



## **DISSERTATION**

### **Titel der Dissertation**

“You All Are One in Christ” (Gal 3:26-29). The Exegesis of “Oneness” of Christians and Its Hermeneutical Applications

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To the King of ages, the eternal King, the immortal God, the invisible God, the God of inspiration and knowledge, the undying God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the King who is, the King who is to come, be the glory, honour, adoration, praise and power forever and ever. Amen (cf. Gal 1:5; 1 Timothy 1:17).

## Introduction

Paul, a trained diaspora Jew knows the hatred that exists between the Jews and the Gentiles, the socio-religious and ethno-cultural stratifications between the freeborn, freed slaves, slaves, between male and female. Paul might have said the Jewish morning pray in which a male Jew thanks God that he was not created a Gentile, a slave or a woman.<sup>1</sup> Gentiles loathe Jews because of the rituals of the law (cf. Gen 17:11-14) and other socio-religious practices like the ritual washing of hands (cf. Matt 15:2).

After his conversion or call,<sup>2</sup> Paul sets out to unify Jewish and Gentile Christians with the law-free gospel. For him Jews and Gentiles are sons and daughters of God (Gal 3:26), and inheritors of Abrahamic promise (3:29), because they have “put on Christ” in baptism (3:27). Therefore, they are “one in Christ” (3:28). What matters now is “faith in Christ” (3:26), “faith working through love” (5:6), “being a new creation” (6:15), “keeping God’s commandment” (1 Cor 7:19) and not the legalism of the law. But then, what happens to the divine principles of the law (cf. Rom 7:12)? Now that “faith has come” (Gal 3:25), how are Gentile Christians to interact with Jewish Christians?

How did Paul try to unify Christians according to Gal 3:26-29; 6:15; 1 Cor 12:13; Phlm 15-16? How has this notion developed further in deuterio-Pauline letters as exemplified in Col 3:9-11? How can one claim that Christians are one in a diversified world?<sup>3</sup> Where are Christians one? Where are they not one? What are the hermeneutical problems therein?<sup>4</sup> What are the possibilities of breaking down the difficult hermeneutical differences, especially when Gal 3:26-28 is applied to the ethno-cultural and religious practices in Nigeria cum Africa?

This study is divided into seven chapters. The first chapter deals with introductory issues and the historicity of the letter. It begins with the questions: Who is Paul? Who are the Galatians? Who wrote the letter? When was it written and why? The second chapter is concerned with the detailed study of Gal 3:1-29, i.e. the Greek text, variants and translation. Chapter three, the core of our study, offers a linguistic analysis of 3:26-29, dealing with structure and style, syntax and semantics, literary genre and pragmatics, biblical and traditional sources of the text, Pauline redaction, and finally giving a detailed exegesis of 3:26-29.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 187.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Horrell, *An Introduction to the Study of Paul*, 26-27.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Lieu, *Neither Jew nor Greek?*, 1.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Hove, *Equality in Christ?*, 116.

Chapter four shows that the issue of division in Christian communities does not only exist in Galatia, rather, it takes a new dimension in Corinth where spiritual gifts are leading to spiritual elitism. Paul uses the body metaphor to show that no single part of the body is more important than the other parts.<sup>5</sup> The master-slave relationship is also an issue in the little community in Philemon's house. Paul tells Philemon that the slave Onesimus has become his adopted son (Phlm 10) and "a brother of yours" in the Lord (16). During or after the death of Paul, the issues of Greeks and Jews, barbarians and Scythians, freeborn, freed slaves and slaves become the new challenges facing the Christian communities. The author of the letter to the Colossians admonishes the Christians to know that "Christ is all, and in all" (Col 3:11).

Chapter five is centered on the theology of oneness of Christians. If Christianity is to remain a universal faith in Christ (Gal 3:13-14), then those who are "in Christ" form one body in him (1 Cor 12:12, 27), through the same Spirit which they received at baptism (12:13).<sup>6</sup> Chapter six deals with the issue of hermeneutics in Gal 3:26-29 and its applications to the patriarchal and socio-economic conditions, religious denominations and cultural institutions and their systems in Nigeria cum Africa. In many churches in Africa, the Bible is read literarily, interpreted and applied without recourse to critical exegesis, and the institutionalized patriarchy is upheld as if Gal 3:26-29 is not part of the New Testament letters. The study calls for a revisiting of those socio-economic, religious and cultural backgrounds that do not encourage the oneness of all "in Christ."

Chapter seven offers the evaluations and conclusions. Having gone through different texts and the exegeses of many commentators, the work evaluates some opinions on the teaching of Paul. It affirms that the universal nature of the Jesus event makes all those who are "in Christ" one with and in him. *"Sie sind in Christus alle zusammen Einer, der Leib Christi; sie sind es freilich so, dass jeweils jeder Einzelne im Verhältnis zum Anderen Christus ist, also deutlicher: dass sie nur noch Glieder Christi sind."*<sup>7</sup> The last section contains the bibliography, the abstracts and the curriculum vitae.

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. Garland, 1 Corinthians, 588.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Edwards, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, 51.

<sup>7</sup> Schlier, Der Brief an die Galater, 175.

## Research Question

The orientation of this study is different from other researches on Galatians 3:26-29 in the sense that many of those who have written on the issues therein singled out a part of the whole: Jews and Greeks, slaves and freed, male and female. Some exegetes have handled the issue of equality<sup>8</sup> or reread Galatians from the feminist's perspectives.<sup>9</sup> While other scholars have concentrated on the differences between Jews and Greeks,<sup>10</sup> slaves and freed,<sup>11</sup> male and female,<sup>12</sup> this study concentrates on the *oneness of all in Christ*. In Christ Jesus, Jews and Greeks, Scythians and barbarians, slaves and freed, freeborn, male and female are one because in baptism they have "put on the identity of Christ" (cf. *Χριστὸν ἐβαπτίσθητε, Χριστὸν ἐνεδύσασθε* Gal 3:27).<sup>13</sup> Paul categorically states that there is "one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist" (1 Cor 8:6b).

The study is going to demonstrate how Paul uses inclusive pronouns such as *πάντες* ("all," "everyone"), personal or possessive pronouns like *ὁμεῖς/ὁμῶν* ("we," "us," "our"), relative pronouns like *ὅσοι* ("as many as"), etc., generic nouns like *υἱοί* ("brethren"), *ἀδελφοί* ("brothers and sisters") and inclusive phrases like *πάντα τὰ ἔθνη* (Gal 3:8), *υἱοὶ θεοῦ ἐστε* (Gal 3:26), *πάντες γὰρ ὁμεῖς εἶς ἐστε* (Gal 3:28), *ἡμεῖς πάντες εἰς ἓν σῶμα ἐβαπτίσθημεν* (1 Cor 12:13) to bring in all Christians into the one redeemed children of God (cf. Gal 3:26). Such expressions as *υἱοὶ θεοῦ* ("sons of God") are cultural-bound, and will be interpreted as children of God or sons and daughters (*υἱοὶ καὶ θυγατέρες*) of God. Paul uses inclusive languages when he speaks of Jews and Gentiles, and according to Tatha Wiley "Gentile denotes women, too."<sup>14</sup> Richard W. Hove affirms the universality of the couplet Jew and Greek. "The couplet Jew/Greek is significant from a salvation-historical perspective and together, as a pair, they represent all of humanity."<sup>15</sup> Frank Matera says, "whereas the historical people of Israel understood its sonship in the light of God's promise to Abraham and the covenant made at Sinai"<sup>16</sup> (Exodus 19-20), Paul understands the daughtership/sonship of God's children in the light of faith. The people of faith (*οἱ ἐκ πίστεως*, Gal 3:9) are now the sons and

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Hover, Richard: *Equality in Christ? Galatians 3:28 and the Gender Dispute*, Crossway Books, Wheaton, 1999.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Kahl, Brigitte: *Galatians Re-Imagined: Reading with the Eyes of the Vanquished*, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 2010.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Lieu, Judith: *Neither Jew Nor Greek? Constructing Early Christianity*, T & T Clark, London, 2002.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Hezser, Catherine: *Jewish Slavery in Antiquity*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2005.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Hogan, N. Pauline: "No Longer Male and Female": Interpreting Galatians 3:28 in Early Christianity, T & T Clark, London, 2008.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Edwards, *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture*, 51.

<sup>14</sup> Wiley, Paul and the Gentile Women, 107.

<sup>15</sup> Hove, *Equality in Christ?*, 65.

<sup>16</sup> Matera, *Galatians*, 145.

daughters of God (3:26). William Barclay opines that “Jews interpreted the idea of the chosen people in a racial sense,”<sup>17</sup> but Paul interprets it in a Christological sense. He maintains that “the chosenness does not now consist in membership of any nation or in any external mark upon the flesh; it consists of a relationship in Jesus Christ.”<sup>18</sup> This study emphasizes the “oneness of all in Christ” (Gal 3:28) in a globalized sense. It deals with the universal inclusion of all in Christ Jesus because Christ redeemed all of us from the curse of the law (*Χριστὸς ἡμᾶς ἐξηγόρασεν ἐκ τῆς κατάρας τοῦ νόμου* Gal 3:13), and God is the God of all nations (*ἢ Ἰουδαίων ὁ θεὸς μόνον; οὐχὶ καὶ ἐθνῶν; ναὶ καὶ ἐθνῶν* Rom 3:29). “God is one” (*θεὸς εἷς ἐστίν* Gal 3:20) and “you all are one in Christ” (Gal 3:28). Christians who are coming from different parts of the world have diversified ethno-cultural and socio-religious backgrounds but “they are clothed with Christ” (*Χριστὸν ἐνεδύσασθε* Gal 3:27). Irrespective of the ethno-cultural and socio-religious inheritance of Christians, the reception of the Spirit of Christ in baptism (*καὶ πάντες ἐν πνεῦμα ἐποτίσθημεν* 1 Cor 12:13) has made all one with him. And the author of the letter to the Ephesians says that their oneness breaks down all ethno-cultural differences and socio-religious barriers (*τὸ μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ λύσας* Eph 2:14).<sup>19</sup>

This study has its practical character, which differentiates it from other works on Galatians. The hermeneutics of our main text (Gal 3:26-29) will be applied to the Nigerian cum African ethno-cultural and socio-religious institutions that are patriarchal in nature. The situation is best described as “crude patriarchalism.”<sup>20</sup> The fact is that African society, traditional religion and culture have very poor notion of women. According to Marie-Bernadette Mbuy-Beya “our churches (and society) are profoundly affected by gender discriminations. Wherever a woman is given equal responsibility with a man, this is considered as a concession that could have been given only through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>21</sup> The occupants of the patriarchal institutions protect their own interests to the detriment of the oneness of all in Christ. Chinedu A. Amadi-Azuogu calls it “false ecclesiology” that detracts leaders “from the real function of feeding the lamb and of shepherding the sheep, such that one focuses attention more on authority and its benefits than on the welfare of the people.”<sup>22</sup> Elisabeth Johnson expands this issue. “The fundamental sin is exploitation, whether it be expressed in the domination of male over female, white over black, rich over poor, strong over weak, armed

<sup>17</sup> Barclay, *Many Witnesses, One Lord*, 109.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, 109.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Hove, *Equality in Christ?*, 106.

<sup>20</sup> Barth, and Blanke, *Colossians*, 435.

<sup>21</sup> Mbuy-Beya, Marie-Bernadette, *Woman, Who Are You?*, 32.

<sup>22</sup> Amadi-Azuogu, *Biblical Exegesis and Inculturation in Africa in the Third Millennium*, 58.

military over unarmed civilians, human beings over nature. These analogously abusive patterns interlock because they rest on the same base: a structure where an elite insists on its superiority and claims the right to exercise dominative power over all others considered subordinate, for its own benefit.”<sup>23</sup> The gospel of oneness of all needs to be preached to Nigerians cum Africans.

There are undoubtedly lots of values in every culture and African cultural values are no exceptions. However, there are also short comings in African socio-religious and cultural way of life. The problem with African thought, religion and culture is that the institutions are treated as sacred and mannish. An example is the *Osu* caste system. An *Osu* is a slave of the gods or a living sacrifice offered to the gods. He/she has little in common with the freeborn, *Nwadiala*. According to Victor E. Dike, there are visible boundaries between *Osu* and *Nwadiala*. The boundaries between the *Osu* and *Nwadiala* exist openly in the state and in the church. “In Oruku community the *Osu* operate their own village market and it is often difficult for community to appoint an *Osu* to any position of authority in the local churches.”<sup>24</sup> The sacred institutions are yet to be penetrated by the gospel. Elisabeth Johnson describes such situations as an appraisal of “cultural imperialism.”<sup>25</sup> This study calls for the depatriarchalization and the abolition of all those socio-cultural and ethno-religious systems that hinder the oneness of all in Christ (cf. 2 Cor 3:18).<sup>26</sup>

## Methodology

The methodology for this study is the historical critical method of diachronic and synchronic analysis. Our main text (Gal 3:26-29) has four parallels in the New Testament letters. Its context recurs in Gal 6:15; 1 Cor 12:13; Phlm 15-16 and Col 3:9-11. The study looks at the developmental growth of Gal 3:26-29, diachronic and the particularity of each letter, synchronic. The similarities and differences between our main text and the other parallels raise diachronic question. Why are there differences in the texts?<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Johnson, *She Who Is*, 27.

<sup>24</sup> Dike, *The Osu Discrimination in Igboland*, 6

<sup>25</sup> Johnson, *She Who Is*, 27.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid*, 73.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Silva, *Moisés: Interpreting Galatians*, 143.



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## Chapter One: The Historicity and Circumstances Surrounding the Letter to the Galatians

### 1.1 A General Survey: The Act of Letter Writing

Letter writing in Pauline era was harder than it is today because many authors did not have secretaries or organized and supportive communities as we now have them. The community aspect of letter writing was limited to the involvement of families or references to friends for the exchange of greetings and handlings of the essentials of daily life.<sup>28</sup> Paul's letter to the Galatians<sup>29</sup> differs greatly from family exchange of greetings. It was occasioned by faith-issues arising from various Christian communities founded by him (cf. *περὶ δὲ ὧν ἐγράψατε ...* 1 Cor 7:1a; 1 Cor 10:14-21; Gal 2:4; 3:12-20, Phil 4:3; Phlm).<sup>30</sup>

Paul had evangelized many communities in Galatia and he had already proceeded to other communities when "false brothers" (Gal 2:4) started teaching "another gospel" among the community members, a gospel which Paul did not recognize as the true gospel (Gal 1:6-9). The teachings of the false brothers could have been reported to Paul by the entrusted community leaders. Eva Ebel articulates this opinion very well. *"Wenn er (Paulus) nicht selbst eine Gemeinde aufsuchen kann, fungieren Mitarbeiter des Paulus und Gemeindeglieder als Boten und machen sich im Auftrag des Apostels bzw. der Gemeinde eigens auf den Weg, um Briefe, Anfragen, Weisungen und Geld zu überbringen, da die römische Post nur staatliche Schreiben transportiert. Unverzichtbar für die Kommunikation sind zudem Menschen, die aus beruflichen Gründen beständig unterwegs sind und dabei für den Austausch von Neuigkeiten zwischen den einzelnen Gemeinden sorgen."*<sup>31</sup> J. Louis Martyn opines that "by the time he left them, Paul had equipped these churches with catechetical instructors who continued to teach the gospel in the Pauline form (6:6). We may imagine that these instructors were the people who sent (or carried) a message to Paul about the arrival and work of the incursive teachers."<sup>32</sup> Paul's first choice was to visit the troubled communities and personally address the issues,<sup>33</sup> but as he could not personally go to all the communities because of hindrances (cf. *ἐκωλύθη* in Rom 1:13), *κωλόω* meaning "to prevent," "to debar," or "to hinder") he sent

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Stirewalt, Paul, the letter writer, 1-4.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Eckey, Der Galaterbrief, 1.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Frey, Galaterbrief, in: Paulus. Leben - Umwelt - Werk - Briefe, 232: addresses are "wahrscheinlich die von Paulus gegründeten Gemeinden an der kleinasiatischen Südküste."

<sup>31</sup> Ebel, Das Missionswerk des Paulus, in: Paulus. Leben - Umwelt - Werk - Briefe, 119.

<sup>32</sup> Martyn, Galatians, 18.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Richards, Paul and First-Century Letter Writing, 116-117.

representatives such as Timothy, Titus or Epaphras (cf. 1 Cor 16:10; 2 Cor 7:5-7; 1 Thess 3:2-3; Phil 2:25; Col 1:7; 4:12). F. F. Bruce maintains that “the letter had to serve lieu of a personal visit.”<sup>34</sup> It was only as a last resort that Paul sent a letter.<sup>35</sup> For the conduct of his epistolary ministry, he relied upon all forms and functions of written communications that were at his disposal and on his rich creativity; so he formulated the apostolic letter that was eminently suitable for the needs of the young Christian communities in Galatia.<sup>36</sup>

As a highly literate person corresponding with geographically scattered groups of people, Paul clothed authority with expressions of affection, appeals with warnings and encouragements.<sup>37</sup> He did this having mastered all forms of letter writing, which enabled him to express himself persuasively.<sup>38</sup> To ensure that there was peace in the troubled communities, and since he could not visit personally these communities that had problems, it seems that the letter was the most appropriate medium of restating his teachings to the troubled Christians in Galatia. Jörg Frey calls the letter Paul’s defence. “*Der Brief ersetzt nach dieser Auffassung die Verteidigungsrede des abwesenden Apostels.*”<sup>39</sup> Paul knew the need for peace and order in the communities, for God is not the author of disunity (*ἀκαταστασία*, 1 Cor 14:33). To settle the desperate situation in Galatia, he sent a representative with an authority letter signed by himself (cf. *ἴδετε πηλικοίς ὑμῖν γράμμασιν ἔγραψα τῇ ἐμῇ χειρί*, Gal 6:11).

## 1.2 Authorship

The letter to the Galatians is said to be one of the four “capital epistles of Paul”<sup>40</sup> or what Jörg Frey calls “*Hauptbriefe.*” “*Er gehört mit 1/2 Kor und Röm zu den ‘Hauptbriefen’ und mit 2 Kor zu den sog. ‘Kampfbriefen,’ in denen Paulus um die Anerkennung seines Apostolats und um ‘sein’ Evangelium kämpft.*”<sup>41</sup> From the time of the gathering together of Paul’s writings (early in the second century AD), Galatians, Romans and Corinthians have secured a special place among other letters. When the authorship of other Pauline letters is under consideration, the standard of assessment is the above named four capital letters. However, they stand in relation to one another on different levels. F. F. Bruce’s observation is that

<sup>34</sup> Bruce, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, XXI.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Richards, Paul and First-Century Letter Writing, 16.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, 109.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, 25.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, 93.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Frey, Galaterbrief, in: Paulus. Leben - Umwelt - Werk - Briefe, 239.

<sup>40</sup> Bruce, The Epistle to the Galatians, 1; cf. George, Galatians, 23.

<sup>41</sup> Frey, Galaterbrief, in: Paulus. Leben - Umwelt - Werk - Briefe, 255.

“among the writings of Paul it is with the letter to the Romans that Galatians has the closest affinity.”<sup>42</sup>

Paul is the author of the letter to the Galatians.<sup>43</sup> There is also the opinion that Paul dictated the letter. Helmut Merklein opines that a disciple of Paul could have written it down and Paul closed it (Gal 6:11). *“Statt mit einer Unterschrift wird der diktierter Brief durch einen eigenhändigen Gruß abgeschlossen (vgl. 1 Kor 16,21 ...).”*<sup>44</sup> Jörg Frey expands this view. *“Dass ein ‘Sekretär’ (ggf. als ‘Mitarbeiter’; vgl. 1,2) beteiligt war, legt der Eigenhändigkeitsvermerk Gal 6,11 nahe. Unsicher bleibt, welchen Einfluss ein solcher ‘Schreiber’ auf die Ausgestaltung hatte (vgl. Röm 16,22). Dass selbst der sarkastische Ausfall in 5,12 nicht abgemildert wurde, lässt jedoch vermuten, dass kaum Retuschen erfolgten: Der Apostel verantwortet Form und Inhalt des Schreibens selbst.”*<sup>45</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner and Clinton E. Arnold conclude that there are no significant scholarly debates on whether Paul is the author of the letter to the Galatians or not. *“Indeed, Galatians is often identified as quintessentially Pauline.”*<sup>46</sup> James D. G. Dunn shares this opinion. *“Unlike many ancient documents whose authors we can only guess at, we know well who wrote Galatians. It was Paul.”*<sup>47</sup>

The letter to the Galatians provides us with more personal and autobiographical information of Paul than any of his other letters. A proof of this fact is already seen when Paul starts by impressing it upon the minds of his readers that he is an apostle chosen by God (Gal 1:1). He recalls his earlier life in Judaism as a zealous persecutor of the church of God (cf. *ἐδιώκον τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἐπόρθουν αὐτήν*, 1:13-14), his conversion/call (1:15-16), his meeting with the church leaders in Jerusalem (2:1-10), his confrontation with Peter in Antioch (2:11-14), his personal reminiscences of his evangelizing visit to Galatia (4:12-20) and the physical cost of his strenuous life style (6:17). All these help the reader to build up the picture of Paul the theologian and missionary. They enable the reader to situate the letter to the Galatians within the life time of Paul and within his theology.<sup>48</sup> This is why F. F. Bruce calls the beginning of the letter to the Galatians “an autobiographical sketch” of Paul. “Paul, therefore judges it necessary in his letter to dwell at some length on the divine authority of his gospel and of his commission to preach it: He embarks on an autobiographical sketch of

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Eckey, Der Galaterbrief, 1.

<sup>44</sup> Merklein, Stuttgarter Neues Testament, 370.

<sup>45</sup> Frey, Galaterbrief, in: Paulus. Leben - Umwelt - Werk - Briefe, 240.

<sup>46</sup> Schreiner and Arnold: Galatians, 22.

<sup>47</sup> Dunn, The Theology of Paul's Letter to the Galatians, 4.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid, 5.

the first fourteen or seventeen years of his apostleship.”<sup>49</sup> According to Timothy George, few facts related to “the history and interpretations of Galatians have virtual unanimity among all scholars everywhere. But here is one: Galatians was indeed written by Paul the apostle as its opening verse attests.”<sup>50</sup>

### 1.3 Who Are the Galatians?

The special character of the letter is that it is addressed to different communities, which makes scholars ask: Which Galatians does Paul mean? Jörg Frey shares this opinion. *“Die Adressaten werden als ‘Galater’ (Γαλάται) angesprochen (3,1). Strittig ist jedoch, welche Adressaten in welcher Gegend damit gemeint sind.”*<sup>51</sup> Where are they historically and geographically located? Should we locate them in the territory of the former kingdom of Galatia or among the extensive Roman province of Galatia? Are we to understand the recipients of the letter to the Galatians in the ethnic sense or in the political sense? Jörg Frey gives two possibilities.

Nach der Landschaftshypothese (nordgalatische Hypothese) richtet sich Gal an die Bewohner der ‘Landschaft’ Galatien in Zentralanatolien um die Städte Ankyra (heute: Ankara), Pessinus und Tavium, die ihren Namen von den im 3. Jh. v.Chr. eingedrungenen keltischen Volksstämmen hatte. Dort lebte eine wenig hellenisierte Landbevölkerung, in den wenigen Städten wohl eine Mischbevölkerung. Eine nennenswerte jüdische Diaspora ist in dieser Gegend für das 1. Jh. nicht erweisbar. Nach Apg 16,6; 18,23 zog Paulus auf seiner sog. 2 und 3. Missionsreise durch ‘das galatische Land,’ was sich auf diese Region beziehen könnte. Von Gemeindegründungen durch Paulus berichtet Lukas allerdings nicht. Nach der Provinzhypothese (südgalatische Hypothese) richtet sich Gal an Bewohner der 25 v.Chr. gegründeten römischen Provincia Galatiae, die neben der Landschaft Galatien (Sitz des Statthalters war Ankyra) auch das Gebiet bis zur kleinasiatischen Südküste, d.h. Teile von Pamphylien, Pisidien, Isaurien und Lykaonien, umfasste. Dort gab es eine alte und stattliche jüdische Diaspora. Städte aus dem Gebiet (Antiochia in Pisidien, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, Perge) sind in Apg 13f. als Stationen der 1. Missionsreise von Barnabas und Paulus erwähnt. Demnach haben beide dort Gemeinden gegründet und sie auf dem Rückweg nochmals besucht.<sup>52</sup>

It is difficult to take a definite position on this issue. Jörg Frey hints at the debatable nature of both propositions. *“Während die angelsächsische Forschung seit langem die südgalatische Hypothese favorisiert, hat sich die deutsche Forschung weithin der nordgalatischen Hypothese angeschlossen, doch mehren sich neuerdings auch hier Befürworter der Provinzhypothese.”*<sup>53</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Bruce, The Epistle to the Galatians, 20.

<sup>50</sup> George, Galatians, 22.

<sup>51</sup> Frey, Galaterbrief, in: Paulus. Leben - Umwelt - Werk - Briefe, 241.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, 241.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, 241-242.



F. F. Bruce also provides us with further details when he says that the “Greek word *Γαλάται* is a variant form of *Κέλται* or *Κέλτοι*, Celts,” the Latin form of which is *Galli*. They were residents of Central Europe, in the Danube basin. From there they migrated in a westerly direction into Switzerland, South Germany and North Italy. They migrated also into Gaul and Britain before they finally settled in the North-Central Asia Minor.<sup>54</sup> Brigitte Kahl offers a complementary opinion. “Gaul in the West and Galatia in the East were more closely linked in the first-century C.E. mind than we realize ... The Greek word *Galatês* refers to both ‘Gaul’ and ‘Galatians’.”<sup>55</sup> We can, therefore, no longer keep the first century Gauls and Galatians as neatly separated from each other as we have long been accustomed to do. Both are Celtic People.<sup>56</sup>

According to F. F. Bruce, the Galatians were warlords. “Like the Greeks before them, the Romans knew the land inhabited by the Celtic peoples as barbarian territory par excellence.”<sup>57</sup> They recruited soldiers from the tribes of Tolistobogii in the west, with their centre at Pessinus, the Trocmi in the east, with their centre at Tavium, and the Tectosages around Ancyra which later became the capital of the kingdom of Galatia, the present day Ankara, the capital of the Republic of Turkey. For years the Galatians menaced their neighbours in Asia Minor. They took over the territory which formally belonged to the Phrygians. This territory was a broad strip of land stretching over 200 miles from south-west to north-west, between the longitudes of 31° and 35° E. and the latitudes of 39° and 40° 30’ N. The Galatians adopted the Phrygian religion and culture, but not their language. Greek language was used as the language of commerce and diplomacy.<sup>58</sup>

The interest of Roman authority was attracted to the Province of Galatia because the Galatians fought alongside with the Seleucid army against the Roman army. The Roman army defeated both the Seleucid and Galatia armies, but the Roman authority allowed the Galatians to retain their independence under their own rulers. The Galatians quickly learned the art of keeping on a good relationship with the Roman authority.

During the second century BC and with the permission of the Roman authority, Galatia augmented her territory. In 36 B.C, Mark Antony presented Amyntas with Iconium, a city of

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<sup>54</sup> Cf. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 3.

<sup>55</sup> Kahl, *Galatians Re-Imagined*, 1-2.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid*, 2.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid*, 3.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 4.

Phrygia, together with parts of Lycaonia and Pamphylia.<sup>59</sup> Because of the additions and subtractions of cities, under different emperors and at different times in history, the terminology “Phrygia Galatia and Lycaonia Galatia” were added to the names of the cities to distinguish them from the part of Phrygia which lay within the proconsular Asia and from Eastern Lycaonia that belonged to Rome’s ally Antiochus IV, king of Commagene. The province of Galatia stretched from Pontus on the Black Sea to Pamphylia on the Mediterranean. Theoretically, Paul’s churches in Galatia might have been situated anywhere within this vast geographical area.<sup>60</sup>

## 1.4 When was the Letter Written?

In handling the issue of when the letter was written, the problem of the so called North Galatian Hypothesis (55-56) or South Galatian Hypothesis (48-53) arises. F. F. Bruce begins the inquiry with regrets. “It is regrettably strange that, while Galatians is the most indubitably authentic of all the Pauline letters, it should be so difficult to attain certainty on the identity of the addressees and the time at which it was written. It is the most difficult of Paul’s ‘capital letters’ to date precisely.”<sup>61</sup> Wilfried Eckey speculates about this issue. *“Für den Ort und die Zeit der Abfassung kommen entweder die Zeit, in der Paulus in Ephesus wirkte, oder die Zeit, während der Paulus durch Makedonien reiste, in Betracht. Hätte er ihn in Ephesus geschrieben, dann wäre er vor oder nach dem dort abgefaßten Ersten Korintherbrief geschrieben worden. Für die Entstehung des Rundschreiben an die Galater während der Makedonienreise (vgl. Apg 20,2), daß es sachlich dem Römerbrief nahesteht. Paulus hätte ihn dann nach den beiden Briefen an die Gemeinde in Korinth diktiert.”*<sup>62</sup> Jörg Frey maintains that there is no certainty of the time and the place of the writing of the letter to the Galatians. *“Explizite Hinweise zur Datierung und zu Abfassungsort enthält Gal nicht. Die Ansetzung ist vielmehr von drei Faktoren abhängig: a) der Entscheidung in der Adressatenfrage, b) der Synchronisierung mit Apg v.a hinsichtlich der Jerusalemreisen des Paulus und c) Indizien zur relativen Reihenfolge der pln. Briefe. In der Forschung werden nahezu alle Varianten von einer extremen Frühdatierung vor dem Apostelkonzil (vor 48/49 n.Chr.) bis zu einer Spätdatierung nach dem Römerbrief (57 n. Chr.) vertreten. Die höchste Plausibilität können Ansetzungen des Gal vor 1 Kor, zwischen 1*

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid, 4 & 5.

<sup>61</sup> Bruce, The Epistle to the Galatians, 43.

<sup>62</sup> Eckey, Der Galaterbrief, 9.

*Kor und 2 Kor oder – in der deutschen Forschung derzeit am beliebtesten – nach 2 Kor, aber vor Röm beanspruchen.”*<sup>63</sup>

However, the when the letter was written remains an open question. Were the Galatians to whom the letter was addressed situated in the original Galatian territory of North Galatia or in the political province of South Galatia? This remains a difficult question.<sup>64</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner and Clinton E. Arnold are of the opinion that the letter was sent to the ethnic Galatians located in the northern part of the Galatian province, while the Southern Hypothesis proposes that the letter was sent to the cities Paul founded and visited on his first missionary journey as it is narrated in Acts 13-14.<sup>65</sup> Which of the two hypotheses exegetes accept as the most probable one depends also on the school of thought that they favour. But on the whole the evidences slightly favour the Southern Hypothesis, as it is in agreement with historical geography.<sup>66</sup>

#### **1.4.1 The North Galatian Hypothesis – c. 55-56 AD**

The North Galatian hypothesis holds that the letter to the Galatians was written at about 55-56 AD. There are theories that support this claim. As F. F. Bruce states, “In the second century (c. AD 137) Lycaonia Galatica was detached and united with Cilicia and Isaurica to form an enlarged province of Cilicia, and late in the third century (c. 297) the remainder of South Galatia with some adjoining territories became a new province of Pisidia, with Pisidian Antioch as its capital and Iconium as its second city. The province of Galatia was thus reduced to North Galatia, and when the church fathers, in their study of our epistle, read of ‘the churches of Galatia,’ they understood ‘Galatia’ without more ado in the sense familiar in their day.”<sup>67</sup> Because of this history, earlier exegetes understood the Galatians to whom the letter was written to be dwelling in north Galatia. This theory was held up to the nineteenth century. Among other scholars who supported the North Galatian hypothesis J. B. Lightfoot (1889) stands out. They all maintain that the Galatic region (*Γαλατικήν χώραν*) of Acts 16:6 and 18:23 is most probably the ethnic Galatia, and that Paul’s visits to the region mentioned in the above passages of Acts coincided with his visits to Galatia.

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<sup>63</sup> Frey, Galaterbrief, in: Paulus. Leben - Umwelt - Werk - Briefe, 245.

<sup>64</sup> Bruce, The Epistle to the Galatians, 5; Grey, Galaterbrief, 241-242.

<sup>65</sup> Schreiner & Arnold, Galatians, 23. cf. also Matera, Galatians, 19-20.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. Bruce, The Epistle to the Galatians, 8. Matera, Galatians, 9 & 24.

<sup>67</sup> Bruce, The Epistle to the Galatians, 6.

Jörg Frey maintains further possible reasons. *“Paulus erwähnt in seinem autobiographischen Bericht in 1,21 nicht dass er die Adressaten in dem fraglichen Zeitraum besucht hat. Wären die südgalatischen Städte gemeint, hätte Paulus formulieren können: ‘da kam ich nach Syrien, Kilikien und zu euch’ ... Bei Lukas heißen die südlichen Gebiete der Provinz Galatien Pisidien und Lykaonien (Apg 13,13; 14,6.11.24), als das ‘galatische Land’ bezeichnet Lukas nördlichere Landstriche ... Als stärkstes Argument wird angeführt, es sei undenkbar... dass Paulus 3,1 etwa Pisidier oder Lykaonier als ‘dumme Galater’ angeredet hätte.”*<sup>68</sup>

For the supporters of North Galatian Hypnosis, Paul might have heard about the problems in Galatia when he was in Ephesus, but he could not visit the churches there (Gal 4:20) because of the difficulties he was having with the Corinthian congregations; he wrote to the Galatians from Ephesus probably in the mid-fifties.<sup>69</sup>

However, the point of contention is that the North Galatian Hypothesis gives the preferential position to Luke. But Luke’s usage of *Γαλατία* is not decisive for Paul but Paul’s use of *Γαλατία* corresponds to the inferences from Acts.<sup>70</sup> Therefore, the Lukan view should not be used in affirming or rejecting Paul’s position. Jerome Murphy-O’Connor argues that “a fact only suggested in the letters has a status which even the most unequivocal statement of Acts, if not otherwise supported, cannot confer. We may, with proper caution, use Acts to supplement the autobiographical data of the letters, but never to correct them.”<sup>71</sup> J. Louis Martyn seeks supports to this reading, and sees Acts only as a support to the letter to the Galatians. “Our first and decisive attempt to discern the chronology of Paul’s work is to be made on the basis of the letters alone. As a second and separable step, we may turn to Acts. Even in that second step, however, one accepts from Acts only points of confirmation and supportive elucidation.”<sup>72</sup>

#### 1.4.2 The South Galatian Hypothesis – c. 48-53 AD

The South Galatian Hypothesis was championed by W. M. Ramsay (1851-1939). F. F. Bruce says that the research done by him “was accomplished in the 1880s and 1890s. It was his researches in those years that laid the foundation for the South Galatian Hypothesis. He

<sup>68</sup> Frey, Galaterbrief, in: Paulus. Leben - Umwelt - Werk - Briefe, 243.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. Matera, Galatians, 20.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, 10.

<sup>71</sup> Murphy-O’Connor, Paul, VI.

<sup>72</sup> Martyn, Galatians, 17.

laid it so firmly that for many of his disciples, it is no longer a mere hypothesis"<sup>73</sup> but a reality that should be adopted. Jörg Frey states some of the reasons why the South Galatian Hypothesis should be adopted, which include: Paul's use of provincial names such as Arabia, Judea (Gal 1:17, 22; 1Thess 2:14), Spain (Rom 15:24); and he speaks of his request that the Galatian communities should assemble collections for God's people (1 Cor 16:1). *"Nach Apg 20,4 war unter den Überbringern der Kollekte ein Bote der Gemeinden in südlichen Galatien, Gaius aus Derbe. Auch das spricht für die südliche Region."*<sup>74</sup> He presents further arguments in support of South Galatian Hypothesis. (i) *"Wenn die Adressaten nicht nur Heidenchristen waren, sondern – wie Gal 3,27f. vorauszusetzen scheint – eine aus Juden- und Heidenchristen 'gemischte,' mehrheitlich heidenchristliche Gemeinde, dann ist dies in den Städten an der Küste eher anzunehmen als im Norden, wo es kaum jüdische Gemeinden gab. Zugleich ist die Aktivität judenchristlicher Missionare zur Beeinflussung der pln. Gemeinden in ihrem Sinne dort eher plausibel, wo es Synagogen gab und die Beziehungen zum Mutterland (Jerusalem) relativ eng waren."* (ii) *"In der Apg fehlt jeder klare Hinweis auf ein missionarisches Wirken des Paulus in der Landschaft Galatien. Die Formulierungen in Apg 16,6-8 und 18,23 dürften zudem nicht genau dasselbe Gebiet meinen, sondern unterschiedliche Reisewege voraussetzen. Nur in Apg 16,6 ist vorausgesetzt, dass Paulus die nördlichen Landstriche durchzog. Apg 18,23 könnte sich auch auf die südlichen Gebiete beziehen."*<sup>75</sup>

F. F. Bruce maintains that the narrative of Acts 15:41; 16:6 is intelligible only if Phrygian and Galatic regions are part of Phrygia, because North Galatia was not accessible from the road leading from Cilician Gates through Lystra. Acts 18:23 is relevant to those who support the South Galatian Hypothesis because of Paul's hasty visit to Palestine where he went to strengthen the brethren. This could have been in AD 52.<sup>76</sup> F. F. Bruce insists that "the reference to Paul's 'strengthening all the disciples' indicates that he was not pioneering but retracing his former footsteps."<sup>77</sup> It is good to understand Acts 18:23 "in the sense of Paul's passing once more through Derbe, Lystra, Iconium and Pisidian Antioch."<sup>78</sup> Furthermore, Frank J. Matera argues "that 'Galatians' would have been the only all-embracing term available to Paul by

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<sup>73</sup> Bruce, The Epistle to the Galatians, 8.

<sup>74</sup> Frey, Galaterbrief, in: Paulus. Leben - Umwelt - Werk - Briefe, 244.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid, 244.

<sup>76</sup> Cf. Murphy-O'Connor, Paul, 185: "The most probable date of the letter is the spring of AD 53".

<sup>77</sup> Bruce, The Epistle to the Galatians, 13.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid, 13.

which to address the inhabitants of a Province that included such diverse populations as the inhabitants of Antioch in Pisidia, and the Lycaonian cities of Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe.”<sup>79</sup>

The subsidiary lines through which the gospel was spread among the Galatians are divided into two. (a) The land route which goes from Philadelphia to Troas, and across to Philippi and the Egnatian Way. (b) The other road which leads to the north from the Cilician Gates by Tyana and Cappadocian Caesarea to Amisos on the Black Sea. These “are in fact the principal lines of penetration from the Cilician Gates into the peninsula, and none of them led through ethnic Galatia.”<sup>80</sup> Under the Roman Empire, the southern side of the Anatolian plateau was more important than the northern part of the plateau. The development of the northern side did not take place until Diocletian transferred the centre of imperial administration to Nicomedeia in AD 292. The evidence of the South Galatian Hypothesis is based on “the facts of historical geography, coupled with interpretation of Paul’s policy as one of concentration on the main roads and centres of communication in the Roman provinces,” and on the fact that “the main line along which Christianity advanced in Asia Minor was the road from Syria through the Cilician Gates to Iconium and Ephesus, and so across the Aegean.”<sup>81</sup> Therefore, the South Galatian Hypothesis seems more plausible and in agreement with the historical geography of Asia Minor.<sup>82</sup> The weight of the evidences seems to favour the South Galatian Hypothesis. If the letter to the Galatians is addressed to the churches of Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe, then there are also important historical, geographical, literary and epigraphic data which can provide material for the better understanding of Paul’s letter to the Galatians.<sup>83</sup>

However, Frank J. Matera maintains that it is hard to arrive at a consensus about the identity of the Galatians and as such it is also hard to arrive at the exact dating of the letter. This because of the limited amount of data.<sup>84</sup> He criticizes both the North and South Galatian schools of thought. “It should be noted that there is a widespread perception that those who espouse the South Galatian Hypothesis are conservative scholars whose real purpose is to defend the historical veracity of Luke’s account. Conversely, those who favour the North Galatian Hypothesis are often perceived as liberal scholars,” who are “essentially skeptical

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<sup>79</sup> Matera, *Galatians*, 21.

<sup>80</sup> Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 9.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid*, 9.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid*, 9.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid*, 18.

<sup>84</sup> Cf. Matera, *Galatians*, 20.

about the information found in Acts ... The South Galatian Hypothesis does not require one to be a 'true believer' in the historical reliability of Acts any more than the North Galatian Hypothesis demands that one be skeptical about Luke's account."<sup>85</sup> According to James D. G. Dunn, the disagreement seems not to worth all the troubles. To be able to date the composition of an ancient document within a period of six years satisfies most historians' requirement. And since in either case the letter comes from a matured man (*πρεσβύτερος*, Phlm 9), who could have been in his forties, a man already well experienced in his life's vocation and with an already well-developed theology, it hardly seems worthwhile to pursue the issue further.<sup>86</sup> The conclusion of F. F. Bruce is a balanced one. "The fact that so many competent scholars can be cited in support of either position suggests that the evidence for neither is absolutely conclusive."<sup>87</sup> However, the South Galatian Hypothesis seems to be favoured. *"Ingesamt scheint in der Forschung die Tendenz zugunsten einer Lokalisierung der Adressaten in den Missionsgebieten an der kleinasiatischen Südküste zu wachsen."*<sup>88</sup> This work, therefore, follows the majority view that the letter was addressed to the Christians of South Galatia.

## 1.5 Why Was the Letter Written?

What caused Paul to write this letter? Who were those troubling the Galatians and why?

### 1.5.1 The Main Issues at Stake

The pragmatism of the letter is simple. Michele Murray says that "something was rotten in the province of Galatia."<sup>89</sup> Paul must have gone away from Galatia when the issues started. He writes the letter in response to what he perceives as an urgent crisis among the Galatians. Some Jewish Christians have come after Paul had gone away from Galatia and were urging the new converts to be circumcised (Gal 5:2-12; 6:12-13) in keeping with the injunctions of Gen 17:9-14. Paul condemns not only the new teaching but curses the teachers (Gal 1:6-9). The trust between Paul and the Galatians was shaken because of the teachings of the false brother (2:4).<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid, 22.

<sup>86</sup> Dunn, *The Theology of Paul's Letter to the Galatians*, 12.

<sup>87</sup> Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 18.

<sup>88</sup> Frey, *Galaterbrief*, in: *Paulus. Leben - Umwelt - Werk - Briefe*, 245.

<sup>89</sup> Murray, *Playing a Jewish Game*, 29.

<sup>90</sup> Cf. Eckey, *Der Galaterbrief*, 10.

It could also be that the Judaizers criticized Paul's apostolic authority (Gal 1:1), the gospel he preached (Gal 1:6-12) and its consistency with their own gospel (Gal 5:11).<sup>91</sup> According to Richard W. Hove, "Paul wrote Galatians in response to false teaching (a 'different gospel', 1:6) propagated by a group of 'agitators' (5:12) who desired 'to make a good impression outwardly' (6:12). These opponents and their theology precipitated Paul's letter."<sup>92</sup> The Judaizers were not only preaching a different gospel, they were also undermining the authority and authenticity of the law-free gospel preached by Paul.<sup>93</sup> Jerome Murphy-O'Connor says that when "they arrived in Galatia, the Judaizers had two tasks. First, they had to undermine the authority of Paul. It was not enough to say that they were now taking over. They had to discredit him. Secondly, they had to put across their version of Christianity with clarity and power. They could not simply say that Paul was wrong. They had to propose a viable alternative."<sup>94</sup> J. Louis Martyn postulates what the "false teachings" could have been. "They centered their message in the covenantal, sinaitic law, identifying it as the venerable and permanent word of God, confirmed to eternity by God's Messiah/Christ. Telling the Galatians that, apart from this divinely ordained anchor, they were cast adrift on the stormy sea of life, the Teachers offered them a security that appeared to many an absolute Godsend."<sup>95</sup>

For James D. G. Dunn, the main problem was between Jewish and Gentile Christians. He formulates what he calls "the corollary to the problem" with many questions. How could Gentile and Jewish Christians relate with each other within the purpose of God? How should converted Gentiles relate to the God of Israel? How could Gentile converts participate in the blessing God promised to Abraham? Who belongs to Israel of God now that Jesus the Messiah has come and what are the terms of belonging and participating in the activities of the community of believers?<sup>96</sup> Andrew S. Cooper maintains that the main reason for writing the letter was that some Galatians were going astray; they were combining the gospel of faith in Christ with Jewish norms. On account of their corporeal understanding of the promise God made to Abraham (Gen 17:9-14), they started to observe the Sabbath and the rite of circumcision, likewise other legal works that they picked up from the Judaizers. Upset by these

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<sup>91</sup> Cf. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul's Letter to the Galatians*, 7.

<sup>92</sup> Hove, *Equality in Christ?*, 1.

<sup>93</sup> Cf. Matera, *Galatians*, 1.

<sup>94</sup> Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul*, 194-195.

<sup>95</sup> Martyn, *Galatians*, 18.

<sup>96</sup> Cf. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul's Letter to the Galatians*, 9.



things, “Paul writes the letter wanting to correct them, and to summon them back from Judaism in order to keep faith in Christ alone, and to have the hope of salvation from Christ, the hope of his promises.”<sup>97</sup>

Paul is saying that the legalism of the law is obsolete (Gal 5:6; 6:15). He presents the dilemma of the law when he maintains that the law is holy, good and righteous (cf. *καὶ ἡ ἐντολὴ ἁγία καὶ δικαία καὶ ἀγαθή*, Rom 7:12); at the same time the law is a prison yard (*ἐφρουρούμεθα συγκλειόμενοι* Gal 3:23), it increases sin (3:19), and it is the slave-teacher (*παιδαγωγός*, 3:24) leading towards Christ (cf. Rom 10:4). The legal principles of the law are no longer necessary for those who are in Christ. What is needed is only faith. According to Michael Morrison “through faith in our Saviour’s death on our behalf, we are acceptable to God on the basis of faith, and we do not need a physical sign of the covenant that we have in Jesus’ blood. Our relationship with God is based on Jesus, not on the flesh.”<sup>98</sup> The apostle is saying that “God is pleased to dwell in people who aren’t circumcised and who don’t keep the rituals.”<sup>99</sup> Paul dismisses the significance of circumcision. He undermines the agitator’s main argument on the need of the Galatians’ incorporation on the basis of the law and makes being a new creation in Christ (6:15), possessing the Spirit (cf. 1 Cor 12:13) and having faith in Christ, the faith that works miracles (Gal 3:5) to be decisive.<sup>100</sup>

### 1.5.2 Who Informed Paul?

Paul evangelized the Galatian communities. But how did he come to the knowledge of what was happening behind him? According to Jerome Murphy-O’Connor, “it must be kept in mind that Paul was not confronted personally by his opponents. He had no direct knowledge of their accusations. He became aware of what was going on in Galatia only through the reports of his partisans among the Galatians.”<sup>101</sup> Therefore, we do not know precisely how he came to the knowledge of the activities of the Judaizers in Galatia. Unlike the situation in Corinth – “For it has been reported to me by Chloe’s people that there is quarrelling among you, my brethren” (1 Cor 1:11) – there is no such evidence in Galatians. We are sure that there were problems in the Galatian communities (Gal 5:6; 6:15). Paul also refers to those who have

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<sup>97</sup> Cooper, Marius Victorinus’ Commentary on Galatians, 249.

<sup>98</sup> Morrison, Sabbath, Circumcision, and Tithing, 23.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid, 37.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid, 94.

<sup>101</sup> Murphy-O’Connor, Paul, 195.

introduced a different gospel (1:6) as “false brothers” (2:4), “trouble makers,” “those who stir up problems” (cf. *ταράσσοντες* in 1:7; 5:10), “agitators,” “those who turn things upside down,” those who “cause an uproar” (cf. *ἀναστατοῦντες* in 5:12). However, even though we are sure of the crisis in Galatia, we can only speculate about Paul’s knowledge of what was happening there. It may be that some of the Christians reported the case to him. It may be that the community sent a delegation to him. All these are probabilities, but we are unfortunate in the sense that we do not have the other side of the discussion. John M. G. Barclay describes the situation well. “Here is Paul at his most polemical, thoroughly involved in extensive argument against opponents ... It is not just a question of trying to piece together what is being said at the other end of the telephone, but of listening in to one side of a dialogue.”<sup>102</sup> But in all, Paul seems to have been informed by those who felt that the Judaizers were contradicting what he had taught them.

It is unfortunate, says Jerome Murphy-O’Connor, that the Judaizers “did not leave the notes of their speeches, which means that their teaching has to be reconstructed from Paul’s reaction ...”<sup>103</sup> J. Louis Martyn tries to imagine what the report to Paul would have been like. The informants could have said that “you left us with a lawless gospel, so deficient for the strains and stresses of everyday life as to be worse than none.”<sup>104</sup> Paul, therefore, writes a letter in response to what was made known to him by certain informants, who may never be known to us. Unlike Paul’s direct confrontation with Peter in Antioch (Gal 2:11-21), his letter as a whole is a reaction to what was happening in his absence. That he was informed, that he reacted to the information he received, etc. are realities attested by the letter but the question of who informed Paul remains unanswered. Jörg Frey avers this. *“Die Kommunikationssituation lässt sich nur aus dem Brief erheben. Ihre Rekonstruktion setzt voraus, dass Paulus über die Situation zutreffend informiert war, sie steht unter dem Vorbehalt, dass seine polemische Argumentation die Position der Gegner kaum unverzerrt wiedergibt. Es liegt ein 'Dreiecksverhältnis' vor: Paulus schreibt an Gemeinden, die von anderen Missionaren beeinflusst werden und sich deren Botschaft geöffnet haben (1,6-9; 4,9.17.21; 5,4; 6,12f). Mit diesen argumentiert Paulus nur indirekt, mit ihnen kennt er keine Gemeinschaft, auf sie ist vielmehr das 'Anathema', der eschatologische Fluch 1,9, gemünzt.”*<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Barclay, *Mirror-Reading a Polemical Letter*, 74.

<sup>103</sup> Murphy-O’Connor, *Paul*, 195.

<sup>104</sup> Martyn, *Galatians*, 19.

<sup>105</sup> Frey, *Galaterbrief*, in: *Paulus. Leben - Umwelt - Werk - Briefe*, 247-248.

### 1.5.3 The Place of Writing

Where was Paul when his followers brought the “sad news” of the missionary activities of agitators to him? Was he in Ephesus or Macedonia or Corinth? J. Louis Martyn answers this question. “We do not know precisely where Paul was when he received such bad news. We can assume only that he was in Macedonia or Achaia, having recently come there from Galatia, determined to commence his labors in the area surrounding the Aegean Sea. Fully occupied with his work in this new region, Paul could not bring himself to travel back to Galatia (4:20). He therefore composed the highly emotional letter (3:1), sending it by a trusted messenger – probably one of those who had brought the bad news to him – with instructions to assemble the Galatian churches one by one, in order to read the letter to them in the context of a service or worship (1:5; 6:18).”<sup>106</sup>

### 1.6 Who are the Agitators?

Are they Jewish Christians or Gentile Christians or both? Scholars answer this question differently. Frank J. Matera says that they are Jewish Christians. It appears that the agitators were Jewish Christians from Jerusalem who espoused circumcision and law observance. “There is a general consensus that the agitators were Jewish Christians from Judea who advocated circumcision and law observance. But there is no consensus about their relationship to the leadership of the Jerusalem church, their view of Paul, and the precise motives for their mission.”<sup>107</sup> Martin Stowasser holds a still more definite position. *“Als Gegner sind am ehesten Leute aus dem Jakobuskreis anzunehmen, also wahrscheinlich Mitglieder der Jerusalemer Gemeinde, die in den Gemeinden Galatiens eine Art Nachmissionierung gehalten haben.”*<sup>108</sup> But Jörg Frey does not share this view. *“Die Gegner waren sicher hellenistische (d.h. Griechisch sprechende) Judenchristen (oder beschnittene, d.h. Proselyten gewordene ehemalige Heidenchristen), nicht einfach Juden, sonst hätten sie die Gemeinden kaum beeindrucken können. Sie sahen keine Spannung, sondern einen notwendigen Zusammenhang zwischen dem Glauben an Jesus und der Verpflichtung auf Beschneidung und Gesetz (vgl. eine ähnliche Position in Mt 5,17ff.).”*<sup>109</sup> Michele Murray,

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<sup>106</sup> Ibid, 19.

