaphor to demonstrate to the Ephesians the importance of unity among Christians. In this metaphor each member of the body has a role to play. Though this is the same metaphor as Paul used to address the Corinthian Christians, the purpose here is different. In 1 Cor 12:27–31 the focus is on both unity and diversity. Paul urges the Corinthians to change their mindset on which members of the body are most important. In that text the leadership functions which benefit and build up the whole church (as exemplified by the functions of apostle, prophet, and teacher) are more important than gifts which benefit only a few—yet at the same time all members of the body are important in their own way. In Eph 4:1–16 the focus is on the overall purpose of leadership functions (as exemplified by apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastors and teachers) in strengthening the unity of the body of Christ—diversity and distinguishing levels of importance are not major factors. The purpose of the leadership functions is to train the saints, do works of service, and build up the body of Christ.

In the text of Eph 4:1–16 the role of leadership functions in the church is to promote unity and help the Ephesian Christians to live lives according to their calling. These leadership functions are presented in the text as gifts of God and the Ephesian Christians in turn owe a reciprocal gift to God as the divine patron: they must live their lives in a way that is in keeping with their calling as Christians. Paul's purpose in sending

this text to the Ephesians has less to do with prescribing leadership functions and more to do with reminding the Ephesians that the leaders, whoever they are, have been put in place by God in order to help the church to reach its full maturity in the faith. The attitudes that the Ephesians were to have concerning their leaders were those that brought respect and honour to these highly valued gifts.

The text of Eph 4:1–16 presents a list of leadership functions which appears to be an example of leadership functions and not an exhaustive list. There is not enough detailed information available concerning the conflict in Ephesus to link each of the functions specifically to the immediate context. It is safest to interpret this as another list containing examples of leadership functions which were able to fulfil the threefold purpose of training the saints, doing works of service, and building up the body of Christ. The list in Eph 4:1–16 is both similar and different from 1 Cor 12:27–31. In Eph 4:1–16 there is a possible link to local leadership which was not certain in 1 Cor 12:27–31. A possible link between the leadership functions of pastors, teachers, elders, and overseers and a possible link of pastors, elders, and overseers to the Ephesian Christian community suggest that both itinerant and local leaders are in view in Eph 4.

It is between two and four years after Paul's words in Ephesians concerning Christian unity and the threefold purpose of the Christian leadership functions of apostle, prophet, evangelist, and pastor and teacher that he writes to his representative, Timothy, who is in Ephesus. Timothy was left in Ephesus by Paul to combat the false teachings of members of that Christian community. It seems that Paul's prediction of false teachers in the community made to the Ephesian Elders at Miletus has come true. Either the

problems that Eph 4 points to had not been resolved, or the community was dealing with a subsequent crisis.

The text of 1 Tim 3:1–13 is best understood in light of the ancient context of the city of Ephesus. The upheaval in the Christian community concerning a clash over Artemis worship and a tendency to syncretism has been previously noted. The content of some of the false teachings recorded in 1 Timothy (such as devotion to myths, demonic teachings, and Jewish law) suggests that these two factors were still challenges when 1 Timothy was written. The content of the false teaching in Ephesus also extended beyond these two factors and it is possible that some of the community's leaders are themselves false teachers.

As a means of combating the false teachings in a Christian community with a long history of problems, Paul writes lists of qualifications for leaders—specifically those fulfilling the leadership functions of overseers, deacons, and women leaders—and sends them to Timothy and the Ephesian Christians. Lists of virtues in connection with particular jobs or roles have been found in ancient literary evidence; Paul's use of such lists may have been a familiar tactic. These lists of qualifications are meant not as job descriptions for what the leaders ought to *do* but rather as descriptions of the kinds of people the leaders ought to *be*. These character traits often directly correspond to negative traits displayed by the false teachers. Because these are not job descriptions and because extensive discussions of the relationship between the various leadership functions are not found in 1 Timothy, seeing a highly developed ecclesiology in this text is not advisable. Instead, these lists serve as guidelines for Timothy as he attempts to appoint new leaders

in Ephesus to assist him in combating the false teachings and false teachers that are prevalent in that city.

Of the three texts under examination here, the text of 1 Tim 3:1–13 most clearly discusses leadership functions which are clearly tied to the specific need of the community. There is a local problem with false teachers and local leaders such as overseers and deacons are discussed as part of the solution. The attitudes concerning leadership which are promoted in this text are connected to the qualifications for the leadership functions. Each function has particular qualifications in keeping with the needs of the community's current problems. The Ephesian Christians, through the guidance of Timothy, are to have standards for leadership; not just anyone can properly fill the qualifications. The community is to seek high-quality leaders.

Final Observations

The above thick descriptions and analyses of the three selected texts demonstrate the importance of location-specific thick descriptions in clearly understanding location-specific texts. Though admittedly there are many similarities between the social situations of Ephesus and Corinth, both the similarities and differences between the historical situations create contexts that allow for a deeper understanding of texts sent to each location. For example, though social competition was undoubtedly present in both Ephesus and Corinth, the history of Corinth as a Roman colony of freedmen suggests that the social competition may have been even more pronounced in that location than in others. Though religious syncretism was found in both Corinth and Ephesus, the level of importance and influence of Artemis in the city of Ephesus is not paralleled by another deity in Corinth. This, coupled with the syncretism practiced by Christians in Acts with

regard to their magic scrolls, sets the stage for a long history of false teaching and a willingness to blend true and false ideas concerning Christianity within the Ephesian Christian community.

The words that Paul writes to each of these locations concerning leadership functions are rooted in the historical situation of each place. Though some of the same leadership functions are mentioned, the purpose behind their mention is different. In Corinth, Paul highlights the importance of solid leadership over spectacular spiritual gifts. In Ephesus Paul emphasizes that leaders are in place to build up the church (Eph 4:1–16) and later that leaders must be of quality, selfless character and dedicated to right teaching (1 Tim 3:1–13). By employing methods of social description in an analysis of the Christian communities in Corinth and Ephesus, this study has demonstrated that Paul's discussion of specific leadership functions with respect to each city is rooted in the historical context of each Christian community and therefore Paul mentions leadership functions and promotes attitudes concerning leadership which are in keeping with the circumstances of each community and does not necessarily promote uniform practice in all places.

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