<sup>107</sup> Matera, Galatians, 5.

<sup>108</sup> Stowasser, Konflikte und Konfliktlösungen nach Gal 1-2, 56.

<sup>109</sup> Frey, Galaterbrief, in: Paulus. Leben - Umwelt - Werk - Briefe, 248.

however, argues that the term Judaizers which is derived from the verb *ιουδαΐζειν* (Gal 2:4) has been incorrectly translated by scholars who refer to the trouble makers as Jewish Christians actively engaged in persuading non-Jews in Galatian churches to observe the law.<sup>110</sup> The agitators were not Jewish Christians, she says, rather they were Gentile Christians who “were ‘playing Jewish game’ by living like Jews and adhering to certain Jewish practices and dangerously blurring the boundaries between Christianity and Judaism.”<sup>111</sup> Referring to a later historical episode she asks: “Did the harsh reaction of Domitian toward Flavius Clemens and Domitilla stem from his fear that attraction to Judaism would spread if these two prominent Judaizers remained in Rome?” Her response is that “the adoption of various Jewish practices occurred naturally through social contact with neighbours rather than through organized pursuit of converts by Jews.”<sup>112</sup> She thinks that the opponents of Paul are circumcised Gentile Christians. “Among Paul’s main opponents in Galatia, then, are circumcised Gentile Christians who are adding to their numbers new members from the Galatian churches by persuading them to submit to circumcision ... Ultimately, of course, ‘the letter is not addressed to the troublemakers at all but to the Gentile Galatians’ who were Judaizing.”<sup>113</sup>

However, the churches in Galatia were primarily made up of Gentile converts, although there were also Jewish believers mingling among them (cf. 3:28), but the agitators were attacking Paul’s apostolic teachings and his authority (cf. 1:1). Those criticizing Paul’s theology of grace and the law-free gospel were most likely Jewish Christian missionaries with strong ties to Palestinian Christianity. They preached the necessity of circumcision for salvation (Gen 17:9-14), they argued vehemently from the Old Testament Scripture and the history of God’s covenant with Israel (Deut 5:2; cf. 7:6).<sup>114</sup> It was a quarrel over what Gentiles must do in order to become members of the Jewish Christian communities (5:2-4) and as such it was the Jewish Christians’ fight. The competing theological position was a Jewish theology of works of the law and its legalism (Gal 3:1-3). The Saviour they proclaimed was Jewish.<sup>115</sup> Therefore, they were Jewish Christians who came after Paul’s evangelization of the Galatian communities and were trying to reinforce the law of circumcision on the Gentile Christians. They expected the

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<sup>110</sup> Murray, *Playing a Jewish Game*, 33.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid*, 2.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid*, 26.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid*, 36.

<sup>114</sup> Cf. George, *Galatians*, 272.

<sup>115</sup> Cf. Wiley, *Paul and the Gentile Women*, 11.

Galatians to become Jewish proselytes (2:14) and to observe the law as “the hallmark of the people of God.”<sup>116</sup>

Furthermore, the conflict in Galatian communities was presumably not a battle between two religions – Christianity and Judaism or *adversus Judaeos*.<sup>117</sup> The opponents of Paul “are Jews and/or Jewish Christians with a strict, ritualist attitude towards the *cultus* and ... ‘those of circumcision’ or the circumcision party is an equivalent designation of the same group.”<sup>118</sup> Paul’s letter to the Galatians and the messianic movement in which he is engaged, the winning of Gentile believers, and the conflict with other disciples of Jesus (cf. 2:1-10) stood fully within the diversity of the first-century Jewish way of life.

The groups to whom Paul wrote were exclusively Gentiles. Hence, his question: “Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?” (3:3). Paul did not refer to the Galatians as such who were originally circumcised.<sup>119</sup> The Judaizers were Jewish Christians, who wanted the Galatians to observe at least some parts of the law, “including its calendrical requirements,” and “their arguments were attractive and persuasive to many Galatians.”<sup>120</sup>

## 1.7 Paul, the Apostle (1:1)

Paul’s Jewish training, way of life and the instructions coming from the law (cf. Rom 3:19, 21; 7:12) are reliable starting points of understanding him. It is hard to understand him without keeping in mind that he is speaking to us as “a called and converted” Paul (Gal 1:15-16; cf. Acts 9).<sup>121</sup> His arguments are based on his personal experiences and his previous way of life as a diaspora Jew who met Christ (cf. 1 Cor 2:2). Miroslav Kocûr opines that Paul’s childhood experiences provide a reliable basis for our conviction that Pauline evangelical works and ethics are “neither fanatic partisan-like, nor arbitrary life” situation,<sup>122</sup> but a new way of life (Gal 6:15; 2 Cor 5:17) found and lived in Christ (Gal 2:19-20). Paul uses what he is (“a slave of Christ”, Rom 1:1; “an apostle appointed not by human beings nor through any human being but by Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised him from the dead,” Gal 1:1)

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid, 88.

<sup>117</sup> Cf. Wiley, Paul and the Gentile Women, 20-33.

<sup>118</sup> Ellis, Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Early Christianity, XV.

<sup>119</sup> Wiley, Paul and the Gentile Women, 72.

<sup>120</sup> Barclay, Mirror-Reading a Polemic Letter, 88.

<sup>121</sup> Cf. Ibid, 71: “In Paul’s case conversion and call to ministry are inseparable.”

<sup>122</sup> Cf. Kocûr, National and Religious Identity, 87.

to proclaim the gospel (1:6) to his brothers and sisters (3:15). Paul is entrusted with the task of preaching the gospel to the uncircumcised just as Peter is to the circumcised (Gal 2:8; cf. Rom 4:9-12). In practice, however, he expects the Christian Jews to overlook the rituals of the law (Gal 2:16; 6:15; Rom 3:20, 28) whenever their observances interfere with their harmonious relationship with the Gentiles.<sup>123</sup> Christ caused Paul to shift his allegiance from “the works of the law” (Gal 3:2, 5) and its ritual practices that generate marginalization and separation between the Jews and the Gentiles to a more Christ-like and universal approach (3:13-14, 28; cf. Jn 6:37), which brings new motivation into the lives of all those who are “one in Christ” (Gal 3:28d). He wants to put an end to the exclusivism that comes from the circumcised group, by rejecting the assumption that ethnic origin and identity marks are factors that determine the reception of God’s grace and its expression within a believing community (cf. 1 Cor 7:19). To be “in Christ”, a Gentile must neither become like a Jew nor vice versa (cf. Gal 2:14; Rom 3:27-31), and to be a follower of Christ one only needs faith that is attested through the miraculous power of the Spirit (Gal 3:3), a faith that manifests itself through love. “Faith in Christ” incorporates all the Christians into the “one body of Christ” (1 Cor 12:12, 27), while the works of the law exclude all those who are from different ethnic groups (Gen 17:9-14; cf. Col 3:11).

Paul is a diaspora Jew, and it is within this geographical setting that his mission and theological reflections take place. The Paul we see finding and nurturing local churches, writing letters and engaging in controversial discussions is a Jew in the diaspora, who is frequently in touch with diaspora synagogues, where he may have defended his apostolic mission (cf. Gal 2:1-10), and counting other diaspora Jews among his closest friends (e.g. Barnabas, Timothy, Andronicus and Junia, Aquila and Prisca, Apollos, etc.).<sup>124</sup> He must have also made non-Jewish friends like Onesimus, Philemon, the Deacon Phoebe, etc. Whenever arguments break out in the diaspora locations (Gal 2:11-14) Paul defends the position of eating with Gentiles in Gentile terms. He disregards the dietary law as his liberal position with the food from the Gentile temples shows (cf. 1 Cor 8-10). However, it must be said that he has no liberal attitude towards idolatry.<sup>125</sup> Paul’s association with the Gentile communities presents him in a negative light before the Judaizers (cf. Gal 1-2). John M. G. Barclay gives the

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<sup>123</sup> Cf. Räisänen, *Jesus, Paul and Torah*, 123.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid*, 90.

<sup>125</sup> Cf. Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 377: “Now one sees that the eating of idol meat has assumed a broader perspective; it is no longer simply a problem for those whose conscience is ‘weak’ (8:7), but one related to idolatry, which a Christian must shun.”

reason. “Jews in the western diaspora faced in common the necessity to define their identity in a social environment shaped by non-Jewish cultural norms.”<sup>126</sup> But Paul ignores the issue of ethnic identity, “he deracinates a culturally conservative form of Judaism for the sake of his largely Gentile churches.”<sup>127</sup>

However, “to say that Paul is a man of enormous influence, is not to say that everyone regards his influence positively.”<sup>128</sup> As a result of his evangelical activities, his contemporaries (especially the Judaizers) regard him as “a dangerous man,”<sup>129</sup> while others see him as “an apostate” and his teachings as “apostasy”<sup>130</sup> that led to the conflict in Gal 1-2.<sup>131</sup> John D. G. Barclay sees these criticisms as merely blatant judgmental terms “employed by insiders in excluding outsiders” from their circles.<sup>132</sup> According to the Judaizers, what Paul taught the Galatians about Christ is correct, but he leaves out the fact that obedience to the rituals of the law is an integral part of God’s plan for humanity. They demand that the Galatians should be circumcised and made to observe the rituals of the law to the point that they could be regarded as members of the covenant people as it is defined by the covenantal law (Gen 17:9-14).<sup>133</sup> Paul rejects this and curses the trouble makers (Gal 1:8-9), he warns those who mutilate the flesh (cf. Phil 3:2) and declares that Christians are “one in Christ” (Gal 3:28), and that they do not need circumcision (cf. 5:6; 6:15, 1 Cor 7:19). Bruce W. Longenecker calls this Pauline theology of oneness of Christians the “recipe for healthy social relationships, including corporate diversity, solidarity and responsibility.”<sup>134</sup> Paul wants the Galatians to live as one people of God (3:26) by deemphasizing ethnic sentiments, social status, religious bigotry, sex and gender categorizations (3:28).

## 1.8 Summary

There is no agreement among exegetes on the authorship of all the letters formally attributed to Paul. Different schools of thought have their opinions of the writings of Paul. According to C. Marvin Pate, the number of letters attributed to Paul by a scholar, determines

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<sup>126</sup> Barclay, *Paul Among Diaspora Jews: Anomaly or Apostate?*, 90.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid*, 120.

<sup>128</sup> Horrell, *An Introduction to the Study of Paul*, 1.

<sup>129</sup> Cf. *Ibid*, 90.

<sup>130</sup> Cf. Kahl, *Galatians Re-Imaged*, 13.

<sup>131</sup> Cf. Barclay, *Paul Among Diaspora Jews: Anomaly or Apostate?*, 90.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid*, 111.

<sup>133</sup> Cf. Kuula, *The Law, The Covenant and God’s Plan*, 36.

<sup>134</sup> Longenecker, *The Triumph of Abraham’s God*, 4.

his or her understanding of him. “What is the extent of Paul’s writings? That is, how many epistles did the apostle write? The answer one gives to this question significantly determines how one understands Paul. If he indeed wrote thirteen epistles, as the traditional view maintains, then we have a large body of material from which to interpret Paul. However, if he only authored seven epistles, as the pseudonymous view claims, then the collection for grasping the message of the apostle is considerably reduced.”<sup>135</sup> It has become “popular to claim Pauline authorship for no more than seven epistles ... Galatians, 1 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Romans, Philippians, and Philemon. The remaining letters purporting to be by Paul were classified as deuterio- (secondarily) Pauline, written by a later, close associate of the apostle (Colossians, Ephesians, 2 Thessalonians) and pseudo- (false) Pauline, composed by a later individual who, though not having contact with Paul, admired his theology (the pastoral Epistles). Five basic criteria supposedly supported this new arrangement of the material: vocabulary, style of writing, theology, history, and the practice of pseudonymity.”<sup>136</sup> Here, we are principally concerned with his letter to the Galatians. When he wrote it, where he was when he did that, who the Galatians were and where they lived have remained open-ended questions. But one thing is certain: Paul is the author of the letter to the Galatians.<sup>137</sup>

The agitators, however, are most probably Jewish Christians, who wanted the Gentiles to observe at least some of the legal principles of the law. Paul rejected this claim because he welcomed the Gentile converts without the laid down norms of proselytism. The Jewish Christian agitators tried to reinstate the covenantal law because of its importance to the Jewish nation (Gen 17:9-14). This results in a conflict between the impact of the Jesus event as represented by Paul’s gospel and the ethnic law (Gal 3:23-29). The resultant conflict raises the question of the universalism of the Jesus event. What takes the upper hand: The rituals of the law or the Jesus event (cf. Gal 3:13-14; 5:6; 6:15)?<sup>138</sup>

The letter is clearly polemical. The Judaizers or agitators are only mentioned in (2:4). It seems that Paul never wants to give them undue prominence in the letter by stating what they taught the Galatians, rather, he negates them and their teaching by calling them “false brothers.” In comparison to the false teachers, the Galatians are the real brothers and sisters of Paul (cf. *ἀδελφοί*, 3:15 and 18).

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<sup>135</sup> Pate, *The End of the Age Has Come*, 34-35.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid*, 36. Cf. Bruce, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, XXI.

<sup>137</sup> Cf. George, *Galatians*, 22.

<sup>138</sup> Cf. Badiou, *St. Paul. The Foundation of Universalism*, 57-60.



The heart of the matter is Paul's persistence that his apostleship and the gospel that he preaches are for Gentiles and Jews as well (Gal 3:26-29; Rom 1:16; 3:29). What should be the role of the law in God's promise to Abraham? Is the gospel only for one nation or for all nations (Gal 3:13, 28)? These are the questions Paul deals with in Gal 3.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> Cf. Barclay, *Obeying the Truth*, 73.

## Chapter Two: Context, Text, Structure and Content of Gal 3:1-29

### 2.1 Context

The remote context of our work begins in Gal 2:15 and ends in 5:1. The conflict at Antioch (2:11-14) leads Paul to assert that all Christians are justified by faith in Christ and not by the legal works of the law (2:16-18), and that God grants his gift of the Spirit to the people of faith (3:2-5). The Galatians have received the Spirit without the works of the law, which shows the superiority of faith in Christ over the legalism of the law, confirms that Christ has redeemed all from the curse of the law (3:13-14). By preaching a different gospel (1:6-7), the false brothers want to attract the Galatians again to the legal ways of life. Paul appeals to the Galatians as his dear brothers and sisters (3:15) who are led astray by the false brothers (2:4); who wish to swell up the number of their personal followers (cf. 4:17). But the Galatians do not need to return to the slavery of the law because faith has come (3:23-25).<sup>140</sup>

Although a child is an heir of inheritance, he or she remains like a slave because of the supervisions of his guardians and trustees (4:1-2). The Galatians were once like children under the elemental spirits of this world (4:9). But at the fullness of time, God sent his son, born of a woman, born under the law to redeem those under the law (4:4). The Galatians thus have become adopted children of God and can now call God “Abba Father” (4:6). Hence, they are not to go back to the observances of days, months, seasons and years (4:8-10).

Paul recalls the Galatians’ generosity by mentioning the help he received from them. They received him like an angel of God and would have plucked out their eyes and given them to him if that were possible (4:12-14). He assures them of their freedom in Christ and illustrates this with the example of the two sons of Abraham: One from a slave woman (Hagar) and the other from a free woman (Sarah) (4:21-23). This analogy signifies God’s different covenants with his people, one on Mount Sinai and the other in Jerusalem above (4:24-26). The Galatians belong to the children not of the slave woman but of the free woman (4:28-31). Therefore, they should not submit to the yoke of law, rather they are to stand firm, for Christ has set all free from the law (5:1).

The immediate context of our analysis comprises Gal 3:1-29. The pivot of Paul’s entire argument in Gal 3 is his understanding of the universal role of the cross of Christ (cf. Gal 3:13). “The foundation of everything Paul teaches is the idea that we are redeemed because Christ

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<sup>140</sup> Cf. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 135.

died and rose again.”<sup>141</sup> This redemptive work of Christ is God’s gift to both Jews and Gentiles on equal terms. Now that Christ has come (v 25), the law has lost its grip on all the children of God (v 26).<sup>142</sup>

In Christ there are neither Jews nor Gentiles, there are neither freed nor slaves, there is neither male and female, “for you all are one in Christ Jesus” (v 28). Paul adds this ringing conclusion in v 28 as an argument against the claim that male Gentile Christians should be circumcised. Paul maintains that ethnic marks and social statuses are no longer the determinants of Christian initiation because in baptism “you all have clothed yourself with Christ” (v 27). Apparently, this has a double implication: Christians now have, metaphorically, a uniform appearance (clothed with Christ) and they may claim the inheritance of the one they now resemble; nothing more is necessary to inherit God’s promised blessing to Abraham and his descendants forever (v 29).<sup>143</sup>

## 2.2 The Greek Text, Variants and Translation

### 2.2.1 The Greek Text

The Greek text of Gal 3:1-29 is taken from Nestle-Aland’s *Novum Testamentum Graece*, twenty eighth edition.<sup>144</sup> The text is arranged in correspondence to the structure which will be used in the following analysis.<sup>145</sup>

1 Ὡς ἀνόητοι Γαλάται, τίς ὑμᾶς ἐβάσκανεν, οἷς κατ’ ὀφθαλμοὺς Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς προεγράφη ἐσταυρωμένος; 2 τοῦτο μόνον θέλω μαθεῖν ἀφ’ ὑμῶν· ἐξ ἔργων νόμου τὸ πνεῦμα ἐλάβετε ἢ ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως; 3 οὕτως ἀνόητοι ἐστε, ἐναρξάμενοι πνεύματι νῦν σαρκὶ ἐπιτελεῖσθε; 4 τοσαῦτα ἐπάθετε εἰκῇ; εἴ γε καὶ εἰκῇ. 5 ὁ οὖν ἐπιχορηγῶν ὑμῖν τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ ἐνεργῶν δυνάμεις ἐν ὑμῖν ἐξ ἔργων νόμου ἢ ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως; 6 Καθὼς Ἀβραὰμ ἐπίστευσεν τῷ θεῷ, καὶ ἐλογίσθη αὐτῷ εἰς δικαιοσύνην.

7 γινώσκετε ἄρα ὅτι οἱ ἐκ πίστεως, οὗτοι υἱοὶ εἰσὶν Ἀβραάμ. 8 προῖδοῦσα δὲ ἡ γραφὴ ὅτι ἐκ πίστεως δικαιοὶ τὰ ἔθνη ὁ θεὸς προευγγελίσαστο τῷ Ἀβραάμ ὅτι ἐνευλογηθήσονται ἐν σοὶ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη· 9 ὥστε οἱ ἐκ πίστεως εὐλογοῦνται σὺν τῷ πιστῷ Ἀβραάμ.

10 Ὅσοι γὰρ ἐξ ἔργων νόμου εἰσὶν, ὑπὸ κατάραν εἰσὶν· γέγραπται γὰρ ὅτι ἐπικατάρατος πᾶς ὃς οὐκ ἐμμένει πᾶσιν τοῖς γεγραμμένοις ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τοῦ νόμου τοῦ ποιῆσαι αὐτά. 11 ὅτι δὲ ἐν νόμῳ οὐδεὶς δικαιούται παρὰ τῷ θεῷ δῆλον, ὅτι ὁ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται· 12 ὁ δὲ νόμος οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ πίστεως, ἀλλ’ ὁ ποιήσας αὐτὰ ζήσεται ἐν αὐτοῖς. 13 Χριστὸς ἡμᾶς ἐξηγόρασεν ἐκ τῆς κατάραι τοῦ νόμου γενόμενος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν κατάρα, ὅτι γέγραπται

<sup>141</sup> The New Jerusalem Bible, 1927.

<sup>142</sup> Cf. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 137: “The *ἔργα νόμου* are the actions prescribed by the law. They are not deprecated in themselves, for the law of God is ‘holy and just and good’ Rom 7:12.”

<sup>143</sup> Cf. Hogan, “No Longer Male and Female”, 1.

<sup>144</sup> Cf. Nestle-Aland, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 582-584.

<sup>145</sup> Cf. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 57.

ἐπικατάρατος πᾶς ὁ κρεμᾶμενος ἐπὶ ξύλου, 14 ἵνα εἰς τὰ ἔθνη ἡ εὐλογία τοῦ Ἀβραὰμ γένηται ἐν Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ, ἵνα τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν τοῦ πνεύματος λάβωμεν διὰ τῆς πίστεως.

15 Ἀδελφοί, κατὰ ἄνθρωπον λέγω· ὅμως ἀνθρώπου κεκυρωμένην διαθήκην οὐδεὶς ἀθετεῖ ἢ ἐπιδιατάσσεται. 16 τῷ δὲ Ἀβραὰμ ἐρρέθησαν αἱ ἐπαγγελίαι καὶ τῷ σπέρματι αὐτοῦ. οὐ λέγει· καὶ τοῖς σπέρμασιν, ὡς ἐπὶ πολλῶν ἀλλ' ὡς ἐφ' ἑνός· καὶ τῷ σπέρματι σου, ὃς ἐστὶν Χριστός. 17 τοῦτο δὲ λέγω· διαθήκην προκεκυρωμένην ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ μετὰ τετρακόσια καὶ τριάκοντα ἔτη γεγονώς νόμος οὐκ ἀκυροῖ εἰς τὸ καταργῆσαι τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν. 18 εἰ γὰρ ἐκ νόμου ἡ κληρονομία, οὐκέτι ἐξ ἐπαγγελίας· τῷ δὲ Ἀβραὰμ δι' ἐπαγγελίας κεχάρισται ὁ θεός.

19 Τί οὖν ὁ νόμος; τῶν παραβάσεων χάριν προσετέθη, ἄχρις ἃν ἔλθῃ τὸ σπέρμα ᾧ ἐπήγγελται, διαταγείς δι' ἁγγελων ἐν χειρὶ μεσίτου. 20 ὁ δὲ μεσίτης ἑνός οὐκ ἔστιν, ὁ δὲ θεός εἷς ἐστίν. 21 ὁ οὖν νόμος κατὰ τῶν ἐπαγγελιῶν τοῦ θεοῦ; μὴ γένοιτο, εἰ γὰρ ἐδόθη νόμος ὁ δυνάμενος ζωοποιῆσαι, ὥντως ἐν νόμῳ ἂν ἦν ἡ δικαιοσύνη. 22 ἀλλὰ συνέκλεισεν ἡ γραφὴ τὰ πάντα ὑπὸ ἁμαρτίαν, ἵνα ἡ ἐπαγγελία ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ δοθῇ τοῖς πιστεύουσιν.

23 Πρὸ τοῦ δὲ ἐλθεῖν τὴν πίστιν ὑπὸ νόμον ἐφρουρούμεθα συγκλειόμενοι εἰς τὴν μέλλουσαν πίστιν ἀποκαλυφθῆναι, 24 ὥστε ὁ νόμος παιδαγωγὸς ἡμῶν γέγονεν εἰς Χριστόν, ἵνα ἐκ πίστεως δικαιωθῶμεν, 25 ἐλθούσης δὲ τῆς πίστεως οὐκέτι ὑπὸ παιδαγωγόν ἐσμεν.

26 Πάντες γὰρ υἱοὶ θεοῦ ἐστε διὰ τῆς πίστεως ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ· 27 ὅσοι γὰρ εἰς Χριστόν ἐβαπτίσθητε, Χριστόν ἐνεδύσασθε. 28 οὐκ ἔνι Ἰουδαῖος οὐδὲ Ἕλλην, οὐκ ἔνι δοῦλος οὐδὲ ἐλεύθερος, οὐκ ἔνι ἄρσεν καὶ θῆλυ· πάντες γὰρ ὑμεῖς εἷς ἐστε ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. 29 εἰ δὲ ὑμεῖς Χριστοῦ, ἄρα τοῦ Ἀβραὰμ σπέρμα ἐστέ, κατ' ἐπαγγελίαν κληρονόμοι.

## 2.2.2 Text Variants

Our text has both major and minor variants. The minor variants occur in verses 7, 10, 12, 14, 16, 17, 18, 21, 23 and 24. The phrase *εἰσιν υἱοί* ("are sons") in verse 7 is a different reading that is supported by the manuscripts of  $\aleph^2$  A C D F G K and minuscules 0278, 33, 104, 365, 1175, 1739, 1881, as well as  $\mathfrak{M}$  latt and  $\text{Ir}^{\text{lat}}$ , while *εἰσιν οἱ υἱοί* ("are the sons") is witnessed to by L 630 and 1505, but Nestle-Aland's text *υἱοὶ εἰσιν* ("sons are") is best attested by other important manuscripts such as  $\mathfrak{P}^{46}$   $\aleph^*$  B P  $\Psi$  81, 326, 1241 and 2464.

Another example is verse 10a where the preposition *ἐν* ("in") is added in the quotation of Deut 27:26 by  $\aleph^2$  A C D F G K L P  $\mathfrak{M}$  latt, but in Nestle-Aland's text the preposition is omitted which is well witnessed to by  $\mathfrak{P}^{46}$   $\aleph^*$  B  $\Psi$  0278, 6, 33, 81, 104, 365, 630, 1175, 1241, 1739, 1881, 2646.

In verse 12 *ἄνθρωπος* ("man") is added in some manuscripts such as D<sup>2</sup> K L and minuscules 81<sup>c</sup>, 630, 1505, 1881, 2464  $\mathfrak{M}$  ar  $\text{vg}^s$   $\text{sy}^{\text{hmg}}$ . However, *ἄνθρωπος* is omitted by other significant manuscripts like  $\mathfrak{P}^{46}$   $\aleph^{\text{vid}}$  B C D<sup>\*</sup> F G P,  $\Psi$  0278 and minuscules 6, 33, 81<sup>\*</sup>, 104, 365, 629, 1175, 1241, 1739, as well as b r  $\text{vg}$   $\text{sy}^{\text{h}}$  co and Ambst. Here, Nestle-Aland prefers the shorter reading.

In verse 14b, *ἐπαγγελίαν* (“promise”) is replaced by *εὐλογίαν* (“blessing”) in  $\mathfrak{P}^{46}$  D\*.c F G b vg<sup>ms</sup>, which Bruce M. Metzger sees as an influence of the preceding clause. “Influenced by the occurrence of *εὐλογία* in the preceding clause, several witnesses, chiefly Western in character ( $\mathfrak{P}^{46}$  D\* F<sup>gr</sup> G 88\* 489 it<sup>d.g</sup> Marcion Ambrosiaster Ephraem Vigilius), replace *ἐπαγγελίαν* with *εὐλογίαν*.”<sup>146</sup> Our Nestle-Aland’s text, however, is attested to by  $\mathfrak{P}^{99}$   $\aleph$  A B C D<sup>2</sup> K L P  $\Psi$  0278, 33, 81, 104, 365, 630, 1175, 1241, 1505, 1739, 1881, 2464, as well as  $\mathfrak{M}$  lat sy and co.

Variant readings occur also in verse 16. In place of the relative pronoun *ὃς* (“who”), the manuscripts D\* F<sup>c</sup>, 81 1505, Ir<sup>lat</sup> support the neuter pronoun *ὃ* (“which”), while F\* and G read the genitive *οὗ* (“whose”).

In verse 17 *εἰς χριστον* (“in Christ”) is added after the prepositional phrase *ὑπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ* by some manuscripts such as D F G I K L, the minuscules 0176, 0278, 104, 365, 630, 1505, as well as  $\mathfrak{M}$  it sy and Eus Ambst, but our Nestle-Aland’s text is very well witnessed by several manuscripts,  $\mathfrak{P}^{46}$   $\aleph$  A B C P  $\Psi$  6, 33, 81, 1175, 1241, 1739, 1881, 2464 r t vg and co.

In verse 18,  $\mathfrak{P}^{46}$  has the instrumental preposition *δια* (“through”) in place of the more frequently attested genitive preposition *ἐκ* (“from”).

In verse 21, the attribute *τοῦ Θεοῦ* (“of the God”) is supported by most manuscripts  $\aleph$  A C D K L P  $\Psi$  0278, 33, 81, 365,  $\mathfrak{M}$ , lat sy co, etc. while others read *του Χριστου* 104 (“the of Christ”) or simply *Θεου* F G (“of God”). Furthermore, *ὁντως* (“indeed”) is supported by most manuscripts, but F G read *αληθειᾳ* (“in truth”). Although the Nestle-Aland version *ἐκ νόμου ἃν ἦν* is rather well witnessed by A C 81  $\mathfrak{M}$  1241, 2464, other manuscripts read *εκ νομου ην*: D\* 1881 or just *εκ νομου* F G d or *αν εκ νομου ην*: D<sup>1</sup> K L P 0176<sup>vid</sup>, 1505,  $\mathfrak{M}$  or *εκ νομου ην αν*:  $\aleph$   $\Psi$ (\*)<sup>c</sup> 0278, 33, 104, 365, 630 and others or *εν νομω αν ην*: B.

In verse 23, present participle *συνκλειόμενοι* (“being imprisoned”) is supported by most manuscripts:  $\mathfrak{P}^{46}$   $\aleph$  A B D\* F G P  $\Psi$  33, 81, 104, Cl<sup>pt</sup>, etc. whereas the perfect *συγκεκρισμενοι* (“having been imprisoned”) is attested to by C D<sup>1</sup> K L 0176, 0278.

And in verse 24, the most frequent reading with the perfect indicative *γέγονεν* (“has been”) is replaced by the aorist form *ἐγένετο* in  $\mathfrak{P}^{46}$  B and Cl<sup>pt</sup>.

The major text variants occur in verses 1, 19, 26 and 28. In verse 1, *τη αληθεια μη πειθεσθαι*, obviously derived from Gal 5:7 is added by the following manuscripts: C D<sup>2</sup> K L P,

<sup>146</sup> Metzger, A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament, 525.

Ψ 0278 and minuscule 33<sup>c</sup>, 104, 365, 1175, 1241, 1505, 1881, 2464, as well as 𐌆, vg<sup>cl</sup> sy<sup>h</sup>; Hier<sup>mss</sup>,<sup>147</sup> but our Nestle-Aland text is better witnessed to by 𐌆 A B D\* F G 6, 33\*, 81, 630 1739 lat sy<sup>p</sup> co; Hier<sup>mss</sup>. Secondly, εν υμιν (“among you”) is inserted after *προεγράφη* by D F G K L 33<sup>c</sup>, 1505, 2464, and 𐌆 it vg<sup>cl</sup> sy<sup>h</sup>, but shorter text in Nestle-Aland “is decisively supported by 𐌆 A B C Ψ 33\*, 104 234 424<sup>c</sup> 915 1739 it<sup>r</sup> vg syr<sup>p</sup> cop<sup>sa. bo</sup> arm eth all.”<sup>148</sup> The longer and less preferable variant of verse 1 then reads: “Oh foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you to stop obeying the truth after Jesus Christ has been clearly portrayed as crucified among you.”

In verse 19b, the manuscript D\* supports a different reading, which is, νομος; των παραδοσεων χαριν ετεθη “... the law? It was given because of the traditions,” while the reading νομος των πραξεων; ετεθη “... the law of works? It was given ...” is attested to by F G it and Ir<sup>lat</sup> Ambst Spec, and simply νομος των πραξεων “... the law of works” is witnessed to by 𐌆<sup>46</sup>. But our text νόμος; τῶν παραβάσεων χάριν προσετέθη is supported by most other important manuscripts such as 𐌆 A B C D<sup>1</sup> K L P Ψ 0176<sup>vid</sup>, the minuscule 0278, 33, 81, 104, 365, 630, 1175, 1241, 1505, etc.

In verse 26, our Nestle-Aland’s text reads διὰ τῆς πίστεως ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. But the manuscripts 𐌆<sup>46</sup> P 2464 and Cl omit the article τῆς (“the”). Others write the genitive *Χριστου Ἰησου*: 𐌆<sup>46</sup> 6, (<sup>s</sup> 1739, 1881, sy<sup>p</sup>) sa instead of the prepositional dative ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ as preferred by Nestle-Aland.

In verse 28d, most texts – 𐌆<sup>2</sup> B C D K L P Ψ 0278, 81, 104, 365, 630, etc., read εἰς εστε εν Χριστω while others read ἐν εστε εν Χριστῷ (F G 33) or εστε Χριστου (𐌆<sup>46</sup> 𐌆<sup>c</sup> A) or εστε εν Χριστου(as 𐌆\* vg<sup>ms</sup>). The Nestle-Aland text here offers the best attested version.

The sacred text was preserved in different forms and at various places. The insertions, variants, alternative readings and omissions are probably caused by copyists’ typographical errors. According to Bruce M. Metzger, the “inattentive copyists have produced several quite idiosyncratic readings ...”,<sup>149</sup> however, these variants do not affect the core of the text. On the whole, we can rely on the well attested version of the text in Nestle-Aland, 28<sup>th</sup> edition.

<sup>147</sup> Cf. Ibid, 525: “The Textus Receptus, following C D<sup>c</sup> K L P Ψ most minuscules vg<sup>mss</sup> sy<sup>rh</sup> goth eth all, adds τῇ ἀληθείᾳ μὴ πείθεσθαι from 5:7.”

<sup>148</sup> Ibid, 525.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid, 525.

## 2.2.3 Translation

### 2.2.3.1 Clarification of Problematic Expressions

The phrase ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως (v 2, 5) is translated as “hearing the message of faith,”<sup>150</sup> and τοσαῦτα ἐπάθετε εἰκῇ (v 4) is rendered as “did you suffer so much for nothing” or “did you experience so much for nothing.” The expression ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (v 22) is translated as “by faith in Jesus Christ”<sup>151</sup> as opposed to “by the faith of Jesus Christ.”<sup>152</sup> The expression διὰ τῆς πίστεως ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (v 26) is translated as “through the faith in Christ Jesus,” rather than “through the faith of Christ Jesus.” This is different from the “New Perspective on Paul” that emphasizes the *genitivus subjectivus*<sup>153</sup> as against the *genitivus objectivus*. However, there are difficulties in maintaining “the faith of Christ.” Christ is the Messiah and all those who believe in him are justified through “faith in him” (Gal 3:26). It is the faith of Christians “in Christ” that justifies them (cf. 2 Tim 1:12). The righteous will live by this faith and not ἐξ ἔργων νόμου. This is in keeping with διὰ τῆς πίστεως ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ – “through the faith in Christ Jesus” (3:26) which favours the objective genitive, cf. also ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ in v 22. Moises Silva criticizes the Greek fathers for upholding the objective genitive. “A recognition of this phenomenon can have substantive implications. Chrysostom and the other Greek fathers, for instance, evidently assume that πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ is an objective genitive (‘faith in Jesus Christ,’ rather than ‘faith/faithfulness of Jesus Christ’), but the commentaries fail to point out the significance of that fact.”<sup>154</sup> It is not the commentaries that failed to point this out, rather, it is the failure of the commentators who uphold the “faith of Christ” to recognize that faith is always “faith in God.” Grammatically, therefore, it is faith “in Christ.”

The noun ἀδελφοί (v 15) is inclusive, denoting brethren or brothers and sisters, and the noun υἱοί (vv 7, 26) is also inclusive – sons and daughters or children of God cum Abraham. The pronoun τί in v 19 has a double meaning. It can be treated as predicative or adverbial, as Franz Mußner affirms. “*Das Fragepronomen τί kann entweder prädikativ gemeint sein – dann ist nach dem Wesen des Gesetzes gefragt und etwa ἐστὶν zu ergänzen: 'Was ist also das Wesen*

<sup>150</sup> Matera, Galatians, 112.

<sup>151</sup> Bruce, The Epistle to the Galatians, 181.

<sup>152</sup> Hays, The Faith of Jesus Christ, 150.

<sup>153</sup> Cf. Ibid, 156: “The Messiah will live by (his own) faith(fullness), the righteous person will live as a result of the Messiah’s faith(fullness), and the righteous person will live by (his own) faith (in the Messiah).”

<sup>154</sup> Silva, Interpreting Galatians, 30.

*des Gesetzes'? – oder adverbial und dann ist aus der eigenen Antwort des Apostels auf seine Frage das Verbum προσετέθη zu ergänzen: 'Warum wurde also das Gesetz hinzugefügt?'"*<sup>155</sup>

In any case Paul takes τί οὖν ὁ νόμος (v 19) as a question and as a response to the Judaizers' agitations.

### 2.2.3.2 Text Translation

1 O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. 2 I want to know only this from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law or by hearing the message of faith? 3 Are you so foolish? Having begun in Spirit, are you now being made perfect through the flesh? 4 Did you suffer so many things in vain? If indeed it was in vain. 5 Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do this by works of the law or by hearing the message of faith? 6 Just as Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.

7 Know therefore, that those of faith are the sons and daughters of Abraham. 8 The Scripture foreseeing that God will justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham saying: "All the nations will bless themselves in you." 9 So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

10 For as many as are of the works of the law are under a curse. For it is written: "Cursed are those who do not persevere in performing all the things written in the book of the law." 11 It is now evident that no one is justified before God through the law, for "the righteous shall live by faith." 12 However, the law is not of faith; but those who practice them shall live by them. 13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us. For it is written: "Cursed is anyone who is hanged on a tree." 14 In order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, in order that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.

15 Brethren, let me speak in human terms. When a human covenant has been ratified, no one can set it aside or add a codicil to it. 16. Now the promises were made to Abraham and his seed. It does not say "and to your seeds," as if referring to many, but to one, "and to your seed," who is Christ. 17 What I mean is this: The law which came four hundred and thirty years later cannot invalidate the covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise. 18 If the inheritance is from the law, it is not from the promise. But God gave it to Abraham by a promise.

19 Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made, and it was put in place through angels by a mediator. 20 Now the mediator implies more than one party, but God is one. 21 Is the law contrary to God's promises? Certainly not! For if the law is able to impart life, then, righteousness would have been based on the law. 22 But the Scripture imprisoned all under sin, so that the promise of faith in Jesus Christ might come to all those who believe.

23 But before faith came, we were kept in the custody of the law; imprisoned until the coming of faith would be revealed. 24 Therefore, the law became our tutor to lead us to Christ,

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<sup>155</sup> Mußner, Galaterbrief, 244.



in order that we might be justified by faith. 25 Now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian.

26 For you all are sons and daughters of God, through faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For as many as are baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. 28 There are neither Jews nor Greeks, neither slaves nor freed, neither male and female. For you all are one in Christ Jesus. 29 If then you are Christ's, therefore, you are Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise.<sup>156</sup>

## 2.3 Structure

There are many propositions for the structure of Gal 3:1-29.<sup>157</sup> F. F. Bruce presents one of these structures: (a) The primacy of faith over law (3:1-6). (b) The blessing of Abraham (3:7-9). (c) The curse of the law (3:10-14). (d) The priority and permanence of the promise (3:15-18). (e) The purpose of the law (3:19-22). (f) Liberation from the law (3:23-25). (g) Jews and Gentiles are one Christ (3:26-29).<sup>158</sup> There are other proposed structures for Gal 3:1-29. Some examples are represented here. The structure that Tom Wright prefers reads: "Gal 3:1-9 God's promise and Abraham's faith. Gal 3:10-14 Redeemed from the law's curse. Gal 3:15-22 Christ the seed, Christ the Mediator. Gal 3:23-29 The coming of faith."<sup>159</sup> Frank J. Matera also offers a slightly different structure. "The Spirit did not come through legal works (3:1-6). The people of faith are Abraham's descendants (3:7-14). The law does not annul the promise (3:15-20). The law is not opposed to the promise (3:21-25). Those in Christ are Abraham's descendants (3:26-29)."<sup>160</sup> Ronald Y. K. Fung offers a still more detailed structure: "A series of questions (3:1-5). An answer from Scripture (3:6). Faith: The way to blessing (3:7-9). Law: Involving a curse (3:10-12). Christ: Providing the transition (3:13-14). The priority of the promise (3:15-18). The purpose of the law (3:19-22). The coming of faith: Sonship to God (3:23-29)."<sup>161</sup>

"Die Bibel. Einheitsübersetzung,"<sup>162</sup> "Stuttgarter Neues Testament"<sup>163</sup> and Wilhelm Egger offer an entirely different structure: "*Aufruf an die Galater: 3<sup>1-5</sup>. Abrahams Glaube und die Verheißung des Segens: 3<sup>6-18</sup>. Die heilsgeschichtliche Stellung des Gesetzes: 3,<sup>19-25</sup>. Glaube und Gottessohnschaft: 3,<sup>26-4,7</sup>.*"<sup>164</sup>

<sup>156</sup> Cf. The Revised Standard Version, 177-178.

<sup>157</sup> Cf. Silva, Interpreting Galatians, 96: "It is also important to appreciate that no outline for Galatians (or any other book) can claim to be the only valid one. Different analyses serve different purposes and will succeed in highlighting different features found in the text."

<sup>158</sup> Bruce, The Epistle to the Galatians, 57.

<sup>159</sup> Wright, Paul for Everyone: Galatians and Thessalonians, V.

<sup>160</sup> Matera, Galatians, VI.

<sup>161</sup> Fung, The Epistle to the Galatians, VII.

<sup>162</sup> Die Bibel. Altes und Neues Testament. Einheitsübersetzung, 1305-1306.

<sup>163</sup> Merklein, Stuttgarter Neues Testament, 364-366.

<sup>164</sup> Egger, Galaterbrief. Philipperbrief. Philemonbrief, 22-28.

Though Ronald Y. K. Fung proposes a rather detailed structure, the structure of F. F. Bruce is adopted here but not without modifications. The Galatians' faith and the idea of their reception of God's Spirit ends in v 5 and the faith of Abraham begins in v 6 which ends in verses 7-9. But the inclusion of v 6 into the structure of 1-6 offers the opportunity to compare the faith of the Galatians with the faith of Abraham without treating v 6 as a separate substructure or breaking the follow of Paul's thought.<sup>165</sup> Although not all the structures mentioned above might correspond to Paul's conscious strategy in presenting his arguments in Gal 3:1-29, the different proposals help us to "appreciate the flow of Paul's argument,"<sup>166</sup> and assist the reader to focus on the issue in the subsection under consideration.

### 2.3.1 The Primacy of Faith Over Law (3:1-6)

1 Ὡ ἀνόητοι Γαλάται, τίς ὑμᾶς ἐβάσκανεν, οἷς κατ' ὀφθαλμοὺς Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς προεγράφη ἐσταυρωμένος; 2 τοῦτο μόνον θέλω μαθεῖν ἀφ' ὑμῶν· ἐξ ἔργων νόμου τὸ πνεῦμα ἐλάβετε ἢ ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως; 3 οὕτως ἀνόητοι ἐστε, ἐναρξάμενοι πνεύματι νῦν σαρκὶ ἐπιτελεῖσθε; 4 τοσαῦτα ἐπάθετε εἰκῇ; εἶ γε καὶ εἰκῇ. 5 ὁ οὖν ἐπιχορηγῶν ὑμῖν τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ ἐνεργῶν δυνάμεις ἐν ὑμῖν ἐξ ἔργων νόμου ἢ ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως; 6 Καθὼς Ἀβραὰμ ἐπίστευσεν τῷ θεῷ, καὶ ἐλογίσθη αὐτῷ εἰς δικαιοσύνην.

1 O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. 2 I want to know only this from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law or by hearing the message of faith? 3 Are you so foolish? Having begun in Spirit, are you now being made perfect through the flesh? 4 Did you suffer so many things in vain? If indeed it was in vain. 5 Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do this by works of the law or by hearing the message of faith? 6 Just as Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him as righteousness;

Paul begins this subsection with a sudden exclamation, Ὡ ἀνόητοι Γαλάται. The abrupt expression is an exclamation of surprise and worry.<sup>167</sup> With this emotional phrase he introduces a specific theme: The foolishness of the Galatians.<sup>168</sup> The interjection Ὡ shows that Paul has been saying other things so far. He now leaves behind the account of what he told Peter in Antioch (Gal 2:11-21) and turns directly to the Galatians. Richard W. Hays' opinion is that Paul is making "an allusion to the content of the gospel already proclaimed to the Galatians," which shows that Paul is operating "in the mode of recapitulation,' elucidating the

<sup>165</sup> Cf. Fung, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, VII.

<sup>166</sup> Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 58.

<sup>167</sup> Cf. Kocûr, *National and Religious Identity*, 64.

<sup>168</sup> Cf. Holmstrand, *Markers and Meaning in Paul*, 165.

significance of something that is already so familiar to his readers that he need not recount it in details.”<sup>169</sup> Mika Hietanen maintains that “oh foolish Galatians” is a wakeup call. Paul wants to present the main substance of his arguments, which signals that what follows now is very important.<sup>170</sup>

Paul describes the Galatians as “foolish” because they are doing the very opposite of what is expected of them. Franz Mußner affirms that *“die Galater sind ja dabei, gerade das Gegenteil von dem zu tun, was der Apostel auf keinen Fall tun möchte: Sie setzen die Gnadenordnung Gottes außer Geltung; sie suchen die Gerechtigkeit ‘durch das Gesetz’.”*<sup>171</sup> Paul calls them “foolish Galatians” not because they are lacking in knowledge but because of their inability to recognize the superiority of faith in Christ over the works of the law. Franz Mußner again attests to this fact. *“Wenn die Galater von Paulus als ἀνόητοι apostrophiert werden, so wird ihnen damit nicht mangelnde Intelligenz unterstellt, sondern mangelnde Einsicht, nämlich in das Wesen des Evangeliums und damit des Christentums.”*<sup>172</sup> Paul cannot understand what is in the legal works of the law that is so fascinating to the Galatians. The gospel that he preached to them is neither from man (Gal 1:11) nor from the legalism of the law. The Spirit they received is through the hearing of the message of faith (ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως). According to Franz Mußner: *“Sie haben das Pneuma aufgrund der gehorsamen Annahme der Glaubenspredigt empfangen. Das steht fest; das haben sie erfahren. Und an diese Erfahrung appelliert der Apostel. Das setzt aber voraus, daß ihnen der Pneumaempfang in der Tat eine sichere Erfahrung geworden ist.”*<sup>173</sup>

The behaviour of the Galatians is so strange and completely at odds with the liberating message of faith which they previously accepted that it appears as if someone had cast a spell on them. The Galatians seem to have been bewitched by the Judaizers (3:1). Franz Mußner describes well the situation that causes Paul’s question τίς ὑμᾶς ἐβάσκανεν; *Quis vos fascinavit?* *“Was die Galater zum ‘Judaismus’ umschwenken läßt, ist für Paulus mehr als durch menschliche Überredungskunst verursacht; dahinter steht vielmehr geradezu eine dämonische Macht, die der Apostel zwar völlig in dem τίς verhüllt läßt. Mit dem Fragepronomen τίς bringt Paulus seine ganze Verwunderung über die Galater zum Ausdruck.”*<sup>174</sup> Paul rebukes the

<sup>169</sup> Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, 167.

<sup>170</sup> Cf. Hietanen, *Paul’s Argumentation in Galatians*, 84-85.

<sup>171</sup> Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 206.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid*, 206.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid*, 208.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid*, 206.

Galatians with hard words, because of their lack of “spiritual discernment.”<sup>175</sup> For Timothy George, “Paul’s harsh rebuke is an example of tough love. He confronted the Galatians with their folly so that by this means he might win them back to the truth they were in danger of forsaking.”<sup>176</sup>

The verb “has bewitched” (ἐβάσκανεν from βασκαίνω – “to give the evil eye,” “to fascinate,” “to overpower” or “to slander”) “is a *hapax legomenon*, a word found nowhere else in the New Testament.”<sup>177</sup> Franz Mußner maintains that the bewitchment has nothing to do with demonic possession. *“Der gläubige Gehorsam gegen die Kreuzespredigt hat mit 'Behexung' sicher nichts zu tun! Die erste Frage des Apostels bringt also das Unbegreifliche der sich vollziehenden Sinnesänderung der Galater zum Ausdruck.”*<sup>178</sup> Ronald Y. K. Fung however, does not share this opinion. For him the question suggests that Paul regards the Galatians as having unwittingly come under a spell, which is the hypnotical effect of the false teachings of the Judaizers. It could also be that the other missionaries had begrudged the Galatians’ experience of the Spirit which they received without any commitment to the observances of the legal works of the law.<sup>179</sup> Timothy George similarly suggests that “the Galatians had become object of a sinister, supernatural ploy.”<sup>180</sup> The pronoun “who” (τίς) in the question is singular, suggesting that behind the works of the agitators was the devil himself.<sup>181</sup> Paul considers the Galatians to have been robbed of their senses by some uncanny force of darkness.<sup>182</sup> Heinrich Schlier shares the same opinion. *“Die Galater sind in die Hände eines fremden Zauberers gefallen. Hinter der Predigt des Gesetzes durch jene Zerstörer des Evangelium und der Gemeinden steht ein dämonischer Zwang. Die Galater sind nicht menschlich überredet worden, sondern sie sind in einen Bann geschlagen.”*<sup>183</sup> James D. G. Dunn on the other hand does not see the bewitchment (ἐβάσκανεν) from the same perspective. He maintains that the question reinforces Paul’s bewilderment at the Galatians’ apostasy and characterizes the motive of the other missionaries who brought into existence such a disturbing teaching.<sup>184</sup> The foolish behaviour of the Galatians is their denial of the truth of the

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<sup>175</sup> George, Galatians, 206.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid, 206.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid, 207.

<sup>178</sup> Mußner, Galaterbrief, 207.

<sup>179</sup> Cf. Fung, The Epistle to the Galatians, 129.

<sup>180</sup> George, Galatians, 207.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid, 207.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid, 215.

<sup>183</sup> Schlier, Der Brief an die Galater, 119.

<sup>184</sup> Cf. Dunn, The Epistle to the Galatians, 151-152.

gospel. In the light of the gospel preached to them by Paul and the experiences of the Spirit that they had, they should have known better than succumbing to the bewitching influence of the intruders. Paul formulates his question as a sharp antithesis which is designed to break this bewitching spell of the intruders by showing the contradictions between the Galatians' interests in the works of the law and the message of faith. His argument of disassociation and contrast between the works of the law on the one hand, the power of the Spirit and the hearing of the message of faith on the other hand is meant to force the Galatians to make a choice. They are not free to choose both possibilities. Either they continue with the spiritual manifestations of the power of the risen Lord or they choose to follow the works of the law. It is an either this or that choice.<sup>185</sup>

By ἐξ ἔργων νόμου ἢ ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως, Paul brings in two prepositional phrases, each of which represents an alternative way for the Galatians to interpret their initial reception of the Spirit.<sup>186</sup> For Paul the power of the Spirit has nothing to do with the legalism of the law. Franz Mußner shares this opinion. *"Wie der V 5 zusammen mit der Darlegung von 2,15ff erkennen läßt, ist man für Paulus in der religiösen Existenz bestimmt entweder durch die 'Werke des Gesetzes' oder durch die gehorsame Annahme der Glaubenspredigt."*<sup>187</sup> The gospel as Paul understands it rules out completely the works of the law. The law cannot be the means of getting into right relationship with God. Paul never forgot his encounter with the Lord (Acts 9) which came as a result of his love for the law (cf. Gal 1:13-14). It was only after this encounter that he experienced what F. F. Bruce calls the "astonishing suddenness" of change.<sup>188</sup> The encounter became for him the source of a new beginning. It did for him what the law and its ritual observances could not do.<sup>189</sup> This encounter also caused him to interpret the story of Israel in a Christological perspective rather than through the works of the law.<sup>190</sup> Salvation is not attained through the legal works of the law, rather the legal works of the law mar the relationship between Jewish people and Gentiles. If it were possible for the works of the law to grant anyone salvation, Paul would not have needed the encounter with the risen Lord.<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>185</sup> Cf. Hansen, Abraham in Galatians, 109.

<sup>186</sup> Cf. George, Galatians, 211.

<sup>187</sup> Mußner, Galaterbrief, 209.

<sup>188</sup> Bruce, Paul Apostle of the Heart Set Free, 74.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid, 188.

<sup>190</sup> Cf. Pate, The Reverse of the Curse: Paul, Wisdom, and Law, 283.

<sup>191</sup> Cf. Bruce, The Epistle to the Galatians, 148-149.

The gospel of Christ crucified and risen from the dead rules out completely the works of the law. The cross of Christ with all its involvement is central to Paul's gospel. Paul calls the gospel *ὁ λόγος τοῦ σταυροῦ* ("the word of the cross" 1 Cor 1:18). The only means of getting into a right relationship with God is *ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως* (Gal 3:5). It is scarcely credible that people who once embraced Christ through the gospel preached by Paul should ever turn to the works of the law for salvation.<sup>192</sup> The realization that Jesus is the crucified Messiah turned Paul's "own values completely upside down" (cf. Phil 3:8), so much that he could not understand why the Galatians should not see the same significance in the message of faith preached to them. He believes that whoever does not realize the effect of the gospel of Jesus crucified must have been cast under a spell or simply acts foolishly.<sup>193</sup> Anyone to whom Jesus Christ has been portrayed as crucified should not find it difficult to realize the validity of this truth. Richard W. Hays sees it as a sign of "the Galatians' incorrigible dullness of the mind,"<sup>194</sup> which prevents them from understanding Paul's point.

Ronald Y. K. Fung maintains that if only the Galatians had fixed their eyes on the placard which reads "Jesus is crucified,"<sup>195</sup> they would have escaped the fascination of the false brothers or counteracted the evil spell of the missionaries.<sup>196</sup> Heinrich Schlier rejects the opinion that the cross of Christ has been formally drawn before the eyes of the Galatians. *"Προγράψειν heißt dabei nicht 'vorher' oder 'vormals' schreiben ... Auch nicht, wie oft ausgelegt wird, 'vor Augen malen', sondern eindeutig: 'öffentlich ausschreiben' – 'öffentlich anschlagen' – bezogen auf Reklame, Erlässe, Edikte ... Paulus reflektiert im Zusammenhang also nicht das Anschauliche und Faßliche des Bildes des Gekreuzigten, das den Galatern eindringlich vor Augen steht ... weil es ihnen historisch oder typisch, 'vor Augen gemalt wurde', sondern auf den öffentlichen und sozusagen amtlichen Character seiner apostolischen Verkündigung."*<sup>197</sup>

However, Paul is worried about the Galatians' acceptance of the works of the flesh (Gal 3:3). John M. G. Barclay gives some of the possible reasons why the Galatians should accept the principles of the law as the completion "in the flesh." "It is assumed here that the Christians were being socially ostracized."<sup>198</sup> Paul's departure from Galatia might have given

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<sup>192</sup> Ibid, 148.

<sup>193</sup> Cf. Dunn, The Epistle to the Galatians, 152.

<sup>194</sup> Hays, The Faith of Jesus Christ, 167.

<sup>195</sup> Fung, The Epistle to the Galatians, 129 and George, Galatians, 209: "Christ crucified plastered on a Billboard."

<sup>196</sup> Cf. Dunn, The Epistle to the Galatians, 152.

<sup>197</sup> Schlier, Der Brief an die Galater, 119-120. 119-120.

<sup>198</sup> Barclay, Obeying the Truth, 58.

room for the Judaizers to become the more “significant group” whose approval or disapproval of an opinion soon came to matter more than Paul’s teachings. Now that the Christians had lost their family ties, friends and business associates, it became difficult for them to cope with the new situation and therefore they willingly went back to the Judaizers’ principles of the law. They had abandoned their national and ancestral religious practices; but now, they could not participate fully in the Jewish-Christian worship. Thus, it became more plausible to accept the teaching that made one a full member of the Jewish-Christian community.<sup>199</sup> If the Galatians accepted circumcision they would associate more freely with the Jewish Christians. They would also have better social security. According to John M. G. Barclay, “at least the Jewish religion had a long-established pedigree; it was not a suspicious novelty like the Christian movement. By becoming proselytes the Galatians could hope to identify themselves with the local synagogues and thus hold at least a more understandable and recognizable place in society.”<sup>200</sup> Paul addresses the Galatians as behaving “foolishly” – for attempting to switch over to the works of the law and all its ethical practices as if the gospel of Christ preached to them were of secondary value. Paul again uses the adjective *ἀνόητοι* to emphasize the illogicality of the Galatians’ retrogression in faith.<sup>201</sup>

But why is Paul so perplexed with the situation in Galatia? Why this bewilderment? Having been born a Jew and also educated strictly in the ancestral law of the Jews and under Gamaliel, the great teacher of the law (cf. Acts 5:34; 22:3), the law did not bring salvation to him. Paul confesses that he was perfect in keeping the dictates of the law (cf. Phil 3:6). According to John Reumann, “Phil 3:6 was the starting point for the idea that Paul kept the law, suffered no crisis of conscience, and maintained a ‘robust conscience’,”<sup>202</sup> but the law did not bring to him the salvation he got from knowing Jesus Christ (Phil 3:8). As far as the written requirements of the law were concerned, Paul in his pre-Christian days had kept them punctiliously, but his keeping them all did not add up to what God did for him apart from the principles of the law (cf. 1 Cor 2:2). Because of his past experiences of the law, Paul now rejects the works of the law and sets them against the works of faith (*ἐξ ἔργων νόμου ... ἢ ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως*). However, there is a lacuna between Paul’s experiences of the works of the law and the Galatians’ expectations from the works of the law. James D. G. Dunn gives a good

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<sup>199</sup> Ibid, 58-59.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid, 60.

<sup>201</sup> Cf. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 148.

<sup>202</sup> Reumann, *Philippians*, 487.

description of the different situation. “Galatians had shared Paul’s experience of the Spirit, they had not shared his earlier experience of ‘life within Judaism’.”<sup>203</sup> If they had shared the same experiences, they would have known that there was no need to go back to the works of the law because there was no justification in the rituals of the law (Gal 2:16).

Paul fails also to understand why the Judaizers wanted the Galatians to follow the works of the law. The will of God has not changed. God gives each person the freedom to choose or to reject his will made known in Christ. Whereas God’s will was formerly engraved on two tablets of stone (Ex 31:18), it is now engraved in human hearts (cf. Jer 31:31-34; Heb 10:16). It is not necessary therefore to enforce the works of the law on the Galatians because they have accepted Christ. F. F. Bruce says that “the inward impulsion has accomplished what external compulsion could not do.”<sup>204</sup>

On the other hand, Paul’s rejection of the works of the law would seem like a fantasy to the Judaizers. How can a Jew separate the works of the law from faith? Franz Mußner articulates this well. “*Kein Jude kann sich vorstellen, wie man den Glauben und die Werke des Gesetzes als Gegensätze empfinden könne.*”<sup>205</sup> The reason for the Judaizers’ rejection of Paul’s law-free-gospel was simple. “*Die ‘Werke des Gesetzes’ sind für den Juden die konkrete Verwirklichung des Glaubens! Dies muß man zunächst deutlich sehen, um das Revolutionäre, ‘Unjüdische’ in der Theologie des Apostels Paulus zu erkennen. Bedingt ist diese totale Neubestimmung des Verhältnisses von Gesetz und Glauben durch das Christusereignis und nur durch dieses.*”<sup>206</sup> Paul insists that the works of the law should not be the criteria for the admission of the Gentiles into the Christian communities, he rather stresses the need of hearing the message of faith, ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως.

This phrase ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως allows various interpretations. It can mean: “From hearing with faith,” “from hearing the faith,” “from the message that results in faith,” “from the message of faith.”<sup>207</sup> Ronald Y. K. Fung offers still another differentiation. It all depends “on whether akoês is taken in an active sense (‘hearing’) or a passive sense (‘what is heard’), that is, the gospel message and on whether pisteôs is regarded as active (‘believing,’ ‘faith,’ either subjective or objective genitive) or passive (‘what is believed,’ ‘the message of faith,’

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<sup>203</sup> Dunn, The Epistle to the Galatians, 156.

<sup>204</sup> Bruce, Paul Apostle of the Heart Set Free, 200.

<sup>205</sup> Mußner, Galaterbrief, 218.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid, 218.

<sup>207</sup> Matera, Galatians, 112.



objective genitive).”<sup>208</sup> Frank J. Matera accepts the interpretation as “from the message of faith” because the context suggests that Paul is opposing the legal works of the law and promoting the gospel message of “Christ’s faithfulness.”<sup>209</sup> Richard B. Hays, however, maintains that *ἀκοῆς πίστεως* is best understood as “a designation for the proclamation of the gospel,” which is the instrument through which God gives the Spirit and works miracles. This contrast is understandable because “the syntax of the sentence makes it clearer that the prepositional phrases are intended as modifiers of God’s actions.”<sup>210</sup> God supplies the Spirit and works miracles among the Gentiles through the message of faith. Faith comes from the message of faith and what is heard comes through the preaching of Christ (cf. Rom 10:17). If Paul himself or any other apostle, or even an angel is to preach a different gospel from the message of faith which has proved its saving power to the Gentiles, both the messenger and his counterfeit message should be cursed (Gal 1:8-9).

Paul’s elaboration on “the works of the flesh” certainly refers also to the benefits of the Sabbath and circumcision rituals (Gal 4:10; 5:2). “In v 3 Paul berates the Galatians for their foolishness. Not only have they foolishly fallen under the spell of the agitators; now they are so foolish as to think that having received the Spirit they can be perfected by the flesh, that is, the mark of circumcision.”<sup>211</sup> Paul thus juxtaposes the works of the flesh with the works of the Spirit. Having begun in the Spirit, are the Galatians now longing to get perfect in the flesh? Paul draws a sharp double contrast – begun in the Spirit and being made perfect in the flesh.<sup>212</sup> The Spirit is God’s divine power, his enabling grace (cf. 5:22-25) while the flesh is “weak, self-centered and self-indulgent humanity” (cf. 5:16; 6:12-13).<sup>213</sup> Wilfried Eckey affirms. “*Dem Anfang eines Christenlebens 'im Geist' sollte angesichts des Gegensatzes von 'Fleisch' und 'Geist' auch ein Fortgang 'im Geist' folgen, wie der Apostel in Gal 6,8 schreibt: 'Wer auf sein Fleisch sät, wird vom Fleisch Verderben ernten; doch wer auf den Geist sät, wird vom Geist ewiges Leben ernten'.*”<sup>214</sup> The Galatians received the Spirit without the works of the flesh.

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<sup>208</sup> Fung, The Epistle to the Galatians, 131.

<sup>209</sup> Cf. Matera, Galatians, 112.

<sup>210</sup> Hays, The Faith of Jesus Christ, 130.

<sup>211</sup> Matera, Galatians, 113.

<sup>212</sup> Cf. Bruce, The Epistle to the Galatians, 149: “‘Flesh’ here is not simply the body, in which circumcision is carried out, but human nature in its unregenerate weakness, relying on such inadequate resources as were available before the coming of faith, having no access as yet to the power of the Spirit. In Paul’s experience as well as in his theology, legal works were a feature of life according to the ‘flesh’, not according to the Spirit.”

<sup>213</sup> Dunn, The Epistle to the Galatians, 155.

<sup>214</sup> Eckey, Der Galaterbrief, 186.

“How could they not see that they had been thus fully accepted by God and did not fall short in any degree in their standing before him?”<sup>215</sup>

Paul therefore, asks the Galatians a vital question. “Did you suffer in vain?” And he gives a rhetorical answer, *εἰ γε καὶ εἰκῆ* v 4. Mika Hietanen maintains that this subsection (vv 1-6) contains five “accusatory rhetorical questions,”<sup>216</sup> the aim of which is to provoke interactive discussions among the Galatians. But among the questions that Paul has asked so far, Frank J. Matera regards “have you suffered in vain” as the most difficult one. The reason is because the verb *ἐπάθετε* can mean either “to experience,” “to suffer” or “to endure.” And it also depends on how one interprets *τοσαῦτα* (“so many things”). If *ἐπάθετε* refers to persecution, the translation would be “endured.” Frank J. Matera, however, chooses “experienced” which he says refers to the experience of the Spirit.<sup>217</sup> James D. G. Dunn similarly maintains that Paul had experienced “a deeply inwardly encounter (1.16 – God was ‘pleased to reveal his Son in me’) ... Hence the immediate appeal to his audience’s own experience of receiving the gospel at the beginning of the letter’s central argument (3.1-5; ‘have you experienced so much in vain?’, 3:4).”<sup>218</sup> The purpose of Paul’s appeal to the experiences of the Galatians, then, is to establish his claim that the foundation for those experiences is the hearing of the message of faith.<sup>219</sup>

Paul queries the Galatians about the Spirit that God gave to them and wants to know if it was in vain. If salvation is not the hand work of God from the first day the Galatians heard the message of faith to the last day of their lives, then, “the preaching of the gospel was vanity, the cross of Christ is a farce, and the gift of the Spirit means nothing,”<sup>220</sup> but if salvation is gained through the gift of the Spirit, then, the law and its legal works are not necessary for the salvation of the Galatians. F. F. Bruce opines that the phrase *ἐπάθετε εἰκῆ* is hard to interpret because we do not know for sure if the Galatians suffered any type of persecution. What the Galatians had actually suffered is uncertain. There is no reference to their being positively persecuted for the faith, as the Thessalonians were (1 Thess 2:14; cf. 2 Thess 1:14f.).<sup>221</sup> But

<sup>215</sup> Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 155.

<sup>216</sup> Hietanen, *Paul’s Argumentation in Galatians*, 85.

<sup>217</sup> Cf. Matera, *Galatians*, 113.

<sup>218</sup> Dunn, *The Theology of Paul’s Letter to the Galatians*, 52.

<sup>219</sup> Cf. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, 168.

<sup>220</sup> George, *Galatians*, 214.

<sup>221</sup> Cf. Bruce, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, XXI: “From this letter it appears that the community owed its existence to a missionary visit paid to the city by Paul and two of his colleagues not long before. That visit had been preceded by a visit to Philippi, where the missionaries had been ‘shamefully treated’ (1 Thess 2:2). Their sojourn in

sufferings of any kind endured for the gospel's sake would indeed be pointless if, after all, salvation could be simply attained by law-keeping.<sup>222</sup>

Paul continues (v 5) with his rhetorical questions. The Spirit that the Galatians received, which works wonders among them (*ἐπιχορηγέω*, “to supply,” “to provide,” “to furnish”), where does it come from? Does it come from hearing the message of faith or from the legal works of the law? Does God supply his Spirit and perform miracles through the works of the law? Paul hopes that the Galatians will agree with him that God continually supplies his Spirit and works miracles among them *ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως*, and not *ἐξ ἔργων νόμου*. By performing miracles among the Gentiles God attests to the validity of their conversion and initiation into Christ through baptism (Gal 3:27). The reception of the Spirit in these earliest days of the Christian mission is evidently something that made an impact on the lives of those who received it. The feminine plural noun *δυνάμεις* (“might,” “power,” “marvelous works”) “is used comprehensively of the manifestations of the Spirit’s power.”<sup>223</sup> According to Frank J. Matera, the rhetorical question suggests that “the point of dispute between Paul and Galatians will be settled if the Galatians honestly answer this single question.”<sup>224</sup> Are their experiences of the Spirit derived from the works of the law or from God’s mercifulness?

The presence of the Spirit is a continuous act of God. “The present participles *ἐπιχορηγῶν* and *ἐνεργῶν* probably imply that this divine activity still continues: Paul is not referring to something which the Galatians had witnessed once and for all when they first believed the gospel.”<sup>225</sup> It is something continuous among them and that is why Paul wants to learn only one thing from them (*θέλω μαθεῖν*): Are the miracles worked among them resulting from the works of the law or from hearing the message of faith? According to Franz Mußner, the answer to this question is self-evident. “*Die Antwort der Galater konnte nur sein: Wir haben das Pneuma aufgrund der gehorsamen Annahme der Glaubens-Predigt empfangen, nicht aufgrund gesetzlicher Werke, von denen wir damals ja noch gar nichts wußten. Das können die Galater nicht leugnen.*”<sup>226</sup> The implication of God giving his Spirit to the Gentiles is that the message of salvation is breaking down all national and ethnic barriers (Gal 3:28; cf. Col 3:11; Eph 2:14-15). The light of Christ has shone on the lands of the Gentiles (cf. Isa 9:2;

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Thessalonica had also been attended by trouble, and their converts there had endured some measure of persecution (1 Thess 1:6; 2:14).”

<sup>222</sup> Bruce, *Epistle to the Galatians*, 150.

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid*, 151.

<sup>224</sup> Matera, *Galatians*, 112.

<sup>225</sup> *Ibid*, 151.

<sup>226</sup> Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 208.

Matt 4:14-16). Just like Abraham whom God called from among the Gentiles, God has called the Galatian Christians from among the Gentile nations. The Galatians have come to believe in Christ as Abraham believed God.

The phrase *καθὼς Ἀβραάμ* (v 6) introduces the text of the Scripture and draws attention to Abraham's faith.<sup>227</sup> Paul begins his Abraham's hermeneutics by distancing Abraham from the works of the law (cf. Gen 17:9-14), and justifies his claim that Gentile Christians are the children of Abraham because of their faith in Christ. Accord to Bernard O. Ukwuegbu, rather than Abraham being the model for proselytes who accept circumcision, Paul presents Abraham "as the model of the sinner who receives justification by faith without having done anything whatsoever to earn it."<sup>228</sup> For G. Walter Hansen, "the use of the verb *πιστεύω* is referring to a response of faith in the life of Abraham, the comparative adverbial conjunction *καθὼς* sets up a correspondence between the faith response of the Galatians and Abraham's faith response."<sup>229</sup> Frank J. Matera also sees an important parallel between the situation of Abraham and that of the Galatians. "Kathōs is translated 'in the same way' to indicate that Paul is making a comparison between the situation of the Galatians and that of Abraham."<sup>230</sup> "Just as Abraham was justified by God in whom he believed, so the Galatians received the Spirit from the message of faith." "In both instances the determining factor is the prior act of God. In the case of Abraham it was God's promise, in the case of the Galatians it was the message of the crucified Christ ... And just as righteousness was a free gift from God in whom Abraham believed, so the Spirit was a free gift of God" bestowed on the Galatians because of the message of faith that Paul preached to them.<sup>231</sup> The connection between the two is the act of faith and the gift of God's promise or Spirit, and not the works of the law. In other words, justification by faith, the experience of the Spirit and the reception of the promise made to Abraham are intimately interrelated; so that the Galatians who now possess the promised Spirit are justified without the works of the law.<sup>232</sup> If the experiences of the Galatians correspond to the experiences of the Patriarch, then their experiences conform to the will of God.<sup>233</sup> The will of God is the welcoming of the Gentiles through the law-free gospel.

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<sup>227</sup> Cf. Fung, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 128.

<sup>228</sup> Ukwuegbu, *The Emergence of Christian Identity in Paul's Letter to the Galatians*, 273.

<sup>229</sup> Hansen, *Abraham in Galatians*, 111.

<sup>230</sup> Matera, *Galatians*, 113.

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid*, 116.

<sup>232</sup> Cf. Ukwuegbu, *The Emergence of Christian Identity in Paul's Letter to the Galatians*, 273-274.

<sup>233</sup> Cf. Hansen, *Abraham in Galatians*, 112.

### 2.3.2 The Blessing of Abraham (3:7-9)

7 γινώσκετε ἄρα ὅτι οἱ ἐκ πίστεως, οὗτοι υἱοὶ εἰσιν Ἀβραάμ. 8 προιδοῦσα δὲ ἡ γραφὴ ὅτι ἐκ πίστεως δικαιοῖ τὰ ἔθνη ὁ θεὸς προεὐγγελίσατο τῷ Ἀβραάμ ὅτι ἐνευλογηθήσονται ἐν σοὶ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη· 9 ὥστε οἱ ἐκ πίστεως εὐλογοῦνται σὺν τῷ πιστῷ Ἀβραάμ.

7 Know therefore, that those of faith are the sons and daughters of Abraham. 8 The Scripture foreseeing that God will justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham saying: "All the nations will bless themselves in you." 9 So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

Verse 6 concludes the first subsection of Paul's argument against the promoters of the works of the law and leads into a new subsection on God's promised blessing to Abraham. The two subsections are connected to one another by *καθὼς Ἀβραάμ* – just as Abraham responded in faith and received God's promised blessing, and *ἄρα* – therefore, the Galatians should recognize that, through faith in Christ, they have received God's promised blessing to Abraham because they are the people of faith.<sup>234</sup> Paul cites different scriptural texts and uses them to fortify his universal gospel. In "all the Gentiles will be blessed in you" (V 8) Paul combines Gen 12:3 and 18:18, which contain the crucial term *ethnê*, "nations" and the phrase "all the nations of the earth will be blessed in him." He deliberately leaves out the phrase "of the earth" (found in both Genesis passages), an omission that helps to focus the attention on the specific sense of τὰ ἔθνη ("the nations") as non-Jewish Gentiles.<sup>235</sup> The phrase "all the nations" (Gen 18:18) is inserted in place of "all races," "all tribes" because Paul's primary purpose is to demonstrate that the Scripture witnesses to the inclusion of all nations in the Abrahamic blessing. The inheritance of the promised blessing does not come about through the process of proselytization but on the basis of faith in Christ.<sup>236</sup>

Paul's recognition of the people of faith as the children of Abraham is a new theological insight as Franz Mußner observes. "*Erkennt also, daß die aus Glauben, diese die Söhne Abrahams sind'. Der Apostel bringt mit der Formulierung der Schlußfolgerung ein ganz neues Theologumenon herein, von dem bisher noch keine Rede war.*"<sup>237</sup> The novelty of Paul's inclusive interpretation of the sonship and daughtership of Abraham and God's promise to him is better understood when one looks at the traditional way of interpreting the same text.

<sup>234</sup> Cf. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 153.

<sup>235</sup> Cf. Silva, *Galatians*, in: *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 793.

<sup>236</sup> Cf. Hansen, *Abraham in Galatians*, 115-116.

<sup>237</sup> Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 216.

Jewish tradition praises Abraham for his faithfulness to God's commandments (cf. Gen 26:5; Sir 44:20; 1 Mac 2:52; Jub 21:2; SyrBar 57:12).<sup>238</sup> By following Abraham in the rite of circumcision, Gentiles can enter the existing community of the people of God. But Paul interprets the concept "children of Abraham" without making reference to the law of circumcision. He bypasses the role of the law – certainly to the embarrassment of the Judaizers. Paul's interpretation contradicts the Jewish understanding of the law and its principles. Franz Mußner rightly observes this. *"Ein Jude kann der Logik des Apostels kaum zustimmen."*<sup>239</sup>

Paul wants the Galatians to know (γινώσκειν, "to be aware of," "to perceive," "to understand," "to believe") that people of all nations "who are of faith" have received God's promised blessing to Abraham. Heinrich Schlier shares this opinion. *"Das οὔτοι ist betont und beschränkt die Söhne Abrahams auf diejenigen, die ihre Existenz im Glauben begründen. Dabei richtet sich die Aussage gegen den Anspruch derer, die ἐξ ἔργων νόμου leben."*<sup>240</sup> The criterion for full inclusion into the people of God is now faith in Christ Jesus.<sup>241</sup> Being a son or a daughter of the patriarch depends on the genealogy of faith which goes back to him.<sup>242</sup> Paul's redefinition of what it means to be a son or a daughter of Abraham opens up the possibility for all Christians to become children of Abraham without circumcision. Under this new dispensation one becomes a legitimate child of Abraham not by having a biological relationship with Abraham or by obedience to the law but by faith in Christ.<sup>243</sup> Heinrich Schlier affirms this view. *"Οἱ ἐκ πίστεως hat einen umfassenden Sinn: Es sind die Menschen, die in der πίστις die Grundweise ihres Lebens haben, deren Lebensprinzip die πίστις ist. Es sind die 'Glaubensleute' (Zahn, Lietzmann), denen die Gesetzesleute οἱ ἐκ νόμου (Röm 4<sub>16</sub>) oder die 'Werkleute' (3<sub>14</sub>) gegenüberstehen."*<sup>244</sup> James D. G. Dunn moreover observes that the scope of those who participate in God's promise to Abraham remains deliberately unlimited and that "we should not be in hurry to restrict the scope of 'those of faith'."<sup>245</sup>

In the salvation history postulated by Paul, all the nations occupy an equal status because according to the promise God gave to Abraham, "all the nations of the earth will bless

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<sup>238</sup> Cf. Martyn, Galatians, 343.

<sup>239</sup> Mußner, Galaterbrief, 223.

<sup>240</sup> Schlier, Der Brief an die Galater, 128-129.

<sup>241</sup> Cf. Wisdom, Blessing for the Nations and Curse of the Law, 142.

<sup>242</sup> Cf. Fung, The Epistle to the Galatians, 138.

<sup>243</sup> Cf. Ukwuegbu, The Emergence of Christian Identity in Paul's Letter to the Galatians, 275.

<sup>244</sup> Schlier, Die Brief an die Galater, 128.

<sup>245</sup> Dunn, The Epistle to the Galatians, 166.

themselves in you, because you have obeyed my commands” (Gen 22:18). This has no limitations attached to it as Franz Mußer observes. *“Hinter dem ἐν σοὶ verbirgt sich wahrscheinlich noch eine besondere Idee, der die Exegese der Gegenwart ihr Augenmerk widmet. ‘In’ Abraham sind die Völker schon mitgesegnet worden (vgl. Gen 18,18; 22,17f; Jer 4,1f); ‘in’ ihm sind sie schon in einem universalen Sinn als ‘Stammvater’ des kommenden Heils gesehen, mit dem seine Nachkommenschaft solidarisch durch die Segensverheißung verbunden ist.”*<sup>246</sup> Paul deliberately uses inclusive nouns as Frank J. Matera opines. “Here *ethnê* has been rendered as ‘Gentiles’ because the nations are the Gentiles and the Gentiles are Paul’s primary concern.”<sup>247</sup> James D. G. Dunn maintains that “Paul takes the ‘all the nations’ seriously – Gentiles as well as Jews, not Gentiles distinct from Jews. The promise to Abraham’s seed is incomplete without the Gentiles sharing in the same blessing.”<sup>248</sup> According to F. F. Bruce, “the Greek passive *ἐνευλογηθήσονται* is unambiguous: in (with) Abraham all the nations will be blessed.”<sup>249</sup> The reflexive interpretation of the text means that Abraham has become the proverbial means of divine blessing and prosperity, so that in the days to come man and woman everywhere, wishing to call down the greatest prosperity on themselves, will say, “may I be blessed as Abraham was.”<sup>250</sup>

Paul insists on making a further point. God made the promise to Abraham beforehand (v 8). The main verb of the sentence is *προεευαγγελίσατο* (an aorist of the verb *προεευαγγελίζομαι* meaning “to announce” or “to promise” beforehand). It is modified by the adverbial participle *προῖδοῦσα* (“having foreseen”), which means that God prepared beforehand to justify the nations by faith. Anyone who imposes the principles of the law on the Gentiles attempts to change God’s pre-planned promise to Abraham and thus opposes God’s purpose and his means of fulfilling the promise to Abraham.<sup>251</sup> Moisés Silva therefore, sees the fulfillment as God’s “revelation of a secret kept hidden for long ages.”<sup>252</sup> Frank J. Matera further notes that “Paul in a unique way personifies the Scripture (*hê graphê*) by making it the subject of the verb ‘announced the good news,’ and because the words from the Genesis texts are themselves a direct quotation of what God said to (and about) Abraham,

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<sup>246</sup> Mußner, Galaterbrief, 222.

<sup>247</sup> Matera, Galatians, 118.

<sup>248</sup> Dunn, The Epistle to the Galatians, 165.

<sup>249</sup> Bruce, The Epistle to the Galatians, 156.

<sup>250</sup> Ibid, 156.

<sup>251</sup> Cf. Wisdom, Blessing for the Nations and Curse of the Law, 141-145.

<sup>252</sup> Silva, Galatians, in: Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament, 795.

it is plain that, as far as Paul is concerned, what Scripture says, God says.”<sup>253</sup> The Scripture preached to Abraham the hope of what is to come. God’s promise to Abraham is fulfilled in Christ who is Abraham’s offspring par excellence,<sup>254</sup> and the Galatians belong to Abraham’s offspring par excellence because of their faith in Christ. “Paul identifies that gospel specifically as containing the message that the Gentiles are justified by faith.”<sup>255</sup>

The promise of the Scripture does not end with Abraham or with the Galatians. The promise extends to all those who will come to believe years after the conversion of the Galatians. F. F. Bruce stresses this point. “The written text (*γραφῇ*) of Gn. 12:3 or 18:18 is, of course, centuries later than the lifetime of Abraham. But the scripture embodies and perpetuates the promise, so that the good news which was ‘preached beforehand’ to Abraham is still preached by the Scripture to those who read it or hear it read, especially to those living in the age when the promise has been fulfilled. If the promise was good news for Abraham, it is good news also for the nations (Gentiles) who are to be blessed in (or with) him.”<sup>256</sup> The logical conclusion is that those of faith are blessed with the faith of Abraham.

The opposite of the people of faith are those of the legalism of the law. Indirectly Paul is warning the Galatians of the presence of the Judaizers. The danger of the position of the people of the law is their exclusion of themselves from faith in Christ. By believing that circumcision should be added to the Jesus event, the people of the law appear to doubt that faith in Christ is sufficient for salvation. Paul throws “down the gauntlet, putting us on notice that there are people around who are not of faith and who therefore do not partake of the Abrahamic blessing.”<sup>257</sup> The Galatians are the people of faith because they share in the faith of Abraham (Gal 3:6). They are now like Abraham, just as Abraham was once like them. Paul thus places Abraham “in the same arena as the Gentiles.” Even though Abraham “was the perfect model for the Jewish missionaries,” Paul interprets the story of Abraham to incorporate all Christians. Paul describes the Judaizers as the false brothers (2:4) and insists that the justifying faith of Abraham “had nothing to do with the Torah.”<sup>258</sup> Even though ὥστε (v 9) is a conjunction, it functions here as an inferential particle. The statement in 3:7 which is deduced from God’s acceptance of Abraham on the ground of faith is therefore identical to

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<sup>253</sup> Matera, Galatians, 118.

<sup>254</sup> Cf. Bruce, The Epistle to the Galatians, 154.

<sup>255</sup> Matera, Galatians, 118.

<sup>256</sup> Ibid, 156.

<sup>257</sup> Silva, Galatians, in: Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament, 799.

<sup>258</sup> Ibid, 795.



the statement in 3:9 inferred from God's promise to justify the nations as he justified Abraham (3:8). Becoming "a son of" or "a daughter of" Abraham by faith means the same thing as being blessed with Abraham through faith (3:9).<sup>259</sup> And the phrase "these are sons of Abraham" (v 7) applies to all those who are having the same father, who are coming from the same ancestral root. Descending from the same father denotes a share in a particular quality. Paul insists that the common ground of faith in Jesus Christ and the gospel of his self-giving on the cross are equally applicable to all believers (3:13). The gospel is God's initiative blessing of humanity which calls for human response through faith in Christ.<sup>260</sup>

F. F. Bruce maintains that "the Galatian Christians had apparently been told by the agitators how necessary it was for them to be true sons of Abraham, and therefore to be circumcised, as Abraham was."<sup>261</sup> They should not forget that Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old (Gen 21:4; cf. 17:23). If Abraham is their father in faith and model, then, they should accept circumcision as Abraham did. Paul refutes this teaching. It is not circumcision that makes someone a son or a daughter of God in the same way as Abraham was, but faith in Christ. It was not the works of the law that justified Abraham but his faith in the promise, which God made to him even when he was not circumcised.<sup>262</sup> For those who have been justified by faith in Christ to turn around and seek justification by the works of the law would be a perverse attempt to seek perfection in the flesh after they had begun in the Spirit of the risen Christ (Gal 3:3c). Paul does not only redefine the notion of the people of God, he also relegates the *Torah* to an inferior position. When the legal works of the law are compared to the principles of faith as it is illustrated in the faith of Abraham, the resultant effect is that the works of the law are inferior to faith in Christ. This is because the law is particular while faith is universal. According to Frank J. Matera, "whereas the agitators interpreted the promise made to Abraham in the light of Mosaic law, Paul vigorously argues that the law is subordinated to the promise."<sup>263</sup> Consequently, the people of God are no longer defined based on any ethnic mark of identity, rather, in terms of their universal faith in Christ.<sup>264</sup> William Barclay assists on this issue. "The chosenness does not now consist in membership of any nation or in any external mark upon the body; it consists of a relationship

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<sup>259</sup> Cf. Hong, *The Law in Galatians*, 41.

<sup>260</sup> Cf. Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 152.

<sup>261</sup> Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 155.

<sup>262</sup> Cf. Bruce, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*, 112.

<sup>263</sup> Matera, *Galatians*, 16.

<sup>264</sup> Pate, *The Reverse of the Curse*, 224.

to Jesus Christ. The chosen people are those of every race and nation who have taken Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.”<sup>265</sup> This hermeneutical maneuver on Paul’s part serves to counteract the argument of his opponents who held that Gentiles could only become descendants of Abraham by submitting to the works of the law.<sup>266</sup> Since God promised that all the nations will be blessed through Abraham and since his blessing is in the first instance that of justification by faith, then, those who exercise faith in Christ are justified as Abraham was.<sup>267</sup>

### 2.3.3 The Curse of the Law (3:10-14)

10 Ὅσοι γὰρ ἐξ ἔργων νόμου εἰσὶν, ὑπὸ κατάραν εἰσὶν· γέγραπται γὰρ ὅτι ἐπικατάρατος πᾶς ὃς οὐκ ἐμμένει πᾶσιν τοῖς γεγραμμένοις ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τοῦ νόμου τοῦ ποιῆσαι αὐτά. 11 ὅτι δὲ ἐν νόμῳ οὐδεὶς δικαιοῦται παρὰ τῷ θεῷ δῆλον, ὅτι ὁ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται. 12 ὁ δὲ νόμος οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ πίστεως, ἀλλ’ ὁ ποιήσας αὐτὰ ζήσεται ἐν αὐτοῖς. 13 Χριστὸς ἡμᾶς ἐξηγόρασεν ἐκ τῆς κατάρας τοῦ νόμου γενόμενος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν κατάρα, ὅτι γέγραπται ἐπικατάρατος πᾶς ὁ κρεμᾶμενος ἐπὶ ξύλου, 14 ἵνα εἰς τὰ ἔθνη ἡ εὐλογία τοῦ Ἀβραάμ γένηται ἐν Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ, ἵνα τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν τοῦ πνεύματος λάβωμεν διὰ τῆς πίστεως.

10 For as many as are of the works of the law are under a curse. For it is written: “Cursed are those who do not persevere in performing all the things written in the book of the law.” 11 It is now evident that no one is justified before God through the law, for “the righteous shall live by faith.” 12 However, the law is not of faith; but those who practice them shall live by them. 13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us. For it is written: “Cursed is anyone who is hanged on a tree.” 14 In order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, in order that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.

Verses 10-14 form one tightly-knit unit, and the key to its understanding lies in knowing how the whole unit functions.<sup>268</sup> The arguments therein are supported with scriptural texts. Apart from the conclusion (v 14) the other four verses contain Old Testament citations.<sup>269</sup> In verse 10, Paul quotes from Deut 27:26; he supports verse 11 with Hab 2:4; verse 12 cites Lev 18:5 while verse 13 makes an allusion to Deut 21:23. According to Frank J. Matera, “the last four quotations are related to each other by a series of verbal contacts. Thus *epikataratos* (‘cursed’) occurs in Deut 27:26 and Deut 21:23, and *zêsetai* (‘will live’) in Hab 2:4 and Lev 18:5, allowing Paul to compare texts which share a common word.”<sup>270</sup> The verb *poiein*, “to do”

<sup>265</sup> Barclay, *Many Witnesses, One Lord*, 109.

<sup>266</sup> Cf. Pate, *The Reverse of the Curse*, 224.

<sup>267</sup> Cf. Fung, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 140; Pate, *The Reverse of the Curse*, 217.

<sup>268</sup> Cf. Tarazi, *Galatians*, 121.

<sup>269</sup> Ibid, 123: “V 14 is the conclusion of the discussion, the debate itself being confined to vv.10-13 where it is the curse that is being discussed.”

<sup>270</sup> Matera, *Galatians*, 121.

occurs in Deut 27:26 and Lev 18:5 thereby bringing these texts together as well. On the basis of the verb “to live,” Paul shows that God’s justice operates on the principle of faith (Hab 2:5) while the law is based on doing what is written in it (Lev 18:5). The “doing” in Lev 18:5 is related to the curse mentioned in Deut 26:27, which comes upon those who do not “do all” that the law requires.<sup>271</sup>

The law (*νόμος*) was central to God’s covenant with Israel (Ex 20-24),<sup>272</sup> for it was the keeping of the law that marked out the Jews from the lawless Gentiles (cf. Gal 2:15). But the law prevented God’s promised blessing to Abraham from reaching out to the Gentiles. The law functioned as a mark which distinguished Jews from Gentiles as well as a barrier between Jews and Gentiles. Paul, therefore, turns to the issue of the law.<sup>273</sup> Lev 18:5 promises life to those who do what is written in the law, while Hab 2:4 proclaims that the just shall live by faith. Since no one, however, fulfills all that is written in the law, “the true source of life is by faith.”<sup>274</sup> According to J. D. G. Dunn, “the difference between Hab 2:4 and Lev 18:5 is that the former talks of a relationship lived out on the basis of faith, whereas the latter has the more limited purview of doing the law and of living within its terms.”<sup>275</sup> Paul draws a contrast between two kinds of people. *Hoi ek pisteôs* (Gal 3:9) are those who have been justified by faith in Christ Jesus and *hosoi ex ergôn nomou* (3:10) are those who seek justification in the Torah. But the law does not justify anyone. “Niemand kann durch das Halten der Weisungen des Mosegesetzes gerechtfertigt werden und so das Heil erlangen.”<sup>276</sup> James D. G. Dunn avers that “at the heart of Paul’s argument, then, is the conviction that relationship with God begins from faith ... is maintained on the basis of faith.”<sup>277</sup> The law is not from faith (*ὁ δὲ νόμος οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ πίστεως*, v 12). Faith in Christ does not depend on or include the Torah.<sup>278</sup> F. F. Bruce observes that “law and faith, for Paul, are unrelated: The gospel calls for faith, but the law requires works.”<sup>279</sup> The law, therefore, is not based on faith but on works.<sup>280</sup>

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<sup>271</sup> Cf. Ibid, Galatians, 121.

<sup>272</sup> Cf. Dunn, The Epistle to the Galatians, 175-176: “Paul recognized the important role the law had in the period when the covenant was effective for only Israel, as a means of directing life within the covenant people; the mistake was to confuse that role with the more basic role of faith.”

<sup>273</sup> Ibid, 169.

<sup>274</sup> Matera, Galatians, 124.

<sup>275</sup> Dunn, The Epistle to the Galatians, 175.

<sup>276</sup> Eckey, Der Galaterbrief, 195.

<sup>277</sup> Dunn, The Epistle to the Galatians, 174.

<sup>278</sup> Cf. Betz, Galatians, 147.

<sup>279</sup> Bruce, The Epistle to the Galatians, 163.

<sup>280</sup> Cf. Tarazi, Galatians, 128.

The curse of the law which was announced in verse 10 finds a remedy in the counter curse of verse 13, which is Christ's redeeming death on the cross.<sup>281</sup> Paul speaks of the curse of the law as opposed to God's promised blessing to the nations. J. Louis Martyn opines that Paul is "speaking of what one might term 'the blessing God' and 'the cursing law'."<sup>282</sup> In Christ's crucifixion the curse of the law met with the promised blessing. The resultant effect is the victory of Christ and the redemption of all from the curse of the law.<sup>283</sup>

In the Scripture, there are options between blessings and curses, life and death (Deut 28:15-28). The promised blessings are for the Israelites but only if they keep the law (Deut 28:1-14), and the curses are theirs as well, if they fail to keep the law (Deut 28:15-35). The curse means the deprivation of the covenant privileges and blessings therein, the loss of the promised land – a loss of that which distinguishes Israel from other nations. In order to inherit the promised blessings, Israel must keep the law.<sup>284</sup> But if the keeping of the law brings blessings, what does Paul mean when he speaks of the curse of the law? And who are those under the curse of the law? Paul reinterprets the curse of the law in terms of the redemptive blessing. Christ redeemed us from the law's curse (Χριστὸς ἡμᾶς ἐξηγόρασεν ἐκ τῆς κατάρας τοῦ νόμου Gal 3:13). Before the coming of Christ all the nations were under the curse of the law. Israel as well as the nations have not kept the law; they were under its curse (ἐπικατάρατος πᾶς ὃς οὐκ ἐμμένει). The phrase ὅσοι γὰρ ἐξ ἔργων νόμου admits no exception as Heinrich Schlier concurs. "*ὅσοι bekräftigt die Tatsache, daß es dabei keine Ausnahmen gibt: alle, welche, oder wieviele, vgl. Röm 2<sub>12</sub>*)." <sup>285</sup>

When Paul speaks of the curse of the law, he has the totality of humanity, the teachings of the law and all that it forbids in mind. Franz Mußner opines that "*wer die Tora übertritt, an dem wird der Todesfluch Gottes wirksam. Davon gibt es keine Ausnahme (πᾶς!), und die Tora will in ihrer Gänze erfüllt sein (πᾶσιν!)*."<sup>286</sup> He reinforces. "*Nach seiner (Paulus) Überzeugung steht vielmehr die ganze Menschheit wegen ihrer Übertretungen des Willens Gottes 'unter einem Fluch'*"<sup>287</sup> (cf. "All the world is guilty before God", Rom 3:19), and stresses this point further. "*Dies muß auch festgehalten werden, wenn man die Ausführungen des Apostels in Gal 3,10ff verstehen will. Für ihn ist es eine unumstößliche Gewißheit, daß alle (vgl. ὅσοι), die*

<sup>281</sup> Cf. George, Galatians, 233.

<sup>282</sup> Martyn, Galatians, 312.

<sup>283</sup> Ibid, 309.

<sup>284</sup> Cf. Dunn, The Epistle to the Galatians, 169.

<sup>285</sup> Schlier, Die Brief an die Galater, 132.

<sup>286</sup> Mußner, Galaterbrief, 224.

<sup>287</sup> Ibid, 224.

*ihre religiöse Existenz auf die Werke des Gesetzes aufbauen, 'unter dem Fluch sind'. Der Apostel nimmt kein Volk von diesem drohenden Fluch aus.*"<sup>288</sup> Moreover, the "we" of verse 14b picks up the "us" of verse 13a, which surely includes the Gentiles of verse 14a, thus confirming that verse 13a already has Gentiles as well as Jews in view. Joseph A. Fitzmyer affirms, "Paul insists that the Jew is mistaken if he thinks that, in trusting in the law, he is exempt from the wrath of God. He uses *nomos* specifically of the Mosaic law, but also generically to refer to the whole Old Testament (cf. 1 Cor 14:21)."<sup>289</sup> By submitting to the curse of the law on behalf of humanity, Christ redeemed both Jews and Gentiles from the law's curse. He neutralizes the curse for all those who believe in him so that the curse which should rightly fall on all because of their failure to keep the law now falls on him.<sup>290</sup> In this way the coming of Christ opens for all nations the doors of faith, liberation and justification, which have nothing in common with the legalism of the law.<sup>291</sup>

Paul reverses the Deuteronomic curse in favour of faith in Christ.<sup>292</sup> This is because the texts quoted in Gal 3:10-13 were interpreted differently in early Judaism, undoubtedly in consonance with Paul's pre-Christian understanding of the law.<sup>293</sup> Paul's usage of Deut 21:23 in Gal 3:13b suggests that he formerly applied the text polemically, as an interpretation that saw "Christ as a false Messiah whose words and actions encouraged others to break the law, and whose subsequent crucifixion confirmed that he was the accursed of God. Thus Jesus' crucifixion was viewed as the actualization of the Deuteronomic curse upon a messianic pretender, whose claim contradicted the *Torah* and the Temple."<sup>294</sup> To challenge the law or to speak ill of the temple was to risk one's own life (cf. Mk 14:58; Acts 6:11).<sup>295</sup> One has to keep in mind that "the Messiah was the epitome of blessing, but one 'hung on a tree' was by definition 'accused by God'."<sup>296</sup> Paul, however, "*läßt ... in seinem Dt-Zitat υπό θεοῦ weg, weil in seinen Augen der gekreuzigte Christus unmöglich von Gott selbst verflucht sein konnte.*"<sup>297</sup>

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<sup>288</sup> Ibid, 225.

<sup>289</sup> Fitzmyer, Romans, 336.

<sup>290</sup> Cf. Fung, The Epistle to the Galatians, 149-150.

<sup>291</sup> Cf. Ibid, 151.

<sup>292</sup> Cf. Pate, The Reverse of the Curse, 211.

<sup>293</sup> Ibid, 146-147.

<sup>294</sup> Ibid, 150.

<sup>295</sup> Cf. Marcus, Mark 8-16, 1014: "It could be dangerous for a first-century Jew to belittle or threaten the Temple with a dissolution in this way."

<sup>296</sup> George, Galatians, 239.

<sup>297</sup> Mußner, Galaterbrief, 233.

Christ alone is immune from the curse of the law. By taking the cross upon himself, Christ nullified the curse of the law and redeemed all those who were under the law (cf. 4:4-6).<sup>298</sup>

In this way, Paul reverses the Deuteronomistic tradition at two critical points: (i) Christ the righteous one absorbed the curse of the *Torah* (death) so that sinners might earn its blessing (life); whoever attempts to obey the *Torah* will suffer its curse (death), but whoever has faith in Christ, not in the works of the law, shares its blessing (life). (ii) Whereas the eschatological restoration of the people of God was expected to begin with Israel, Christ's death on the cross has reversed the order in such a way that it has now begun with the Gentiles. Paul thus replaces Jewish particularism of the law's demand with God's universalism in Christ's death and resurrection.<sup>299</sup> Paul knows that the Judaizers' effort in keeping the law did not bring to them the Spirit which God promised to the nations. The law did not justify them. Should justification come from the law, then Christ would have died in vain (cf. 2:21). If Christ had died in vain, humanity would have remained under the Deuteronomic curse. Moreover, by adding the law to the gospel of faith the Judaizers were taking the Galatians back to the curse of the law.<sup>300</sup>

Paul depicts himself and his fellow Israelites as not only having inherited the blessing of the law but also its curse; standing in Gentile shoes, either literally or metaphorically on Gentile soil, they are compelled to seek justification by appealing to God as if they were Gentiles; looking back past the covenant at Sinai and the law of Moses to the original Gentile-inclusive promise made to Abraham (Gen 12:3).<sup>301</sup> When Paul speaks of the curse of the law or the means by which we received (v 14 *λάβωμεν*) the blessing promised to Abraham, he is not thinking of Jews alone, but Gentiles as well as Jews. Thus, the "us", those redeemed from the curse of the law, are all the children of God (Gal 3:26).<sup>302</sup> The authentic descendants of Abraham are "soul brothers (and sisters) rather than merely blood brothers" and sisters. Paul interprets the promised blessing to all nations through Abraham "as a prophecy of his own law-free mission to the Gentiles."<sup>303</sup> The gospel is God's free gift to all those who believe (cf. Rom 1:16). "Thus 3:14 anticipates 3:28, where that which unites true believers, our oneness in Christ, far outweighs those tokens of distinction that, in some respects very legitimately,

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<sup>298</sup> Cf. Matera, Galatians, 150.

<sup>299</sup> Cf. Pate, The Reverse of the Curse, 212-213.

<sup>300</sup> Ibid, 226.

<sup>301</sup> Ibid, 60.

<sup>302</sup> Cf. George, Galatians, 233.

<sup>303</sup> Ibid, 226.

still divide us.”<sup>304</sup> Therefore, Christ’s redemptive work is for all humanity. “Christ redeems humanity from the law’s curse (Gal 3:13), and God sends his Son to redeem those under the law (4:5). Paul views ‘being under the law’ as a kind of slavery from which one must be ransomed,”<sup>305</sup> and that is exactly what Christ did for humanity.

Does it mean that those who persevere in doing what is written in the law will not be saved? It appears that Paul does not believe that persevering in doing what is written in the law will lead to justification. Paul’s thinking is dominated by the logic of his call/conversion experience. He knows that he was “blameless before the law” (Phil 3:6), but this did not lead him to Christ. Deut 27:26, however, seems to postulate that all those who persevere in doing all that the law prescribes are immune from the curse of the law. Lev 18:5 gives credence to this fact. “Whoever complies with my laws and customs will find life.” Todd A. Wilson opines that this can also be found in Qumran text. “In the Qumran literature the Hebrew text of Hab 2:4b is applied to ‘all the doers of the law in the house of Judah, whom God will save from the place of judgement because of their toil (*’âmâl*) and their faith in (or ‘loyalty to’) the ‘Teacher of Righteousness’ (IQpHab 8:1-3). The Teacher of Righteousness was not only a spiritual leader but a figure of eschatological significance. Acceptance of his teaching, or loyally keeping to the path which he marked out for his followers, was the way to eternal life.”<sup>306</sup> F. F. Bruce maintains that although this promise of life to those who keep the law is part of the Old Testament tradition as well as of the Qumran community, it has been abrogated with the Jesus event. “True, in the context of Lev 18:5 the promise of life to those who do what God commands is a genuine promise, but in Romans 10:5 as well as in Galatians 3:12 Paul indicates that, with the coming of the gospel, that way to life has now been closed, even if once it was open – and it is doubtful if he would concede even that (his Damascus-road experience had shown him the incompetence of the way of law-keeping and the power of the way of faith).”<sup>307</sup> Paul puts obedience to the law (Lev 18:5) aside in favour of the principles of justification by faith in Christ Jesus. He supports his principles of justification by following the footsteps of the prophet Habakkuk who pronounced curse on the oppressors of the people of God and blessings upon the uprights of Yahweh (Hab 2:4b).

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<sup>304</sup> Ibid, 243.

<sup>305</sup> Matera, Galatians, 120.

<sup>306</sup> Wisdom, Blessing for the Nations and Curse to the Law, 162.

<sup>307</sup> Bruce, The Epistle to the Galatians, 163.

Paul's citation from Hab 2:4 has a rich historical backing. It was originally a salvation oracle in which God made the promise that the just shall live by faith. During the Babylonian captivity God spoke through the prophet Habakkuk: "The faithful will survive the trial period." Paul's argument is that the law does not have its origin in this faith that the prophet is speaking about (Gal 3:12). Failing to have its origin in faith, the law can only utter a false promise. This shows that Paul does not simply adhere to "the major presupposition of the textual contradiction, the assumption that the two texts, Hab 2:4 and Lev 18:5, have their origin in a monolith that is larger and more fundamental than either of them ... The fundamental place of such a comprehensive monolith is given by Paul to the faith that is elicited by God's promise."<sup>308</sup> Although Paul continues to believe that there is a benchmark from which all else is to be judged, he can no longer identify that benchmark as the law in which one can find "textual contradictions." The benchmark is God's own promised blessing to the nations.<sup>309</sup>

There is also the second curse of the law which states that if a man is guilty of a capital offence and he is put to death by hanging, his body must not remain on the tree overnight. It must be buried the same day (Deut 21:22-23). Paul cites this example, *γέγραπται ἐπικατάρατος πᾶς ὁ κρεμάμενος ἐπὶ ξύλου* (Gal 3:13b). Joshua practiced this injunction. After the defeat of the kings at the battle of *Beth-horon*, he exposed their dead bodies on five different trees. They were left hanging until evening. At sunset he gave order that their bodies should be buried in the caves where they had been hiding (Josh 10:26-27). The reasons for the burial are simply that the exposure of the human corpse on a tree overnight is an affront not only to human decency but to God himself and that their corpses might not contaminate the land (cf. Deut 21:22-23).<sup>310</sup> This injunction was later changed and public crucifixion became a display of shame and a sign of humiliation.<sup>311</sup> Those hanged on the tree were allowed for passersby to see. The crime they had committed was written out and hung above their heads (cf. Matt 27:37). Kings and Emperors also used public crucifixion as instruments of terror and as means of inducing obedience from their citizens. People feared greatly the act of public

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<sup>308</sup> Ibid, 332.

<sup>309</sup> Ibid, 332-333.

<sup>310</sup> Cf. Sängers, "Verflucht ist jeder, der am Holze hängt" (Gal 3,13b), in: ZNW, 280: "Das Gebot Dtn 21,22f. MT bezieht sich ursprünglich auf den Täter eines todeswürdigen Verbrechens. Sein Leichnam durfte nach seiner Steinigung nur bis zum Sonnenuntergang an einem Pfahl gehängt werden, 'denn ein Fluch Gottes ist ein Aufgehängter...'"

<sup>311</sup> Cf. Silva, Galatians, in: Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament, 798.



crucifixion and would do their best to stay away from such “a Roman style of execution abhorrent to the Jewish people.”<sup>312</sup>

The crucified was obviously seen as “the cursed of God” (Deut 21:22-23). Christ’s public crucifixion demonstrated that he was “a seducer,” “a deceiver,” “an impostor” whom God did not prevent from his crucifixion.<sup>313</sup> According to Heinrich Schlier, “*dass Christus auch am Holze hing, eben das zeigt, dass er tatsächlich ein Verfluchter geworden war, der die Erde, die der Herr gibt, verunreinigt.*”<sup>314</sup> That God did not deliver him from the public shame showed that he should be regarded as “the cursed of God.”<sup>315</sup> Furthermore, “it is hardly to be doubted that first-century Jews as a whole would have seen the connection between the two (Christ’s death and the curse of the law) and therefore that Jesus, by being suspended on a wooden cross for public viewing and ridicule, would have been regarded as falling, in some sense, under a curse.”<sup>316</sup> The reading of Deut 21:22-23 as a reference to (Christ’s) crucifixion is a known polemic as J. Louis Martyn affirms. “We find it in Qumran. We also find it in sources that may reflect Jewish polemic against the early church’s confession of Jesus as God’s Messiah. Indeed, a scriptural argument based on Deut 21:23 may have played an important role in the passion with which Paul the Pharisee rejected the church’s confession: A crucified criminal, necessarily enduring the curse of God, cannot possibly have been God’s Messiah.”<sup>317</sup> But the Christian Paul reverses this polemical use of Deut 21:22-23. He omits “curse by God” thus dissociating the curse from God. And by linking it solely to the law, he causes the quoted text to conform to his prefixed exegesis, which holds that the law pronounces a curse on the crucified one. Paul now says that Christ’s embodiment of the law’s curse is the act in which the law is robbed of its final power.

Paul also stresses the reason why Christ took the cross upon himself. Christ has become “the cursed of the law,” “the doomed one,” “the ruinous one,” the one “upon whom our condemnations fall,” but all on our behalf (ὕπὲρ ἡμῶν). J. Louis Martyn maintains that “the expression ‘in our behalf’ (3:13) always has for Paul the universal dimension of Christ’s atoning

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<sup>312</sup> George, Galatians, 382.

<sup>313</sup> Cf. Sanger, “Verflucht ist jeder, der am Holze hangt” (Gal 3,13b), in: ZNW, 280: “Hingegen bezieht Paulus Dtn 21,23 eindeutig auf die Art und Weise der Hinrichtung und bezeichnet Christus qua *Kreuzestod* als einen vom Gesetz Verfluchten.”

<sup>314</sup> Schlier, Der Brief an die Galater, 138.

<sup>315</sup> Martyn, Galatians, 320.

<sup>316</sup> Silva, Galatians, in: Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament, 798.

<sup>317</sup> Martyn, Galatians, 320.

death.”<sup>318</sup> The verb “to redeem”, ἐξαγοράζειν, literally means “to buy off,” “to set free by the payment of a ransom/price” or “to rescue from loss.” Usually slaves were set free after buying themselves back from their masters or by the generosity of their masters; but not before they had served them for many years (manumission). Franz Mußner opines that Paul takes up this ancient imagery and applies it to Christ. *“Er (Paulus) formuliert aber das Stellvertretungskerygma diesmal ganz von den Ideen des Kontextes her, vor allem im Hinblick auf den auf allen lastenden und alle bedrohenden Todesfluch des Gesetzes, von dem uns Christus befreit hat. Der Apostel gebraucht den Terminus ἐξηγόρασεν, und man verwies zu seinem Verständnis auf den sakralen Sklavenfreikauf (manumissio) in der Antike (so besonders Deißmann).”*<sup>319</sup> Heinrich Schlier also combines the redemptive death of Christ with our being set free from slavery (5:1) and calls it “loskaufen, freikaufen.”<sup>320</sup> *“Man kann den Tod Christi als die Kosten und als das Verfahren des Loskaufes der versklavten Welt bezeichnen ... Ähnlich meint Paulus an unserer Stelle, dass uns Christus dadurch aus dem Fluch des Gesetzes loskaufte, dass er uns zugute den Fluch so auf sich nahm, dass er diesen auf ihm liegenden Fluch repräsentierte.”*<sup>321</sup>

Before the coming of Christ, humanity was under the slavery of sin, but with his coming, she has been redeemed. The root word for redemption (ἐξαγοράζειν) is *agora*, “a gathering place” or “a marketplace.” It was also the ancient site of slave auction, where in the Hellenistic and Greco-Roman era slaves were bought and sold. Paul maintains that we are bought with “a price of unspeakable value” (cf. 1 Cor 6:20; 7:23). The ransom for our sins was paid with the blood of Christ (cf. Eph 1:7). Heinrich Schlier offers a further explanation. *“Die Vergangenheit, aus der Christus uns befreite, wird mit ἡ κατάρα τοῦ νόμου bezeichnet. Dadurch wird deutlich, dass das vorhin genannte ‘unter dem Fluche sein’ tatsächlich das Dasein begriff, das nicht nur vom Fluche bedroht, sondern vom Fluche ergriffen ist, so dass sich der Fluch in ihm auswirkt.”*<sup>322</sup> James D. G. Dunn sees the redemptive work of Christ mainly expressed in “the metaphor of being bought back from sin,”<sup>323</sup> while Timothy George observes that “Jesus willingly took upon himself the curse of the law on behalf of guilty sinners.”<sup>324</sup> The

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<sup>318</sup> Ibid, Galatians, 335.

<sup>319</sup> Mußner, Galaterbrief, 232.

<sup>320</sup> Schlier, Der Brief an die Galater, 136.

<sup>321</sup> Ibid, 137-138.

<sup>322</sup> Ibid, 136.

<sup>323</sup> Dunn, The Epistle to the Galatians, 176. “The metaphor is of buying from or back, and so of redemption by payment of a price (not necessarily as a technical term for purchasing the freedom of a slave).”

<sup>324</sup> George, Galatians, 270.

implication is that it would be foolishness on the part of the Galatians (Gal 3:3) to assume again the very curse from which the Messiah has freed all the believers. Wilhelm Egger accepts this view. *“Der Glaubende ist nämlich dem Gesetz gestorben; er ist vom Gesetz befreit ... Aufgrund des Gesetzes wurde Jesus hingerichtet, und sein Tod hat Heilskraft.”*<sup>325</sup>

The conclusion that is to be drawn from verses 10-14 is: Paul turns the curse which was to come to Christ into a redemptive event. Yes, Jesus was crucified like a criminal but in substitution for our sins. He is the holy one who carried the cross on our behalf. Christ acts as a representative figure, taking the curse upon himself in order to set humanity free from the curse of the law. Christ underwent the penalty prescribed for criminals. But Christ lived in obedience to the will of God, thereby being exempt from the curse of the law. Through his death on the cross, he redeemed all of us from the curse which the law had placed on humanity. By being publicly crucified in order to make him “a cursed one by God and humanity,”<sup>326</sup> he redeemed the world. He took the curse of sinners on himself in order that they might be righteous before God. Paul is working here with the idea of an “exchange curse” by which the sin, the guilt, and the damnation of lost humanity are placed upon Christ while Christ’s righteousness, blessing, and sonship are imputed to those in whose place he stands. Timothy George expresses it thus: “For us the Son of God became a curse. For us he shed his precious blood. For us he who from all eternity knew only the intimacy of the Father’s bosom came and died on the cross.”<sup>327</sup> He did all these things for us. Heinrich Schlier affirms the inclusive effect of Christ’s death. *“Das ἡμᾶς schließt alle ein, die unter dem Fluche standen ... Das ‘wir’ in λάβωμεν umfasst sicherlich Juden und Heiden. Dann aber ist es wahrscheinlich, dass auch das ἡμᾶς in v.13 diese beiden im Auge hat ... Das Gesetz machte das Dasein aller Menschen zum Fluch. So hat Christus uns alle aus dem verfluchten Dasein losgekauft.”*<sup>328</sup> The ingenuity of Paul is shown by the fact that he does not dispute the polemical charge that a crucified Jesus was accursed by God and humanity, but turns the polemic to his own ends.<sup>329</sup> In his death everything that sin has made of humanity was made his (2 Cor 5:21) but in order that we might be justified through him. Similarly, F. F. Bruce avers that “Christ had endured the curse on his people’s behalf (by being ‘hanged on a tree’) in order to redeem them from

<sup>325</sup> Egger, Galaterbrief. Philipperbrief. Philemonbrief, 22.

<sup>326</sup> Cf. Bruce, The Epistle to the Galatians, 165: “One type of criminal who is to be hanged ‘on a tree, that he may die,’ is he who has wronged his people by informing against them and delivering them up to a foreign power; another is he who ‘has cursed (qâlal) his people and the children of Israel’.”

<sup>327</sup> George, Galatians, 242.

<sup>328</sup> Schlier, Der Brief an die Galater, 136-137.

<sup>329</sup> Cf. Pate, The Reverse of Curse, 217.

the curse pronounced on those who failed to keep the law.”<sup>330</sup> But G. Walter Hansen rejects this opinion. “Christ became a curse not because he sinned – or because he took the curse of those who did – but because of the verdict of the law against anyone who hangs on a tree.”<sup>331</sup> Such a restricted view would be contradictory, however, to Paul’s emphasis on the believer’s death with Christ (Gal 2:19-20). According to Frank J. Matera, “Paul envisions a divine interchange: Christ assumes humanity’s situation so that humanity can assume his situation.”<sup>332</sup>

With two conjunctions (ἵνα v 14) Paul emphasizes the purpose why Christ took the curse of the law upon himself: (i) In order that the blessings of Abraham will come to the Gentiles and (ii) In order that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. In this way Paul draws out the implications of Christ’s death for all as Franz Mußner supports. *“In zwei ἵνα-Sätzen wird ein universales Heilsziel der stellvertretenden Erlösungstat Christi genannt.”*<sup>333</sup> The messianic work of redemption is beneficial to all because all nations now enjoy the blessing promised to Abraham. *“Deshalb kann das Ziel der Erlösungstat Christi nur sein, daß die Heiden die verheißene Segensgabe ‘durch den Glauben’ (und nicht aufgrund von Gesetzeswerken) empfangen; der Ton liegt im zweiten ἵνα-Satz auf διὰ τῆς πίστεως. Weil es also immer noch um den Gegensatz νόμος zu πίστις geht, darum ist auch der zweite ἵνα-Satz im V 14 vom Hauptsatz des V 13 abhängig: Christi vom Fluch des Gesetzes erlösende Tat hat auch die Befreiung zum Glaubensweg als Ziel, damit auf diese Weise die Segensverheißung sich erfüllen kann.”*<sup>334</sup> Using the conjunction ἵνα verse 14 demonstrates grammatically the incorporation of the Gentiles into the salvation history inaugurated through the death and resurrection of Christ.<sup>335</sup> The two purpose clauses with ἵνα<sup>336</sup> both express the purpose of Christ’s redemptive death – one in a more general term, and the other in a more specific term. The blessing promised to Abraham comes to Jews as well as Gentiles through faith, and the Spirit of Christ is received by both Jews and Gentiles only through faith.<sup>337</sup>

### 2.3.4 The Priority and Permanence of the Promise (3:15-18)

<sup>330</sup> Bruce, The Epistle to the Galatians, 166.

<sup>331</sup> Hansen, Abraham in Galatians, 124.

<sup>332</sup> Matera, Galatians, 120.

<sup>333</sup> Mußner, Galaterbrief, 234.

<sup>334</sup> Ibid, 235.

<sup>335</sup> Cf. Hong, The Law in Galatians, 42.

<sup>336</sup> Cf. Wisdom, Blessing for the Nations and Curse of the Law, 195.

<sup>337</sup> Cf. Bruce, The Epistle to the Galatians, 167. Matera, Galatians, 124.

15 Ἀδελφοί, κατὰ ἄνθρωπον λέγω· ὁμῶς ἀνθρώπου κεκυρωμένην διαθήκην οὐδεὶς ἀθετεῖ ἢ ἐπιδιατάσσεται. 16 τῷ δὲ Ἀβραάμ ἐρρέθησαν αἱ ἐπαγγελίαι καὶ τῷ σπέρματι αὐτοῦ. οὐ λέγει· καὶ τοῖς σπέρμασιν, ὡς ἐπὶ πολλῶν ἀλλ' ὡς ἐφ' ἑνός· καὶ τῷ σπέρματι σου, ὃς ἐστὶν Χριστός. 17 τοῦτο δὲ λέγω· διαθήκην προκεκυρωμένην ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ μετὰ τετρακόσια καὶ τριάκοντα ἔτη γεγονώς νόμος οὐκ ἄκυροί· εἰς τὸ καταργῆσαι τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν. 18 εἰ γὰρ ἐκ νόμου ἡ κληρονομία, οὐκέτι ἐξ ἐπαγγελίας· τῷ δὲ Ἀβραάμ δι' ἐπαγγελίας κεχάρισται ὁ θεός.

15 Brethren, let me speak in human terms. When a human covenant has been ratified, no one can set it aside or add a codicil to it. 16 Now the promises were made to Abraham and his seed. It does not say "and to your seeds," as if referring to many, but to one, "and to your seed," who is Christ. 17 What I mean is this: The law which came four hundred and thirty years later cannot invalidate the covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise. 18 If the inheritance is from the law, it is not from the promise. But God gave it to Abraham by a promise.

This subsection begins with a friendlier expression, *ἀδελφοί*. For the first time Paul is being gentle with the Galatians. Before he called them "foolish Galatians" (3:1, 3) for their unfaithfulness to the gospel he had preached to them, and because of their admiration of the new gospel that should not be called a gospel at all (1:6-8). But he still finds time to address them as brothers and sisters in Christ. They are Paul's "true" brothers and sisters, which is a direct opposite of the "false brothers" (2:4). Paul is trying to show them that the profound bond of unity between them is not yet broken. Even though the situation is emotionally disturbing, they are still his brethren in Christ.<sup>338</sup> According to Franz Mußner, Paul's "brethren formula" introduces an emotional change of tone, which is different from the formal beginning of 3:1, 3. *"Der Ton des Apostels wird jetzt gegenüber den 'törichten' Galatern herzlicher; sie werden von ihm wieder als 'Brüder' angesprochen."*<sup>339</sup> J. Louis Martyn also observes that "Paul reverts to the endearing and familiar 'brothers and sisters' of 1:11, thus beginning a new paragraph of his exegetical section by bringing the Galatians to his side."<sup>340</sup> According to Heinrich Schlier, this friendly invitation gives Paul the opportunity to speak personally to the Galatians. *"An der Spitze des neuen Gedankenganges steht v. 15 die Anrede ἀδελφοί, um die Aufmerksamkeit der Leser etwas zu erregen."*<sup>341</sup> James D. G. Dunn thinks that Paul's address of the Galatians as brothers and sisters implies both "frustrated affection and gentle coercion."<sup>342</sup> Timothy George sees the "brethren formula" also as an answer to the some questions: Who are the true children of Abraham? Who are the heirs of the promise?

<sup>338</sup> Cf. Matera, Galatians, 126.

<sup>339</sup> Mußner, Galaterbrief, 236.

<sup>340</sup> Martyn, Galatians, 337.

<sup>341</sup> Schlier, Der Brief an die Galater, 143.

<sup>342</sup> Dunn, The Epistle to the Galatians, 181.

Who are those entitled to address one another as brothers and sisters? – The true children of Abraham are the soul brothers and sisters from all nations.<sup>343</sup>

Paul invites the erring brethren in Galatia to reason along with him, as he gives them a worldly legal analogy. Franz Mußner supports this reading. *“Die Verheißung der Schrift, die an den Glauben gebunden ist, kann durch das Gesetz nicht außer Geltung gesetzt werden. Diesen Gedanken unterstützt der Apostel im folgenden durch den Hinweis auf eine weltliche Institution: das Testamentsrecht.”*<sup>344</sup> This shows a shift from the Scriptural arguments to the daily life events. The clause *κατὰ ἄνθρωπον λέγω* (v 15) gives the impression that rather than introducing something new, it is an explanation of or comment on the preceding text.<sup>345</sup> Paul says, my brothers and sisters allow me to speak to you according to human standard (judicial practice). To Franz Mußner this is just a technical formula. *“Diese Formulierung ist weder abwertend noch neutral, vielmehr handelt es sich um eine technische Formel, die den Sinn hat: Ich verweise im folgenden auf eine unter Menschen geltende Einrichtung um durch sie das von der Schrift Gesagte zu stützen.”*<sup>346</sup> Paul refers to the analogy of writing a last will or a testament (*διαθήκη*).<sup>347</sup> Timothy George opines that Paul does not specify which law he is alluding to, because his statement presupposes “a legal situation unknown to both Greek and Roman jurisprudence in the ancient world.”<sup>348</sup> Heinrich Schlier agrees: *“Eine Übernahme einer jüdischen oder hellenistischen Formel liegt in der genannten Phrase nicht vor ... Betont wird von Paulus die Unangreifbarkeit eines rechtsgültigen menschlichen Testamentes für den Testator selbst. Οὐδεὶς is hier wahrscheinlich der Erblasser selbst.”*<sup>349</sup> However, the origin of Paul’s argument is probably from the Jewish law of inheritance known as *mattenat bâi’*, by which a person makes an irrevocable testament. It is precisely this kind of legal transaction that Jesus alludes to in the parable of the prodigal son (Lk 15:11-32). The father prematurely divides his property between his heirs, an act all the more momentous because it is unalterable. Franz Mußner accepts this analogy. *“Da die ‘Verheißung’ Gottes an Abraham in*

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<sup>343</sup> Cf. George, Galatians, 244-226.

<sup>344</sup> Mußner, Galaterbrief, 236.

<sup>345</sup> Cf. Holmstrand, Markers and Meaning in Paul, 170.

<sup>346</sup> Mußner, Galaterbrief, 236.

<sup>347</sup> Cf. Bruce, The Epistle to the Galatians, 169: “Since it is a human analogy that Paul is using, *διαθήκην* in the immediate context is likely to have its current secular sense of ‘will’, ‘testamentary disposition’, rather than its distinctively biblical sense of ‘covenant’.”

<sup>348</sup> George, Galatians, 245.

<sup>349</sup> Schlier, Der Brief an die Galater, 143-144.

*den Augen des Apostels – weltlich geredet – ein solches Rechtsgeschäft darstellt, gelten auch dafür die Regeln der Mattanah.*"<sup>350</sup>

In this analogy, Paul maintains that once the testament or last will is properly signed, sealed and the property is legally conveyed, it is not possible to annul it or modify it by another law. For J. Louis Martyn, "the verbs in this illustration show that Paul uses the noun *diathêkê* here to refer to nothing other than a person's last will: 'Ratify a will' (*kyroô diathêkên*), annul a will (*atheteô*), 'add a codicil' (*epidiatassomai*)."<sup>351</sup> In Paul's argument, this means that the law has no power over God's promised blessing (Gen 12:3; 22:18). "The law lacks the power to specify and thus to alter the promise; it can no more do that than a codicil added to a person's will by a second party can become a genuine part of that will, effectively altering it."<sup>352</sup> The attempt to add a codicil to a will comes at a later point in time, just as the giving of the law happened four hundred and thirty years after God had made his covenant with Abraham. Franz Mußner regards the four hundred and thirty years as a technical form of expression, meaning that the promise has both "prior and superior quality" over the law. "*Das ist zunächst, schon wegen der nachfolgenden Zeitbestimmung '430 Jahre', zeitlich gemeint; aber da nach rabbinischer Auffassung Priorität = Superiorität ist, ist mit dem προ der Verheißung zugleich auch ein qualitativer Vorrang vor dem Gesetz zugesprochen.*"<sup>353</sup> J. Louis Martyn stresses more the temporal aspect. "To the verb *kyroô*, 'to validate,' Paul prefixed the preposition *pro*, 'before,' indicating that God's covenantal act antedated the law, just as a will antedates an attempted codicil."<sup>354</sup> This is especially so when the owner of the last will is already dead.

If a human testament cannot be changed or annulled, how much more is this true of the covenant that God made with Abraham? As Frank J. Matera maintains, "the living God made an analogous testament (*diathêke*) with Abraham; that is, God made an unalterable promise to Abraham and to his seed. This, of course, is the only kind of covenant that suits the situation since God cannot die."<sup>355</sup> From this premise follows the conclusion: The law cannot possibly invalidate the original settlement or render the original promise ineffective. Ronald Y. K. Fung thinks that "the point of comparison is simply that of inviolability, unalterability and

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<sup>350</sup> Mußner, Galaterbrief, 237.

<sup>351</sup> Martyn, Galatians, 338.

<sup>352</sup> Ibid, 337.

<sup>353</sup> Mußner, Galaterbrief, 241.

<sup>354</sup> Martyn, Galatians, 341.

<sup>355</sup> Matera, Galatians, 130.

therefore absolute validity.”<sup>356</sup> It is thus clear that Paul regards the promise to Abraham as a divinely ratified covenant and argues from its priority to the law and that its provisions cannot be made null and void by the later introduction of the law.<sup>357</sup> The covenant and the law are quite distinct from one another, they are even opposed to one another (cf. 3:18).<sup>358</sup> However, this does not imply the rejection of the law (Rom 7:12).

The covenant is the promise God made to Abraham and to his singular seed, who is Christ (v 16).<sup>359</sup> J. Louis Martyn criticizes this concept of the seed of Abraham. “Even in focusing his attention on this single verse (i.e. Gen 17:8), Paul ignores two factors: (a) the plain meaning of the word ‘seed’ in Genesis 17, where it is clearly a collective referring to the people of Israel as the descendants of Abraham, generation after generation; (b) his own earlier willingness to discuss the issue of the identity of Abraham’s plural children (v 7; cf. v 29; Rom 4:13-16).”<sup>360</sup> However, given the development in the Galatian churches, the singular seed of Abraham (Gen 17:8) is what Paul actually means. This is also conceded by J. Louis Martyn. “Equating promise and covenant, Paul insists that God spoke his covenantal promise to only two persons: Abraham and his singular seed. What concerns him, then, is the identity of that seed to whom, in addition to Abraham, the covenantal promise was made.”<sup>361</sup> The single seed of Abraham is Christ. *“Mit dem Singular τῷ σπέρματι αὐτοῦ gibt die Schrift dem Leser im Sinne der halakhischen Exegese einen verborgenen Hinweis. Er zielt auf den ἔξ, auf Christus, den Universalerben aller Verheißung.”*<sup>362</sup> Franz Mußner observes that there are already Old Testament allusions to the single seed. *“Die ‘individuelle’ statt der ‘kollektiven’ Deutung von σπέρμα, die Paulus in Gal 3,16 den Segensverheißungen an Abraham gibt, ist im AT selbst schon durch ihre Applikation auf Einzelgestalten wie Isaak, Jacob, David und den Gottesknecht vorbereitet ...”*<sup>363</sup>

The promise God made to Abraham is inherited by all his descendants. According to F. Bruce, if in Genesis 18:18 it is in (or with) Abraham that all the nations of the earth will be blessed, then in Genesis 22:18 the promise is that “in your offspring (σπέρμα) all the nations

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<sup>356</sup> Fung, The Epistle to the Galatians, 154.

<sup>357</sup> Ibid, 157.

<sup>358</sup> Cf. Mußner, Galaterbrief, 242.

<sup>359</sup> Martyn, Galatians, 340.

<sup>360</sup> Ibid, 340.

<sup>361</sup> Ibid, 340.

<sup>362</sup> Schlier, Der Brief an die Galater, 145.

<sup>363</sup> Mußner, Galaterbrief, 239-240.



of the earth will be blessed.”<sup>364</sup> Paul is aware that the collective noun σπέρμα (seed) could indicate a plurality of descendants as well as a single descendant. In the first instance it refers to a single descendant, who is Christ. In the second instance the reference is to all those who will receive this blessing.<sup>365</sup> Paul takes advantage of the singular seed and identifies him as Christ. Abraham had two sons, Ishmael and Isaac (Gen 25:9), and Isaac is already regarded as God’s chosen instrument (Gen 21:12). But Isaac as Abraham’s seed is swallowed up in Christ,<sup>366</sup> who truly is “Abraham’s seed.”<sup>367</sup> Franz Mußner supports this reading. *“Christus ist ja für Paulus und die Christen der verheißene Messias und als solcher der eschatologische Bringer und Träger der Segensverheißung.”*<sup>368</sup> *“In der christlichen Schau ist der gekreuzigte Christus der wahre Isaak und deshalb ‘der Same’ Abrahams schlechthin, der zum eschatologischen Träger der Segensverheißung für die Völker wurde.”*<sup>369</sup>

God’s covenantal promise to Abraham is fulfilled in Christ. It is complete in itself, and it has all the required confirmations from the authority of God. The prefix προ, in προκεκυρωμένην indicates that the covenant is validated by God.<sup>370</sup> J. Louis Martyn illustrates this. “When Paul thinks both of the covenant and of the law, the chief issue that arises in his mind is one of power. Is the later-arriving law sufficiently powerful to invalidate (akyrōō) or nullify (katargeō) the covenantal promise God had earlier made to Abraham? And if so, how would it do that? ... In Paul’s argument, were the law to absorb the promise into itself, as the teachers imply, it would rob the promise of its true reference: Christ as the singular seed of Abraham ... Just as a codicil added by someone other than the testator is impotent to falsify the testator’s will, so the law is impotent to invalidate God’s promissory covenant with Abraham and Abraham’s seed.”<sup>371</sup> As important as the law is (cf. Rom 7:12), it cannot add to or annul what God has already promised by a solemn oath to Abraham.<sup>372</sup> The law, Paul says, is a latecomer. Paul uses the usual calculation from the period the law was given to the Israelites and the time the promise was made to Abraham to demonstrate the inferiority of the law.<sup>373</sup> However, it is not only that the law is a latecomer; Franz Mußner sees the law and

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<sup>364</sup> Bruce, The Epistle to the Galatians, 171.

<sup>365</sup> Ibid, 172.

<sup>366</sup> Ibid, 173.

<sup>367</sup> Cf. Matera, Galatians, 127.

<sup>368</sup> Mußner, Galaterbrief, 238.

<sup>369</sup> Ibid, 240.

<sup>370</sup> Cf. Bruce, The Epistle to the Galatians, 173.

<sup>371</sup> Martyn, Galatians, 342.

<sup>372</sup> Cf. Matera, Galatians, 132.

<sup>373</sup> Ibid, 127.

the promise simply as incompatible. “‘Verheißung’ und ‘Gesetz’ bleiben also Größen, die nicht in einem komplementären Verhältnis zueinander stehen.”<sup>374</sup> *“Wenn das Gesetz die Verheißung nicht vernichtet, ergänzt es sie dann nicht wenigstens, so dass der Segen und das Erbe aus der Verheißung, die in Christus erfüllt ist, und aus dem Gesetz fließen? Auch auf solche Frage gibt es nur eine verneinende Antwort. Gesetz und Verheißung schließen sich völlig aus.”*<sup>375</sup>

God’s covenant with Abraham stands as a witness to the primacy of his grace in all his dealings with humanity. It testifies also that the election is an act of God’s favour and not a state to which one can attend through the observances of the legal works of the law.<sup>376</sup> This point is strengthened by the idea of inheritance (κληρονομία – “inheritance,” “heir,” “heritage,” “God’s gift to his chosen people”). According to Franz Mußner, the word inheritance is here particularly appropriate because the disposition depends solely on the testator, God. *“Das ‘Erbe’ ist im Zusammenhang der Stelle konkret der Segen, den Abraham für sich und seine Nachkommen von Gott bekommen hat (3,8). Der Begriff ist aber durch die Verheißungsstellen der Genesis und durch die Verwendung erbrechtlicher Vorstellungen gegeben.”*<sup>377</sup> The perfect indicative verb κεχάρισται from χαρίζομαι (“to show favour or kindness,” “to grant forgiveness,” “to give freely”) implies that God continues to grant the same favour or show the same kindness to the people of faith.<sup>378</sup> Since the inheritance is based on God’s promise, Paul presents a situation with two options from which the Galatians have a compulsory choice to make: εἰ γὰρ ἐκ νόμου ἡ κληρονομία, οὐκέτι ἐξ ἐπαγγελίας, v 18a. Heinrich Schlier explains this clearly. *“Entweder bringt das Gesetz oder es bringt die Verheißung das Erbe. Als Quelle der messianischen Hoffnung schließen sie sich gegenseitig aus.”*<sup>379</sup> The promise and the law exist at extreme poles, and there are no possibilities of their meeting each other or of combining the two.

Paul supports his course with the theological axiom that the promise was a matter of divine initiative. F. F. Bruce says that “the promise to Abraham was entirely a covenant of grant,”<sup>380</sup> and Timothy George maintains that God’s promise to Abraham is not based on “Abraham’s meritorious deeds, lifelong obedience, or indeed anything other than God’s

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<sup>374</sup> Mußner, Galaterbrief, 242.

<sup>375</sup> Ibid, 148.

<sup>376</sup> Cf. Bruce, The Epistle to the Galatians, 174.

<sup>377</sup> Mußner, Galaterbrief, 242.

<sup>378</sup> Cf. Bruce, The Epistle to the Galatians, 174.

<sup>379</sup> Schlier, Der Brief an die Galater, 149.

<sup>380</sup> Bruce, The Epistle to the Galatians, 174.

gratuitous good pleasure.”<sup>381</sup> He makes a clear distinction between the promise and the law. “The law demands, ‘Do this!’ The promise grants, ‘Accept this!’ Here in v 18 Paul drew the two into sharpest antithesis: If law ... not promise; if works ... not grace.”<sup>382</sup>

Paul develops a definition of the covenant which refutes the nomistic and nationalistic theology of the intruders. The nomistic understanding of Abrahamic covenant is relegated to the background by the dissociation of the covenant and the law. In this argument Paul equates the promise with a covenant, and then splits apart the covenantal promise from the law, but he maintains the concept of covenant in this argument for his Gentile mission by defining the Abrahamic covenant in terms of God’s promised blessing to the nations. Paul points out the incompatibility between receiving the inheritance as a gift of God and receiving it as a reward for keeping the law.<sup>383</sup> The Galatians aspire to be fully included within the fold of Abraham’s people, but that can only be true of those who are in corporate union with the seed of Abraham – Christ.

### 2.3.5 The Purpose of the Law (3:19-22)

19 Τί οὖν ὁ νόμος; τῶν παραβάσεων χάριν προσετέθη, ἄχρις ἂν ἔλθῃ τὸ σπέρμα ᾧ ἐπηγγέλται, διαταγείς δι’ ἀγγελων ἐν χειρὶ μεσίτου. 20 ὁ δὲ μεσίτης ἐνός οὐκ ἔστιν, ὁ δὲ θεὸς εἷς ἐστίν. 21 ὁ οὖν νόμος κατὰ τῶν ἐπαγγελιῶν τοῦ θεοῦ; μὴ γένοιτο, εἰ γὰρ ἐδόθη νόμος ὁ δυνάμενος ζωοποιῆσαι, ὥντως ἐν νόμῳ ἂν ἦν ἡ δικαιοσύνη. 22 ἀλλὰ συνέκλεισεν ἡ γραφὴ τὰ πάντα ὑπὸ ἁμαρτίαν, ἵνα ἡ ἐπαγγελία ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ δοθῇ τοῖς πιστεύουσιν.

19 Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made, and it was put in place through angels by a mediator. 20 Now the mediator implies more than one party, but God is one. 21 Is the law contrary to God’s promises? Certainly not! For if the law is able to impart life, then, righteousness would have been based on the law. 22 But the Scripture imprisoned all under sin, so that the promise of faith in Jesus Christ might come to all those who believe.

As a former student of rabbinical studies, Paul knows that a testament cannot be altered without invalidating its content. *“Man sieht die Bedeutung, die für den Apostel als ehemaligen Rabbinenschüler der Grundsatz, eine διαθήκη könne nicht geändert werden, hat; mit seiner Hilfe gelingt es ihm, die Verheißungslinie konsequent durchzuhalten. Um so dringender erhebt sich aber nun die Frage nach der wahren Heilsfunktion des Gesetzes. Wenn*

<sup>381</sup> George, Galatians, 245.

<sup>382</sup> Ibid, 250.

<sup>383</sup> Cf. Hansen, Abraham in Galatians, 127-129.

*es nicht ein additives Element zur Verheißung ist oder eine Art 'Ausführungsbestimmung' zu ihr, was ist es dann?"*<sup>384</sup> Having placed faith in Christ over and above the legal works of the law, Paul now asks a critical question: τί οὖν ὁ νόμος (v 19). This question gives him the chance to state the limitations and the reasons for the law. Franz Mußner thinks that the answer to Paul's question can be divided into three, namely: "1. 'Um der Übertretungen wegen wurde es hinzugegeben, bis komme der Same, dem die Verheißung galt'. 2. διαταγείς δι' ἁγγέλων. 3. ἐν χειρὶ μεσίτου."<sup>385</sup> J. Louis Martyn is of the opinion that there are four reasons. (1) The law was added. (2) In order to provoke transgressions. (3) Until the seed should come to whom God made his promise. (4) The law was instituted (a) by angels, (b) through a mediator.<sup>386</sup> James D. G. Dunn slightly shifts the arguments by rewording them. (1) The law was added to deal with transgressions until Christ comes (3:19); (2) in this role it was inferior to the promise, since it was mediated through angels and Moses (3:20); (3) though it regulated life within the covenant for the people of Israel (3:21), it was not the source of the living relationship with God; (4) and it did not deal with the problem of a whole epoch under the power of sin, which the immediate action of God through faith in Christ has resolved (3:22).<sup>387</sup> Timothy George opines that, in any case, "the law has the character of something additional; a side road intended to carry extra traffic and excess baggage and, if we may anticipate Paul's argument, designed not to lead to a separate destination but to point its travelers back to the main road."<sup>388</sup> The age of the law was designed to be a parenthesis in God's dealing with mankind and this age has been superseded by "the age of Christ" and "the age of the Spirit."<sup>389</sup> Just as the origin of the law is at Mount Sinai, its end is at Mount Calvary. Thus, Paul interprets the law in terms of its fulfillment and cancellation as well (cf. Rom 10:4).<sup>390</sup>

As for verse 19, the law is a "provocative additional substance," a foreign body, which makes a terrible situation still more desperate.<sup>391</sup> The law was given for further reasons – "Χάριν expresses purpose, not antecedent cause."<sup>392</sup> It was added to multiply and even to stimulate the conscious disobedience of the definite commandments of God. It confined all in

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<sup>384</sup> Mußner, Galaterbrief, 243.

<sup>385</sup> Ibid, 245.

<sup>386</sup> Cf. Martyn, Galatians, 354.

<sup>387</sup> Cf. Dunn, The Epistle to the Galatians, 196; George, Galatians, 252.

<sup>388</sup> George, Galatians, 253.

<sup>389</sup> Bruce, Paul Apostle of the Heart set Free, 190.

<sup>390</sup> Cf. George, Galatians, 254.

<sup>391</sup> Cf. Ibid, 260.

<sup>392</sup> Bruce, The Epistle to the Galatians, 175.

the prison yard of sin, from which there is no exit except through faith in Christ. That presupposes the well-known fact: "The promulgation of specific enactments creates a corresponding category of specific violations, with opportunity (and perhaps temptation) to commit the violations. But Paul's statement goes beyond this: The purpose of the law was to increase the sum-total of transgression."<sup>393</sup>

Paul's position in this respect is directly opposed to the Jewish understanding of the law. Franz Mußner attests to the novelty of this interpretation. *"Der Jude dachte und denkt darüber anders. Für ihn ist das Gesetz von ewiger Dauer."*<sup>394</sup> A catalogue of evidences can show that in Jewish philosophy the law is everlasting. *"So spricht schon Weish 18,4 von dem 'unvergänglichen Licht des Gesetzes,' das der Welt durch Israel geschenkt wird; und Josephus von 'unserem unsterblichen Gesetz' (Contra Apionem II,38): Philo sagt; 'Moses ist der einzige, dessen Gesetze von Dauer waren und unverändert und unerschüttert bleiben ... und auch für alle künftigen Zeiten werden sie bestehen und gewissermaßen unsterblich sein, solange Sonne und Mond und der gesamte Himmel und das Weltall bestehen' (Vita Mos. II, 3 § 14)."*<sup>395</sup> There are even further evidences. *"Bar-Apk 77,15: 'Wenn wir (die Führer und Lehrer Israel) auch fortgehen (sterben), so bleibt doch das Gesetz bestehen'; Esr-Apk 9,37: 'Das Gesetz geht nicht unter, sondern bleibt in seiner Herrlichkeit'. Nach Ass. Mos. 1,11 hat Gott 'die Welt um seines Gesetzes willen erschaffen' und ist das Gesetz 'der Erstling der Schöpfung'; nach Abot III, 14 ist den Israeliten das Gesetz gegeben 'durch das die Welt erschaffen ist'. Nach Targ. Is. 9,5 nimmt der Messias die Tora auf sich, um sie zu beobachten."*<sup>396</sup>

The roles of the mediator (ὁ μεσίτης) and the angels (ἄγγελοι) in vv 19-20 need to be further examined. The idea of a mediator carries with it a number of images. The mediator could be an arbitrator in a case that had not yet come before the court of law; he or she tries to prevent the case from going further by settling the issues therein. He or she could also be a trustee for something in dispute.<sup>397</sup> Frank Mußner supports the view that in the mediation of the law, there were intermediaries: angels and Moses. *"Die Auffassung des Apostels ist also die, daß dem Mose das Gesetz nicht direkt von Gott, sondern 'durch Vermittlung der Engel' verordnet wurde."*<sup>398</sup> Moisés Silva enforces this position. "Paul's emphasis on the need for

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<sup>393</sup> Ibid, 175.

<sup>394</sup> Mußner, Galaterbrief, 246.

<sup>395</sup> Ibid, 246.

<sup>396</sup> Ibid, 246.

<sup>397</sup> Cf. Ukwuegbu, The Emergence of Christian Identity in Paul's Letter to the Galatians, 298.

<sup>398</sup> Mußner, Galaterbrief, 247.

twofold mediation (Moses and the angels) suggests that the law is twice removed from God and contrasts sharply with the directness evident in God's dealings with Abraham."<sup>399</sup> Paul's point is probably that the Jewish motif of the law given through the angels and Moses tantamount to the abandonment of the claim that Israel is different from other nations.<sup>400</sup> Israel's claim to be the chosen nation sets her apart from all other nations (Deut 7:6; cf. 1 Pt 2:9). God was the God of Israel alone. But a mediator requires at least two different parties. And mediation involves obligations on both sides. Ronald Y. K. Fung opines that the "mediation involved in the giving of the law indicates that it is of the nature of a contract between two parties, both of whom have to fulfill its terms for it to be valid."<sup>401</sup> Israel did not keep her own side of the agreement but God did. "God is faithful" (1 Cor 1:9), but "Israel is unfaithful" (cf. Hos 2:2-23; Jer 3:11 and 20).

Paul uses the role of the angels to enhance its inferiority and to promote the superiority of the promise. Paul subtly turns the tradition about the angelic mediation of the law into the inferiority of the law.<sup>402</sup> Rather than showing the glory of the law, the involvement of the angels and Moses implies that the law can grant only indirect relationship to God. If the Judaizers have paraded the law and all its rituals as the means of ensuring intimacy with God, Paul portrays it as an instrument that disrupts the direct and intimate relationship with God. The law rather thwarts God's intention of establishing a direct relationship with the nations.<sup>403</sup> On the other hand, God made the promise directly to Abraham and this promise is fulfilled in Christ. Through faith in Christ the Galatians have direct experience of God's Spirit (3:1-5). The contrast between mediated and direct experience is designed to put the law on a level different from the promise.<sup>404</sup>

To place the promise on the level of God's grace, Paul focuses on the unity of God (*ὁ θεὸς εἷς ἐστιν*, 20b). He quotes from the Shema, the most basic confession of the Hebrew faith, "Hear o Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one" (Deut 6:4). The Shema functions as an emphatic denial of a split in God. "Even in the context of the Gentile mission," says J. Louis Martyn, "Paul is far from thinking that the promissory and enslaving voices of the law come from two gods. They come respectively from God and from a group of angels who acted in

<sup>399</sup> Silva, Galatians, in: Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament, 806.

<sup>400</sup> Cf. Dunn, The Epistle to the Galatians, 191-192.

<sup>401</sup> Fung, The Epistle to the Galatians, 162.

<sup>402</sup> Cf. Mußner, Galaterbrief, 247: "... um die Inferiorität des Gesetzes im Vergleich mit der Verheißung sicherzustellen."

<sup>403</sup> Cf. Ukwuegbu, The Emergence of Christian Identity in Paul's Letter to the Galatians, 298-300.

<sup>404</sup> Cf. Hansen, Abraham in Galatians, 132.

God's absence."<sup>405</sup> The affirmation may also imply a contrast between the universality of God and the particularity of the law. The universality of God is expressed in the promise to *πάντα τὰ ἔθνη* (v 8c). The particularity of the law is specified by its mediation through the angels and Moses at a given time. Moses is the announcer of the law to the Israelites within a certain historical period. Therefore, the law has a specific beginning; the law is not everlasting. The unity of God, however, implies that God is the same God for the Gentiles as well as for the Jews. He is the one true God who cannot be divided between Jews and Gentiles (cf. Rom 3:29-30). Above all, the fact that the Galatians received the promised Spirit by faith without becoming like Jews is viewed by Paul as a witness to the universality of God's plan for humanity.<sup>406</sup>

Paul wants to know if the law is opposed to the promise (v 21). He answers *μὴ γένοιτο*, "far be it." Moisés Silva maintains that "a critical distinction must be noted at this point. Paul does not say that the law as such is antithetical to the promise; indeed, he emphatically denies such an opposition (in 3:21 itself: *mê genoito* [NIV: 'Absolutely not!']). The antithesis lies, rather, between two different means by which the inheritance might be received: 'If the inheritance is [or, 'comes, results'] by law, it is no longer by promise' (3:18)."<sup>407</sup> Heinrich Schlier also confirms that there is no competition between the law and the promise. "*Zu einem Gegensatz (κατὰ) zwischen Gesetz und Verheißung, zu einer Konkurrenz gibt es gar keine Möglichkeit.*"<sup>408</sup> Timothy George opines that the Greek expression *μὴ γένοιτο* even "conveys horror and shock."<sup>409</sup> Paul sees the mere thought of such a view as a shock. The fact that Paul emphatically negates the possibility of the law being opposed to the promise indicates that he is only comparing the two and by so doing, he brings out the inferior nature of the law. In a way there is a conflict between what is good in the law and what is bad in the law. In this sense, Timothy George maintains that in verse 22 "the adversative *alla*, 'but', separates Paul's negative argument against a false conclusion in v 21 from his positive statement of the law's function in v 22."<sup>410</sup>

The promise is God's promise to Abraham (Gen 12:2-3), and the law is God's law to the Israelites (Ex 19-20). The two cannot be opposed to each other. But the law has only a

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<sup>405</sup> Martyn, Galatians, 370.

<sup>406</sup> Cf. Hansen, Abraham in Galatians, 133; Kühschelm, Zeitenwende, 70-71.

<sup>407</sup> Silva, Galatians, in: Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament, 805.

<sup>408</sup> Schlier, Der Brief an die Galater, 163.

<sup>409</sup> George, Galatians, 258.

<sup>410</sup> Ibid, 261.

temporary purpose. Paul clarifies why the purpose of the law has been accomplished. If the law could impart life, then righteousness would certainly be based on the law. But because the law cannot impart life, it has been superseded by faith. If the law could give life, then “Christ would have died in vain” (Gal 2:21). In a similar way Paul says to the Corinthians, “the Spirit gives life,” but the letter kills (2 Cor 3:6). The law aided the crucifixion of Christ but God raised him from the dead. However, when Paul says that the law lacks the power to give life, he contradicts not only the theology of the Judaizers but also one of the sustaining pillars of classical Hebraic thought. For nothing is more characteristic of the Jewish picture of the law than the assertion that it is God’s chosen instrument for the giving of life (cf. Ps 119:93 – “your law sustains my life”). According to F. F. Bruce, “one thinks also of a saying attributed to Hillel: ‘The more study of the law the more life’ (m. ‘Abot 2:7).”<sup>411</sup> But to weaken the argument of the opponents, Paul maintains that the law lacks the power to give life – “to call one out of the dead” (cf. Ps 130:1) lies in the hands of God and God has not invested this power in the law.<sup>412</sup> F. F. Bruce concludes that “the establishment of righteousness by faith as the way to life implies the inability and displacement of the law.”<sup>413</sup>

However, the law played a double role: as the law of God and as a confinement. Bruce W. Longenecker explains that the *Torah* did serve a function within history, but not as the legal corpus and social constitution of the covenant people of God. It was only a divine necessity in salvation history that represented the dark but necessary foil for the coming of faith.<sup>414</sup> But how did the law perform this strange task? It is by provoking transgression, by exposing human wickedness to the scrutiny of divine holiness, by eliminating every avenue of self-justification that the sinner is drawn to. Thus it leads humanity to the place where authentic redemption and liberation can be found, in God. We cannot move from Abraham to Christ, from promise to fulfillment, without going through the period of the law.<sup>415</sup> J. Louis Martyn makes this plain. “It (the law) actually served the purpose of God. It did that, however, only by its role as a jailer. It shut every door that might seem to lead from the human orb to the possession of God’s promise, and in that way it played its part in God’s plan to make his own entry into the human orb.”<sup>416</sup> Now that God has entered into the human orb, there is no more place for the

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<sup>411</sup> Martyn, Galatians, 359, footnote 219.

<sup>412</sup> Ibid, 359.

<sup>413</sup> Bruce, The Epistle to the Galatians, 180.

<sup>414</sup> Cf. Longenecker, The Triumph of Abraham’s God, 11-15.

<sup>415</sup> Cf. George, Galatians, 264.

<sup>416</sup> Martyn, Galatians, 361.



confining power of the law. The legalism of the law does not exist for Christians and there are no possibilities of returning to the principle of the law because the period of its validity is over. The conjunction ἄχρις, “until” (v 19c)<sup>417</sup> indicates a *terminus* in time. The verb συνέκλεισεν, an aorist form of συγκλείω, means “to frustrate,” “to condemn,” “to jail” and “to confine.” The condemning purpose of the law is further emphasized by the use of the ὑπό-phrase. The law imprisoned all under sin. Since the reference to the law in v 22 apparently recalls the quotation of Deut 27:26 in 3:10, the ὑπό-phrase is an amplification of the oppressive presence of the law and the condition is depicted as being under a curse (ὑπό κατάραν) in 3:10 or under sin (ὑπό ἁμαρτίαν) in 3:22. Therefore, the door to any attempts to use the principles of the law as a means to any positive goal is effectively slammed shut.<sup>418</sup>

With this image Paul brings together both the judicial and the punitive dimension of the law’s condemning function. Not only does the law declare all guilty before God, it also places all under its curse and locks all up in prison, preventing all from escape.<sup>419</sup> It held this power waiting for the redeemer who would liberate all (3:13) from the prison of sin (3:22). Since the Judaizers might have stressed the continuity in salvation-history between Abraham, *Torah*, circumcision, and Christ,<sup>420</sup> Paul attacks those of the works of the law for believing that they could merit God’s justification through their own efforts. To imagine that one could be saved by his or her own works would mean that God had done nothing for humanity. It would also mean that Christ did not die for our sins.<sup>421</sup>

Before the coming of Christ, the Scripture held all in the prison of sin (v 22a). According to Franz Mußner, “prison of sin” is to be understood in a metaphoric sense. *“Nicht die Vorstellung von einem Gefängnis ist dabei mitgegeben, vielmehr die Idee, daß nach dem Urteil der Schrift alle ohne Ausnahme Sünder sind; ob Juden oder Heiden. Schärfer ist die Aussage in Röm 11,32: συνέκλεισεν γὰρ ὁ θεὸς τοὺς πάντας εἰς ἀπειθειαν. Was der Röm von Gott sagt, bezeugt nach Gal 3,22 die Schrift! Sie deckt das Urteil Gottes über die Welt auf.”*<sup>422</sup> He distinguishes, however: *“ἡ γραφὴ ist in Gal 3,22 nicht identisch mit ὁ νόμος. Vielmehr ist 'die Schrift' das Dokument, das feststellt, daß die heiligen Forderungen Gottes, wie sie im Gesetz niedergelegt sind, von allen übertreten wurden, und so konstatiert sie die Verfallenheit aller*

<sup>417</sup> Cf. Hansen, Abraham in Galatians, 130.

<sup>418</sup> Ibid, 130.

<sup>419</sup> Ibid, 262-263.

<sup>420</sup> Cf. Longenecker, The Triumph of Abraham’s God, 10.

<sup>421</sup> Barclay, Many Witnesses, One Lord, 28-29.

<sup>422</sup> Mußner, Galaterbrief, 253.

*ohne Ausnahme an die Sünde.*"<sup>423</sup> But Paul does not demonstrate this in Galatians as he does in Romans. *"Das führt der Apostel im Gal nicht näher aus; aber in Röm 3,9-19 hat er eine ganze Reihe von Aussagen des AT zusammengestellt, aus denen hervorgeht, daß nach dem Zeugnis der Schrift 'die ganze Welt,' Juden und Heiden in gleicher Weise, sündig geworden sind ... Alle sind abgewichen, alle zusammen sind sie untüchtig geworden. Da ist keiner, der das Gute tut, auch nicht ein einziger (Ps 14,1-3).*"<sup>424</sup> Thus, all were under the prison of sin until the coming of Christ.

The Scripture in this context is neither a synonym for the law nor an allusion to some specific texts, such as Ps 143:2 or Deut 27:26. Paul rather personifies the "Scripture as a metonymy for God himself."<sup>425</sup> Franz Mußner prefers a different reading. *"Die (Schrift) ist dabei nicht als ein persönliches Wesen aufgefaßt, vielmehr ist an ihre Aussagen, ihre Urteile gedacht."*<sup>426</sup> Moisês Silva disagrees with him. "God not only declared all to be under the power of sin, but also effectively enclosed them in a state of sinful slavery to the law."<sup>427</sup> Richard B. Hays thinks here of *γραφῇ* as "alive and active ... It has a voice, and it speaks – not only to readers like Paul but also to characters within the story that it narrates, such as Abraham and Pharaoh."<sup>428</sup> Timothy George sees the Scripture as generally "the rule of faith, the deposit of trust, a definitive canon, a sure word of promise. From beginning to end Scripture presents one coherent theme: The sovereign unfolding of God's eternal purposes in Jesus Christ, to the praise of his glory."<sup>429</sup>

The expression *ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ* (v 22b) is a contested phrase. One school of thought interprets it as "by faith of Jesus Christ"<sup>430</sup> (genitivus subjectivus) while another understands it as "by faith in Jesus Christ" (genitivus objectivus).<sup>431</sup> F. F. Bruce settles for "by faith in Jesus Christ" because it has verbal parallels, e.g., "believe in Jesus Christ" (Gal 2:16), and "faith always means faith in." "The principal and, indeed, conclusive argument for taking the genitive to be objective here is that, when Paul expresses himself by the verb *πίστεύω* and not by the noun *πίστις*, Christ is the undoubted object of the faith, as in the clause immediately

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<sup>423</sup> Ibid, 253.

<sup>424</sup> Ibid, 252.

<sup>425</sup> Ibid, 261.

<sup>426</sup> Ibid, 252.

<sup>427</sup> Silva, Galatians, in: Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament, 806-807

<sup>428</sup> Hays, Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul, 106.

<sup>429</sup> George, Galatians, 262.

<sup>430</sup> Martyn, Galatians, 361.

<sup>431</sup> Bruce, The Epistle to the Galatians, 181.

following [2:17]: *καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐπιστεύσαμεν* ('even we have believed in Christ Jesus')."<sup>432</sup> James D. G. Dunn maintains that Paul never speaks of "believing of Christ."<sup>433</sup>

"Faith" has its root in the Greek society where it means the trust between two persons, but its usage in both Old and New Testament shows that it is always faith in God. Its Hebrew root, *aman* means "to hold firm," "to find support in" or "to trust in God as saviour" (Ps 37:5; cf. Isa 7:9b). In the New Testament, it is also "trust in God" (cf. Jn 14:1), "faith in his Son Jesus Christ" (cf. Rom 3:22), etc. Faith is a personal response to God's call, a relationship with God and a devotion to his Son. It is faith in him "who loved us" first (cf. Rom 5:8; 8:37-39). William Barclay emphasizes that "faith is committal to an adventure. We walk by faith and not by sight (11 Cor 5:7). It is launching out into the deep, accepting the plunge into the unknown, 'betting your life that there is a God.' It is venturing for the name of Christ. Faith is the trustful acceptance of an offer ... It is casting oneself without reservation on God in the complete confidence that he means what he says in Christ."<sup>434</sup>

The word *ἐκ* or *ἐξ* is a primary preposition denoting origin, root or source, meaning "from," "out of," "a place of."<sup>435</sup> Here in v 22, it suggests the source from which faith flows. Faith comes from hearing and believing in the message of Christ (Rom 10:17), which "leads to *hypakoê pisteôs*, the '(personal) commitment of faith' (1:5; [16:26]), and such faith produces trust and hope, as it works itself out through love (Gal 5:6)."<sup>436</sup> However, Richard D. Hays, like J. Louis Martyn and other supporters of the "New Perspective on Paul" has a contrary opinion. "We would do well to begin by asking whether it is more intelligible to suppose that 'believing in Jesus Christ' is the basis upon which 'the promise' is given to those who believe."<sup>437</sup> He insists that his analysis of "faith of Christ" in v 22 is in agreement with the analyses of 3:13-14 and 4:3-6 that "places Jesus Christ in the role of Subject, with πίστις as the power or quality which enables him to carry out his mandate."<sup>438</sup> J. Louis Martyn builds a long argument starting with "God's faithfulness" and arriving at Christ's faithfulness. "From Gal 3:7, 8 and 9 one sees, then, that in the first instance Paul hears in Hab 2:4 a reference to faith on the part of the human whom God has rectified in Christ ... Just as the faith of which Habakkuk speaks is a reflection of God's faithfulness, so the faith to which Paul refers is elicited, kindled, incited

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<sup>432</sup> Ibid, 139.

<sup>433</sup> Dunn, *The Theology of Paul's Letter to the Galatians*, 57.

<sup>434</sup> Barclay, *Many Witnesses, One Lord*, 28.

<sup>435</sup> Moulton, *ἐκ*, in: *The Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised*, 121.

<sup>436</sup> Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 598.

<sup>437</sup> Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, 150.

<sup>438</sup> Ibid, 115.

by the faith of Christ, enacted in his atoning death.”<sup>439</sup> This position of Richard D. Hays, J. Louis Martyn, etc. regards the human person as rather passive in the act of faith. The active grace is responsible for what we can do in life. Christians are expected to wait on God’s unconditional grace (*“Gottes bedingungslose Gnade zu erwarten”*).<sup>440</sup> This contradicts the letter of James which states that the body without the Spirit is dead, as faith without good works is dead (James 2:26; cf. Rom 4:1-22). Helmut Merklein offers the solution. *“Er (Jakobus) wendet sich gegen einen Glauben, der ohne Werke, ohne Geist und ohne Leben ist, und ist in dieser Frontstellung zu hören und ernst zu nehmen.”*<sup>441</sup> This shows that authentic Christianity needs faith in Christ and not faith of Christ.

The danger in the concept “faith of Christ” is that we are not seen as responsible for our actions. We only need “the faith of Christ” and not our own faith. But it is a fact that God has willed that man and woman should remain under the control of their own decisions (Sir 15:14), so that they could seek their creator spontaneously. Hence man or woman’s dignity demands that he or she should “act according to a known free choice that is personally motivated and prompted from within, neither under blind internal impulse nor by mere external pressure.”<sup>442</sup>

Paul in former times must have shared the polemical view that “Jesus is a mere man,” “an impostor,” “a blasphemer,” and “a rebel,” “a godforsaken” who deceived himself and others by claiming that he is the Messiah.<sup>443</sup> Paul might have held such polemical views until he met the crucified, dead and risen Lord (cf. Acts 9). This meeting did for him what his faith in the law and all its involvements could not do (Phil 3:8). After God had revealed his Son to him, so that he might preach him to the Gentiles (Gal 1:15-16), he changed from preaching the efficacy of the law (the faithfulness of the law that saw Jesus as a mere human person) to preaching faith in the crucified and risen Christ who is Lord (Rom 10:9; cf. Matt 28:18). The profession of “faith in Christ Jesus, who is Lord of the living and the dead” (cf. Rom 14:9) is not the same as the profession “of the faith of Christ.”

To mellow down the controversies surrounding “faith of Christ” and “faith in Christ” Bernard O. Ukwuegbu adopts a synthesis of the two concepts. “Rather than seeing the two

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<sup>439</sup> Martyn, Galatians, 314.

<sup>440</sup> Pesch, Hinführung zu Luther, 125.

<sup>441</sup> Merklein, Stuttgarter Neues Testament, 444.

<sup>442</sup> Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, 60.

<sup>443</sup> Cf. Moltmann, The Crucified God: The Cross of Christ as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology, 128-145.

concepts as in opposition, with one mutually excluding the other, 'faith in Christ' and the 'faithfulness of Christ' are approached as complimentary notions, the latter proving the basis for the former."<sup>444</sup> However, "till date, the controversy is far from settled."<sup>445</sup> The expression "faith of Christ" or "faith in Christ" remains open-ended, but faith is always "faith in," "confidence in" or "believing in" Christ, because "the nature of faith is given in the object to which faith is directed," for faith is always "faith in God" or "faith in Christ." It is one's personal faith in God that unites him or her with Christ and with all the members of the believing community, which is expressed in Paul's idiom of being "one in Christ."<sup>446</sup> Not all commentators agree to these explanations,<sup>447</sup> but one does not need "very weighty arguments" as Moisês Silva claims,<sup>448</sup> one just needs to look at the syntaxes and semantics of Gal 1:23; 2:16 and 3:1-29 to see if a commentary is being faithful to the text as a whole.

### 2.3.6 Liberation from the Law (3:23-25)

<p>23 Πρὸ τοῦ δὲ ἐλθεῖν τὴν πίστιν ὑπὸ νόμον ἐφρουρούμεθα συγκλειόμενοι εἰς τὴν μέλλουσάν πιστιν ἀποκαλυφθῆναι, 24 ὥστε ὁ νόμος παιδαγωγὸς ἡμῶν γέγονεν εἰς Χριστὸν, ἵνα ἐκ πίστεως δικαιωθῶμεν, 25 ἐλθούσης δὲ τῆς πίστεως οὐκέτι ὑπὸ παιδαγωγὸν ἔσμεν.</p>	<p>23 But before faith came, we were kept in the custody of the law; imprisoned until the coming of faith would be revealed. 24 Therefore, the law became our tutor to lead us to Christ, in order that we might be justified by faith. 25 Now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian.</p>
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"The coming of faith" functions here as a key concept that holds the subsection together. *"Diese drei Verse bilden eine Einheit ... Die Aussage zu Anfang des V 23 'bevor aber der Glaube kam' korrespondiert genau jener zu Anfang des V 25 'als aber der Glaube kam'."*<sup>449</sup> Before the coming of faith (v 25) we were kept under the law and after faith has come we are "no longer under the slave-pedagogue." With the coming of Christ a new way to God has been

<sup>444</sup> Ukwuegbu, The Emergence of Christian Identity in Paul's Letter to the Galatians, 250.

<sup>445</sup> Ibid, 250.

<sup>446</sup> Cf. Bruce, The Epistle to the Galatians, 139.

<sup>447</sup> Cf. Howard, Paul: Crisis in Galatian, XXVIII-XXIX: "In Galatians a similar pattern emerges. There Paul writes that 'in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles' (Gal. 3:14 RSV). This is written in the context of the promise given to Abraham that all the nations will be blessed in him (Gal. 3:8). Shortly before this Paul speaks of the faith of Christ (Gal. 2:16) and afterwards he mentions the coming of the faith of Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:22-5) ... Paul understood the faith of Jesus Christ to be the fulfillment of the promise given to Abraham which stated that all the nations would be blessed in him. Christ kept faith (= faith of Christ) with the divine promise by opening the doors to the nations."

<sup>448</sup> Silva, Interpreting Galatians, 30.

<sup>449</sup> Mußner, Galaterbrief, 254.

opened. Franz Mußner calls it the way of faith in Christ. *“Dieser ‘Glaube’ ist für den Apostel, wie das Genitiv-Attribut Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ eindeutig erkennen läßt, der christliche Glaube, und das heißt der Glaube an den Gekreuzigten und Auferstandenen.”*<sup>450</sup> Heinrich Schlier shares the same opinion. *“Christus Jesus setzt mit seinen Kommen objektiv den Glauben als den neuen Zugang zu Gott.”*<sup>451</sup>

Before faith came, we were kept under the law. What does this mean? The verb ἐφρουρούμεθα (imperfect passive indicative of φρουρέω “to watch,” “to mount a guard,” “to hem in,” “to protect,” “to keep in check”) is difficult to interpret because it has both negative and positive connotations. Franz Mußner concurs. *“Bevor der Glaube kam, ὑπὸ παιδαγωγὸν ἔσμεν. Was ist mit dieser Aussage eigentlich gemeint? Eine eindeutige Antwort darauf ist nicht leicht zu geben, da das Verbum φρουρεῖν sowohl ‘negativ’ wie ‘positiv’ Bedeutung hat: ‘in Haft halten,’ ‘streng bewachen,’ aber auch ‘bewachen’ im Sinn von ‘beschützen’.”*<sup>452</sup> However, Paul certainly means being kept under the law in the negative sense. Although “the law is God’s law,” (cf. Rom 7:12), one is not altogether surprised that Paul in Galatians says nothing about the law being of God or about its being holy, righteous and good (Rom 7:12, 14, 22) because he makes its function a temporary one.<sup>453</sup> The temporary function is clearly expressed in such phrases as “until the coming of faith” (v 23), “before faith came” (v 23), “the law became our tutor” (v 24), “now that faith has come” (v 25). Paul uses non-scriptural terms and constructions. The verb ἐλθεῖν from ἔρχομαι (“to come,” “to enter”) is a non-scriptural way of speaking about the genesis of the law. But all these are meant to show that even if the law had once had a function in God’s scheme of salvation history, that function was only valid until the coming of Christ (v 25). Paul’s hermeneutics of the law departs here completely from the traditional way of understanding the Torah. This heterodoxy, however, is not based on a new exegesis of the Scripture but upon the coming of Christ. Christ has come and his coming has completed the work which the law could not accomplish. Thus the law “is presented as ‘an interim dispensation’ which was temporally restricted and only temporarily valid.”<sup>454</sup> In Christ, the parenthetic age of the law has been displaced by the age of faith, which fulfils the promise

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<sup>450</sup> Ibid, 254.

<sup>451</sup> Schlier, Der Brief an die Galater, 167.

<sup>452</sup> Mußner, Galaterbrief, 255.

<sup>453</sup> Cf. Martyn, Galatians, 353.

<sup>454</sup> Fung, The Epistle to the Galatians, 160.

made to Abraham. It coincides also with the abandonment of all attempts to establish righteousness based on legal works of the law.<sup>455</sup>

The law was given in order to restrain the people of God from transgressing. The law, therefore, was like a watchman whose duty it was to safeguard the property of the master. Until the master comes, the watchman is in charge, but when the master of the house comes, the guard is relieved of his or her supervisory duty. Franz Mußner maintains that the guidance period of the law is to be understood positively; even when it makes sin known, it is still God's law. *"Es ist aber eine positive Funktion, die in Gal 3,23 dem Gesetz in der Zeit vor der Ankunft des Glaubens zugesprochen ist. Es hatte darüber zu wachen, daß die Sünde Sünde blieb! Weil aber die Sünde nicht aufhörte, mußte das Gesetz sein Amt immer zu beibehalten; es konnte nicht selber vom 'Zusammenschluß' aller unter die Sünde befreien."*<sup>456</sup> However, this function is limited by/until the coming of faith. *"Die Funktion des Gesetzes ist eine zeitlich begrenzte; sie ist auch eine inhaltlich begrenzte."*<sup>457</sup> With the coming of faith the validity of the law's functions has been overtaken.

Now that Christ has come (ἐλθεῖν), we are no longer under the slavery of the law. G. Walter Hansen explains that "the function of the Mosaic law as a jailer, pedagogue, guardian, or trustee of the people of God is limited to a specific era of salvation history – which ended with the coming of Christ."<sup>458</sup> The law was like "a suppressor" and "a restrainer of mankind," man and woman were suppressed under its tyranny but they have been released from its confinement because Christ has come.<sup>459</sup> F. F. Bruce thinks that in v 24 "the phrase εἰς Χριστὸν the preposition εἰς has a temporal force: 'until Christ' (contrast NIV, 'to lead us to Christ')."<sup>460</sup> Heinrich Schlier explains. *"Nach dem im 1. Jh. v. Chr. entstandenen Aristeebrief hat Gott den Juden das Gesetz gegeben, 'damit wir mit keinem der anderen Völker irgendeine Gemeinschaft pflegten' (§ 139; vgl. auch § 142)."*<sup>461</sup>

Miroslav Kocûr stresses the contrasts between the personification of the law and the personification of faith. The works of the law are personified and the coming of faith is also personified. The person of Christ, the faith that has come, is a personality with absolute credibility and trustworthiness. The person of the law, however, is the personality of the

<sup>455</sup> Cf. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 181.

<sup>456</sup> Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 255-256.

<sup>457</sup> *Ibid*, 257.

<sup>458</sup> Hansen, *Abraham in Galatians*, 132.

<sup>459</sup> Cf. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 182.

<sup>460</sup> *Ibid*, 183.

<sup>461</sup> Schlier, *Der Brief an die Galater*, 256.

slave-attendant with inferior status. There is a confrontation between these two personalities: The person of Christ and the person of the law.<sup>462</sup> In this way of personifications, faith is seen as a co-liberator with Christ, whereas the law is personified as a jailer and a slave-tutor, a strict trainer. By dividing the biblical time line between the reign of the law and the coming of faith personified, Paul separates the two hypostasized forces as different time periods. Thus, the double *inclusio* which frames the sentence in vv 23-25 draws effective attention to the conflict between faith and law.

The conjunction *ὥστε*, “so that,” “so then,” “therefore” at the beginning of verse 24 indicates that the image of the *παιδαγωγός* is meant to be taken as an extension of the legal imagery of verse 23. Like a jailer, the law imprisons all under sin and like a *παιδαγωγός* the law condemns and disciplines all and consciously prevents the prisoner from escaping.<sup>463</sup> Paul appeals to the tradition that his audience as well as the Judaizers are acquainted with.<sup>464</sup> He uses the idea that the lawgiver fenced Israel round with an impenetrable barrier, iron walls in order to prevent her from mingling with other nations. The law, therefore, acted as a wall between Israel and the nations and separated them from one another.<sup>465</sup>

The tutor was also the slave-attendant who accompanied the son of the master to wherever he went. Therefore, “the law was like a Greek slave, the *paidagōgos*, charged with the discipline and training of a youth.”<sup>466</sup> Franz Mußner shares the same view. “*Im antiken Erziehungswesen gab es den 'Pädagogen', d.h. einen Sklaven, der dem Kind als Begleiter auf der Straße zur Schule beigegeben war, um es vor Gefahren zu hüten, ihm die notwendigen Anstandsregeln beizubringen und ihm behilflich zu sein.*”<sup>467</sup> The *παιδαγωγός* begins his work when the child is seven years old and continues to late adolescence.<sup>468</sup> According to Jeffrey R. Wisdom, “the primary role for the *παιδαγωγός* was supervisory ... This supervision of the child until maturity most often meant that the *παιδαγωγός* ... restricted a child’s freedom, limited his activities, controlled his life, kept him from free association’,”<sup>469</sup> and from circumstances that he thought were unhealthy for his mental, psychological, sociological and moral growth.

<sup>462</sup> Cf. Kocûr, National and Religious Identity, 74.

<sup>463</sup> Ibid, 135.

<sup>464</sup> Cf. Schlier, Der Brief an die Galater, 256.

<sup>465</sup> Cf. Ukwuegbu, The Emergence of Christian Identity in Paul’s Letter to the Galatians, 303.

<sup>466</sup> Matera, Galatians, 16.

<sup>467</sup> Mußner, Galaterbrief, 256-257.

<sup>468</sup> Matera, Galatians, 139; cf. Mußner, Galaterbrief, 257: “*Es war nicht seine eigentliche Aufgabe, dem Kind Unterricht zu geben. War der junge Mann mündig geworden, erlosch diese Tätigkeit.*”

<sup>469</sup> Wisdom, Blessing of the Nations and Curse of the Law, 150.



The *παιδαγωγός* provides protective custody for the child; he guards him from dangerous people, destructive habits and undue influences. It was his duty to teach the boy good manners, to make sure he does his home works and that he memorizes and recites what he has learned in school.<sup>470</sup>

The child is under the slave-attendant as long as he is a minor. When he comes of age, he is liberated from the supervision of the slave-attendant and becomes responsible for his own actions. Accordingly, James D. G. Dunn regards the restrictive function of the law as “a protective custody.”<sup>471</sup> The law was the slave-attendant who accompanied us to the teacher, Christ. As the slave-attendant keeps the boy under his control until he comes of age, the law has kept the people of God in leading-strings until the coming of faith. With the coming of Christ the children of God attained their spiritual majority. In Christ they are no longer under the disciplinarian.<sup>472</sup> Frank J. Matera resumes that “the law was our disciplinarian,”<sup>473</sup> but since faith has come, we are no longer under a disciplinarian. “Paul repeatedly employs the preposition *hypo* (‘under’): 3:22 ‘under sin’; 3:23 ‘under the law’; 3:25 ‘under a custodian’; 4:2 ‘under guardians and stewards’; 4:3 ‘under the elements’; 4:4, 5 ‘under the law’. He argues that the period of the law (from Moses to Christ) was a time of confinement and restraint, a period of minority that limited the freedom of those under it. In effect, those under the law were no different from slaves. But when God sent his Son, this period of minority ended, and the God-given role of the law was concluded.”<sup>474</sup>

Humanity was kept under the law, so that “we” might be made righteous through faith (Gal 3:24b; cf. Rom 3:21-22). Put in a different way, the coming of Christ constituted the divinely ordained epoch for the people of God to enter into their inheritance as matured and responsible children of God.<sup>475</sup> For the Galatians to submit to the legal works of the law as delineated under the slave-teacher is to retrogress from maturity to childhood, from freedom to slavery, from the ability to live according to God’s will to the period of the *παιδαγωγός* characterized by reprimand and punishment.<sup>476</sup> Paul makes it clear to the Galatians that they are delivered from the hands of the slave-attendant. He wonders if they want to go back to childhood, when they are already grown-ups. Do they want to go back to being slaves when

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<sup>470</sup> Ibid, 152.

<sup>471</sup> Dunn, The Epistle to the Galatians, 197.

<sup>472</sup> Ibid, 182-183.

<sup>473</sup> Matera, Galatians, 136.

<sup>474</sup> Ibid, 137.

<sup>475</sup> Cf. Bruce, The Epistle to the Galatians, 194.

<sup>476</sup> Cf. Pate, The End of the Age has Come, 140.

they are already freed?<sup>477</sup> They should not forget that the law was only given for “an interim measure.”<sup>478</sup> Now that the Galatians are adult children of God, they need to be on their own. Now that Christ has come, what is required of the Christians is the recognition of their new identity acquired through the coming of faith, which is comparable with the new identity of a grown up boy, who has been recently freed from the previous obligations of the *παιδαγωγός*.

Furthermore, the need for *παιδαγωγός* was conditioned by the social status of the family. Not all parents could afford his services; but with the coming of faith, all God’s children have acquired a new identity in Christ. The new identity-requirement of the adult is to grow up, to give up the legal and sociological paradigms known during the period of childhood and to enter into relationships with people other than the brothers and sisters of their nuclear family.

### 2.3.7 Jews and Gentiles, Slaves and Freed, Male and Female are one in Christ (3:26-29)

26 Πάντες γὰρ υἱοὶ θεοῦ ἐστε διὰ τῆς πίστεως ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. 27 ὅσοι γὰρ εἰς Χριστὸν ἐβαπτίσθητε, Χριστὸν ἐνεδύσασθε. 28 οὐκ ἔνι Ἰουδαῖος οὐδὲ Ἕλληνας, οὐκ ἔνι δοῦλος οὐδὲ ἐλεύθερος, οὐκ ἔνι ἄρσεν καὶ θῆλυ· πάντες γὰρ ὑμεῖς εἷς ἐστε ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. 29 εἰ δὲ ὑμεῖς Χριστοῦ, ἄρα τοῦ Ἀβραάμ σπέρμα ἐστέ, κατ’ ἐπαγγελίαν κληρονόμοι.

26 For you all are sons and daughters of God, through faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For as many as are baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. 28 There are neither Jews nor Greeks, neither slaves nor freed, neither male and female. For you all are one in Christ Jesus. 29 If then you are Christ’s, therefore you are Abraham’s seed and heirs according to the promise.

Verses 26-29 is our main text. Only a brief analysis is offered here, as far as vv 26-29 are part of Gal 3. The linguistic details will be done in the next chapter.

The argument of this subsection is determined by the three times use of *γάρ*, “for,” because each of which indicates that what follows is connected to what precedes. The Galatians are no longer under a *παιδαγωγός* (v 25) “because they are sons and daughters of God” (v 26). They are the children of God, because they are baptized in the name of Christ, “clothed with Christ” (v 27). And there are neither Jews nor Greeks, slaves nor freed, male and female (v 28) “because as many as are baptized into Christ” (v 27) are one in him (v 28b). The pronoun “all” (πάντες) forms a bracket around verses 26-28, and verse 29 provides a

<sup>477</sup> Cf. Wright, Paul for Everyone: Galatians and Thessalonians, 41.

<sup>478</sup> Cf. Dunn, The Epistle to the Galatians, 201.

conclusion to the argument in this unit and to the whole chapter.<sup>479</sup> Paul aims at the inclusion of all nations in the salvific work of Christ, which is expressed in the relative pronoun *ὅσοι*, “as many as” (v 27a).

Christ is the Son of God and the seed of Abraham in whom the promise made to Abraham in perpetuity is fulfilled (Gal 3:16). All those who are baptized in the name of Christ are therefore incorporated into the children of God (v 26). “The Israel of God” (6:16) is redefined to be equivalent to those who belong to Christ. Existence in Christ is also defined as existence in the reconstituted Israel of God because Christ is the realm of the promised blessing.<sup>480</sup> Heinrich Schlier argues that “being one in Christ” has an inclusive meaning. *“Christus gehören meint, daß einer (als Glied seines Leibes!) Christus seinsmäßig zugeordnet oder eingeordnet ist.”*<sup>481</sup> All those who are in Christ are heirs of Abraham: *“Erben im absoluten Sinn.”*<sup>482</sup>

Paul goes back to the question of God’s promise to Abraham which he started in verses 6, 16 and 18. Heinrich Schlier says that the promise has double meanings. *“Der übergeordnete Gedanke war jede doppelte These, die er seit 3,6 ausführte: 1. Der Segen Abrahams gehört dem Glauben und 2. das Erbe Abrahams gehört Christus. Beide Thesen lassen sich auf eine reduzieren. Denn der Segen Abrahams birgt das Erbe, das durch den Geist im Glauben jetzt schon erfahren wird, in sich, und der Glaube ist ja also der neue Zugang zu Gott mit Christus gekommen.”*<sup>483</sup> The Galatians belong to Christ because of their faith in him. They share in the promise of God to Abraham because Christ is the seed of Abraham.

Paul represents the reality of the inclusion of all Christians in Christ with two metaphors: “being baptized into” and “putting on Christ.” The metaphor of baptism is used to draw the Galatians back to their initiation into the Christian communities, while the metaphor of “putting on Christ” might have been drawn from the “act of re-robing in the ceremony of baptism.”<sup>484</sup> It depicts the reality of complete identification with Christ. Therefore, identifications based on ethnicity, social status or sex and gender no longer have any significance because of the complete identification of all “in Christ Jesus.” The relation of this inclusion in Christ to the entire Abraham argument is apparent. The status of all the baptized

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<sup>479</sup> Cf. Matera, Galatians, 144.

<sup>480</sup> Cf. Hansen, Abraham in Galatians, 136.

<sup>481</sup> Schlier, Der Brief an die Galater, 175.

<sup>482</sup> Ibid, 176.

<sup>483</sup> Ibid, 176.

<sup>484</sup> Hansen, Abraham in Galatians, 136.

as being sons and daughters of God and the seed of Abraham renders any attempt to gain a superior status by circumcision or by observance of the legalism of the law valueless.<sup>485</sup>

All those who are baptized share one thing in common: faith in Christ. The pronoun πάντες (vv 26, 28; cf. ὅσοι, v 27) denotes the conclusion towards which Paul has been driving. The coming of faith is not simply for Jewish Christians but for all those who believe in Christ.<sup>486</sup> Through faith in Christ all are sons and daughters of God. According to F. F. Bruce, when Paul says that “you are all sons of God” (v 26a), it is not because only males are circumcised, it is rather because υἱοὶ also includes θυγατέρες.<sup>487</sup> It is men’s world and as such the plural noun “sons,” υἱοὶ is used in its generic sense. Men and women of faith are not only sons and daughters of God (v 26), they have a share in God’s promised blessing to the nations. The faith through which the true children of Abraham (v 6) inherit the promise made to Abraham and his posterity (v 16) is specifically identified as faith in Jesus Christ, who is the seed of Abraham par excellence (v 29).<sup>488</sup>

Paul’s use of the phrase “sons and daughters of God” at both the beginning and the end of his Abraham’s argument (v 7 and v 26) indicates that the inclusion of all nations among the people of God on the basis of faith in Christ is the focus of his entire argument. It is the conceptual framework for the understanding of the inclusive language of v 8 (ἐνευλογηθήσονται ἐν σοὶ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη) and v 14 (ἵνα εἰς τὰ ἔθνη ἡ εὐλογία τοῦ Ἀβραὰμ γένηται ἐν Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ). And it is the presupposition behind the redefinition of the seed of Abraham as a reference to Christ (v 29).<sup>489</sup>

Paul demonstrates how all can have access to God’s gracious provision of justification in Christ by faith alone. In reality Paul argues that faith has always been the means to salvation, beginning from Abraham, the father of the Jewish nation down to Christ, the redeemer of all the nations. Therefore, neither Jews nor Gentiles have any ground for boasting before God. As a result of their being in Christ, social, racial and gender statuses between Jews and Gentiles, slaves and freed, male and female have become irrelevant.<sup>490</sup>

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<sup>485</sup> Ibid, 136-138.

<sup>486</sup> Cf. Dunn, The Epistle to the Galatians, 201.

<sup>487</sup> Ibid, 202.

<sup>488</sup> Cf. Bruce, The Epistle to the Galatians, 181.

<sup>489</sup> Cf. Hansen, Abraham in Galatians, 138.

<sup>490</sup> Cf. Pate, The End of the Age Has Come, 194.

## 2.4 Summary of Gal 3:1-29

Chapter three of the letter to the Galatians holds itself together. In the first subsection (vv 1-6) Paul concentrates on the experiences of the Galatians. He appeals to the spiritual experiences which the Galatians cannot deny. The coming of Christ and the reception of the Spirit are the new revolutionary activities of God. The one who sends the Son and the one who justifies through the miraculous power of the Spirit is the one who has called the Galatians.<sup>491</sup> They are justified in him. As a result of their justification through faith in Christ, they have no more need of the legalism of the law. Paul grounds his argument in the redemptive history. The coming of Christ brings freedom from the legal and ritual works of the law.<sup>492</sup>

The structure of the second unit (vv 7-9) is clearly defined, and better appreciated when it is taken up in retrospect to the first subsection (vv 1-6) and extended to the third subsection (vv 10-14). According to Frank J. Matera, *hoi ek pisteôs* encloses verses 7-9 which develop the theme of the blessing of Abraham, while *epikataratos* (cursed) forms a bracket around verses 10-13 which develop the theme of the curse of the law from which Christ has redeemed us.<sup>493</sup> The Galatians are descendants of Abraham because they are *hoi ek pisteôs*, people of faith. By contrast, those who rely on the works of the law risk being excluded from the descendants of Abraham because they have not been incorporated into Christ through faith.<sup>494</sup> The central place of Paul's argument in verses 13-14 is appreciated when it is viewed as an amplification of his rebuke in verses 1-2. The Galatians were accused of being foolish in turning away from the message of Christ crucified (v 1) and the reception of the Spirit (v 2) to the legal works of the law. Now Paul confronts them with a deeper argument, the cross of Christ (v 13) which is the means of the reception of the Spirit (v 14). To live *ἐν νόμῳ* (v 11) or *ἐν αὐτοῖς* (v 12) i.e., the demand of the law, leaves the Galatians under the curse of the law and shuts them out of those whose lives are justified through faith. But to live *ἐν Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ* (v 14a) frees them from the curse of the law and opens the door of Abrahamic blessing to them. Thus, Paul exposes the foolishness of the Galatians by sharpening his argument of dissociation from the law and developing the argument of faith in Christ crucified.<sup>495</sup>

<sup>491</sup> Cf. Wright, Paul for Everyone: Galatians and Thessalonians, 169.

<sup>492</sup> Cf. Silva, Galatians, in: Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament, 804- 806.

<sup>493</sup> Cf. Matera, Galatians, 121.

<sup>494</sup> Ibid, 129.

<sup>495</sup> Cf. Hansen, Abraham in Galatians, 122.

In verses 15-18, Paul invites the Galatians into a dialogue with him as brothers and sisters in Christ. They are to know that a human will (*διαθήκη*) cannot be altered; and if it is altered, it becomes invalid. Paul appeals to the “*jüdisches Rechtsinstitut der ‘Mattanah Bari’*,”<sup>496</sup> and says that the law which came four hundred and thirty years later cannot alter or invalidate the original promise. The law is a late comer, and as such, it cannot affect the promise (*ἐπαγγελία*) made before it was given. Therefore, the promise God made to Abraham and his descendants forever supersedes the works of the law. The law was given through the mediation of the angels and Moses. The promise, however, was made directly by God to Abraham. Using the time the law was given and its origin in Sinai, Paul demonstrates the inferiority of the law. But the problem of the law seems not to be overcome as Paul digs deeper into its relationship with the coming of Christ (vv 19-22, 23-25). Franz Mußner asks: “*Wie stehen Gesetz und die in Christus schon angebrochene Glaubenszeit mit ihrer Erfüllung der Verheißung miteinander in Beziehung?*”<sup>497</sup> The law is good and holy (Rom 7:12), but its function as a slave-teacher was only valid until the coming of Christ. Now that Christ has come, we do not need the guardian function (*παιδαγωγός*) of the law any more. “*Das Gesetz ist nur unser Pädagoge gewesen bis zur Ankunft des Messias und nichts anderes, damit wir dann nicht aus Werken des Gesetzes, sondern aus Glauben die Rechtfertigung erlangen.*”<sup>498</sup>

Paul’s main aim is to illustrate the superiority of faith in Christ over the law, the superiority of the coming of Christ over the slave-attendant (*παιδαγωγός*), and to give the reason for the inclusion of the Gentiles into the one family of God (vv 26-29) through faith in Christ, who is the son of God (v 26) and the seed of Abraham (v 29). Verses 27-28 thus form the central point in an argument that moves from a discussion about the ineffectiveness of the law to the statement that a personal relationship with God is available to all through faith-union in Christ Jesus.<sup>499</sup> Paul negates every form of discrimination and segregation for those who have “put on Christ.” In Christ Jesus, therefore, all forms of stereotypes are swallowed up, because the Abrahamic blessing is promised to all nations (Gen 12:2-3), all those who share the faith of Abraham (Gal 3:6), share also in the inheritance of the promise.

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<sup>496</sup> Mußner, Galaterbrief, 244.

<sup>497</sup> Ibid, 254.

<sup>498</sup> Ibid, 258.

<sup>499</sup> Ibid, 26.

## Chapter Three: Analysis of Gal 3:26-29

### 3.1 Text

26 Πάντες γὰρ υἱοὶ θεοῦ ἐστε διὰ τῆς πίστεως ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ· 27 ὅσοι γὰρ εἰς Χριστὸν ἐβαπτίσθητε, Χριστὸν ἐνεδύσασθε. 28 οὐκ ἔνι Ἰουδαῖος οὐδὲ Ἕλλην, οὐκ ἔνι δοῦλος οὐδὲ ἐλεύθερος, οὐκ ἔνι ἄρσεν καὶ θῆλυ· πάντες γὰρ ὑμεῖς εἷς ἐστε ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. 29 εἰ δὲ ὑμεῖς Χριστοῦ, ἄρα τοῦ Ἀβραάμ σπέρμα ἐστέ, κατ' ἐπαγγελίαν κληρονόμοι.

26 For you all are sons and daughters of God, through the faith, in Christ Jesus. 27 For as many as you are baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor freed, neither male and female. For you all are one in Christ Jesus. 29 If then you are Christ's, therefore you are Abraham's seed, heirs according to the promise.

This text can be arranged and structured in *stichoi* like this:

V 26a For you all are sons and daughters of God,  
v 26b through the faith, **in Christ Jesus**.

V 27a For as many as you are baptized into Christ,  
v 27b have put on Christ.

V 28 a. There is neither Jew nor Greek,  
b. neither slave nor freed,  
c. neither male and female,  
d. For you all are one **in Christ Jesus**.

V 29a If then you are **Christ's**,  
v 29b therefore you are Abraham's seed,  
v 29c heirs according to the promise.

V 26 Πάντες γὰρ υἱοὶ θεοῦ ἐστε,  
v 26b διὰ τῆς πίστεως, **ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ**.

V 27a ὅσοι γὰρ εἰς Χριστὸν ἐβαπτίσθητε,  
v 27b Χριστὸν ἐνεδύσασθε.

V 28 a. οὐκ ἔνι Ἰουδαῖος οὐδὲ Ἕλλην,  
b. οὐκ ἔνι δοῦλος οὐδὲ ἐλεύθερος,  
c. οὐκ ἔνι ἄρσεν καὶ θῆλυ.  
d πάντες γὰρ ὑμεῖς εἷς ἐστε **ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ**

V 29 εἰ δὲ ὑμεῖς **Χριστοῦ**,  
v 29b ἄρα τοῦ Ἀβραάμ σπέρμα ἐστέ,  
v 29c κατ' ἐπαγγελίαν κληρονόμοι.

### 3.2 Linguistic Analysis of the Text

#### 3.2.1 Structure and Style

The text is written in verse form. Unlike prose that is written in grammatical sentences that constitute paragraphs but lack formal metrical structure, Paul's thought in vv 26-29 is presented in well structured and systematic form. The arguments are linked together with

causal and coordinating conjunctions *γάρ*, *καὶ*, *οὐδὲ*, *ἄρα*, which are witnesses of the coherence of the text.

The text displays structural parallels. “You all are sons and daughters of God, through the faith in Christ Jesus” (v 26) is parallel to “for you all are one in Christ Jesus” (v 28d). “You have put on Christ” (v 27b) is parallel to “if then you are Christ’s” (v 29a).<sup>500</sup> “Through the faith, in Christ Jesus” (v 26b) is parallel to “heirs according to the promise” (v 29c).<sup>501</sup> V 28 a-c are polar or antithetical parallels, although the elements in a and b are connected by *οὐδὲ* (“nor”), while in c they are connected by *καὶ* (“and”). “You are Abraham’s seed” (v 29b) refers back to “sons of Abraham” (v 7), “those of faith” (v 9) and “the offspring of Abraham” (v 16).

In the preceding verses Paul uses the personal pronouns *ἡμᾶς*, *ἡμῶν* (“us” – style, 3:13, 24), and first person plural verb forms like *ἐφρουρούμεθα* and *ἔσμεν* (3:23, 25), thereby gathering the Galatians together with himself among those, who, with the coming of faith (v 25) have been liberated from the bondage of the law (3:13-14). In 3:26-29 he turns to the second person plural *ὕμεῖς* (“you”), which he has already used in 3:1-5. He draws a conclusion that is focused on the Galatians’ “being in Christ” and takes them back to the moment of their baptism (v 27), through which they became sons and daughters of God (v 26) as well as heirs of the Abrahamic promise (v 29).<sup>502</sup>

### 3.2.2 Syntax and Semantics

There is a threefold use of the conjunction *γάρ* (“for,” “because”) in vv 26a, 27a and 28d. The *γάρ* in v 26a connects vv 26-29 to vv 19-25 in an explanatory and continuative fashion.<sup>503</sup> The “for” in v 27a confirms the thesis statement of v 26 and the “for” in v 28d affirms again the thesis statement by paralleling its terms and concepts.<sup>504</sup>

<sup>500</sup> Cf. Longenecker, Galatians, 158: “The sentence is a first class conditional sentence, which assumes the truth of what is stated in the protasis. The protasis itself focuses on only one fact: Relationship with Christ (ὕμεῖς Χριστοῦ, ‘you belong to Christ).’”

<sup>501</sup> Cf. Betz, Galatians, 187-189.

<sup>502</sup> Cf. Martyn, Galatians, 374.

<sup>503</sup> Cf. Longenecker, Galatians, 149: “Gal 3:19-25 is the first of Paul’s answers to the Judaizer’s call for Gentile Christians to live their lives under the prescriptions of the Mosaic law. Here Paul sets out a Christian understanding of the law, highlighting in vv 19-20 its relation to God’s redemptive promises, in vv 21-22 its condemnatory purpose, and in vv 23-25 its supervisory function.”

<sup>504</sup> Cf. Ibid, 158.



πάντες (“all”) in v 26a is connected to ὅσοι (“as many as”) in v 27a,<sup>505</sup> which for its part is again connected to πάντες (“all”) in v 28d. “Through the faith” in v 26 indicates how the Galatians have become children of God. Thus, the plural noun “sons” (υἱοὶ) is used in its Semitic sense to connote adoption.<sup>506</sup> “In Christ Jesus” in v 26 is taken up by “in Christ Jesus” in v 28d. “The expression ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (in Christ Jesus) signifies the relation of identification with Christ.”<sup>507</sup> Those who are in Christ are Christ’s (v 29a; cf. “Christ lives in me”, 2:19-20). “In other words, the objective basis of which Paul speaks is faith” and “faith in Christ can only be grounded in Christ himself.”<sup>508</sup>

Paul uses the aorist indicatives passive or middle, all in second person plural, in the expressions ἐβαπτίσθητε (v 27a) and ἐνεδύσασθε (v 27b). Those who are baptized are those who “have put on Christ” (v 27) and those who are one in Christ (εἷς, v 28b) are those who are the σπέρμα of Abraham (v 29b). The relative pronoun ὅσοι (“as many as”, v 27a) refers back to υἱοὶ (“sons and daughters of God”, v 26a).<sup>509</sup>

The phrase οὐκ ... Ἰουδαῖος ... οὐδὲ Ἕλλην (v 28) employs representative terms, which are pairs of opposites (forming a *merismus*), and are here negated with οὐκ (“neither”). The threefold repetition of οὐκ ἔνι in v 28 a-c is deliberate. It defines the religious, cultural and social, sex and gender consequences of being ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (“in Christ Jesus”, v 28d). The ἔνι in v 28 can be the strengthened form of the preposition ἐν but in classical usage it is also a variant of ἔνεστι(ν). Even though ἔνι is made negative by the particle οὐκ, “neither,” it is here an emphatic equivalent of ἐστίν.<sup>510</sup> An illustration of this can be seen in Paul’s question to the Corinthians: οὕτως οὐκ ἔνι ἐν ὑμῖν οὐδεὶς σοφός; “so there is no wise one among you?” (1 Cor 6:5). “In Christ Jesus” all human segregations are replaced by the order of inclusion. In Christ, Christians are united in Him “who calls you” (cf. 1:6; 1 Thess 5:24).<sup>511</sup>

Being εἷς (“one”) in Christ (v 28d) refers back to “God is one” (3:20), and connects God’s oneness to the oneness of the members. Because “God is one,” his oneness underscores the unity of his people. There is also an immediate relation of εἷς (“one”) in relation to being ἐν

<sup>505</sup> Cf. Betz, Galatians, 186: “The ὅσοι (as many of you) is not intended to limit the ‘all’ of v 26, but identifies what is meant by ‘all’.”

<sup>506</sup> Cf. Hansen, Abraham in Galatians, 113.

<sup>507</sup> Ibid, 125.

<sup>508</sup> Betz, Galatians, 187.

<sup>509</sup> Cf. Hove, Equality in Christ?, 58.

<sup>510</sup> Cf. Bruce, The Epistle to the Galatians, 187.

<sup>511</sup> Cf. Cole, The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians, 58.

Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (“in Christ Jesus”, 28d). The ἐν (“in”) is locative as well as personal. Being one “in Christ Jesus” is viewed in a universal and corporate form.<sup>512</sup>

The conjunction εἰ (“if”, v 29a) is conditional and makes those who will “be Christ’s” (v 29a) definitively one in him. The collective noun σπέρμα (“seed”, v 29b) and the plural noun κληρονόμοι (“heirs” or “inheritors”, v 29c) refer to all those who embrace “faith in God” as Abraham did (Gen 15:6; cf. Gal 3:6; Rom 4:3; James 2:23). The preposition κατά (“according to”) in v 29c serves to disclose how the Galatians will receive the inheritance. The noun ἐπαγγελίαν (“promise”, 29c) refers to God’s promised blessing to Abraham, that he will be the father of all nations (Gen 12:2; 17:5; 22:18).

The main expressions of this subsection are “[being] in Christ Jesus” (vv 26b, 28d), “[being] baptized into Christ”/“clothed with Christ” (v 27), “[being] Christ’s” (v 29a), “[being] seed of Abraham” (v 29b) and “[being] heirs according to the promise” (v 29c). The conclusion from this accumulation is that “the Judaizers’ call for a normistic lifestyle on the part of Paul’s Gentile converts, so that they might be related to Abraham and recipients of God’s covenantal promise, is thus countered by the proclamation that it is being ‘in Christ’ that brings about these results, and not observing the Torah.”<sup>513</sup> “Being in Christ” supersedes all forms of categorization and discrimination. Richard W. Hove avers that “since all God’s people share in Christ, there is no room for boasting or comparison for any reason, but certainly not on the basis of race, gender, or social standing. Feelings of superiority, as well as feelings of inferiority, both stem from an erroneous view of God’s people in the new age.”<sup>514</sup>

### 3.2.3 Literary Genre

Vv 26-29 are exhortations which display the same literary genre as 5:2-6; 6:15.<sup>515</sup> The present verb ἐστε (“you are”, vv 26a, 28d, 29a) indicates what the Galatians have become in the present (“sons and daughters of God”, “clothed with Christ”, “heirs of Abraham”, etc.) and that this supersedes what they were in the past. In the present they are “in Christ”; in the past they were categorized under different ethnic origins, social statuses, sex identifications, but now they are Christ’s. Paul thus encourages the Galatians to remain what they are now and to forget what they were in the past.

<sup>512</sup> Cf. Longenecker, Galatians, 158.

<sup>513</sup> Ibid, 158.

<sup>514</sup> Ibid, 122.

<sup>515</sup> Cf. Schmeller, Paränese: in, Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche, 1374.

### 3.2.4 Pragmatics

First of all, Paul constructs a universal principle for all those who are “in Christ.”<sup>516</sup> He wants to express a “comprehensive egalitarianism,”<sup>517</sup> using a “transformation formula”<sup>518</sup> and stressing the “revolutionary principles of equality.”<sup>519</sup> There are clear emphases on the universal nature of the Jesus event (Gal 3:13-14): There are neither Jews nor Gentiles, there are neither slaves nor freed, there is neither male and female because each and every person in these groups shares a common identity in Christ. The proposed meaning is that there are no discriminations among the children of God.<sup>520</sup>

At the same time, the text is a refutation of the teaching of the false brothers (*ψευδαδελφοί*, Gal 2:4), who regard being a male and freed Jew as an edge over those who are slaves, freed slaves, women and all those whose faith and way of life are not combined with the legal works of the law. Paul presents “a theological refutation of a heresy, that if accepted will destroy man and woman.”<sup>521</sup> According to Jerome Murphy-O’Connor, “what Paul wanted to get across was that society in its most basic elements, the very structure of society, was oppressive.”<sup>522</sup> The acceptance of the afore-mentioned issues – Jewish and Gentile categorization, slaves and freed, male and female stratifications – as the bases of admission into the Galatian communities would imply that faith in Christ is not sufficient in itself.<sup>523</sup>

Paul’s refutation is polemic.<sup>524</sup> He does not say explicitly what the Judaizers taught the Galatians. Gal 3:26-29 is a conclusion from his arguments, in which he makes no reference to what the Galatians were taught. He is simply defending his mission among the Gentiles. John M. G. Barclay rightly maintains that the “complicating factor lies in the linguistic problem of knowing only one partner in a particular conversation.”<sup>525</sup> At any rate, Paul teaches the Galatians that there are neither Jews/Greeks, slaves/freed, male and female. He makes every

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<sup>516</sup> Cf. Badiou, St. Paul. The Foundation of Universalism, 57-60.

<sup>517</sup> Asano, Community-Identity Construction in Galatians, 198.

<sup>518</sup> Hogan, “No Longer Man and Woman”, 25.

<sup>519</sup> Bruce, The Epistle to the Galatians 191.

<sup>520</sup> Ibid, 189.

<sup>521</sup> Cole, The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians, 57.

<sup>522</sup> Murphy-O’Connor, Paul. A Critical Life, 208.

<sup>523</sup> Cf. Kim, The Significance of Clothing Imagery in the Pauline Corpus, 111.

<sup>524</sup> Cf. Barclay, Mirror-Reading a Polemical Letter, 73.

<sup>525</sup> Ibid, 76.

effort to “draw unmistakable distinctions between his own theology and that of the Teachers.”<sup>526</sup>

### 3.3 Inter-Textual Relationship with the Old and New Testament

Paul requests for the books,<sup>527</sup> and above all the parchments (2 Tim 4:13),<sup>528</sup> which are “materials to read and probably also materials for writing.”<sup>529</sup> The sacred books or books of the law (1 Macc 1:56), Jewish tradition, the teachings of Christ, the practices of the early Christian community, etc. form the foundational sources of a Pauline letter.<sup>530</sup> There are inter-textual occurrences of different aspects and motifs of Gal 3:26-29. This subsection, therefore, looks at the scripture and other sources of different parts and items of our text in order to determine the possible places where Paul took the materials he used in composing our text.

#### 3.3.1 Sons of God in Old and New Testament

*Sons of God in the Old Testament:* The designation “son of God” is the prerogative of the kings of Israel (cf. Ps 2:7; 2 Sam 7:14).<sup>531</sup> However, the book of Exodus calls Israel “my first-born son” (Ex 4:22). Yahweh instructs Moses on what to say to Pharaoh — “let my son go so that he might worship me” (Ex 4:23; cf. Sir 36:17b) — and the prophet Hosea affirms this when Yahweh says, “out of Egypt I have called my son” (Hos 11:1). The Israelites who left Egypt are called “the sons and daughters of God” (Isa 43:6b; cf. Deut 14:1-2). The phrase “Israel is my son” refers to the whole nation (Deut 7:6). Jacob Kremer avers. “‘Sohn’ Gottes wird in Alten Testament das ganze Volk Israel auf Grund seiner Zugehörigkeit zu Gott genannt (z. B. Hos 11,1: ‘Als Israel jung war, gewann ich es lieb; aus Ägypten rief ich meinen Sohn’; vgl. Ex 4,22; Jer 31,9.20 ...”<sup>532</sup> A righteous person is also called “God’s son.” God will rescue him or her from

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<sup>526</sup> Martyn, Galatians, 42.

<sup>527</sup> Cf. Johnson, The First and Second Letter to Timothy, 440: “In Judaism, the plural ta biblia was frequently used for the scrolls of Torah ...”

<sup>528</sup> Cf. Ibid, 440: “This could mean, therefore, materials on which Paul could write.”

<sup>529</sup> Ibid, 441.

<sup>530</sup> Cf. Hartman, Baptism, in: The Anchor Bible Dictionary, 583.

<sup>531</sup> Cf. Montague, Son of God, in: New Catholic Encyclopedia, 311: “The king was understood in the Old Testament to stand in a special relation of sonship to God, and although the title son of God is never given to the king explicitly, Yahweh is frequently depicted as calling him ‘my son’ (2 Sam 7.14; 1 Chr 22.10; Ps 2.7), ‘my firstborn’ [Ps 88(89).28]. This unique relationship was rooted in Yahweh’s choice (1 Chr 28.6) and was acknowledged at the king’s enthronement: ‘You are my son; this day I have begotten you’ (Ps 2.7). The king was thus understood to sit on Yahweh’s throne (1 Chr 29.23), to be His representative and witness of God’s love and care for His people (2 Chr 9.8).”

<sup>532</sup> Kremer, “Sohn Gottes”, in: Bibel und Liturgie, 6.

the adversaries (Wis 2:12-13, 18). *“Wegen seiner Zuordnung zu Gott, die sich in seiner Gotteserkenntnis kundtat, kann von dem Gerechten im Buch der Weisheit als ‚Sohn Gottes‘ gesprochen werden (Weish 2,13, 18 ...).”*<sup>533</sup>

*Son and Sons of God in the Gospels:* In the Infancy Narratives the child who is to be born will be called “the Son of the most high” (Lk 1:32) and because the Holy Spirit will come upon Mary, the child will be called “the Son of God” (1:35; cf. “Son of the living God”, Matt 16:16).<sup>534</sup> Jesus is the Son of God (Mk 1:1, 11; 9:7; 15:39; Matt 4:3; Lk 4:9; 10:22; Jn 1:14; 3:16; 5:25; 11:4, 27; 19:7). He is “the Son of God in a unique and preeminent sense.”<sup>535</sup> He is the only Son of God (Jn 3:16), while men and women or angels are sons and daughters of God. “He alone stands as Son in His distinctive relationship with God.”<sup>536</sup> Mark puts this affirmation in the mouth of the centurion, who exclaims: “Truly this man was [the] Son of God” (Mk 15:39). According to Jakob Kremer, *“‘Sohn Gottes’ ist Jesus nach Markus also nicht erst durch seine Auferstehung; er ‘war’ es schon vorher, und zwar nicht erst seit der Taufe, sondern als der vom ‘Herrn des Weinbergs’ gesandte ‘geliebte Sohn’.”*<sup>537</sup>

Jesus is the only begotten Son of the Father (Jn 1:14). Nathanael affirms the Sonship of Christ (Jn 1:49). The title “affirms the uniqueness of relationship between Son and Father that the entire Gospel of John describes” (cf. 20:30).<sup>538</sup> Because Jesus is the Son of God, we will receive anything we ask for in His name, to the glory of the Father (Jn 14:13).

The Old Testament prophecies of the “son of God” (cf. Ps 2:7) come to fulfillment in Christ, the Son of David and the Son of Abraham (Matt 1:1; cf. Acts 13:33; Heb 1:5; 5:5).<sup>539</sup> Jakob Kremer affirms. *“Auf ihn konnte das aus dem Ritual der Königsenthronisation stammende Wort Ps 2,7 bezogen werden: ‘Mein Sohn bist du! Heute habe ich dich gezeugt’, d.h. zum König erkoren.”*<sup>540</sup>

“Sons of God” is also used in its inclusive and collective form. In the beatitudes (Matt 5:3-12) Jesus teaches the disciples to love their enemies, those who curse and persecute them, because the peacemakers will be called sons of God (Matt 5:9). And those who are worthy of the resurrection will rise as sons of God (Lk 20:36).

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<sup>533</sup> Ibid, 6.

<sup>534</sup> Montague, Son of God, in: New Catholic Encyclopedia, 313.

<sup>535</sup> Ibid, 312.

<sup>536</sup> Ibid, 313.

<sup>537</sup> Kremer, “Sohn Gottes”, in: Bibel und Liturgie, 11.

<sup>538</sup> Montague, Son of God, in: New Catholic Encyclopedia, 314.

<sup>539</sup> Cf. Janse, “You are my son”: The Reception History of Psalm 2 in Early Judaism and the Early Church, 87-89.

<sup>540</sup> Kremer, “Sohn Gottes”, in: Bibel und Liturgie, 8.

*Sons of God in Paul:* Paul simply calls the Galatians “sons of God” (3:26), and because they are sons, God sends the Spirit of his son into their hearts, which cries out “Abba, Father” (4:6; cf. Rom 8:15). The Galatians are sons of God as a result of their faith in Christ. According to James D. G. Dunn, “faith in Christ is now sufficient to ensure the relationship of all to God as sons (Gal 3:26), that relationship which hitherto had been the particular claim of Israel and of the righteous within Israel.”<sup>541</sup> It is now extended to all through faith in Christ Jesus.

There are expectations addressed to those who are called sons of God. They are to remain faithful in the face of suffering because the sufferings of this world cannot be compared to the glory that awaits God’s children (Rom 8:19; cf. Heb 2:10).

Paul addresses the Galatians as sons and daughters of God, thereby elevating them not only to the chosen people of God (cf. Deut 7:6), but to the status of adopted sons and daughters of God and heirs of Abraham (Gal 3:26, 29; 4:5).<sup>542</sup> With one God as the Father of us all (1 Cor 8:6) and the sonship of the baptized (Gal 3:26-27), Paul establishes an equal status for all the children of God.

### 3.3.2 Baptism in Old and New Testament

*Baptism in the Old Testament:* Baptism, which is derived from the verb βαπτίζω (“to dip” or “to immerse”) is the rite of purification or washing away of impurity (cf. Lev 13-17). Lars Hartman affirms that “the Greek verb for ‘baptize,’ *baptizein*, is formed from *battein*, ‘dip,’ and means ‘dip frequently or intensively, plunge, immerse.’ ... It refers to ceremonial baths in Lev 15:11 ...” a form of purification “from sin, from destruction, from the profane sphere before entering an holy area, from something under a taboo, etc.”<sup>543</sup> This was also done through the process of ablution by immersion. Immersion was a religious act specifically undertaken to achieve ritual purity and was performed by both male and female. The priest immerses himself before conducting the *Yom Kippur*, i.e. the sacrifice for the Atonement of sins (cf. Lev 16). The Torah also requires full immersion for women after their menstrual flow, for the woman who has recently given birth, the proselyte and for men after a sexual emission (cf. Lev 15:16-33). The bodily ablution is also used in the process of conversion by men and women. H. Mueller explains. “An extension of the general custom of ritual washings and the

<sup>541</sup> Dunn, *The Theology of Paul’s Letter to the Galatians*, 93.

<sup>542</sup> Cf. Kremer, “Sohn Gottes”, in: *Bibel und Liturgie*, 19.

<sup>543</sup> Hartman, *Baptism*, in: *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 583.

simple bathe of purification was proselyte baptism, which in later Judaism was prescribed for Gentile converts ... Slowly it developed into a recognized rite of initiation consisting of three parts: circumcision, baptism, and sacrifice.”<sup>544</sup>

Ritual cleansing was necessary for persons and objects.<sup>545</sup> For instance, “she (Judith) remained in the camp for three days, and went out each night to the valley of Bethulia, and bathed at the spring in the camp” (Judith 12:7). The Lord commands Moses to cleanse the Levites through the sprinkling of water (Num 8:7). Anyone who is cleansed can take the hyssop, dip it in water and sprinkle it on the tent and on the people therein (Num 19:18). H. Mueller opines that “in the Old Testament, *tâbal* becomes a technical term connected with removal of ritual impurity: dipping (*tâbal*, βαπτίζω) hyssop into blood and sprinkling it upon a leper who has been healed is part of the ritual by which he is pronounced clean (Lv 14:6-7).”<sup>546</sup> Although baptism is not mentioned directly in Old Testament, there are some allusions. “I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses ... and I will give you a new heart, and a new Spirit I will put within you” (Ezek 36:25-26). “The ritual is said to have cleansed the ritual participants from the state of being that existed prior to the ritual.”<sup>547</sup> By being sprinkled with clean water, and made holy through this act (IQS 3:7-9) one becomes acceptable to God.<sup>548</sup>

*Baptism in the New Testament:* In the New Testament, the verb βάπτω “is used only in the literal sense (Lk 16:24; Jn 13:26; Rev 19:13). From this form is derived the iterative form βαπτίζω, which in classical Greek, was used in the literal sense of ‘dipping’ and in the figurative sense of ‘being overwhelmed’ with sufferings and miseries.”<sup>549</sup>

The *Gospels* give detailed accounts of the baptism of John. The people of Jerusalem and Judea and the whole region around the Jordan went to John the Baptist. They confessed their sins and were baptized by him (Matt 3:5-6; cf. Mk 1:4-5; Lk 7:29). “John’s baptism had an explicitly moral character. It was the visible sign of *μετάνοια* ... a change of heart necessary for the remission of sins.”<sup>550</sup> His baptism was a challenge to “the piety of contemporary

<sup>544</sup> Mueller, Baptism (in the Bible), in: New Catholic Encyclopedia, 57.

<sup>545</sup> Cf. Beasley-Murray, Die christliche Taufe, 13.

<sup>546</sup> Mueller, Baptism (in the Bible), in: New Catholic Encyclopedia, 57.

<sup>547</sup> Petersen, Rituals of Purification, Rituals of Initiation, in: Ablution, Initiation, and Baptism, 3.

<sup>548</sup> Cf. Marshall, The Meaning of the Verb 'Baptize', in: Dimensions of Baptism, 15.

<sup>549</sup> Mueller, Baptism (in the Bible), in: New Catholic Encyclopedia, 56.

<sup>550</sup> Marshall, The Meaning of the Verb 'Baptize', in: Dimensions of Baptism, 57.

Judaism. His baptism implied that the law and all efforts to observe it could not produce the sanctity envisioned and foretold by the prophets”<sup>551</sup> (cf. Isa 1:16; Zech 13:1).

Jesus was also baptized by John (Mk 1:9-11; Matt 3:13-17; Lk 3:21-22). A possible reason for this is: “Jesus was baptized in view of His death that effected the forgiveness of sins for all men. For this reason Jesus must unite Himself in solidarity with His whole people; ‘all justice must be fulfilled’ (Matt 3:15). Thus the baptism of Jesus points forward to the cross, in which alone all baptism will find its fulfillment.”<sup>552</sup> Jesus also baptized some people in the land of Judea (Jn 3:22), although not personally but through His disciples (Jn 4:2).

There is the prediction of the coming of the one who is greater than John, who will baptize with fire and the Spirit (Matt 3:11; Lk 3:16), and of baptism as drinking from the cup of suffering (Mk 10:38-40; Lk 12:50). After his resurrection Jesus commands the disciples to go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Matt 28:19). *“Die Taufformel bestätigt den ausschließlichen Bezug von ‘alle Völker’ auf Menschen nicht-jüdischer Herkunft.”*<sup>553</sup> The secondary ending of Mark adds faith as the necessary *conditio sine qua non* for baptism and salvation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved (Mk 16:16).

*Baptism in Acts:* Baptism in Acts is very comprehensive. It connotes repentance, forgiveness of sins and reception of God’s Spirit (Acts 2:38; cf. 22:16). It is also an act of initiation into the Christian community (Act 10:47-48; 18:8). H. Mueller avers that “from the very outset, starting with Pentecost, the Apostolic Church preached the absolute need of baptism for salvation, admonishing all to do penance, to believe in Jesus, and to be baptized (Acts 2:28, 41; 8:12-13, 16, 36, 38; 9:18; 10:47; 19:3-5).”<sup>554</sup>

*Baptism in Paul:* Paul sees baptism as an inclusive act performed in the name of Christ. “We” are baptized into his death, “we” are buried with him in baptism (Rom 6:3-4), and “we” shall rise with him (Rom 6:5, 8). “The frequent use of εἰς (into) in this context, however, probably expresses the new relationship into which one enters with Christ through baptism; one enters into the sphere of His saving activity, becomes His property.”<sup>555</sup> In baptism “we all” received one Spirit, “we all” were incorporated into one body and “we all” drank from the

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<sup>551</sup> Ibid, 58.

<sup>552</sup> Ibid, 58.

<sup>553</sup> Friedler, Das Matthäusevangelium, 430.

<sup>554</sup> Mueller, Baptism (in the Bible), in: New Catholic Encyclopedia, 59.

<sup>555</sup> Ibid, 59.



same Spirit (1 Cor 12:13). And all those who accept baptism have clothed themselves with Christ (Gal 3:27).

*Baptism in Deutero-Pauline letters:* The letter to the Ephesians emphasizes the very nature of baptism. There is only one baptism (Eph 4:5).<sup>556</sup> The author, probably by taking up an old tradition, calls on the Christians to “awake” (ἐγείρε) from sleep and “rise up” (ἀνάστα) from the dead “so that Christ will be your light” (5:14). The Colossians are not only buried with Christ in baptism (cf. Rom 6:3), they have already risen with him, through the power of God, who raised Jesus from the dead (cf. Col 2:12).<sup>557</sup> The future resurrection from the dead (cf. Rom 6:8) is made present through the act of baptism (Col 3:1-3; Eph 2:4-6), however, the future expectation is still valid: “when Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory” (Col 3:4). According to Tor Vegge, “the passage contains the assurance that believer will be revealed in glory with Christ.”<sup>558</sup>

Summary: Paul sees in the baptism of the Galatians the expression of their faith in Christ as well as their “putting on Christ” (Gal 3:26-27). Baptism is the only means of entry into the Christian community. Baptism on the name of Christ supersedes all ethnic identity marks, status classifications, sex and gender stratifications (cf. 3:28). Baptism, therefore, “is the initiation rite for all those who want to belong to Christ ... Baptism brings one into the community that knows no barriers between different nations (Eph 2:14); all are one in Christ, whether Jew or Greek, slave or free man, male or female (Gal 3:28).”<sup>559</sup> All those who are baptized have “put on Christ” (Gal 3:27; cf. 1 Cor 12:13), and they have become “a new creation” (Gal 6:15; 2 Cor 5:17) “in Christ.” They are “conformed” (σύμμορφοι) to Christ (Rom 8:29) i.e., into His body (cf. 1 Cor 12:27; Eph 1:23).

### 3.3.3 Slavery in Old and New Testament

*Slavery in the Old Testament:* Slavery is legal in Old Testament times (Ex 21:5-6). There are differences between a Hebrew slave and a foreign slave. A male Hebrew slave will serve the Hebrew master for six years, after which the master has to set him free (Ex 21:3). However, this injunction is not always followed. “But afterward they turned around and took back the male and female slaves they had set free, and brought them into subjection as slaves” (Jer

<sup>556</sup> Cf. Vegge, *Baptismal Phrases in the Deuteropauline Epistles*, in: *Ablution, Initiation, and Baptism*, 497.

<sup>557</sup> Cf. *Ibid*, 497.

<sup>558</sup> *Ibid*, 512.

<sup>559</sup> Marshall, *The Meaning of the Verb 'Baptize'*, in: *Dimensions of Baptism*, 59-60.

34:11). H. C. Franco underscores this. “Yet this humanitarian legislation of 7<sup>th</sup>-year release and jubilee-year liberty remained largely theoretical, as is seen in the unfulfilled pledge given the Hebrew slaves at the time of the Babylonian siege (Jer 34:8-22).”<sup>560</sup> Female Hebrew slaves, however, must not be released (Ex 21:7; cf. Deut 15:12-18): *“Sie sollen nicht wie die Sklaven im siebenten Jahr freigelassen werden, sondern bleiben normalerweise auf Dauer versklavt. Dabei ist vorausgesetzt, dass nicht nur die Arbeitskraft der Sklavin, sondern auch ihre Sexualität ausgebeutet wird.”*<sup>561</sup> At the same time a female slave should not be sold to a foreigner (Ex 21:8).

A male slave can make himself a permanent slave (Ex 21:5), but an Israelite who becomes poor and sells himself to a fellow Israelite shall be treated as a hired servant, and in the Jubilee year he and his family shall regain their freedom (Lev 25:39-43; Deut 15:12-18; cf. Jer 34:9). Only a non-Israelite can be made a permanent slave (Lev 25:44-55). Permanent slaves, oxen, cattle, sheep, money, etc. are counted as part of the property of their owners (Tob 10:10). A man can own as many slaves as he wants and do with them what he wants. Even though there is an injunction not to mishandle a hardworking slave (Sir 7:20-21), but to treat him as oneself or as a brother (Sir 33:31), this injunction is not always respected. Hence, the aphorism: “Set your slave to work, and you will find rest; leave his hands idle, and he will seek freedom” (Sir 33:25). There are three things necessary for a slave’s obedience, bread, discipline and work (Sir 33:24, 26-28).<sup>562</sup>

*Slavery in the Gospels:* The Gospels set the master-slave relationship in comparisons, parables and metaphors (Lk 17:7-10; Matt 18:23-33). A slave is not greater than the master (Matt 10:24; Jn 13:16) and whoever wants to be the first, shall be a slave to others (Mk 10:44). According to the gospel of John which personifies sin, anyone who commits sin is a slave to sin (Jn 8:34).

*Slavery in Pauline letters:* Paul maintains also that whoever commits sin is a slave to sin (Rom 6:16-18). It is not only humanity that needs to be freed from the slavery of sin, rather, the whole creation needs to be returned to the freedom of the glorious children of God (Rom 8:21). Paul makes status in the Christian communities irrelevant (Gal 3:28c) and commands the Corinthians not to make themselves slaves of anyone, rather, they should seek for freedom if they can (1 Cor 7:21-22). C. Williams underscores this. “The idea of one human

<sup>560</sup> Franco, Slavery, 1 (in the Bible), in: New Catholic Encyclopedia, 206.

<sup>561</sup> Crüsemann, Als Mann und Frau Geschaffen, 33.

<sup>562</sup> Cf. Franco, Slavery, 1 (in the Bible), in: New Catholic Encyclopedia, 206.

being belonging to another as a piece of property was always repugnant to the Christian concept of human dignity.”<sup>563</sup> Paul presents the master-slave relationship on the paternal (Phlm 10) and consanguine level (16). “The church did, however, from the beginning, urgently insist on the mutual rights and duties existing between masters and slaves.”<sup>564</sup> The Galatians are encouraged not to be slaves of the elements of this world (4:3), because they are now sons of God (3:26; 4:5-6), rather, they should resist “a yoke of slavery” (5:1).

*Slavery in Deutero-Pauline letters:* The Deutero-Pauline household codes bring slaves under their masters (cf. Col 3:22-25). Slaves are to serve their earthly masters with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart and as if they are serving Christ; not in the way of eye-service, as men-pleasers, but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart (Eph 6:5-6). Masters are to stop threatening their slaves because they too have a master in heaven, Christ (Eph 6:9; Col 4:1).

The letter to Timothy commands slaves to respect their masters. They are to honour their masters so that the name of God and the doctrine will not be blasphemed. Those who have believing masters should not despise them, because they are brothers, rather, they should serve them well (1 Tim 6:1-2). They are to be loyal even to their perverse masters (1 Pt 2:18).

Paul makes the slave-master relationship irrelevant. He sends Onesimus back no longer as a slave but as an adopted child (Phlm 10) and a beloved brother (16). Institutionalized slavery has lost its hold on all those who are in Christ. There are, therefore, neither slaves nor freed in Christ (Gal 3:28).

### 3.3.4 Man and Woman in Old and New Testament

*Man and Woman in Old Testament:* God created man and woman in His own image (Gen 1:27). In the subsequent chapters, however, the woman seems to be made subject to the man. The man shall rule over the woman (3:16b) because she was taken from his side (2:23).<sup>565</sup> Erich Zenger opines, however, that Gen 2:23 is a demonstration of the equality of man and woman. “*Die Worte, die die Erzähler dem 'Erdling' in V.23 in den Mund legen, machen*

<sup>563</sup> Williams, Slavery, II (and the Church), in: New Catholic Encyclopedia, 208.

<sup>564</sup> Ibid, 207.

<sup>565</sup> Cf. Bird, Frau und Mann, in: Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart, 280: “Die Schöpfungsberichte der Gen stellen die Menschheit (... ādām) als untrennbare Einheit von männlich und weiblich dar (Gen 1,26f.; 5,1-2), erzählen aber auch von der Unterordnung der Frau ... unter den Mann ... wobei die männlichen Abstammungslinien und männlichen Akteure die Erzählung tragen (Gen 2-3; 5,1. 3ff.).“

*deutlich, das Gen 2 nicht (wie oft behauptet wird) die Unterordnung der Frau, sondern die Ebenbürtigkeit und die Solidarität von Mann und Frau begründen will.”*<sup>566</sup>

There exists also equality between man and woman in the assembly of God's people and before the law of God. “And Ezra the priest brought the law before the assembly, both men and women and all who could hear with understanding, on the first day of the seventh month” (Neh 8:2). Furthermore, the prophet Joel anticipates the equal reception of God's Spirit in the community (cf. Joel 2:28-29).<sup>567</sup> Therefore, the equality between man and woman and the inclusive nature of the community are emphasized.

*Man and woman in the Gospels:* Man and woman are joined in marriage. Jesus is asked by the Pharisees if a man can divorce his wife. He refers them back to the creation account (Matt 19:3-5; Mk 10:2-6). *“Theo[logisch] werden Frau und Mann von Gen 1,27 und 2,24 her verstanden: Gott schuf den Menschen als Mann und Frau und ordnete sie einander so zu, dass sie eine körperliche Einheit bilden.”*<sup>568</sup> In marriage man and woman are joined together forever. *“Die Jesus-Überlieferung spricht sich von daher gegen die Entlassung der Frau aus der Ehe aus (Mk 10,2-12 und Mt 19, 3-9; Mt 5,27-32). Damit versteht Jesus die Ehepartner rechtlich und faktisch als gleichberechtigt.”*<sup>569</sup> Even in marriage man and woman are equal.

The Sadducees ask Jesus a question about the resurrection of a woman who married seven brothers (Mk 12:18-27). After the death of the woman, in the resurrection of the dead, whose wife will she be? Jesus answers: “For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven” (Mk 12:25). Man and woman will rise on the last day with an angelic body. They will become one body like those of Adam and Eve (cf. Gen 2:24).<sup>570</sup>

*Man and woman in Pauline Letters:* According to 1 Cor 11:3, Christ is the head of the man, while the man is the head of the woman. Women are to pray or prophesy with covered hair while men should not (1 Cor 11:5). Women are to remain silent in the churches of the saints, and be subordinate as the law says (1 Cor 14:34). However, 1 Cor 14:34 is seen by many scholars as coming from a secondary source or being an addition of a latter redactor, who was influenced by the Pastoral letters. *“Es stört als ein Fremdkörper den klaren Zusammenhang in Kor 14. Die Berufung auf das ‚Gesetz‘, das den Frauen zu schweigen befiehlt, ist bei Paulus*

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<sup>566</sup> Zenger, Stuttgarter Altes Testament, 20.

<sup>567</sup> Cf. Crüsemann, Als Mann und Frau geschaffen, 93.

<sup>568</sup> Wischmeyer, Frau und Mann, in: Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart, 281.

<sup>569</sup> Ibid, 281.

<sup>570</sup> Cf. Thyen, Als Mann und Frau geschaffen, 140.

*mehr als nur befremdlich. Und endlich bestätigt die handschriftliche Überlieferung den Verdacht, dass hier eine Bemerkung in den Text geraten ist, die sich ein früherer Frauenfeind am Rande seines Exemplars des ersten Korintherbriefes notiert hatte.*<sup>571</sup> Paul says that there is neither male and female (Gal 3:28d). Gudrun Diestel, and others further demonstrate that the command, “he shall rule over you” (Gen 3:16b) has been invalidated. *“Mit der Aufhebung der Trennung zwischen Juden und Heiden, Freien und Sklaven, Männern und Frauen in Christus ist auch die Macht des Strafspruches von Genesis 3,16, ‚er aber soll dein Herr sein‘, gebrochen. Mann und Frau werden frei als Gottes mündige Geschöpfe, so dass sie einander in der Andersartigkeit als gleichrangige Menschen achten und durch ihre erneuerte Beziehung Bauleute im Raum der neuen Schöpfung werden.”*<sup>572</sup>

*Man and woman in Deutero-Pauline Letters:* Women are to be subject to their husbands — “Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord” (Col 3:18). The letter to the Ephesians demands that man and woman should be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ. “Wives, be subject to your husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Saviour. As the church is subject to Christ, so let wives also be subject in everything to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her...” (Eph 5:22-25). Women are commanded to learn in silence. They are not allowed to teach the men or exercise authority over them, rather, they are to be subject to them (1 Tim 2:11-12).

*Man and Woman in Other Letters:* The subordination of women gets further. The first letter of Peter opines that wives should be submissive to their husbands as a Christian conduct and a way of evangelization. “Likewise you wives, be submissive to your husbands, so that some, though they do not obey the word, may be won without a word by the behaviour of their wives, when they see your reverent and chaste behaviour” (1 Pet 3:1-2; cf. Tit 2:5).

*Summary:* God created male and female in his own image (Gen 1:27). There is no subordination of male nor female in Christ (Gal 3:28). They are God’s children and just as no God’s child is a slave or a foreigner, so also are female and male equal before God.

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<sup>571</sup> Ibid, 186.

<sup>572</sup> Diestel, et al, *Ist das Alte Vergangen?*, in: *Als Mann und Frau geschaffen*, 7.

### 3.3.5 Heir of Abraham in the Old and New Testament

*Heir of Abraham in the Old Testament:* Abraham means “the father of multitudes” or “the father of many nations” (Gen 17:5; Sir 44:19).<sup>573</sup> Yahweh made a unilateral covenant with Abraham and his descendants forever (Gen 17:4). The sign of the covenant is circumcision (Gen 17:9-14) and the effect of the covenant is that Abraham becomes a source of blessing to all nations (Gen 12:2; 18:18).

In keeping with the terms of the covenant, Abraham circumcises every male child born to him (Gen 17:23-26; 21:4); the sons of Abraham are Isaac and Ishmael (1 Chron 1:28). Circumcision is also the sign of God’s covenant with Isaac and Jacob (Lev 26:42; 2 Kg 13:23). God confirms this covenant as an everlasting covenant to Israel (1 Chron 16:16-17; Ps 105:8-10; cf. 1 Makk 1:11-15). To enter this community one must be circumcised. The term *gôyîm* was used to describe “people or nations other than the chosen people.”<sup>574</sup> All contacts with the uncircumcised were forbidden. J. J. Castelot explains. “The attitude of the Israelites of the Old Testament was determined by religious rather than racial considerations. Social and political contacts with Gentiles always involved the danger of religious contamination, and since the Israelites were the sole champions of pure moral monotheism, this was a consideration of prime importance.”<sup>575</sup>

*Heir of Abraham in the New Testament:* Luke speaks of God’s promise to Abraham and his descendant/offspring forever (Lk 1:55). In the Johannine dispute between Jesus and the Jews, the Jews affirm that they are the descendants of Abraham (Jn 8:31-33, 39; cf. Acts 7:2).

*Heir of Abraham in Pauline letters:* God’s promise to Abraham and his descendants for Paul is the promise of faith. “Descendant of Abraham” is an inclusive phrase (Rom 4:13-16; 11:1). The children of Abraham are now the people of faith (Gal 3:5, 8-9; Rom 4:1, 12b). God’s promised blessing to Abraham is now inherited by those who share in the faith of Abraham. Paul simply affirms that those of faith are heirs of Abraham (Gal 3:7, [15-18], 29).

*Summary:* The excursus of the Old and New Testament texts shows that the sources of 3:26-29 are the sacred books, Jewish tradition, the teachings of Jesus Christ, as well as the practices of the early Christian community.<sup>576</sup> This exposition also places Paul’s letter to the Galatians within the framework of the early church. Parts of the formula in 3:26-29 occur in

<sup>573</sup> Cf. Lang, Abraham, in: Herders Neues Bibel Lexikon, 6.

<sup>574</sup> Castelot, Gentiles, in: New Catholic Encyclopedia, 139.

<sup>575</sup> Ibid, 139.

<sup>576</sup> Cf. Hartman, Baptism, in: The Anchor Bible Dictionary, 583.

various Old and New Testament texts, as well as in the Jewish tradition, but with “a consistency of motifs and variations.”<sup>577</sup> Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza explains. “Just as born Jews had to abandon the privileged notion that they alone were the chosen people of God, so masters had to relinquish their power over slaves ... Since these social-political privileges were, at the same time, religious privileges, conversion to the Christian movement for men also meant relinquishing their religious prerogatives.”<sup>578</sup> The Pauline community was, therefore, a community that welcomed all: Jews and Gentiles, slaves and freed, male and female. In Christ Jesus ethnic identity marks, social status, sex and gender have lost their stronghold.

### 3.4 Traditional Sources and Paul’s Redaction

Ritual washing or purification existed before the Christian baptism. Lars Hartman summarizes the traditional sources thus: “By Plato’s time and onwards it (baptism) is often used in a figurative sense (e.g., in the passive, ‘soaked’ in wine, Plato, Symposium 176 B). It appears four times in the LXX: 4 Kgdms 5:14 (Naaman in the Jordan), Jdt 12:7 (purification), Sir 34:30 – Eng 34:25 (purification after touching a corpse), Isa 21:4 (figurative of lawlessness).”<sup>579</sup> Furthermore, “many religions in antiquity practised different washings and baths. This holds true for the mysteries of Eleusis, of Mithras, and of Isis; the Old Testament prescribed several ablutions to be performed, rules which were observed by Jews also in New Testament times (John 2:6); the Qumran community laid a particular stress on them, and Bannus (Joseph. Life. 10) and John the Baptist were not alone in practising baptisms outside of mainstream Judaism; other baptismal movements also appeared in the Transjordanian/Syrian area. Sometimes during the first century C.E. proselyte baptism was introduced in Judaism, and when baptism received a central place in Mandeism, the rite as such was certainly no novelty, regardless of whether it should be regarded as pre-Christian or not.”<sup>580</sup> Paul, therefore, had a rich tradition before him.

Gal 3:26 begins with the second person plural verb *ἐστε* (“you are”). Galatians are now sons and daughters of God (cf. Hos 11:1; Isa 43:6b), through faith in Christ Jesus. Verse 27 uses also second person plural verbs *ἐβαπτίσθητε* (“you were baptized”) and *Χριστὸν ἐνεδύσασθε* (“you have put on Christ”). This leads to the affirmation that Jews and Gentiles, slaves and

<sup>577</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 208.

<sup>578</sup> *Ibid*, 218.

<sup>579</sup> Hartman, Baptism, in: *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 583.

<sup>580</sup> *Ibid*, 583.

freed, male and female are one in Christ (v 28). In comparison to verse 27 Paul remarks that the Corinthians are baptized into one body (*εἰς ἓν σῶμα ἐβαπτίσθημεν*, 1 Cor 12:13a). Paul also speaks of baptism as being “buried with Christ” (*συνετάφημεν*, Rom 6:4). On the other hand, Ephesians 5:14 calls on Christians to “awake” (using the imperative *ἐγείρε*) from slumber and to “arise” (*ἀνάστα*) from the dead and Christ will be their light (*ἐπιφάσει*). Col 2:12 speaks of baptism as “buried with him” (*συνταφέντες αὐτῷ*) and 3:9-10 presents baptism as “putting off” (*ἀπεκδυσάμενοι*, v 9) the old man and “putting on” (*ἐνδυσάμενοι*, v 10) the new self, while Ephesians 4:22 talks of “putting off” (*ἀποθέσθαι*) the old man and “putting on” (*ἐνδύσασθαι*, 4:24) the new man. The account of the Ethiopian Chamberlain similarly describes baptism as “going down into the water” (*κατέβησαν*, Acts 8:38) and “coming up out of the water” (*ἀνέβησαν*, 8:39).<sup>581</sup> These texts show that baptism as “putting on Christ,” “robing,” “disrobing,” “immersion,” “going down,” “being buried,” “awaking” and “arising” is well attested to in both Scripture and Jewish tradition. However, “being baptized into Christ means entering the sphere of the resurrected Lord, the life-giving Spirit whose reality and power are manifested in the Christian community.”<sup>582</sup> Unlike other initiations which entail ritual purification or initiation into specific cults, “Christian baptism accomplishes both individual salvation and initiation into a community, into a religious association.”<sup>583</sup> Baptism, therefore, is the identification with Christ’s death (cf. Rom 6:3), an initiation into Christ (Gal 3:27), within a given Christian community.

The phrase *Χριστὸν ἐνεδύσασθε* (“you have put on Christ”) in Gal 3:27b has also Old Testament allusions. Job speaks of “putting on righteousness” and being clothed with a robe of justice (Job 29:14). The sons of Aaron are clothed with priestly garments (Ex 28:31-43). Baptism is also referred to in a different metaphorical way as being sprinkled with clean water (cf. Ezek 36:25). In Jewish tradition the baptism of a proselyte can be described as “going down” and “coming up” of the water (cf. Gen Rab 39:4).<sup>584</sup> In Gal 3:27b, Paul describes baptism as “putting on Christ.”

<sup>581</sup> Thyen, *Als Mann und Frau geschaffen*, 144-145.

<sup>582</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 214.

<sup>583</sup> *Ibid*, 214.

<sup>584</sup> Cf. Garland, *II Corinthians*, 286, footnote, 778; Daube, *The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism*, 111-112.



Before the coming of Christ,<sup>585</sup> “there was a great deal of baptismal activity in Syria and Palestine, especially along the upper Jordan, among many different groups”<sup>586</sup> such as Mandeism and Bannus (Joseph. Life. 10).<sup>587</sup> These activities include: ablution in Hellenistic syncretism, the bathe of the Essenes, proselyte baptism of late Judaism, etc. These movements predisposed the people for the baptism of John and subsequently for that of Christ.<sup>588</sup> John is called the “baptizer” or “Baptist” (βαπτιστής, Matt 3:1). “This title was obviously first given him, not by Christians, but by pre-Christian popular consent.”<sup>589</sup> Paul takes up baptism (Gal 3:27; 1 Cor 12:13) which was present in both Jewish tradition and Scripture and sees in it the means of initiation into the Christian community and identification with Christ.

Paul uses an inclusive formula in v 28, which shares three of its component parts with a traditional pattern of Jew and Gentile, slave and freed, male and female. Harthwig Thyen affirms that this blessing is contained in the ancient prayer book called *Birchot HaShachar*, i.e., a series of morning blessings recited by the Rabbi.<sup>590</sup> According to F. F. Bruce, “this threefold thanksgiving can be traced back as far as R. Judah b. Elai, c. AD 150 (t. Ber. 7.18), or his contemporary R. Me’ir (b. Men. 43b) ... The formula may be even earlier, for it seems to have been modelled on a Greek formula going back as far as Thales (6<sup>th</sup> century BC) ...”<sup>591</sup> Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza underscores this point. “It was a rhetorical commonplace that Hellenistic man was grateful to the gods because he was fortunate enough to be born a human being and not a beast, a Greek and not a barbarian, a free man and not a slave, a man and not woman. This cultural pattern seems to have been adopted by Judaism in the first or second centuries C.E. and found its way into the synagogue liturgy. Three times a Jewish man thanked God that he did not create him a Gentile, a slave, or a woman.”<sup>592</sup> Harthwig Thyen concurs. “*Drei Gebete muss man täglich sagen. Gepriesen seist du, der du mich nicht als Heiden schufst. Gepriesen, der du mich nicht als Frau geschaffen! Gepriesen, der du mich nicht als Ungebildeten*

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<sup>585</sup> Cf. Petersen, Rituals of Purification, Rituals of Initiation, in: Ablution, Initiation, and Baptism, 7: “There is ample textual evidence that the Castalian spring played an important role for ritual purity deemed to be a prerequisite for priests and pilgrims approaching the religious precinct of the temple of Apollo at Delphi. In Euripide’s *Ion* it is not only said that the priests and pilgrims had to purify themselves with the water from the Castalian spring but also that the temple itself was sometime sprinkled with the water (*Ion* 94-108).”

<sup>586</sup> Mueller, Baptism (in the Bible), in: New Catholic Encyclopedia, 57.

<sup>587</sup> Cf. Hartman, Baptism, in: The Anchor Bible Dictionary, 583.

<sup>588</sup> Mueller, Baptism (in the Bible), in: New Catholic Encyclopedia, 57.

<sup>589</sup> *Ibid*, 57.

<sup>590</sup> Cf. Thyen, Als Mann und Frau geschaffen, 149.

<sup>591</sup> Bruce, The Epistle to the Galatians, 187.

<sup>592</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, In Memory of Her, 217.

*machtest.*"<sup>593</sup> The formula underwent a transformation when "uneducated" was changed to "slave." *"Im Babylonischen Talmud ist das Wort 'Ungebildeter' durch 'Sklave' ersetzt, und in dieser Form stehen die drei Danksagungen im Gebetbuch Birkot haShahar."*<sup>594</sup>

In verse 29, Paul refers to the faith of Abraham. God promised Abraham that his children shall be as innumerable as the stars. Abraham believed God and God recorded it to him as righteousness (Gen 15:5-6). Abraham is a known personality in Hebrew tradition (cf. Gen 12:2; 17; 18:18; Sir 44:19-23). Paul compares the faith of the Galatians with that of Abraham (3:6) and makes all those who are one in Christ (3:28d) the children of Abraham (σπέρμα, 3:16, 29) and heirs of Abrahamic promise (3:18) through faith in Christ Jesus (3:26).

*Summary:* After going through the Scripture and the traditional sources of our text, it seems most probable that Gal 3:26-29 has its root in the early Christian baptismal liturgy: *"Daß der Passage (Gal 3,26-29) tatsächlich ein Stück Tauf liturgie der heidenchristlichen Kirche zugrunde liegt, ist recht wahrscheinlich."*<sup>595</sup> Paul seems to take from the Scripture and from tradition the motifs he wants and to plant them within the context of the coming of faith (vv 23-25) and the time of our adoption (4:1-8). It is the formula itself that negates discrimination in any form (cf. "There is, therefore, now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus", Rom 8:1; cf. also 1:16-17; 3:22-26; 10:10-13). Hartwig Thyen affirms that this claim has its root in the traditional liturgical formula. *"Da sowohl 1 Kor 12,13 als auch Gal 3,26-28 ausdrücklich die Taufe als der Ort der Besiegelung der Bekehrung und des unwiderruflichen Eintritts in den Bereich dieser neuen Schöpfung der aufgehobenen Gegensätze genannt wird, und da der Kolossertext [Col 3:9-11] mit seinem Bild von 'Ausziehen des alten' und vom 'Anlegen des neuen Menschen' ebenfalls dazu aufruft, die eigene Bekehrung im täglichen Lebensvollzug einzuholen, darf man wohl mit der Mehrzahl der Ausleger annehmen, dass die hier jeweils unterschiedlich verarbeitete Tradition der Tauf liturgie der heidenchristlichen Kirche entstammt."*<sup>596</sup> And if it is no longer circumcision (Gal 5:6; 6:15; 1 Cor 7:19; Col 3:11) but baptism that is the rite of initiation into the community of God's children, then, Jews and Gentiles, slaves and freed, male and female have become full members of the people of God with equal rights, privileges and duties through baptism.

<sup>593</sup> Thyen, *Als Mann und Frau geschaffen*, 149.

<sup>594</sup> *Ibid*, 149.

<sup>595</sup> Thyen, *Als Mann und Frau geschaffen*, 144.

<sup>596</sup> *Ibid*, 139.

Israel is called “the son of God” (cf. Ex 4:22; Hos 11:1), but Christ is “the only Son from the Father” (Jn 1:14). Paul calls all Christians sons and daughters of God (Gal 2:26), thereby borrowing a scriptural phrase. Those who are sons and daughters of God are those who are clothed with Christ (vv 26-27). Paul thus elevates Christians to the status of God’s adopted children and heirs of Abraham (vv 26, 29; 4:5-6). He takes what seems appropriate from the biblical texts (cf. Gen 15:5-6; Job 29:14) and the religious tradition, and makes additions and subtractions, which enable him to arrive at what he wants his new teaching to be. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza attests to possible “Pauline insertions” in vv 26-29. “Within the baptismal unit one can distinguish several Pauline additions. The syntactic transitions, ‘therefore,’ and ‘through faith in Christ Jesus,’ as well as v 29, are clearly Pauline insertions.”<sup>597</sup> All these suggest that Paul was familiar with traditional patterns and Scripture.<sup>598</sup> The fact that Paul uses the concepts, such as “sons,” “faith in Christ,” “putting on Christ,” “male and female,” “heirs of Abraham,” etc. without trying to elaborate on them also suggests that the Galatians were familiar with the tradition and the Scripture, which they learnt from Paul.

Paul sometimes speaks explicitly of handing on a tradition (*παραδίδωμι*, 1 Cor 11:23; cf. 1 Cor 15:3), but Gal 3:26-29 mainly fuses together different biblical texts and a religious formula.<sup>599</sup> V 28 has a strong connection to both tradition and the Jewish Synagogue liturgy, but with a new stressing of outstanding motifs, variants and some modifications. Paul does neither thank God for creating him a Jew (cf. Phil 3:5-6) or a man nor thank him for not creating him a slave (cf. 1 Cor 9:19-23) or a woman (Gal 3:28d), rather, he dismisses these ethno-cultural and socio-religious institutions and boundaries by saying that “you all are one in Christ” (v 28, cf. v 26). He counts every privilege accruing from circumcision as nothing (Gal 6:15; cf. Phil 3:7-8).<sup>600</sup> Paul sees God’s promise to bless all the nations (Gen 12:2-3; 22:18) as fulfilled in Christ, who is the seed of Abraham (Gal 3:29).

### 3.5 Detailed Exegesis of Gal 3:26-29

This subsection provides a detailed verse by verse analysis and interpretation of our text. It stresses the importance of the “transformation formula” in verses 26-28.<sup>601</sup>

<sup>597</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 208.

<sup>598</sup> Cf. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul’s Letter to the Galatians*, 117.

<sup>599</sup> Cf. Betz, *Galatians*, 181.

<sup>600</sup> Cf. Martyn, *Galatians*, 374.

<sup>601</sup> Cf. Hogan, “No Longer Male and Female”, 27.

### 3.5.1 You are all Sons and Daughters of God (v 26)

Πάντες γὰρ υἱοὶ θεοῦ ἐστε διὰ τῆς πίστεως ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ ·

Paul begins verse 26 with “for all”, πάντες γὰρ. The conjunction γὰρ assigns a reason to what precedes (the faith that has come, v 25) and prepares the reader for what will follow, being “sons and daughters of God.” The pronoun “all” (πάντες) is inclusive, while the preposition διὰ states how all are one in Christ, i.e. through faith. The Galatians are sons and daughters of God διὰ τῆς πίστεως “through faith,” “on account of faith,” “because of faith” in Christ.<sup>602</sup> Believers are no longer like minors under the slave-guide because they are “grownup children of God.” Franz Mußner underscores this point. *“Den Ausdruck 'Söhne' gebraucht ... der Apostel deutlich im Sinn von erwachsenen, freien Söhnen und also als Gegensatz zu den νήπιοι und Sklaven (vgl. 4,3 ὅτε ἤμεν νήπιοι).”*<sup>603</sup>

The noun υἱοὶ which means “a son by birth,” “by adoption,” “by descendant,” “having the same nature” occurs here in its plural form.<sup>604</sup> The Galatians are God’s children because they share in the divine nature of Christ, the only Son of God. The generic noun υἱοὶ includes daughters as well, Frank J. Matera, however, prefers to translate it as “sons” because Paul is employing a metaphor of inheritance that has the male offspring in view.<sup>605</sup> But God’s promised blessing to Abraham which Paul is speaking of in verses 8, 16, 18 and 29 does not exclude women. All those who are in Christ have inherited God’s promised blessing. For (γὰρ) this reason and through faith in Christ, women are included among the children of God. The verb ἐστε is in the second person plural form — “you are.” Those who are addressed as “you are” in v 26 are all the Christians.

According to Paul, “through [the] faith” in Christ Jesus also the Gentiles are now included among the children of God. The title which was once reserved for Israel and her elites is now used in its inclusive form, for Israel and the nations (cf. Gal 6:16). This is made possible through faith in Christ. Frank Matera says that “whereas the historical people of Israel understood its sonship in the light of God’s promise to Abraham and the covenant made at

<sup>602</sup> Cf. Mußner, Galaterbrief, 260.

<sup>603</sup> Ibid, 261.

<sup>604</sup> Cf. Ibid: “Daß die Sohnschaft der Gläubigen eine gnadenhafte Adoptivsohnschaft Gottes ist, wird erst in 4,5 klargestellt.”

<sup>605</sup> Cf. Matera, Galatians, 141.

Sinai”<sup>606</sup> (cf. Exodus 19-20), Paul understands the daughtership and sonship of God’s children in the light of faith. The people of faith (*οἱ ἐκ πίστεως*, Gal 3:7) are now the sons and daughters of God. William Barclay opines that “Jews interpreted the idea of the chosen people in a racial sense,”<sup>607</sup> but Paul interprets it in a Christological sense. “The chosenness does not now consist in membership of any nation or in any external mark upon the flesh; it consists of a relationship in Jesus Christ.”<sup>608</sup>

To be “in Christ Jesus” is to be engrafted into him. It is an experience that derives its efficacy from Christ. Paul understands himself as a man in Christ (cf. Gal 2:19-20; 2 Cor 12:2). God’s sons are men and women in Christ. F. F. Bruce emphasizes this point. “In fact, this new life in Christ is nothing less than the risen Christ living his life in the believer.”<sup>609</sup> This inclusive relationship in Christ is to be lived out as a reality in the ordinary life of each member. “The body of Christ (the believing community as a whole), together with its members one by one, is vitalized by the life of the risen Christ and energized by his Spirit. Incorporation into this body is effected by personal faith in Christ and sacramentally sealed in baptism (cf. v 27). Membership in the body of Christ has a far-reaching effect on each one who is so incorporated as well as on the community as such.”<sup>610</sup>

Some members of the Galatian communities have accepted the observances of the law’s demands and as such they started separating themselves from other members who refused to observe the legalism of the law (cf. Gal 3:1-2). The law observers thought that they had found a surer way to the sonship and daughtership of God through the law. Paul counteracts this action as Franz Mußner opines. *“Der Apostel sagt das nun unmittelbar den Adressaten (ἐστέ), und zwar ihnen allen (vgl. πάντες), und er tut das nicht umsonst, weil die Galater ja dabei sind, sich wieder unter die Herrschaft des ‘Pädagogen’ zu stellen, verführt von den Gegnern des Apostels.”*<sup>611</sup> Perceiving that the Galatians are turning back to the works of the law, an attitude which is based on an ethnic interpretation of Abraham’s sonship, Paul refers all of them back to their origin as children not of Abraham but of God. “You all,” “all of you” are sons and daughters of God (*πάντες γὰρ υἱοὶ θεοῦ ἐστέ*) is a claim that does not need any augmentation from the works of the law.<sup>612</sup>

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<sup>606</sup> Ibid, 145.

<sup>607</sup> Barclay, *Many Witnesses, One Lord*, 109.

<sup>608</sup> Ibid, 109.

<sup>609</sup> Ibid, 144.

<sup>610</sup> Ibid, 184.

<sup>611</sup> Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 260-261.

<sup>612</sup> Cf. Martyn, *Galatians*, 374.

Timothy George calls verse 26 the fulcrum of this chapter. Everything Paul has said from verses 1-25 flows into this single verse. This verse says plainly what Paul is arguing for.<sup>613</sup> Heinrich Schlier summarizes this. *“Nur diese Auffassung von πίστις erlaubt es auch, die Behauptung, daß alle galatischen Christen Söhne Gottes sind, nicht als Ausdruck eines ‘fast unbegrenzten Optimismus’ (Oepke) des Apostels zu verstehen, sondern als eine Umschreibung des wirklichen Sachverhaltes zu begreifen. Der Glaube, nicht das Gesetz, hat sie zu dem Sein gebracht, hat ihnen das Sein vermittelt, in dem sie Söhne Gottes sind: das Sein in Christus.”*<sup>614</sup> All those who “believe in Christ,” “all those who have faith in Christ,” “all those who are in Christ” are sons and daughters of God. They are “brothers and sisters of Christ,” the only Son of God. “For all of you are” in verse 26a suggests that Paul has moved πάντες, “all,” “everybody” or “everyone,” to an emphatic position.

### 3.5.2 You have put on Christ through Baptism (v 27)

*ὅσοι γὰρ εἰς Χριστὸν ἐβαπτίσθητε, Χριστὸν ἐνεδύσασθε.*

The conjunction γὰρ (“for” or “indeed”) again (cf. v 26) indicates that this verse explains further the previous one. “Indeed,” believers are sons and daughters of God because in baptism they have “clothed themselves with Christ.” The relative pronoun ὅσοι can be translated “as many as,” but because it is not restrictive, it can be simply rendered as “all of you.” The verb ἐβαπτίσθητε, a passive aorist indicative second person plural of βαπτίζειν (“to dip,” “to submerge,” “to baptize”) stipulates the form through which all Christians are initiated into Christ, “thereby becoming incorporated into Christ.”<sup>615</sup> The aorist indicative verb ἐνεδύσασθε is derived from ἐνδύομαι which means “to sink,” “to plunge,” “to enter” or “to clothe.” All those who are “dipped into Christ” (cf. “buried into Christ”, Rom 6:4) through baptism have “clothed themselves with Christ.”

The liturgy of baptismal initiation presupposes the removal of one’s clothes before he or she enters into the baptismal water and the baptismal act symbolically signifies “being clothed with Christ.” J. Louis Martyn maintains that “the new robe, put on as one comes out of the water, signifies Christ himself.”<sup>616</sup> Frank J. Matera supports this view. “Paul views

<sup>613</sup> Cf. George, Galatians, 274.

<sup>614</sup> Schlier, Der Brief an die Galater, 171-172.

<sup>615</sup> Cf. Matera, Galatians, 142, 146.

<sup>616</sup> Martyn, Galatians, 375-376.

baptism as the moment when Christ, like a garment, envelops the believer.”<sup>617</sup> In baptism all Christians are metaphorically “buried with Christ” or “dipped into Christ.” All those who are “submerged into Christ” come out of the baptismal water “putting on Christ” (ἐνεδύομαι).

Verse 27 is the one and only place where baptism is referred to in the whole letter to the Galatians. Paul does not go into the development of the theology of baptism as he does in Rom 6:1-11; but he is referring to the Galatians initiation into Christ.<sup>618</sup> Baptism is the outward and visible sign of admission of new members into the Christian communities. Incorporation into the body of Christ is effected through the sacramental seal of baptism.<sup>619</sup> C. Marvin Pate maintains that “baptism is the once-for-all sign of the incorporation of the sinner into the death and resurrection of Christ.”<sup>620</sup> Similarly, Joseph A. Fitzmyer observes that “the baptismal rite symbolically represents the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ; the person descends into the baptismal bath, is covered with its waters, and emerges to a new life. In that act one goes through the experience of dying to sin, being buried, and rising to new life, as did Christ.”<sup>621</sup> Wilhelm Egger further opts that baptism does not only make one a member of Christ, it also shades him or her from the power of the legal principles of the law and gives him or her the power to serve God among his people. “*Durch die Taufe gewinnt der Glaubende Anteil daran, wird umgewandelt und zum Dienst für Gott fähig (Röm 6,11).*”<sup>622</sup>

The baptized is no longer seen as “the unclean Gentile” (cf. Lev 11:1-28; Acts 10:28; Gal 2:15), because in baptism all his or her sins are washed away (cf. Ps 51:2; Jn 13:8; Acts 22:16). It was probably believed that the clothes the baptized had taken off symbolized that the whole of his or her heathen life had been erased, while the new clothes he or she put on indicated that he or she obtained a new identity. The Christian baptismal ritual is thought of as bringing a complete new life to the baptisand or as F. F. Bruce expresses it: “Their former life came to an end; a new life began. They were, in fact, ‘buried’ with Christ when they were plunged in the baptismal water, in token that they had died so far as their old life of sin was concerned ...”<sup>623</sup> Certainly, to “put on Christ” is a figurative speech used “to describe more

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<sup>617</sup> Matera, Galatians, 145.

<sup>618</sup> Cf. Bruce, The Epistle of Paul to the Romans, 136.

<sup>619</sup> Cf. Fung, The Epistle to the Galatians, 172.

<sup>620</sup> Pate, The End of the Age Has Come, 178.

<sup>621</sup> Fitzmyer, Romans, 434.

<sup>622</sup> Egger, Galaterbrief. Philipperbrief. Philemonbrief, 22.

<sup>623</sup> Bruce, The Epistle of Paul to the Romans, 136.

expressively the spiritual transformation which makes one a Christian.”<sup>624</sup> Believers are now sons and daughters of God because they have been clothed with Christ in baptism.<sup>625</sup>

But why does Paul designate the baptismal union with Christ by means of a metaphor at all? Why doesn't he say directly that Christians have been united with Christ? It is likely that Paul has in mind the various aspects of human beings' normal clothing. He probably thinks that the closeness between a garment and its wearer can explain the intimate relationship between Christians and “Christ whom they have put on” in baptism. In a sense a garment can be thought of as being part of its wearer, his or her “second skin.” It helps in identifying its wearer by the colour or type of clothes he or she is wearing. Wherever the wearer is, there also is the garment. It shares everything that its wearer experiences. This unifying relationship between a garment and its wearer could be part of what Paul wishes to portray with the metaphor of clothing oneself with Christ. When “Christ is put on” like a cloth through baptism, when one is “immersed into Christ” by means of baptism, the Spirit of Christ enters into the person and occupies his or her whole being, resulting in the unification with Christ.<sup>626</sup>

Despite its tendency to be part of the wearer, the garment, however, is not identical with its wearer. Similarly, Christ remains different from the baptized even though he is metaphorically “put on” by the baptized. As clothes are dominant in expressing its wearer's appearance, so Christ is dominant in the Christian's life. As a garment is identified with its wearer, Christians become one with Christ through baptism. As a garment also reveals its wearer's character, so Christ reveals the Christians' character. Yet as a garment remains different from its wearer, so Christ is not equated with the Christians; he remains himself and they remain themselves.<sup>627</sup> Jung Hoon Kim states this still clearer. “Although Christ wraps believers like clothes (in other words, although Christ's Spirit dwells in them), both Christ and believers do not lose their own identity.”<sup>628</sup> The imagery is obviously of putting on clothes. It could be a further allusion to a ceremony of initiation where the baptisand did put on a fresh robe or tunic after baptism.<sup>629</sup>

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<sup>624</sup> Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 186.

<sup>625</sup> Cf. Matera, *Galatians*, 142: “Similar imagery is used in Rom 13:12-14 and 1 Thess 5:8 as part of an ethical exhortation. In 1 Cor 15:53-54 Paul writes of being clothed with the resurrection body. Eph 4:24 speaks of clothing oneself ‘with the new self (ton kainon anthrôpon), created according to the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness,’ and Col 3:10 of clothing oneself with the new self (ton neon ton anakainoumenon) ‘which is being renewed in knowledge and according to the image of its creator’.”

<sup>626</sup> Cf. Kim, *The Significance of Clothing Imagery in the Pauline Corpus*, 115-120.

<sup>627</sup> *Ibid*, 116-118.

<sup>628</sup> *Ibid*, 120.

<sup>629</sup> Cf. Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 204.



There are still other possible roots of the phrase “to put on Christ”. “Paul probably has in mind Christ and the baptisand’s unity idea reflected in the primitive church’s baptismal traditions ...”<sup>630</sup> The process of initiation is also reflected in the novel *Joseph and Aseneth* (*Joseph and Aseneth* 15:4).<sup>631</sup> Aseneth’s conversion from paganism to Judaism is portrayed as “putting off her paganism and putting on the Jewish faith.” This is done through the “taking off of her idolatrous garments, repenting by being dressed in a black tunic, putting off this black tunic, bathing herself with water, putting on a new linen garment and eventually attiring herself in a wedding garment, which symbolizes her being united with Judaism.”<sup>632</sup> It could have also been an allusion to the initiation rites of the pagan world or of the Roman celebration of going over from adolescence to maturity. A new convert being initiated into the cult of a particular deity such as Isis or Mithras, etc. would undergo a ritual ablution, usually by immersion. After being baptized in the name of the deity, the neophyte would then put on the distinctive garb of the god, thus identifying publicly with the god’s persona. Equally familiar to Paul’s readers was the custom whereby a Roman youth, nearing the end of adolescence, would remove the crimson bordered garment of childhood and put on the *toga virilis* to mark his entrance into full manhood. This practice would connect naturally to the image of the pedagogue Paul has just elaborated in Gal 3:23-25.<sup>633</sup> The putting on of the *toga virilis* indicates full Roman citizenship, with the right to enter a social, political, military or religious office. Christ, Paul says, is a kind of *toga virilis*, and for believers “to clothe themselves with Christ” means that they have become God’s grownup children (v 26; cf 1 Cor 13:11), which is a significant change similar to the change from boyhood to manhood.<sup>634</sup>

Paul could also have had in mind the transformation of personality which a good actor could achieve by immersing him/herself in the character of another person. Paul could also be referring to the ancient theatrical acts where actors play the role of the gods and goddesses.<sup>635</sup> In this line of thought, James D. G. Dunn sees “putting on Christ” as means of spiritual transformation of the believer, a transformation which affects “something within me so deeply that Christ himself becomes my own self ...”<sup>636</sup>

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<sup>630</sup> Ibid, 116.

<sup>631</sup> Cf. Garland, *II Corinthians*, 286, footnote, 778.

<sup>632</sup> Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 116.

<sup>633</sup> Cf. George, *Galatians*, 276-280.

<sup>634</sup> Cf. Kim, *The Significance of Clothing Imagery in the Pauline Corpus*, 121-122.

<sup>635</sup> Longenecker, *The Triumph of Abraham’s God*, 72.

<sup>636</sup> Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 205.

Paul mentions baptism as “putting on Christ” because “he is about to emphasize the oneness of those who are in Christ (v 28, where the ‘all’ of v 26 recurs).”<sup>637</sup> The visible sign of this oneness is baptism (cf. Eph. 4:5 “one Lord, one faith, one baptism”). Jung Hoon Kim supports this view. “The putting-on-Christ imagery in Gal 3:27 symbolizes a believer’s baptismal union with Christ.”<sup>638</sup> Roman Kühschelm extends this to the reception of the Spirit. *“Hier wird der Zusammenhang von Taufe und Sohnschaft bedacht, doch ist in diesem die Geistbegabung impliziert (vgl. 1 Kor 12,12f; Röm 8,14f.). Taufe, Geist und Sohnschaft sind Ausdruck unmittelbarer Zugehörigkeit zu Christus und damit zu seiner endzeitlichen Heilsgemeinde, die in ihm eins ist.”*<sup>639</sup>

### 3.5.3 The Transformation Formula of Oneness (v 28)

οὐκ ἔνι Ἰουδαῖος οὐδὲ Ἕλλην, οὐκ ἔνι δοῦλος οὐδὲ ἐλεύθερος, οὐκ ἔνι ἄρσεν καὶ θῆλυ· πάντες γὰρ ὑμεῖς εἰς ἓστε ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.

Gal 3:28 contains a unique formula: (a) Neither Jew nor Greek, (b) neither slave nor freed, (c) neither male and female, (d) all are one in Christ Jesus. Paul’s primary concern in v 28 are the relationships between Jews and Gentiles, slaves, freed slaves and freeborn, male and female, which were also the deciding factors in the ethno-cultural, socio-economic and religious lives of the people. A major problem in Galatia was: How are Gentile Christians to interact with Jewish Christians (cf. 2:11-15)? Must new converts accept the customs and the cultural practices of Jewish believers, or could they become members of the commonwealth of Israel solely on the basis of what God has done in Jesus Christ (cf. 3:13-14)? What should be the place and role of women and slaves in relation to the community’s socio-economic and religious life? The agitators obviously espoused a doctrine which might anachronistically be called cultural imperialism; that means, they emphasized the legal works of the law which traditionally identified Jews as the special people of God (Deut 7:6; cf. Ex 6:7; Lev 26:12; Jer 30:22). The legal works of the law included circumcision, food regulations, Sabbath and festival observances (Gal 4:10; 5:2). Paul’s sole aim in v 28 is to diffuse these ethnic, socio-economic,

<sup>637</sup> Bruce, The Epistle to the Galatians, 174.

<sup>638</sup> Kim, The Significance of Clothing Imagery in the Pauline Corpus, 116.

<sup>639</sup> Kühschelm, Zeitenwende, 71.

socio-cultural and religious differences.<sup>640</sup> According to N. T. Wright, the question at issue is not: How can individual sinners find salvation? Rather it is: Are Christian Jews bound by Jewish kosher laws, i.e. to eat separately from Gentile converts, or are they bound by the gospel to eat at the same table with them (2:11-15)? Paul is asking the Jews to break the habit not only of a lifetime but of a tightly integrated religious and ethno-cultural grouping that had survived for hundreds of years.<sup>641</sup>

In those days the basic ethnic and political categories were: Jews and the rest of the nations. From legal and social perspectives, the world was seen as split between slaves and freed. The third most basic way of dividing the world was between male and female.<sup>642</sup> But with the coming of Christ (3:25), the certainty of Israel as being the only chosen people of God has changed and is moved towards the criterion of faith in Christ (3:26b). The only means by which election and incorporation into the body of Christ can be maintained is through faith. It is not through ethnic rules, gender or social status.<sup>643</sup> Faith in Christ makes it possible to extend the limited geographical understanding of election across Israel's borders. Paul is convinced that the reason why God called him is that he might preach the good news to the nations (Gal 1:16). Paul's point is that these "we and them/they and us" — attitudes which marked the epoch of the law — have been rendered obsolete by God's fulfillment of his promise to Abraham in Christ. "'Neither Jews nor Greeks' means a oneness of Jew and Gentile in faith, without the law's interposing between them to mark them off as distinct from each other."<sup>644</sup> Paul also brings the downtrodden into the centre of his argument: slaves and women. His view is "completely antithetical to Greek idealization of freedom" and against the law which said that a woman was inferior to a man<sup>645</sup> and slaves were living instruments in the hands of their masters.<sup>646</sup>

Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza does not think that v 28 includes social relationships too. "The immediate context in Galatians speaks neither about baptism nor about social relationships ... Paul's concern in Galatians is the religious relationship between Jews and Gentiles, not the cultural-political distinctions between Jews and Greeks as two different types

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<sup>640</sup> Cf. Matera, Galatians, 11.

<sup>641</sup> Cf. Wright, The Letter to the Galatians: Exegesis and Theology, in: Between Two Horizons, 210.

<sup>642</sup> Cf. Hove, Equality in Christ?, 66.

<sup>643</sup> Cf. Kocûr, National and Religious Identity, 22-23.

<sup>644</sup> Dunn, The Epistle to the Galatians, 205.

<sup>645</sup> Ibid, 206.

<sup>646</sup> Cf. Chirichigno, Debt-Slavery in Israel and the Ancient Near East, 53.

of people and cultures.”<sup>647</sup> Pauline N. Hogan, however, does not share this opinion. “There is evidence in the Galatian letter that Paul may also intend the transformation formula to denote the eradication of social distinctions and hierarchies within the Christian community.”<sup>648</sup> Verse 28 thus points to an understanding of Christian conversion as “an overwhelmingly transformative event. It cancels out the pairs of opposites which are seen as relationships of disadvantage.”<sup>649</sup> This does not necessarily imply that initiation into other religious communities did not carry the concept of equality,<sup>650</sup> but only that in the specific case of converts who were initiated into Christ, the events were accompanied by a declaration that the normal distinctions of life — ethnic origin, freeborn, freed or slaves’ status, and gender were no longer of significance within the new community, which identified itself as being one in Christ Jesus.

According to Pauline N. Hogan, the eradication of social distinctions (equality) in antiquity had only a restricted sense. She insists that the term “equality” (*ἰσονομία*) needs always to be qualified anew each time it is used. It should be understood that it does not denote the modern concept of equal status among all citizens of a democratic state. Equality in modern society is understood as “exactly the same access to legal rights, to education, and to employment prospects,” these concepts, however, are not relevant to the situation in antiquity. Equality among early Christians could, therefore, refer to spiritual status, which meant the same access to God. However, equality could apparently be seen in some circumstances, at least it could affect certain situations where social interactions between individuals might ordinarily involve precedence in greetings, food service, place of seating, and so on. In these kinds of social interactions, where conventional behaviour would include recognition of one’s higher or lower social position, Christians were instructed to treat one another as equals (cf. 1 Cor 11:17-22; Jas 2:1-4). Equality could also mean equal access to a position of leadership, based upon one’s perceived spiritual gift rather than upon one’s sex, social class or wealth.<sup>651</sup>

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<sup>647</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 208.

<sup>648</sup> Hogan, “No Longer Male and Female”, 27.

<sup>649</sup> *Ibid*, 28.

<sup>650</sup> Cf. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 187: “We have parallels to such open religious fellowship elsewhere in antiquity; for example, in SIG<sup>3</sup> III:985 there is an account of a private cult-group in Philadelphia, founded in the first or second century BC by one Dionysius in pursuance of directions received from Zeus in a dream, which was explicitly open to ‘men and women, free persons and household slaves,’ and in which ethical probity was insisted on.”

<sup>651</sup> Cf. Hogan, “No Longer Male and Female”, 16-17.

However, for those who are “one in Christ,” equality does not need qualification. “Putting on Christ” in baptism is the common denominator. An example of Christian equality could be compared to a family with two different cultural backgrounds. The ethno-cultural backgrounds of the parents do not make any of their children less equal to the other. Therefore, in the community of God’s children (3:26), “you all are one” (3:28) could be stated as “you all are equal” before God, who is your father (cf. also 1 Cor 8:6).

### 3.5.3.1 There is neither Jew nor Greek (v 28a)

οὐκ ἔνι Ἰουδαῖος οὐδὲ Ἕλλην

There are different understandings of who is a Jew. Michael Ernst defines: “*Jude’ bedeutet in der Bibel weder einer bestimmten Volksgruppe oder gar Rasse anzugehören, sondern ist ein religiöser Begriff und bezeichnet jene, welche an das Gesetz des Mose gebunden sind (Gal 2,14).*”<sup>652</sup> Peter Dschulnigg definition offers a further differentiation. “*Im NT ist Jude (Ἰουδαῖος) überwiegend Volksbezeichnung, Judäa Bezeichnung des von Juden bewohnten Gebiets und Judentum Ausdruck für jüd. Lebensweise in Entsprechung zum Gesetz und den Überlieferungen (Gal 1,13f).*”<sup>653</sup> This means that one becomes a Jew either by birth or by accepting Judaism and believing in the faith that comes from Jacob and his twelve sons (Gen 32:9-12; 49). Ἰουδαῖος which is usually translated as “a Jew” or “Jewish,” and implies coming from Jewish parents, has been redefined to include all those who observe the Torah. According to Miroslav Kocûr, it is not possible to take the term Ἰουδαῖος as “a *terminus technicus* in all its occurrences in Pauline and other scriptural texts.”<sup>654</sup> When Paul uses the word Ἰουδαῖος he means a man or a woman who behaves according to the prescriptions of the law; Ἰουδαῖος is not chiefly qualified according to race or nationality, but according to religious belief (Gal 2:14-15). But when he says there is neither Jew nor Greek, he redefines the Judaizers’ understanding of the election of Israel as the only chosen nation (cf. Deut 7:6) by postulating the non-ethnic character of Christ’s salvific event (Gal 3:13-14, 28; 1 Cor 12:13; cf. Col 3:11).

On the other hand the word Ἕλλην, “a Greek,” “a Hellen,” “a Gentile,” “a non-Jew,” denotes all “those who are coming from other nations.” Ἕλλην, the Greek, represents the

<sup>652</sup> Ernst, Jude, in: Herders Neues Bibel Lexikon, 399.

<sup>653</sup> Dschulnigg, Jude, in: Münchner Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, 215.

<sup>654</sup> Kocûr, National and Religious Identity, 26.

Gentile, and for a pious Jew anyone who is not a Jew is a Gentile. The Greek is the uncircumcised who is excluded from the covenant community because of his uncircumcision (cf. Gen 17:9-14). David E. Garland affirms that “for strict Jews and Christian Judaizers, circumcision was the obligatory sign of the covenant that God established in perpetuity with Abraham and his descendants and a tangible identity marker that separated Jews from the heathen people around them. Most Jews assumed that those who were not circumcised did not belong to the sons of the covenant but to the children of destruction destined for annihilation (Jub. 8:26). The rabbis lauded it as one of the most important commands ...”<sup>655</sup> The Jews, therefore, divided the world into two – the Jews on one side and the Greeks on the other side. The Jews are members of the chosen people of God, a holy nation, a people set apart (Deut 7:6), while the Gentiles are not.

*Ἕλλην* has also a coded meaning that is often derogatory. Miroslav Kocûr even avers that “the expression ‘Greek’ has the accompanying sense of ‘anti-Jewish’ or hostility toward the Jew.”<sup>656</sup> The hostility against the Jewish nation includes the adoption of Greek ways of life, the worship of the Greek gods and goddesses; the rejection of circumcision, etc., tantamount to the abandonment of Judaism and the demands of both written and oral Torah. Any Jew who is seen as having free association with Gentiles is treated as an apostate. The whole nation is under obligation to worship only “Yahweh our God” and to keep the demands of the Torah (cf. Deut 6:4; Lev 19:2; 20:26).<sup>657</sup>

Jews are the chosen people of God — a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people set apart to sing the praises of the Lord (cf. Ex 19:6). They are the children of God (Deut 14:1) and God made a covenant with their forefathers at Mount Sinai (Ex 19-20). Because of the Jew’s privileged position before God and the practices arising from this claim, “Jews aroused the attention of their neighbours who, most often than not, directed hatred, criticism and ridicule against what they saw as a manifestation of arrogance.”<sup>658</sup>

The conflict between Jews and Gentiles has a long history. Due to external influences, the maintenance of the uniqueness of the Jewish national identity became a Herculean task. The Hellenistic culture was by its very nature a melting pot of ideologies and Jews were in constant confrontation with different cultures for over three centuries. The matter was not

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<sup>655</sup> Garland, 1 Corinthians, 305.

<sup>656</sup> Kocûr, National and Religious Identity, 25.

<sup>657</sup> Ibid, 25.

<sup>658</sup> Ukwuegbu, The Emergence of Christian Identity in Paul’s Letter to the Galatians, 317.

helped when the rival priests Menelaus and Jason made covenants with other nations (1 Macc 1:11). By making a covenant with the Gentile nations, Israel abandoned the holy covenant with Yahweh and by building a gymnasium in Jerusalem, Israel replaced the observance of the *Torah* with the Greek way of life. The rise of Alexander the great and his conquests made things worse as cities were frequently named after him and his generals.<sup>659</sup> Such actions were offensive to pious Jews, who would at all cost retain their national identity — the worship of Yahweh.<sup>660</sup> Every Jew has to do all that is within his or her power to promote the keeping of the *Torah*, avoid day to day contacts with Gentile sinners (cf. Gal 2:15), as well as those things and places that make one unclean. For Ulrich Wilckens that includes “... *natürlich an erster Stelle die strikte Verweigerung der Teilnahme an heidnischem ‘Götzendienst’ und die Reinhaltung des Tempels vor jeglichem Kontakt mit Heiden; ferner die Beschneidung, die strikte Einhaltung der Schabbatruhe sowie aller Speisegebote.*”<sup>661</sup>

As a result of the legal requirements of the law, every Jew must show that he or she has not been mingling with the Gentiles by rejecting the Greek culture. He or she is to protect the Jewish culture against Greek influences.<sup>662</sup> “*Juden mußten als Glieder des erwählten Bundesvolkes erkennbar und der Unterschied zu den gojim deutlich bleiben.*”<sup>663</sup> And they were also Jewish groups (e.g., *Chasidim* group) mandated to protect the Jewish national culture. Ulrich Wilckens describes them. “*Deren harter Kern war die Gruppe der chasidim (der ‘Frommen’). Zu ihr haben wahrscheinlich auch die späteren Pharisäer gehört. Deren Name paroschim (= ‘die genau Unterscheidenden’) drückt die Tendenz dieser ganzen Widerstandsbewegung aus: Konnte man sich auch der kulturellen Überfremdung durch die Griechen nicht erwehren, so mußte doch jedenfalls ganz Israel an der Exklusivität der Verehrung des einzig-einen Gottes und der entsprechenden Treue in der Bewahrung der*

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<sup>659</sup> Cf. Bruce, *Israel & the Nations*, 118-119: “One of the chief cultural effects of Alexander's conquests was the rise of new cities after the Greek model wherever his armies marched and his veterans settled. Many of these were named after Alexander himself, or after his generals, or after members of their families.”

<sup>660</sup> Cf. Kocûr, *National and Religious Identity*, 56-57.

<sup>661</sup> Wilckens, *Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, Band 1, 74.

<sup>662</sup> Cf. Bruce, *Israel & the Nations*, 118: “Alexander planned to bring about the union of east and west under his control. Once he had conquered Persia in battle and taken limited vengeance by the burning of Persepolis, he did not treat the Persians as second-class subjects or slaves. He married Statira, daughter of the last Persian king, and he encouraged his generals to marry other Persian noblewomen. He had already married Roxana, daughter of a Scythian chief, following Scythian rites. The men who marched behind him, having come from all parts of the Greek-speaking world, began to develop a common Greek speech, not marked by the dialect peculiarities of the various cities from which they had come. The common speech (known as Hellenistic Greek) spread all over the eastern Mediterranean and western Asia throughout the following centuries.”

<sup>663</sup> Wilckens, *Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, Band 1, 73.

*Gebote der Tora unbedingt festhalten.*<sup>664</sup> The *Chasidim* group, therefore, rejected any attempt of the Hellenization of the Jews. The nation must be kept holy “for I the Lord your God, am holy” (Lv 20:26).

A normal relationship between Jews and their neighbours was next to impossible. Almost every contact with a non-Jew made a Jew unclean. Ulrich Wilckens elaborates this point. *“Die Gebote ritueller Reinheit sind dem heutigen nichtjüdischen Leser der Schrift zweifellos sehr fremd und schwer verstehbar. Für Juden — heute wie damals zur Zeit Jesu — sind sie von zentraler Bedeutung. Nicht unrein zu werden ist von gleicher Wichtigkeit wie seine Gerechtigkeit vor Sünde zu bewahren. ‚Ethik‘ und ‚Kult‘ sind zwar voneinander unterschieden, sie haben aber die gleiche Wurzel und den gleichen Sinn: In beidem geht es darum, Gott in seiner Heiligkeit in der menschlichen Lebenspraxis zu entsprechen.”*<sup>665</sup>

Paul’s treatment of the issue of “the Jew” and “the Greek” illuminates “his understanding of the importance of different ethnic and national groups from the point of view of their identity.”<sup>666</sup> Paul uses the keyword *Ἕλληνα* as an expression of diversity in comparison to *Ἰουδαῖος*, which is nationalistic. Israel is “the people of God” (*λαός θεοῦ*), however,<sup>667</sup> Paul negates the Jewish particularism in favour of God’s universal fatherhood (Gal 3:26).

Israel must separate herself from the nations (Lev 20:25-26). God’s election of Israel is not based on the moral qualities of the Jews, but the holiness of the Jews as believers in Yahweh consists in God’s gift of the *Torah* and in the refusal of any kind of sociability and communication with Gentile idolaters (cf. Gal 2:15). Israel is to be separated from the unclean people (Num 16:21, cf. 2 Cor 6:17). Paul now redefines the “elective belonging” and the “immemorial dimension of the law,” because “the Christological event is heterogeneous to the law, pure excess over every prescription, grace without concept or appropriate rite. The real can no more be what in elective exception literalized in stone as timeless law, the ‘ethnic’ subjects brought about by Jewish law just as by Greek wisdom become disqualified to the extent that they lay claim to the perpetuation of a full or undivided subject.”<sup>668</sup> The Jesus

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<sup>664</sup> Ibid, 73.

<sup>665</sup> Ibid, 295-296.

<sup>666</sup> Kocûr, National and Religious Identity, 22.

<sup>667</sup> Ibid, 24: “The technical use of *λαός* changes when it means Israel, with the genitive expressing a certain intimate relation between God and Israel, and it is obvious that this technical use has a religious basis. Later, the figurative meaning, in which *λαός* has been identified with the community of the believers in Christ as Messiah, is actually a development of the LXX usage.”

<sup>668</sup> Badiou, St. Paul. The Foundation of Universalism, 57.



event reveals the non-ethnic character of God's promise to bless all the nations through Abraham and his seed (Gal 3:13-14, 28-29). God's people are now drawn from all nations. In Christ therefore, there are neither Jews nor Greeks.<sup>669</sup>

Paul's preaching of the law-free gospel could be classified as a renewal of one of those offensive spreads of Greek culture (cf. Gal 2:3). Paul consciously tried to remove all socio-religious and ethno-cultural identity markers between Jews and Greeks (cf. Gal 5:6; 6:15) by seeking for the oneness of all those who believe in Christ (Gal 3:28a). But what remains of the Jewish identity when there are no longer Jews and Greeks in Christ Jesus? The cleavage between Jews and Gentiles "was for Judaism the most radical within the human race. It is possible for a Gentile to become a Jewish proselyte," this being an "act of love for fellow creatures" and a way of bringing proselytes nearer to the *Torah*.<sup>670</sup> However, a Gentile who became a proselyte had only crossed over to the Jewish side of the gulf but the gulf remained. It is clear that the gospel principle of complete equality of Jews and Greeks before God was hardly acceptable in the early communities. There were influential voices which insisted that Gentiles could be admitted into membership of Jewish community but just on one ground: That they should be circumcised and not only that they conformed to a certain degree to the Jewish ways of life by observing the principles of the law.<sup>671</sup>

Bernard Ukwuegbu, however, opines that there were no discriminations between Jews and Gentile converts to Judaism,<sup>672</sup> (cf. Ex 22:21: "you shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt." Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza disagrees with him. "Even the full proselyte could not achieve the status of the male Israelite."<sup>673</sup> And Judith Lieu supports this reading. That "the qualification 'circumcised' is not to be applied to a non-Jew who was circumcised is a fairly common assertion ..."<sup>674</sup> If there was no hatred between Jewish and Gentile Christians, Paul would not have been speaking of "neither Jews nor Greeks."

There were many differences in the Jewish-Greek relationships. These differences were especially noticeable when it came to greetings, offering of assistances, serving and eating at tables, giving and receiving instructions, modes of dressings, etc., but these

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<sup>669</sup> Cf. Martyn, Galatians, 352.

<sup>670</sup> Cf. Bruce, The Epistle to the Galatians, 188.

<sup>671</sup> Ibid, 188.

<sup>672</sup> Ukwuegbu, The Emergence of Christian Identity in Paul's Letter to the Galatians, 97.

<sup>673</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, In Memory of Her, 210.

<sup>674</sup> Lieu, Neither Jew Nor Greek?, 105.

differences, whether created by birth or position of authority or education or legal status and defined by the world outside the Christian communities were apparently not meant to affect the relationship of Christians within the communities.<sup>675</sup> Paul, therefore, reminds the Galatians that in Christ, there are neither Jews nor Greeks, because the inferiority-superiority claims between the nations do not any longer exist in Christ (Gal 3:28a).

Paul has to react to the new development in Galatia by saying that the Judaizers and all those who accept their teachings are living in the past glory of the law of circumcision, or according to Franz Mußner: *“Ihre Hinwendung zum 'Judaismus' wäre Rückkehr zu einer durch Christus total überholten Vergangenheit.”*<sup>676</sup> Paul sees the need to unite Jews and Greeks into the “one body of Christ, the church” (1 Cor 12:12, 27) because both Jewish and Greek Christians nurture ethnic prejudices among themselves, which are inconsistent with the Christian’s new social and religious identity in Christ. Elizabeth Schüssler-Fiorenza avers that “the Christian movement was based not on racial and national inheritance and kinship lines, but on a new kinship in Jesus Christ.”<sup>677</sup> Paul’s position therefore, is uncompromising. Jews and Gentiles are equal before God. The possession of Christ’s spirit is the criterion for belonging to the children of God (Gal 3:27; cf. Rom 8:9-11; 1 Cor 8:6).

The primary concern of verse 28a is the oneness of Jews and Gentiles. The expression “Jew and Greek” represents humanity. Richard W. Hove maintains that “the couplet Jew/Greek is significant from a salvation-historical perspective and together, as a pair, they represent all of humanity.”<sup>678</sup> In the following oppositions, Paul encompasses all other forms of divisions between Jews and Gentiles, by including slaves and freed, male and female. Paul’s attitude towards the role of women and the social status of slaves stands in sharp contrast to that of his contemporaries. He does not want human beings to be seen according to their physical appearance or to be exploited by others. He sees them exactly as Christ will see them (cf. Mk 7:25-30; Matt 15:21-28).

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<sup>675</sup> Cf. Hogan, “No longer Male and Female”, 28.

<sup>676</sup> Mußner, Galaterbrief, 264.

<sup>677</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, In Memory of Her, 210.

<sup>678</sup> Hove, Equality in Christ?, 65.

### 3.5.3.2 There is Neither Slave nor Freed (v 28b)

οὐκ ἐνι δοῦλος οὐδὲ ἐλεύθερος

The word *δοῦλος* has a double meaning. It can be used as a designation of servitude and as an honourable title (cf. Rom 1:1). This argument is in line with the Hellenistic use of the word “servant.” Abraham, Moses, David, the prophets, etc. are all called servants of God (Ex 14:31; Ps 78:70; Amos 3:7; Jer 25:4; cf. “I am the servant of the Lord, let it be done to me according to your words”, Lk 1:38). *δοῦλος*, however, emphasizes the involuntary aspect of slavery. A slave has no freedom of his or her own. Therefore, the term *δοῦλος* means “unfree,” which is the opposite of *ἐλεύθερος*, “free.”

The differences between *δοῦλος* and *ἐλεύθερος* were the bases of ancient human interactions. Slaves were of different categories. There were acquired slaves, self-made slaves, situational slaves, tribal slaves, freed slaves, etc. Richard W. Hove expands this. “There were slaves from different races, slaves who volitionally chose to sell themselves into slavery for economic reasons, and slaves from all walks of life.”<sup>679</sup> Paul and his successors lived within the social institution of slavery (1 Cor 7:21-24; Phlm; Eph 6:5-8; Col 3:22-25) and the couplet slaves and freed “points to the social barrier in the Greco-Roman world.”<sup>680</sup> Associations of people were then defined and determined by the class to which they belonged.

Paul’s teaching of “neither slaves nor freed” is in accordance with the demands of the Covenant Code (cf. Ex 21:1-2), which demands that owners should treat their slaves as members of the covenant community (cf. Sir 33:31).<sup>681</sup> The customary view that the slave is a piece of property stands directly opposed to Gal 3:28b and d. The principle of “requital justice” or “only the likes are equal” or “unqualified equality”<sup>682</sup> falls outside the line of the teaching of Gal 3:28b. Robin Scroggs emphasizes that during the era of slavery “neither the church nor any other group in the world mounted a protest against slavery as a system; nevertheless, within the church, slave and master were seen as equal.”<sup>683</sup>

Slavery was also legal, and to declare the abolition of slavery was to disrupt the social order. But Paul’s position is clear on this: Christian slaves should not chafe at their underprivileged status in the world (cf. 1 Cor 7:21); for in Christ they are entitled to enjoy

<sup>679</sup> Hove, *Equality in Christ?*, 65.

<sup>680</sup> Matera, *Galatians*, 142.

<sup>681</sup> Cf. Franco, *Slavery, 1 (in the Bible)*, in: *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 206.

<sup>682</sup> Cf. Hove, *Equality in Christ?*, 116.

<sup>683</sup> Scroggs, *Paul for a New Day*, 45.

equal ranks with their Christian brothers and sisters. This could mean that someone who was a slave could be entrusted with spiritual leadership in the communities, and if the owner of such a slave was a member of the same community, he would submit to the spiritual leadership of the slave. This is not merely a theoretical possibility but a lived experience among the members of Pauline communities (Gal 3:28). Christian communities provided a setting where the master-slave relationship became irrelevant (Phlm 16).<sup>684</sup> Paul's conclusion is that with the coming of Christ, the institution that held some as slaves, freed slaves and others as freeborn has lost its grip. In Christ, therefore, there are neither slaves nor freed. "For you all are one in Christ" (cf. Gal 3:28d).

### 3.5.3.3 There is Neither Male and Female (v 28c)

*οὐκ ἔνι ἄρσεν καὶ θῆλυ*

This couplet points to the gender and sexual barriers between male and female. These barriers are culture-bound.<sup>685</sup> Paul knows that sex and gender differences between male and female are part of God's plan for humanity. According to the book of Genesis, God created man and woman differently; the man is created first and the woman is taken from his side (Gen 2:21-22). In Judaic thought this text was used to subordinate women. Paul, however, does not want this to continue in the Christian communities. Jerome Murphy-O'Connor observes: "Aware, however, that Genesis 2:21-2 was used in Jewish circles to demonstrate the inferiority and subordination of women, Paul immediately moved to ensure that nothing more than what he intended could be drawn from his premise."<sup>686</sup>

Paul does not elaborate on the principle of "neither male and female" in Galatians, but an example of which is his appreciation of Euodia and Syntyche who laboured side by side with him in the spread of the gospel (Phil 4:3). There are also two outstanding women leaders in Corinth: Chloe (1 Cor 1:11) and Prisca (16:19). Paul expresses his respect and praise for these women as his "co-workers."<sup>687</sup> John Reumann maintains that "authority for women in

<sup>684</sup> Cf. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 188-189.

<sup>685</sup> Reumann, *Philippians*, 626.

<sup>686</sup> *Ibid*, 290.

<sup>687</sup> Cf. Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 219: "Despite Paul's consistent use of the address 'brothers,' it seems safe to assume that among the Christians in Corinth there were women who were both well-educated and prosperous, and poor and slave. The attention paid to the relationship between women and men and their sexual intercourse, as well as to women's role in the worship assembly, indicates that women were very active in the community."

Paul's churches fitted some Greco-Roman cultural norms" but "the *ecclesiæ* stamped their leaders with countercultural equality (Gal 3:28) ..." <sup>688</sup> Romans chapter 16 provides one of the best opportunities to determine Paul's attitude towards women who functioned in what might be considered as a "non-conventional position." <sup>689</sup> He sends his greetings to members of the Roman community, among whom are his friends Prisca and Aquila. Within the Pauline community of Cenchreae there was a woman patron called deacon Phoebe. She was most probably the bearer of the letter to the Romans. F. F. Bruce concurs. "The letter, when completed, was evidently taken to its destination by Phoebe, a Christian lady who was in any case making a journey to that place. Paul takes the opportunity to commend her to the hospitality and fellowship of the Christians to whom he is writing." <sup>690</sup> Paul describes Phoebe as "a patron," "a protector" (*προστάτις*) of many (Rom 16:2). A patron in Hellenistic society had a recognized religious, social and legal responsibility and was by necessity a person of wealth and influence. The verb *ἐγενήθη* ("she became") together with "a protector of many" makes this most probable. And the phrase *καὶ ἐμοῦ αὐτοῦ* (v 2b) indicates that Paul had personally benefited from Phoebe's patronage.

But how is she regarded by commentators? She is seen as "our sister," "a non-clerical woman" who does not have any ministerial office or missionary role to play. <sup>691</sup> She is said to have what Jerome Murphy-O'Connor calls an "ambiguous status." <sup>692</sup> F. F. Bruce gives the reason why some theologians have taken this position. "Whereas Paul's ban on discrimination on racial or social grounds has been fairly and widely accepted *au pied de la lettre*, there has been a tendency to restrict the degree to which 'there is no male and female.' Thus, it has been argued that these words relate only to the common access of men and woman at baptism, with its introduction to their new existence in Christ." <sup>693</sup> However, Paul is not speaking of the sex and gender distinctions but of the inequality of roles in Gal 3:28c. It is not their sexual distinctiveness, but their inequality of ethno-cultural, socio-political and religious

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<sup>688</sup> Reumann, Philippians, 626.

<sup>689</sup> Murphy-O'Connor, Paul, 270.

<sup>690</sup> Bruce, The Epistle to the Romans, 267-266.

<sup>691</sup> Cf. Müller, Der Empfänger des Weihesakraments, 52: "In der Grußliste Röm 16,1-6 nennt der Apostel neben einigen Männern auch rühmend viele Frauen, die sich in der Mitarbeit an seinem Aposteldienst und in den Gemeinden verdient gemacht haben. An ihrer Spitze steht Phöbe, die eigens mit einem Amtstitel benannt wird. Sie bot offenbar eine zuverlässige Anlaufstelle für den Apostel und viele Christen, die den Hafen von Korinth passierten und von da aus ihre Reisevorkehrungen trafen. Von Vorsteherschaft in der Wortverkündigung oder pastoralen Leitung wird nicht gesprochen. Das allgemeine Funktionswort *diakonos* hat sich erst in der Zuordnung zu den Episkopen (Phil 1,1) zu einer Amtsstufe innerhalb der Trias Bischof-Presbyter-Diakon entwickelt ..."

<sup>692</sup> Murphy-O'Connor, Paul, 270.

<sup>693</sup> Bruce, The Epistle to the Galatians, 189.

roles, that is abolished in Christ Jesus.<sup>694</sup> Erich Zenger explains this. *“Die Geschlechterdifferenz wird nicht mit der Perspektive Kinderzeugung verbunden, sondern mit dem Gelingen des Lebens im Miteinander von Mann and Frau.”*<sup>695</sup> Fact is that women were treated as “taken from the side of men” (Gen 2:22), that they were not circumcised (Gen 17:12; Josh 5:3-4) and they were seen as unclean (Lev 15:19, 33). Against these ethno-cultural and socio-religious postulations, Paul claims that there are no longer such discriminations “in Christ Jesus.”

There is no consensus among scholars that the apostle Junia (Rom 16:7) is a woman.<sup>696</sup> F. F. Bruce opines that “it is impossible to decide whether the second of these names (Andronicus and Junia[n]) is feminine, Junia (as in AV), or masculine, Junias (as in RV, RSV, NEB).”<sup>697</sup> Helmut Merklein presumes that one should read Junia. *“Möglicherweise ist statt Junias Junia, ein Frauenname, zu lesen.”*<sup>698</sup> Michael Ernst says that “Junias” as a name never existed and *“... dass man statt der Frau Junia einen Mann mit dem Namen 'Junias' (so auch EÜ) meinte lesen zu sollen, obwohl es diesen Namen gar nicht gibt.”*<sup>699</sup> One of the problems is that many have become used to knowing only the twelve as the “apostles” (Matt 10:1-4; Mk 3:13-19; Lk 6:12-16) as Joachim Gnllka expands: *“Wenn wir nach Namen fragen, so sind uns die Namen der Zwölf bekannt, freilich oft auch nicht mehr. In Röm 16,7 erwähnt Paulus Andronikus und Junia, die seine Volksgenossen und Mitgefangenen sind: 'Sie sind angesehene Apostel, die schon vor mir in Christus gewesen sind'. Entweder gehören sie zu den Fünfhundert oder zu allen Aposteln von 1 Kor 15,6f. oder wahrscheinlicher zu den Hellenisten, unter denen eine zweite Apostel-Ableitung aufkam.”*<sup>700</sup>

What, then, should be the translation or meaning of the phrase Ἀνδρόνικον καὶ Ἰουνίαν (or Ἰουινίαν) οἵτινές εἰσιν ἐπίσημοι ἐν τοῖς ἀποστόλοις (“who are of note among the apostles”, Rom 16:7)? This is a text critique issue. Thomas R. Schreiner affirms: “The variant Ἰουινίαν was mistakenly introduced from verse 15 (m<sup>46</sup>, 6, a, b, vg<sup>ms</sup>, bo). The relative clause was altered to τοῖς πρὸ ἐμοῦ (D, F, G, it, vg<sup>ms</sup>, Ambst). Since the alteration is found only in Western witnesses, it is obviously secondary).”<sup>701</sup> This is supported by other important texts (cf. Nestle-Aland,

<sup>694</sup> Ibid, 189.

<sup>695</sup> Zenger, Stuttgarter Altes Testament, 20.

<sup>696</sup> Cf. Jewett, Romans, 961: “The modern scholarly controversy over this name rests on the presumption that no woman could rank as an apostle, and thus that the accusative form must refer to a male by the name of Junias or Junianus.”

<sup>697</sup> Bruce, The Epistle of Paul to the Romans, 271.

<sup>698</sup> Merklein, Stuttgarter Neues Testament, 320.

<sup>699</sup> Ernst, Junia, in: Herders Neues Bibel Lexikon, 406.

<sup>700</sup> Gnllka, Die frühen Christen. Ursprünge und Anfang der Kirche, 276.

<sup>701</sup> Schreiner, Romans, 799.

Novum Testamentum Graece, 28<sup>th</sup> edition, 515: txt B<sup>2</sup> D<sup>2</sup> L Ψ<sup>vid</sup> 33. 81. 104. 365. 630. 1175. 1241. 1505. 1739. 1881. ̳ (sine acc. X A B\* C D\* F G P).<sup>702</sup>

The textual analysis will alleviate some of the problems. The relative pronoun *οἵτινές* (“who”) referring back to Andronicus and Junia,<sup>703</sup> is in the nominative plural form. The plural form of *οἵτινές* is supported by the indicative plural verb *εἰσιν* (“are”). The adjective *ἐπίσημοι* (“of note,” “remarkable,” or “outstanding”) *ἐν* refers to the position of Andronicus and Junia within the circle of the apostles. “The adjective *ἐπίσημοι* lifts up a person or thing as distinguished or marked in comparison with other representatives of the same class, in this instance with the other apostles.”<sup>704</sup> The preposition *ἐν* (“in,” “among”) is locative, while the article *τοῖς* (“the”) qualifies the dative plural noun *ἀποστόλοις* (“apostles”) which is not restricted to the twelve apostles but includes even Paul himself (cf. Gal 1:1; Rom 1:1; 11:13; 1 Cor 9:1) and all those who spread the good news and those to whom Jesus appeared after his resurrection (cf. 1 Cor 15:5-9).

Thus, the phrase “who are outstanding among the apostles” has a double meaning. It can mean that Andronicus and Junia are apostles although they are not among the twelve apostles because Paul does not restrict the use of the noun *ἀποστόλος* to the twelve apostles (cf. Lk 6:12-16) but includes himself and all those who spread the gospel. According to Thomas R. Schreiner, however, “in saying that they are apostles ... Paul is certainly not placing them in the ranks of the Twelve. In 1 Cor 15 (vv 5, 7) Paul distinguished between the twelve and the apostles ... The term *ἀποστόλος* is not a technical term (cf. 2 Cor 8:23; Phil 2:25 ... and in the case of Andronicus and Julia the idea is likely that they were itinerant evangelists or missionaries.”<sup>705</sup> Therefore, Andronikus and Junia are among the apostles. F. F. Bruce also opines that Andronicus and Junia were “not merely well known to the apostles but were apostles themselves (in a wider sense of the word), and eminent ones ...”<sup>706</sup> Paul calls them his “fellow workers,” a title that is alongside with *diakonos* (16:1) among Paul’s most common designation for his colleagues in the ministry (Rom 16:9, 21; 2 Cor 8:23; Phil 2:25; 4:3; 1 Thess 3:2; Phlm 1, 24). “Thus Paul would be sending greetings to a male and female apostles, to some of those who probably carried the Christian message to Rome before him.”<sup>707</sup>

<sup>702</sup> Cf. Ibid, 799.

<sup>703</sup> Cf. Keener, Romans, 186: “Andronicus and Junia seem to be a husband-wife apostolic team (16:7); brother-sister is less likely, and anything else would have been scandalous.”

<sup>704</sup> Jewett, Romans, 963.

<sup>705</sup> Schreiner, Romans, 796.

<sup>706</sup> Bruce, The Epistle of Paul to the Romans, 272.

<sup>707</sup> Fitzmyer, Romans, 739.

It is not only that the name should be read Junia, she is among the women who played active roles in the service of the gospel, even though “what the women did specifically is not delineated, but we cannot doubt that they were vitally involved in ministry.”<sup>708</sup> Joseph A. Fitzmyer also observes that of all “those singled out as active in the service of the gospel, seven are women (Prisca, Mary, Junia, Tryphaena, Tryphosa, Persis, and the mother of Rufus) and five are men (Aquila, Andronicus, Urbanus, Apelles, Rufus).”<sup>709</sup> Eva Ebel supports: *“In keiner Phase seines missionarischen Wirkens ist Paulus als Einzelgänger unterwegs. Ohne die Mitwirkung und Unterstützung anderer Männer und Frauen wäre seinen Bemühungen nicht ein solch dauerhafter Erfolg beschieden gewesen, hätte der Kontakt zu den Gemeinden nicht aufrechterhalten werden können.”*<sup>710</sup> The Christian communities, therefore, had egalitarian character that abrogated sex-role classifications. According to Elisabeth Schüssler-Fiorenza, “the legal-societal and cultural-religious male privileges were no longer valid for Christians ... it allowed not only Gentiles and slaves but also women to exercise leadership functions within the missionary movement.”<sup>711</sup>

One thing that has strongly affected Christianity is the society in which she found herself in. Her public acceptance changes from one era to another and from one geographic location to another. These changes affect Christian thinking and the role of women as well. Where and when the principle of “neither male and female” was unacceptable to the greater part of the society, the women were encouraged to remain under the men (cf. 1 Cor 14:34; Col 3:18-25; 1 Tim 2:12). Unlike Paul who confronted the ancient society with the principle of “neither male and female” and declared male and female as one in Christ, later Christians were influenced by the social order. This is the case of the deutero- and trito-Pauline letters. Their teachings on women are modeled to the acceptable norms of the society’s view of women (cf. Col 3:18; Eph 5:22; 1 Tim 2:12).<sup>712</sup>

It is also possible to interpret the phrase “neither male nor female” as descriptive of man and woman *coram deo*, that is, in the life to come.<sup>713</sup> This eschatological interpretation sees the equality of male and female as having no immediate practical implications for the church. It can be considered as a kind of theological anticipation of the future when Christ

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<sup>708</sup> Schreiner, Romans, 794.

<sup>709</sup> Fitzmyer, Romans, 734.

<sup>710</sup> Ebel, Das Missionswerk des Paulus, in: Paulus. Leben - Umwelt - Werk - Briefe, 124.

<sup>711</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, In Memory of Her, 218.

<sup>712</sup> cf. Hogan, “No Longer Male and Female,” 7.

<sup>713</sup> Ibid, 27.



will come in his glory to usher in the fullness of time (cf. Matt 25:31). But Gal 3:28 does not only mention male and female, it also mentions Jews and Greeks, slaves and freed. Because of these other pairs of opposites, it is not possible to interpret “neither male and female” as restricted to *coram deo*. According to Richard A. Baer Jr., “it is clear that a radical change already has been effected, not just in principle and in anticipation of the future when redemption shall be fully realized, but right here and now.”<sup>714</sup> Roman Kühschelm elaborates on this. *“Die in Christus erfolgte Zeitenwende ist zugleich Existenzwende. Durch das schöpferisch-eschatologische Handeln Gottes ist an die Stelle der alten Existenz eine ‘neue Schöpfung’ (2 Kor 5,17; Gal 6,15) getreten. Angelehnt an Jes 43,18-19 artikuliert sich hier die Überzeugung, aufgrund von Glauben, Taufe and Geistbegabung Endzeitgemeinde zu sein. Was die Propheten als eschatologische Erneuerung des Menschen erwarteten und die Qumranleute bereits präsentisch auf ihre ‘Einung’ münzten (etwa 1 QH 3,19-22), nimmt die christliche Gemeinde nun für sich in Anspruch: ‘In Christus’ ist sie und jeder in ihr eine ‘neue Schöpfung’.”*<sup>715</sup>

Pauline N. Hogan would rather prefer to treat the issue of “neither male and female” with caution. It is necessary to be cautious because Paul is on the one hand convinced of “the validity of the transformation formula in the baptismal liturgy,” but he is also “alarmed” at how it has been understood in Corinth. Paul’s alarmed response to the situation is an indication that some Christians in Corinth understood the transformation formula generally to mean “the abolition of conventional social distinctions and traditional gender roles.”<sup>716</sup> Christians are told that baptismal transformation means that they are now one in Christ. In the task of explaining and applying these verses to the believing early communities, the leaders seem to have been faced with “the challenge of cognitive dissonance: How could they resolve their conviction of women’s inferiority with the new claims of oneness of all Christians?”<sup>717</sup> Moreover, women were thought to be intellectually flawed. This results in a conflict between the belief that baptism is indeed transformative in a way that challenges the binary oppositions (male/female) and the view that women are inferior to men.<sup>718</sup> Pauline N. Hogan warns that Gal 3:28c should not be taken as self-evident in the struggle for equality in the modern society because the question remains open: Did the Galatians read or did they

<sup>714</sup> Baer, A. Richard, *Philo’s use of the Categories Male and Female*, E. J. Brill, Leiden, 1970, 79.

<sup>715</sup> Kühschelm, *Zwischen Schon und Noch-Nicht*, 63.

<sup>716</sup> Hogan, “No Longer Male and Female”, 41.

<sup>717</sup> *Ibid*, 7.

<sup>718</sup> *Ibid*, 5-6.

not read “there is no longer male and female” as an indication of change in gender relations?<sup>719</sup> A reader in today’s world is well aware of the debates concerning equal rights for all (e.g., equal pay) and thus may assume that this concern also is self-evident in the words of Gal 3:28c. We need to keep in mind, however, that the early Christians might not necessarily have been asking the same questions that we are asking today.<sup>720</sup> Richard W. Hove maintains that Gal 3:28c does imply the equality of male and female, but he asks: “What is the standard of comparison when someone asserts that Galatians 3:28 teaches the equality of men and women? Equal in what sense? Equal value? Equal abilities? Equal roles? Equal callings? Equal inheritance in Christ? And how is this ‘equality’ to be measured?”<sup>721</sup> His answer is that “it does not follow that men and women are equal in all regards.”<sup>722</sup> However, it remains a fact that Paul does not encourage the subordination of women in the Christian communities.

“There is neither male and female” does not mean, therefore, that “all male-female distinctions have been obliterated in Christ, any more than that there is no racial difference between the Christian Jew and the Christian Gentile.”<sup>723</sup> On the other hand, among the individual members, all these distinctions are obliterated. In the social spheres of life, the distinctions which ceased to be relevant in church fellowship might have continued to be observed. In Roman law the distinctions between freeborn, freed slaves and slaves remained; and in family life the co-operation of husband and wife depended on the distinctions laid down by the state law. “But superiority and inferiority of status or esteem could have no place in the society whose Founder laid it down that among his followers ‘whoever would be first ... must be slave of all’ (Mk. 10:44).”<sup>724</sup> It is most likely that Paul would not have allowed sex, gender or social status to constitute a barrier against any service of the gospel.<sup>725</sup> Hence, his position is that there is “neither male and female” in Christ.

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<sup>719</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>720</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>721</sup> Ibid, 116.

<sup>722</sup> Ibid, 116.

<sup>723</sup> Fung, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 175.

<sup>724</sup> Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 190.

<sup>725</sup> Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 207.

### 3.5.3.4 You are all One in Christ Jesus (v 28d)

*πάντες γὰρ ὑμεῖς εἷς ἐστε ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.*

Based on what Paul said in v 28a-c, he now makes the conclusive statement, “for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” The conjunction *γὰρ* at the beginning of v 28d indicates a connection to the three pairs of opposites mentioned earlier in a-c. It shows that v 28d is grounded in the prior statements.<sup>726</sup> Paul uses the inclusive pronoun *ὑμεῖς* (“you”) and the corresponding inclusive adjective or generalizing pronoun *πάντες* (“all”) to show that “you all”, i.e. “all those who are in Christ are one in him. The numerical adjective *εἷς* “one” leads back to “God is one” (Deut 6:4; Gal 3:20; 1 Cor 8:6) and it is universal and corporate in form.<sup>727</sup> All those who are “sons and daughters of God” (v 26) correspond to “as many as have put on Christ” (v 27) and all these are those who are “one in Christ” (v 28d). Jung Hoon Kim expresses the same view. Those who are baptized into Christ “have put on Christ” and those who have “put on Christ” are those who “are one in him.”<sup>728</sup>

Jews and Greeks, slaves, freed slaves and freeborn, male and female are certainly distinct from one another, but their unity is manifested in Christ. Alan R. Cole maintains that “Paul is not talking of some radical re-understanding of gender achieved by natural thought, but of a spiritual transformation produced by our new oneness in Christ. He is not denying an existence of ‘natural’ distinctions (like that between male and female, Jews and Gentiles), but in a sense affirming it, and at the same time, affirming that it is now transcended in Christ. Further, he is not saying that men and women are now the same, but that ‘they are one in Christ’.”<sup>729</sup> The ethnic, social, and gender differences amount to nothing “because you all are one in Christ Jesus.” Being one in Christ Jesus means that Jewish and Gentile Christians have accepted to leave their individual traits behind them and now are willing to follow the example of Christ, who related openly and freely with everyone (cf. Mk 7:25-30; Matt 15:21-28). Jesus demonstrated the love of one’s neighbour in his interactions with different “classes of the so called social out casts” (cf. Mk 1:40-45; 10:46-52; Matt 8:1-3; 20:29-34; Lk 17:11-19; 18:35-43).

<sup>726</sup> Cf. Wisdom, Blessing for the Nations and Curse to the Law, 157.

<sup>727</sup> Cf. Longenecker, Galatians, 158.

<sup>728</sup> Cf. Kim, The Significance of Clothing Imagery in the Pauline Corpus, 126-127.

<sup>729</sup> Cole, The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians, 58.

The realizability of the oneness of all in Christ Jesus (Gal 3:28d) is interpreted by two schools of thought, one maintaining that it is already realizable in this world,<sup>730</sup> and the other maintaining that it is only eschatologically realizable.<sup>731</sup> Franz Mußner seems to share the latter view. *"Darum darf man vielleicht so formulieren: εἷς ist der eschatologische 'Einheitsmensch' (der Christ'), der aus der Taufe hervorgeht."*<sup>732</sup> However, the statement "you all are one" has actual and practical implications for the communities, because in Christ, Jews and Greeks, slaves and freed, male and female are all initiated into Him, using the same baptismal formula, and in Him they all are brothers and sisters and children of God (3:26-28) and heirs of Abrahamic promise (3:29).

Jung Hoon Kim speaks of "ecclesiological oneness in Christ." It is likely that "the putting-on-Christ imagery" indicates that "in baptism believers enter into ecclesiological oneness in Christ, who is the corporate person; who is 'put on by Christians as the new Adam'."<sup>733</sup> All those who "have put on Christ" are "one with him." J. Louis Martyn concurs. "Religious, social, and sexual pairs of opposites are not replaced by equality, but rather by a newly created unity. In Christ (in what Paul will later call 'the body of Christ', 1 Cor 12:13, 27) persons who were Jews and persons who were Gentiles have been made into a new unity that is so fundamentally and irreducibly identified with Christ himself ... Members of the church are not one thing; they are one person, having been taken into the corpus of the One New Man."<sup>734</sup> The character of this "oneness" is an integration of all differences into a common unity in Christ Jesus, whereby the differences enhance rather than distract their unity. This "oneness" enriches their mutual interdependence, and the services of the members of the communities. Christians are "one" because their differences cease to be barriers which cause pride or regret, disadvantage or embarrassment; rather they become means to display the diverse richness of God's creation and his gift of grace to his creatures in different forms.<sup>735</sup>

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<sup>730</sup> Eckey, *Der Galaterbrief*, 216.

<sup>731</sup> Mußner, *Galaterbrief*, 264.

<sup>732</sup> *Ibid*, 264.

<sup>733</sup> Kim, *The Significance of Clothing Imagery in the Pauline Corpus*, 127-128.

<sup>734</sup> Martyn, *Galatians*, 377.

<sup>735</sup> *Ibid*, 208.

### 3.6 You Are All Abraham's Heir (v 29)

*εἰ δὲ ὑμεῖς Χριστοῦ, ἄρα τοῦ Ἀβραὰμ σπέρμα ἐστέ, κατ' ἐπαγγελίαν κληρονόμοι.*

Paul returns to the theme of the progeny of Abraham which he began in verses 6-9, 16 and 18, or as Franz Mußner comments: *"Der Vers zieht das Resumé für das Thema, das mit 3,7 schon angeschlagen war. Dort waren die Glaubensmenschen als die wahren Söhne Abrahams erklärt worden. Unterdessen war noch festgestellt worden, daß Christus jener eschatologische 'Same' Abraham ist, durch den und in dem die Verheißung Gottes an Abraham für die Völker Wirklichkeit wurde."*<sup>736</sup>

Paul begins this verse with a conditional conjunction "if" (εἰ). The εἰ in combination with the continuative particle δὲ is used here almost in the sense of causal "since."<sup>737</sup> "But if/since you are Christ's, therefore, you are seed of Abraham, heir in accordance with the promise (v 29)." If Christians are Christ's, therefore (ἄρα), they have inherited God's promised blessing to Abraham (cf. Gen 12:2-3; 17:5; 18:18; 22:18). J. Louis Martyn rightly observes what he calls "the movement of thought." "From v 16, Paul could easily have passed immediately to the conclusion of 3:27 and 3:29. Seeing, therefore, that, as Abraham's singular seed, Christ is the recipient to whom God gave his promise, and seeing that, having been baptized into Christ, you are Christ's, it follows that you are yourselves Abraham's seed, heirs by virtue of the promise."<sup>738</sup> Christ is the unique seed of Abraham, and all the Christians share the same descendant with this single seed. They have inherited the same promise made to Abraham. But a decisive question is: "What is the inheritance being given by God? It is the innumerable Abrahamic progeny among the uncircumcised Gentiles (Gen 12:3) in Gal 3:8, and it is the gift of the promised Spirit to all who are heirs of Abraham because they are heirs of God in Christ (3:14, 29; 4:7). In a word, the inheritance is the church-creating Spirit of Christ."<sup>739</sup>

All those who are "in Christ" belong to Abraham's seed. The participants in the promise are no longer Abraham's physical descendants, rather, they are "those of faith" (3:7) and because they have accepted baptism, they are heirs to the promise.<sup>740</sup> "The God-given future of Abraham are not the patriarch's plural, ethnically distinct descendants" but all those who believe in Christ. Paul, therefore, sees in Gen 17:8 "a messianic prophecy, showing that the

<sup>736</sup> Mußner, Der Galaterbrief, 266.

<sup>737</sup> Cf. Hong, The Law in Galatians, 46-47.

<sup>738</sup> Martyn, Galatians, 341.

<sup>739</sup> Ibid, 342-343.

<sup>740</sup> Cf. Matera, Galatians, 143.

point of departure for his exegesis is the advent of Christ.” It follows that the “plural offspring of Abraham come into existence only when human beings are incorporated into Abraham’s singular seed, Christ.”<sup>741</sup> According to Franz Mußner, “*durch die Taufe sind die Galater ... Eigentum Christi geworden, und das bedeutet aufgrund des vorausgehenden Kontextes eine seinsmäßige Zugehörigkeit zu Christus.*”<sup>742</sup> Similarly Wilfried Eckey comments. “*Aufgrund ihres Glaubens und der Taufe sind die galatischen Christen mit ihrem Retter, Jesus Christus, eng verbunden. Sie sind Glieder des Erdenleibes Christi, der Kirche.*”<sup>743</sup>

“And if you are Christ’s” (εἰ δὲ ὑμεῖς Χριστοῦ ν 29a), you are part of the justified children of Abraham (τοῦ Ἀβραάμ σπέρμα ἐστέ). The personal pronoun ὑμεῖς makes it clear that those who are ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (ν 28) are also “Christ’s,” not only in the sense that they belong to Christ or follow Christ, but even more in the sense that they participate in him by the Spirit, which they received at baptism (cf. 1 Cor 12:13).<sup>744</sup> Galatians have become τοῦ Ἀβραάμ σπέρμα through faith in Christ. Frank J. Matera calls this verse the heart of Paul’s argument. “The heart of Paul’s argument is that God’s promise to Abraham had a singular offspring in view: The Christ. Consequently, all who have been incorporated into Christ through baptism are Abraham’s seed, even if they have not been circumcised.”<sup>745</sup> According to J. Louis Martyn, however, “the crucial point is the order of events. Members of the church are not related to Christ via Abraham; they are related to Abraham via their incorporation into Christ.”<sup>746</sup> Therefore, those who rely upon the law risk being excluded from Abraham’s descendants because they have not been incorporated into Christ.<sup>747</sup>

It would have sounded ridiculous to the Judaizers that all the nations are included among the children of Abraham without any ritual of the law. They could have insisted that Abraham was the first proselyte. God made an unchangeable covenant with him (Gen 15:18-21) and defined the covenant as the commandment of circumcision (17:9-14). And Abraham did not only keep the commandment of circumcision, he also observed the holy feasts. When he turned away from idols to the observance of the law, he circumcised himself, and “avoided walking in the deadly power of the impulsive desire of the flesh.”<sup>748</sup> When God handed down

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<sup>741</sup> Martyn, Galatians, 340.

<sup>742</sup> Mußner Der Galaterbrief, 266.

<sup>743</sup> Eckey, Der Galaterbrief, 217.

<sup>744</sup> Cf. Bruce, The Epistle to the Galatians, 190.

<sup>745</sup> Matera, Galatians, 16.

<sup>746</sup> Martyn, Galatians, 377.

<sup>747</sup> Cf. Matera, Galatians, 129.

<sup>748</sup> Martyn, Galatians, 304.

the law on tablets of stone at Mount Sinai (Ex 19-24), he spoke once again through the mouths of his glorious angels. He passed on the law to Moses his servant. And now the Messiah has come, confirming for eternity God's blessed law (cf. Matt 5:17). From all that, it follows that Abraham's true descendants are those who choose the path of virtue, by becoming faithfully obedient to the law. God is pleased at the present to extend the blessing of the law to the Gentiles. To be more specific, God is creating descendants of Abraham through law-observant Gentiles. The Galatians therefore should become part of Abraham's true descendants by accepting circumcision.<sup>749</sup> What are the Gentiles then expected to do as Abraham's children through Ishmael? They are to cast off their garment of enslavement to the flesh by turning to God's righteous law, following Abraham in the holy, liberating and perfecting rite of circumcision (cf. Gal 6:13), observing the feasts at their appointed times (cf. Gal 4:10), keeping the sacred dietary requirements (cf. 2:11-14), abstaining from idolatry and from the passions of the impulsive flesh (cf. 5:19-21).<sup>750</sup>

Paul rejects vehemently what the Judaizers taught the Galatians. He sees the legal rituals of the law as worthless in the eyes of the Lord (5:6; 6:15; cf. Phil 3:7-8). The Judaizers are bent on the implementation of the homogeneity of the law while Paul opts for faith in Christ. Through faith in Christ Jesus, Gentiles are now partakers of God's divine promise to Abraham. Franz Mußner, therefore, sees Abraham as a "corporate personality." He is not just an individual but an embodiment of the promise made to the nations. *"In ihm ist gewissermaßen seine Nachkommenschaft schon anwesend und wird mitgesegnet. Für semitisches Denken ist der Stammvater gleichsam eine Kollektivperson."*<sup>751</sup> Paul, however, uses the personifying reference to Abraham and the Scripture in a way peculiar to him.<sup>752</sup> *"Er denkt dabei schon inklusive an Christus, der ja das eigentliche σπέρμα Ἀβραάμ ist, dem die Verheißung galt (vgl. V 16)."*<sup>753</sup> On what basis did Scripture then preach the gospel to Abraham beforehand (Gal 3:8)? It was in anticipation of the welcoming of the Gentiles into the one people of God, in the name of Christ and on the basis of a law-free gospel.<sup>754</sup> God is now creating things anew in the Gentile world. He does this through faith in Jesus Christ (cf. 2:16).

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<sup>749</sup> Ibid, 302-304.

<sup>750</sup> Ibid, 304-306.

<sup>751</sup> Mußner, Der Galaterbrief, 222.

<sup>752</sup> Ibid, 220. *"'Die Schrift' wird hier fast wie ein persönliches Wesen gefaßt, weil hinter ihr der lebendige Gott steht (vgl. ähnlich auch V 22)."*

<sup>753</sup> Ibid, 221.

<sup>754</sup> Cf. Martyn, Galatians, 301.

The σπέρμα in Gal 3:29 is a contested term. Why is it used in the singular form? Why is it not σπέρματα? Paul wants to show that Christ alone is the seed of Abraham (3:16) as James D. G. Dunn explains: “Paul’s point is ... not to deny that Abraham’s seed is multitudinous in number, but to affirm that Christ’s pre-eminence as that ‘seed’ carries with it the implication that all ‘in Christ’ are equally Abraham’s seed (3:26-29).”<sup>755</sup> F. F. Bruce also expands on the double meaning of σπέρμα. “In the first instance the reference is to a single descendant, Christ, through whom the promised blessing was to come to all the Gentiles. In the second instance the reference is to all those who received this blessing; in v 29 all those who belong to Christ are thereby included in Abraham’s offspring.”<sup>756</sup> It is also a well-known fact that biblical texts use collective singular nouns such as “the remnant” (cf. Isa 10:21; Micah 5:3). Therefore, the “seed of Abraham” may refer either to a single descendant or to many descendants of Abraham. Paul also emphasizes this point in his letter to the Romans (4:18). He “identifies Abraham’s offspring of Gen 15:5 with the many nations of Gen 17:5, interpreting the latter as Gentile believers.”<sup>757</sup>

There is also another reason for Paul’s choice of “the seed of Abraham.” The goal of Paul’s interpretation of the generic singular noun is to remove the necessity of using the rituals of the law as the starting point of the Jesus event. All the nations now participate in the blessing of Abraham without fulfilling the rituals of the law. Paul uses the neuter noun σπέρμα, “offspring,” which serves as a common descent for those who are “in Christ.” The link Paul makes between Abraham and Christ bypasses the demands of the law as the channel for the reception of Abrahamic promise, with the resultant effect that Christ alone is the means through which God’s promise to Abraham could get to the nations.<sup>758</sup> Paul wants to show that the fulfillment of the promise is Christological.<sup>759</sup> The principle of faith upon which God now deals with Abraham extends to his descendants (the circumcised and the uncircumcised, Rom 3:30), and “to his spiritual descendants, those who follow the example of Abraham’s faith”<sup>760</sup> (4:11).

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<sup>755</sup> Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 184-185.

<sup>756</sup> Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 172.

<sup>757</sup> *Ibid*, 172.

<sup>758</sup> Cf. Hansen, *Abraham in Galatians*, 129.

<sup>759</sup> Cf. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 113: “Abraham’s justification and attendant blessings are based on his faith in God; they were not earned by merit or any effort on his part (as would have been the case had they been conditioned on law-keeping.”

<sup>760</sup> *Ibid*, 113.



Thus, Paul gives a new and radical exegesis of God's covenant with Abraham. He says nothing about Abraham's faithful obedience to God's command that led him to circumcise himself and Ishmael (Gen 17:26). He stresses only the faith of Abraham. Even though Abraham was childless, he believed that his descendants would be as numerous as the stars in the sky (22:17; 26:4). Paul uses the reference to Abraham's faith in God to introduce his own "distinctive understanding of salvation-history."<sup>761</sup> This history of salvation began with Abraham to whom the gospel was "preached in advance" (*προευαγγελίζομαι* 3:8), even when he was still a pagan. It found fulfillment in Christ to whom it primarily referred to as the seed of Abraham (3:16). This means that the Galatians' descent from Abraham is secondary to their primary descent from God that has its genesis in their baptism into Christ (Gal 3:26-27).

### 3.7 Summary of Gal 3:26-29

The believers' acquisition of sonship and daughtership of God through faith in Christ Jesus (Gal 3:26) and their being baptized into Christ, "putting on Christ" (Gal 3:27) refer to how they became heirs to God's promise to Abraham and his descendants (Gen 12:1-3; Gal 3:29). The Galatians had already experienced the gift of the Spirit (3:1-5), which is identified with "being baptized into Christ" (v 27). "The indwelling Christ," says Jung Hoon Kim "is practically identified with the infusion of his Spirit, 'you have put on Christ' in 3:27 is practically equivalent to 'the Spirit of Christ has clothed you'."<sup>762</sup> Those who have entered into faith-union with Christ are all one in him. In Christ the ethnic, social and sexual distinctions are now covered up by the same garment, Christ.<sup>763</sup> The "clothing-with-Christ metaphor" indicates that all Christians are members of Christ's corporate personality. As there exists one united body inside a given garment, so there is one united Christian community which is clothed with Christ. Like a garment Christ encloses all Christians whom he represents in his glorified body (cf. 1 Cor 12:12, 27).<sup>764</sup>

Gal 3:26-29 reveals Paul's starting place not only because it appeals to a baptismal initiation of all the members, but also because it expresses the fundamental idea without which the reasoning throughout Gal 3:1-25 would be unintelligible, that Christians are one in

<sup>761</sup> Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 153.

<sup>762</sup> *Ibid*, 119.

<sup>763</sup> Cf. Fung, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 175.

<sup>764</sup> Cf. Kim, *The Significance of Clothing Imagery in the Pauline Corpus*, 124-125.

Christ and share his destiny.<sup>765</sup> Hans Dieter Betz calls Gal 3:26-29 “the goal toward which Paul has been driving all along.”<sup>766</sup>

In the new “Israel of God” (Gal 6:16) which now includes all nations as opposed to only one nation, there are no longer divisions of ethnicity, classism, gender and sex-assigned role constructions. “You all are one in Christ Jesus” means that one is free to come into the assembly with his or her socio-religious, ethno-cultural and biological backgrounds intact. One does not need to become a Jew before he or she can be one with the Jews. One does not need to change from being born a Gentile in order to be a legitimate child of God.

In the assembly of God’s people, all are brothers and sisters. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza argues against those who interpreted Gal 3:28 as only eschatologically realizable,<sup>767</sup> or restrict equality and oneness of all “in Christ.”<sup>768</sup> “In Christ the dichotomies are overcome.” In Christ “a new unity is created,” a unity “that is not only a matter discerned by the eyes of faith but one that manifests itself” in the biological, social and religious dimensions of the church.<sup>769</sup> In Christ, therefore, “the old hierarchy associated with men and women, slaves and free has been overcome; on the other hand, wholesale emancipation from societal constructions is illusionary enthusiasm that hinders the advancement of the gospel and threatens the unity of the church.”<sup>770</sup>

Paul uses Gal 3:26-29 to counteract the ethnic, socio-cultural and religious differences between Jews and Gentiles, slaves, freed slaves, freeborn, male and female role restrictions within the Christian communities. He comes to the heart of the matter by justifying the oneness of all in Christ through baptism, being children of God and heirs of Abrahamic promise. Even though Jews and Greeks come from different cultural backgrounds and have different world views, have little in common with one another and have lived their lives in double hatred for centuries, now that Christ has come (3:25) all those who are “initiated into him” are one in him (3:27-28). F. F. Bruce intensifies this. “The law kept the Gentiles out of the privileges of the people of God and kept Israel apart from the rest of mankind; this divisive force has been overcome by the unifying effect of Christ’s redemptive act.”<sup>771</sup> Therefore, it is

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<sup>765</sup> Ibid, 204.

<sup>766</sup> Betz, Galatians, 181.

<sup>767</sup> Cf. Mußner, Der Galaterbrief, 264.

<sup>768</sup> Cf. Hove, Equality in Christ?, 116.

<sup>769</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, In Memory of Her, 206.

<sup>770</sup> Ibid, 207.

<sup>771</sup> Bruce, The Epistle to the Galatians 182.

unfortunate that after 2000 years these divisive principles have continued “knowingly and unknowingly.”<sup>772</sup>

The principles enunciated in verses 26-29 are revolutionary and transformative. Their effects were at first felt within the fellowship of the small local groups that were located here and there throughout the Greco-Roman world. But “when these groups and their members multiplied until they formed a significant segment of the society, there was a real possibility that such revolutionary principles would infect society at large, and the imperial authorities in the second and third centuries saw the spread of Christianity as a disintegrating ferment in the body politic.”<sup>773</sup> Paul revolutionized the ancient world with the formula of oneness of all in Christ. The formula challenges the socio-religious, ethno-cultural, economic and gender-based structures that encourage in any form stratifications between institutions, persons and the society. After two thousand years of church’s tradition in which anti-discrimination has become dogma, we can hardly appreciate sufficiently the radical nature of the principles of “neither Jews nor Greeks, neither slaves nor freed, neither male and female.”<sup>774</sup> So, “by all accounts” Gal 3:26-29 is an astounding statement, and “we must do nothing to dampen its radical and revolutionary implications.”<sup>775</sup>

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<sup>772</sup> Pate, *The End of the Age Has Come*, 203.

<sup>773</sup> Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians* 191.

<sup>774</sup> Cf. Scroggs, *Paul for a New Day* 5.

<sup>775</sup> George, *Galatians*, 282.

## Chapter Four: Oneness of All in Pauline and Deutero-Pauline Letters

In trying to resolve the problem of disunity in Galatia Paul recalls that the only way God saved humanity is through the way of the cross (Gal 3:13-14). All those who are “in Christ” (3:28d) will be saved without recourse to the ritual principles of the law (cf. Gal 5:1; Rom 8:1). How did Paul expand this concept in Gal 6:15 and 1 Cor 12:13? How did he employ it in his letter to Philemon? And how has this teaching developed further in deutero-Pauline letters as exemplified in Col 3:9-11?

### 4.1 Gal 6:15: A New Creation

The remote context of this verse is 6:1-18. Paul encourages the Galatians to be kind and compassionate to one another, and to be careful not to fall into temptations. There is no room for comparison and boasting in Christ Jesus because these lead to self-deceit. The Galatians should not forget that there are rewards for whatever they do. Those who are good to others will inherit eternal life, as opposed to self-indulgence that leads to corruption.

The immediate context is 6:11-18, which is called the postscript.<sup>776</sup> Being circumcised or uncircumcised is irrelevant because ritual circumcision does not play a prominent role for those who are in Christ. With a final benediction Paul concludes the letter and states a Christian’s new way of life.<sup>777</sup> *“Jetzt lebt er als neue Schöpfung (vgl. 2 Kor 5,17) in dem durch Christus eröffneten Lebensraum (vgl. Erklärung zu 1 Kor 1,30), in dem einzig Gottes Gnade und Treue zählen und nicht irgendwelche irdisch-menschlichen Qualitäten (V. 15).”*<sup>778</sup>

#### 4.1.2 Text

οὔτε γὰρ περιτομή τί ἐστὶν οὔτε ἀκροβυστία,  
ἀλλὰ καινὴ κτίσις.

For neither circumcision nor uncircumcision  
counts for anything, but what counts is a  
new creation.

This text shares the literary genre and content with 5:6; 1 Cor 7:19 and 2 Cor 5:17, which will be elaborated on in the following subsection.

<sup>776</sup> Cf. Frey, Galaterbrief, in: Paulus. Leben - Umwelt - Werk - Briefe, 239: *“Briefliches Postskript (in der Funktion einer conclusio).”*

<sup>777</sup> Cf. Bruce, The Epistle to the Galatians, 266.

<sup>778</sup> Merklein, Stuttgarter Neues Testament, 370.

#### 4.1.2.1 Linguistic Analysis

*Syntax, Style and Semantics:* Paul begins with, *οὔτε γάρ*, “for neither.” The conjunction *γάρ* refers to Paul’s previous condemnation of circumcision (3:28; 5:6; 6:12-14) and connects it with the present thesis. The conjunction *οὔτε* negates the need for circumcision, while *ἀλλὰ* emphasizes what (τί) is really important, i.e. being a new creation. Those who are the “new creation” are those who are ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (“in Christ Jesus”, Gal 3:26, 28). The indefinite pronoun τί (“what”) indicates that there is no gain in being circumcised or uncircumcised (cf. Gal 5:2-6). The adjective *καινή* (“new”) qualifies what the Galatians have become “in Christ.” The noun *κτίσις* (“creation”) points beyond God’s original creation of the world (cf. Gen 1:1-2:1-3), and denotes a new creation, enabled by God in Christ (cf. 2 Cor 5:17). Frank J. Matera affirms that “the new creation refers to what God has done in Christ by tearing down the barriers of race, class, and sexuality (3:28) that formerly separated people. This new creation results from being in Christ.”<sup>779</sup> This new way of life renders circumcision and uncircumcision irrelevant. Circumcision (*περιτομή*) and uncircumcision (*ἀκροβυστία*) stand in direction opposition to “a new creation in Christ” (*καινή κτίσις*). The verb *ἐστίν* underscores the state of “being in Christ” and encourages Galatians to remain in the present state rather than going back to the ethnic mark of identification.

#### 4.1.2.2 Similar Pauline Texts

There are three other Pauline texts that have similar syntactic, stylistic and semantic features with Gal 6:15. The first is Gal 5:6,<sup>780</sup> which reads: *ἐν γάρ Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ οὔτε περιτομή τι ἰσχύει οὔτε ἀκροβυστία, ἀλλὰ πίστις δι’ ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη.*

The conjunction *γάρ* connects with what Paul said in verses 2-4. The expression *ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ* (“in Christ Jesus”) indicates that “Christ Jesus is the sphere or the realm in which the believer dwells.”<sup>781</sup> The nominative singular noun *περιτομή* (“circumcision”) is the sign of the covenant between God and Abraham (Gen 17:9-21), which the Jews inherited. The repeated conjunction *οὔτε* (“neither”) negates circumcision and uncircumcision as the

<sup>779</sup> Matera, Galatians, 226.

<sup>780</sup> Cf. Martyn, Galatians, 473: “Striking is the fact that, both in Gal 5:6 and in Gal 6:15, the third member of the formula is a single entity – faith active in love, and the new creation, respectively.”

<sup>781</sup> Matera, Galatians, 182,

constitutive means of acceptability to God.<sup>782</sup> According to Hans Dieter Betz, *“‘Beschneidung’ und ‘Unbeschnittensein’ gehören als termini technici zusammen zum jüdischen kultischen Gesetz. Im Judentum symbolisieren die beiden Ausdrücke die Trennungslinie zwischen denen, die zum Bund der Tora gehören und so ihres Heils gewiß sein können, und denen, die außerhalb dieses Bundes stehen. Für Christen haben diese jüdischen Begriffe ihre Bedeutung verloren, da nach Ansicht des Paulus das Heil der Christen sich auf Gottes Verheißung gründet, die denen gilt, die ‘an Christus glauben.’”*<sup>783</sup> Circumcision is, therefore, set in opposition to uncircumcision.

The indefinite pronoun *τι* (“anything”) and the negated verb *ἰσχύω* “to have power” abrogate the power ascribed to circumcision and uncircumcision. The verb *ἰσχύω* (“to have power”) can also refer to the powerlessness of the works of the law (cf. Gal 2:16; 3:11). *“Das Symbol der Beschneidung (oder sein Fehlen) ist kraftlos geworden.”*<sup>784</sup>

Faith (*πίστις*), here, is certainly “faith in Christ Jesus” (Gal 3:26). The noun *ἀγάπη* speaks of love to the neighbour, while the present middle participle *ἐνεργουμένη* (from *ἐνεργέω*, “to work”) has nothing to do with manual work nor the works of the law (cf. 3:2), but denotes the way of showing this love. *“Nach Ansicht des Paulus ist der Christ nicht nur ein Mensch, der an Jesus Christus glaubt, sondern durch diesen Glauben wird er zu einem Instrument für die göttliche Kraft der ‘Liebe’ (ἀγάπη).”*<sup>785</sup> The contrastive conjunction *ἀλλὰ* (“but”) links “neither circumcision nor uncircumcision” with “faith working through love.” Hence, the *πίστις* (“faith”) that works through love stands in opposition to circumcision or uncircumcision.

The second text is 1 Cor 7:19: *ἡ περιτομή οὐδὲν ἐστίν, καὶ ἡ ἀκροβυστία οὐδὲν ἐστίν, ἀλλὰ τήρησις ἐντολῶν Θεοῦ.* (“For neither circumcision counts for anything nor uncircumcision, but keeping the commandments of God”). Paul rephrases here what he wrote to the Galatians in Gal 3:28; 5:6 and 6:15 – circumcision or uncircumcision is nothing.<sup>786</sup> However, that is “as far as the Christian vocation is concerned.”<sup>787</sup> God commanded Abraham and his descendants thus: “Every male among you shall be circumcised” (Gen 17:10c). The

<sup>782</sup> Cf. Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 270.

<sup>783</sup> Betz, *Der Galaterbrief*, 448-449.

<sup>784</sup> *Ibid*, 449.

<sup>785</sup> *Ibid*, 450.

<sup>786</sup> Cf. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 305: “To declare that circumcision is nothing (cf. Gal. 5:6; 6:15; Rom 2:25-26) is a remarkable statement for a Jew to make, particularly one who claims to revere keeping of the commandments of God, since circumcision is one of those commandments (Gen. 17:9-14) ...”

<sup>787</sup> Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 308.

commandments (ἐντολαί) are God's commandments (cf. Ex 20:3-17), "which echoes Sir 32:23, is demanded of the individual Christian no matter what his or her ethnic background or social status might be."<sup>788</sup> Therefore, the law is good, holy and righteous (cf. Rom 7:12). The law is valid "as an ethical code to guide community life and social relations."<sup>789</sup> Hence, the conjunction ἀλλὰ ("but") contrasts circumcision and uncircumcision with the keeping of God's commandments and lays the emphasis on the latter. The keeping of God's commandments (Ex 20:3-17; Matt 5:17) as an essential element of the law is set in opposition to the practice of circumcision (cf. Gen 17:9-14; Rom 2:25-26). David E. Garland rightly maintains, "for Paul to say that circumcision and uncircumcision are nothing reveals that God's call in the crucified Christ voids all former classifications that assign worth to people based on their ethnicity."<sup>790</sup> Paul wants the Christians to realize that God accepts them just the way they are and that particular ethnic marks of identity are irrelevant for those who are in Christ. Having responded to God's call, Christians must also believe that God accepts them as they are. Their conversion requires a change in allegiance, spiritual values, and moral behaviour and not a change in ethnic origin.<sup>791</sup> It makes no difference if one comes from Jewish background or from Gentile background. "There is no need to deny that ethnic background. One's physical condition has no bearing on the grace of vocation."<sup>792</sup> Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza rightly says that "the religious/biological sign of initiation to Jewish religion is no longer of any relevance to Christians."<sup>793</sup>

Paul places obedience to God's commandments above the rituals of circumcision as he speaks to "the mixed community of Jewish and Gentile Christians in Roman Corinth."<sup>794</sup> In comparison to "you all are one in Christ" (Gal 3:28d) and "faith working through love" (6:15b), Paul emphasizes the keeping of God's commandments (1 Cor 7:19b) because the rituals of circumcision have become obsolete (Gal 2:3), but the keeping of God's commandments is necessary for every Christian (cf. Sir 32:23; Matt 5:17; 1 Tim 6:14).

The third text is 2 Cor 5:17: ὥστε εἴ τις ἐν Χριστῷ, καινὴ κτίσις· τὰ ἀρχαῖα παρῆλθεν, ἰδοὺ γέγονεν καινά. Verse 17a is a lapidary nominal sentence, hence, the verb subject (τις)

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<sup>788</sup> Ibid, 308.

<sup>789</sup> Horsley, 1 Corinthians, 101.

<sup>790</sup> Garland, 1 Corinthians, 305.

<sup>791</sup> Cf. Ibid, 305.

<sup>792</sup> Ibid, 307.

<sup>793</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, In Memory of Her, 221.

<sup>794</sup> Fitzmyer, First Corinthians, 307.

must be supplied.<sup>795</sup> “Therefore, if anyone [is] in Christ, [he/she is] a new creation.” The conjunction ὥστε (“therefore”) links what is said here in v 17 with the foregoing in v 16. The conditional εἰ (“if”) gives room for the choice to “be in Christ” and the indefinite pronoun τις (“anyone,” “whoever”) keeps being a new eschatological creation (καινὴ κτίσις) open to everybody. Used as a noun, the adjective ἀρχαῖα (“old things”) refers to the Corinthians’ old way of life (which is “for those who are perishing” (1 Cor 1:18a) and “are blinded by unbelief,” 2 Cor 4:3b-4), and is put in opposition to ἐν Χριστῷ (being “in Christ”), as well as to καινὰ in v 17c. The aorist indicative παρῆλθεν (“have passed away”) refers back to the Corinthians’ “old way of life” or “old order” which are those things that controlled their pre-Christian lives,<sup>796</sup> i.e. mainly the barriers of circumcision and uncircumcision (cf. also Eph 2:14-16).<sup>797</sup>

καινὴ κτίσις (“a new creation”) is not only the expectation of the recreation of the world (cf. Isa 42:9; 48:6; 65:17; 2 Peter 3:13; Rev 21:1)<sup>798</sup> but a new way of life in Christ. David E. Garland rightly maintains that “Christians see the world in a new way and become new when they are joined to Christ.”<sup>799</sup> The aorist imperative ἰδοὺ (“behold”) calls the attention to the new way of life that has emerged in Christ. The expression γέγονεν καινὰ (“something new has emerged”) refers back to being ἐν Χριστῷ (“in Christ”); all those whose lives are Christ-like live in this new creation (cf. Gal 6:15b). Norbert Baumert affirms that “in V 17 *aber verallgemeinert Paulus diese Aussage über sich selbst, [i.e. in v 16] indem er sich wieder in eine Reihe mit allen stellt, die ,in Christus‘ sind. Dass sie dann ,neues Geschöpf‘ sind, gilt für alle ... Und das Alte, nämlich die fleischlichen, egoistischen, Verhaltensweisen ohne Liebe sind vergangen; das ‘Neue’ aber, das an deren Stelle tritt, ist Liebe Christi (also eine spezifische, neue Gestalt von Liebe).*”<sup>800</sup>

*Pragmatics:* Gal 6:15 serves as a shorter form of the transformation formula of 3:28. It rejects the categorization of people based on ethnic marks of identity – circumcision and uncircumcision – but points at what is more important – being a new creation (2 Cor 5:17) – which is a new way of life that involves loving your neighbour (5:6) and keeping God’s commandment (1 Cor 7:19).

<sup>795</sup> Cf. Garland, 2 Corinthians, 286.

<sup>796</sup> Ibid, 287.

<sup>797</sup> Cf. Ibid, 287.

<sup>798</sup> Cf. Ibid, 287.

<sup>799</sup> Ibid, 287.

<sup>800</sup> Baumert, Mit dem Rücken zur Wand, 114.



### 4.1.3 Detailed Exegesis

Having overviewed the syntactic, stylistic and semantic relationships between Gal 6:15; 5:6; 1 Cor 7:19 and 2 Cor 5:17, the detailed analysis of Gal 6:15 will be handled in combination with these other similar texts.

#### 4.1.3.1 Circumcised or Uncircumcised (v 15a)

οὔτε γὰρ περιτομή τί ἐστὶν οὔτε ἀκροβυστία

Circumcised or uncircumcised has no relevance for those who are “in Christ” (cf. Gal 5:6; 1 Cor 7:19). According to Frank J. Matera, “in the realm of Christ external differences are not important — not even the lack of circumcision; in the light of Christ both are indifferent.”<sup>801</sup> Neither circumcision nor the lack of it means anything because the death of Christ has redeemed and reconciled us to God (cf. Gal 3:13; 2 Cor 5:18). To be circumcised as an imitation of what others are, is an “act of foolishness” (cf. Gal 3:3). If the Galatians adhere to the teaching of the agitators, they have severed (*κατηργήθητε*) themselves from Christ, therefore, Christ will be of no use to them (cf. 5:2-6, especially v 4).

Circumcision is an important issue because it is the sign of God’s covenant with Abraham and his descendants forever (cf. Gen 17:23-27; 21:4). In keeping with God’s injunction, all Jewish males are circumcised and those who are not circumcised are excluded from the covenant community (cf. 17:10-14). To be welcomed as a male Gentile you have to be circumcised. Gentiles were among the *goyim*, those who could not enter the temple’s inner precincts.<sup>802</sup> “The entrance of a Gentile into the Temple was tantamount to desecration (Acts 21:28).”<sup>803</sup> They also could not share the table meal with the Jews, and the Jews could not eat their food either as J. J. Castelot explains. “Food grown or prepared by Gentiles was unfit for Israelite consumption (Ezek 4:13; Hos 9:3; Dn 1:8; Tb 1:10-12; Jdt 10:5; 12:2),”<sup>804</sup> but the acceptance of circumcision made it possible for Gentiles to participate in Jewish religious worship and made them also eligible for the table meal.

Circumcision was also counted among God’s supreme gifts to the Jews (cf. Gen 17). Over the years the rite of circumcision became a tradition that could not even be questioned.

<sup>801</sup> Matera, Galatians, 183.

<sup>802</sup> Cf. Wilckens, Theologie des Neuen Testaments, Band 1, 73.

<sup>803</sup> Castelot, Gentiles, in: New Catholic Encyclopedia, 140.

<sup>804</sup> Ibid, 140.

The reason is that circumcision was regarded as “a sign of the Jewish ethnic identity” and the “mark of belonging.”<sup>805</sup> Jörg Frey explains. *“Dahinter steht eine Theologie, die eine Zugehörigkeit zum Bundesvolk und die Teilhabe an den Verheißungen Gottes ausschließlich durch die Beschneidung (d.h. das Jüdisch-Sein bzw. Proselyt-Werden) ermöglicht sieht. ‘Sohn Abrahams’ wird, wer sich wie jener beschneiden lässt. Die Tora ist die von Gott gegebene Lebensordnung Israels, sie zu beachten ist Ausdruck und notwendiges Implikat der Zugehörigkeit zu diesem Bund. So werden Heidenchristen durch Beschneidung nach dem Muster der jüdischen Proselyten dem Gottesvolk kooptiert.”*<sup>806</sup>

The bringing in of uncircumcised Gentiles into the Jewish dominated-Christian community amounts to the hellenization of the community.<sup>807</sup> The banning of circumcision in any form was the negation of Jewish identity and no pious Jew would live to see this policy come true (cf. 1 Macc 1:60-64). Paul, however, resists the ritual of circumcision because it is a mark of discrimination (cf. Gal 3:28).<sup>808</sup> F. F. Bruce affirms: “True, Paul may have had in mind that circumcision involved a form of discrimination between men and women which was removed when circumcision was demoted from its position as religious law, whereas baptism was open to both sexes indiscriminately.”<sup>809</sup> Paul replaces circumcision as a sign of initiation in the community of God’s people (cf. Gen 17:11) with “being clothed with Christ” (Gal 3:27b).

According to Paul, the acceptance of ritual circumcision as a criterion for membership contradicts and negates the redemptive work of Christ (cf. Gal 3:13-14). The death and resurrection of Christ have rendered such physical preoccupations not only obsolete but also useless. What matters now that Christ has come (cf. 3:23-25) is being a new creation (6:15a). For circumcision is neither a necessity for salvation nor a requirement for membership nor for leadership position within the Christian community. It does not improve anyone’s stand before God,<sup>810</sup> and it is also not necessary for the reception of the Spirit (3:1-3). Those who are entitled to inherit God’s promise, as Abraham did, are the people of faith (3:7) and not the people of circumcision.<sup>811</sup>

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<sup>805</sup> Cf. Glick, *Marked in Your Flesh*, 27-32.

<sup>806</sup> Frey, *Galaterbrief*, in: *Paulus. Leben - Umwelt - Werk - Briefe*, 248.

<sup>807</sup> Cf. Barclay, *Paul Among Diaspora Jews*, 93.

<sup>808</sup> Cf. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 190: “No more restriction is implied in Paul’s equalizing of the status of male and female in Christ than in his equalizing of the status of Jew and Gentile, or of slave and free person”.

<sup>809</sup> *Ibid*, 189-190.

<sup>810</sup> *Ibid*, 187-189.

<sup>811</sup> Cf. Kim, *The Significance of Clothing Imagery in the Pauline Corpus*, 109-110.

#### 4.1.3.2 What Counts is a New Creation (v 15b)

ἀλλὰ καινὴ κτίσις

The phrases “what counts is being a new creation” (Gal 6:15b) and “what counts is faith working through love” (5:6) are entirely harmonious.<sup>812</sup> To show the importance Paul attaches to peaceful co-existence of community members, he uses the formula that promotes universal relationship in Christ (cf. “sons and daughters of God,” “through faith in Christ,” “being clothed with Christ,” “being one in Christ” and “heirs of Abraham” (3:26-29; cf. Phil 3:9). Wilfried Eckey affirms that *“ohne Glauben gibt es keine Rechtfertigung, die Gott uns aus Gnaden und nicht aufgrund der Erfüllung des Gesetzes zuteil werden läßt (vgl. 2 Kor 5,17).”*<sup>813</sup> Paul speaks of a new way of life among those who are Christ’s. One’s faith in Christ (ἐν Χριστῷ) is made manifest through the love of the neighbour. What counts now is not circumcision but a new way of life in Christ Jesus. Those who live this new life “in Christ” are “new creation” and those who are created anew “in Christ” will be saved.

The expression “a new creation” has also other meanings, which are found both in Qumran as well as in postbiblical literatures (cf. 1 Enoch 45:4-5; 72:1; 91:15-16; 2 Apoc. Bar. 32:6; 44:12; 57:2; 73-74; 4 Ezra 7:75; Jub 1:29; 1QH 3:19-23b; 11:9-14; 1QS 4:23-26; 2QTemple 29:7b-10).<sup>814</sup> David E. Garland affirms that “the concept of a new creation appears prominently in Jewish apocalyptic texts that picture the new age as inaugurating something far more sweeping than individual transformation – a new heaven and a new earth. The translation ‘there is a new creation’ would mean that the new creation does not merely involve the personal transformation of individuals but encompasses the eschatological act of recreating humans and nature in Christ. It would also include the new community, which has done away with the artificial barriers of circumcision and uncircumcision (Gal 6:15-16 ... Eph 2:14-16) ...”<sup>815</sup> The new heaven and the new earth as well as the perfection of Christians remain a future hope, but Christians are certain that this hope will be fulfilled in Christ (cf. Heb 6:19-20; Col 3:4) and this is why “their lives are controlled by this new reality that still awaits consummation.”<sup>816</sup> Paul believes also that the new creation foretold by Isaiah (e.g., Isa 43:18-19; 65:17) is fulfilled in Christ. There is a transition from cosmological expectation of “new

<sup>812</sup> Cf. Martyn, Galatians, 473.

<sup>813</sup> Eckey, Der Galaterbrief, 268.

<sup>814</sup> Cf. Garland, II Corinthians, 287, footnote 781.

<sup>815</sup> Ibid, 286-287.

<sup>816</sup> Ibid, 287.

heavens and a new earth" (65:17) to its anthropological application to those who are "in Christ." Frank J. Matera affirms that "whereas Isaiah points to a cosmic renewal that will envelop the whole creation ... Paul identifies this new creation with the believer who is 'in Christ'."<sup>817</sup>

The concept of "a new creation" has parallels in Judaism, and refers to a person whose sins are forgiven or a proselyte who underwent circumcision (Joseph and Asenath 15:4; Gen Rab 39:4),<sup>818</sup> and the ritual bathe (St.-B. II, 415 and III, 519).<sup>819</sup> According to David E. Garland, "later rabbinic texts refer to proselytes becoming new creatures, and a similar idea may have been part of Paul's thinking."<sup>820</sup>

The expression "being a new creation in Christ" (2 Cor 5:17; Gal 6:15), can mean: "that one belongs to Christ, that one lives in the sphere of Christ's power, that one is united to Christ, or that one is part of ... the believing community."<sup>821</sup> Being "a new creation in Christ" brings a radical change in a person's life, because the Christ-like nature helps to eliminate the barriers of circumcision and uncircumcision (Gal 5:6; 6:15; 1 Cor 7:19; cf. Eph 2:14-16).<sup>822</sup> It may also denote the highest aspiration of the Christian who hopes to be with Christ at the end of this life.<sup>823</sup> Hence, F. F. Bruce opines that "the 'new creation' in its fullness belongs to the future, but to those in Christ it is already realized through the Spirit. Christ is head of the new creation; in him they have been transferred from their former existence 'in Adam', the head of the old creation, and await the final manifestation of the new creation on the day of resurrection when 'in Christ all shall be made alive' (1 Cor. 15:22)."<sup>824</sup> Being "a new creation" abolishes all the advantages that might accrue to any one through circumcision, ethnic origin, social status, sex and gender.<sup>825</sup>

There also exists a correspondence between being a "new creation in Christ" (cf. 2 Cor 5:17) and the keeping of God's commandment (cf. 1 Cor 7:19). Those whose lives are changed, love not only to keep God's commandments (Ex 20:3-17; Matt 5:17; Rom 7:12), but they also show God's love to their neighbours. David E. Garland maintains that "the individual's whole

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<sup>817</sup> Matera, II Corinthians, 137.

<sup>818</sup> Garland, II Corinthians, 286, footnote, 778.

<sup>819</sup> Cf. Rienecker, Sprachlicher Schlüssel zum Griechischen Neuen Testament, 411.

<sup>820</sup> Garland, II Corinthians, 286-287.

<sup>821</sup> Ibid, 286.

<sup>822</sup> Cf. Ibid, 286-287.

<sup>823</sup> Cf. Rienecker, Sprachlicher Schlüssel zum Griechischen Neuen Testament, 411.

<sup>824</sup> Bruce, The Epistle to the Galatians, 273.

<sup>825</sup> Cf. Matera, Galatians, 273.

being, value system, and behaviour are also changed through conversion.”<sup>826</sup> The new recreated individual enters into a realm where God’s love reigns. Helmut Merklein affirms this point. *“Wer hineingenommen ist in den Lebensraum, den Christus durch die Tat seiner Liebe geschaffen hat (in Christus ist), der ist Teil der neuen Schöpfung, die durch ihn beginnt (wörtlich: ‘eine neue Schöpfung’; V. 17).”*<sup>827</sup> Paul shares this new creation with all those who have the status of “being in Christ.” The change that occurs at conversion and baptism shows itself in the relationship with other Christians and non-Christians as well. There is also a correspondence between “faith working through love” (Gal 5:6b) and “and keeping the commandment of God” (1 Cor 7:19b), because those who love others are fulfilling the law which states that “you shall love your neighbour as yourself” (Lev 19:18b; Mk 12:31; Rom 13:8-10). Therefore, “the fulfillment of the law through love characterizes the new creation ([Gal] 6:15).”<sup>828</sup>

*Summary:* The conclusive part of the letter to the Galatians is constructed in such a way that it serves as its summary. Just as the introductory part of the letter gives Paul the opportunity to signal some of the major themes of the letter — his apostolate, the conflict, etc. (cf. chapters 1 and 2), the closing section (6:11-18) provides him with an opportunity to summarize what he sees as important in the conflict. Paul warns the Galatians about the agitators. “Those who are trying to force circumcision upon them are operating from impure motives.”<sup>829</sup> Therefore, Paul wants the Galatians to stand firm because Christ has set them free from the yoke of the law (5:1) and because what counts now that Christ has come (3:23-25) is being a new creation, and not circumcision (6:15).

Those who live within the community of God’s children (3:26) should love one another because Christ loved us first and gave his life as a ransom for us (3:13-14; cf. 2:20). Therefore, we are to love one another (5:6) in imitation of Christ’s love. Hans Dieter Betz affirms: *“Wenn der Christ ‘an Jesus Christus glaubt’, glaubt er daher, daß der Sohn Gottes am Kreuz starb, weil er ‘mich liebte und sich für mich dahingab’ (2:20). Wenn der Christ den Geist des Sohnes Gottes (4,6) empfängt, empfängt er auch die göttliche Macht der Liebe, die Christus zu seiner Tat befähigte.”*<sup>830</sup> The life of a Christian manifests itself in his or her love for others and in the life of the members of the Christian community. Love and faith complement each other and those

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<sup>826</sup> Garland, II Corinthians, 287.

<sup>827</sup> Merklein, Stuttgarter Neues Testament, 350.

<sup>828</sup> Silva, Galatians, in: Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament, 810.

<sup>829</sup> Matera, Galatians, 18.

<sup>830</sup> Betz, Der Galaterbrief, 450.

who love others love also the keeping of God's commandment (1 Cor 7:19; cf. Matt 19:17) because *"der Ruf Gottes ist größer und wichtiger als die Tatsache, ob man beschnitten ist oder nicht."*<sup>831</sup> Frank J. Matera also avers that "in the realm of Christ external differences are not important – not even the lack of circumcision; in the light of Christ both are indifferent."<sup>832</sup> The Galatians should not worry about the religious mark of circumcision or uncircumcision because they are already "in Christ Jesus," rather, they should worry about loving their neighbours (Gal 6:15) and keeping God's commandment (1 Cor 7:19). Paul summarizes the Christian way of life as "faith in Christ," which works through (*ἐνεργουμένη*) a dynamic love (Gal 5:6).

Paul uses the gnomic form of expression: "if anyone," "whoever" (*εἴ τις*, 2 Cor 5:17) is "in Christ" to express a universal theological affirmation that "whoever is in Christ is a new creation" and "the old things have passed away" (2 Cor 5:17). "Being a new creation in Christ" in 2 Cor 5:17 directly corresponds to "what counts is a new creation" in Gal 6:15.<sup>833</sup>

## 4.2 1 Cor 12:13: The Body Metaphor

The remote context is chapters 12-14. There are varieties of spiritual gifts, which God gives to members of the community. These include: wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, working of miracles, prophecy, discernment of the plural Spirit, tongues, interpretation of tongues, but the greatest of all is love. And all these come from the same Spirit.

These gifts are to be used for the good of all. Their proper use overshadows rivalries and bickering. All things, therefore, should be done in order, for God is not the author of confusion but peace.

The immediate context is 12:12-30, a text which is frequently superscribed as "the body metaphor."<sup>834</sup> The metaphor of the body which is common in ancient political literatures could have influenced Paul's Christian formulation of it in 1 Cor 12.<sup>835</sup> Wolfgang Schrage is of

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<sup>831</sup> Baumert, *Sorgen des Seelsorgers*, 101.

<sup>832</sup> Matera, *Galatians*, 183.

<sup>833</sup> Cf. Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 314.

<sup>834</sup> Cf. Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 157-158: "The well-known fable of Menenius Agrippa, for example, tells of a revolt of the hands, mouth and teeth against the belly, thus weakening the whole body. This fable is told in a deliberative speech using the plebs to cease from sedition and work for Concordia. The metaphor of the body for the political organism, both being made up of interdependent μέλη, is very old, going back at least as far as the 5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries B. C. E ..."

<sup>835</sup> Cf. Collins, *First Corinthians*, 458: "The body (*sōma*, 3x in 12:12) is a classic topos in Hellenistic rhetoric ... The human body has always been used as a literary image for society ... As a metaphor for a social or political group the body was a classic topos in ancient literature. It was, in fact, the most common topos for unity."

the opinion that the body metaphor is an allusion to the “stoic diatribe” of Greek society. *“Dann greift Paulus das in der Antike, vor allem in der stoischen Diatribe weit verbreitete Bild vom Organismus des Leibes und seinen Gliedern auf, um daran Einheit und Vielfalt der Gemeinde zu veranschaulichen.”*<sup>836</sup> But the body metaphor has also a more political dimension, which is shown by “parallels not only in Plato but also in Livy, Plutarch, Cicero, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Epictetus, and other writers. It would be beyond doubt that the Corinthian addressees would be familiar with the ideological nuances of the image as one of order and hierarchy, given the understanding of body in the era of Paul.”<sup>837</sup> All the aforementioned nuances notwithstanding, Paul utilizes the language for a theological purpose.<sup>838</sup> It is Paul’s reaction to the different factions in Corinth. He seeks for the unity of the community members.<sup>839</sup> Using the body metaphor, Paul aims at explaining to the Corinthians the need for unity in diversity. *“Einheit und Verschiedenheit der Gemeinde bleiben ... das zentrale Thema und werden ... in ihrer notwendigen Wechselseitigkeit und Verflochtenheit illustriert.”*<sup>840</sup> Paul ridicules the rift running through the Corinthians and the folly of their fragmentation, he turns self-centered vanity upside down and impresses upon them the need for solidarity and unity.<sup>841</sup> The body metaphor denotes a theological concept, the body of Christ (ὁμοῦς δὲ ἐστε σῶμα Χριστοῦ, 1 Cor 12:27). In this body of Christ, there are no rooms for rivalries and elitism.

#### 4.2.1 Text

καὶ γὰρ ἐν ἐνὶ πνεύματι ἡμεῖς πάντες εἰς ἓν  
σῶμα ἐβαπτίσθημεν, εἴτε Ἰουδαῖοι εἴτε  
Ἕλληνες, εἴτε δοῦλοι εἴτε ἐλεύθεροι. καὶ πάντες  
ἐν πνεύματι ἐποτίσθημεν.

And indeed, in one Spirit we all were baptized  
into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether  
slaves or freed, and we all were made to drink  
from one Spirit

This text is put in a structured form that corresponds to the ways the issues therein are handed.

<sup>836</sup> Schrage, Der Erste Brief an die Korinther, 206.

<sup>837</sup> Thiselton, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 995.

<sup>838</sup> Ibid, 992.

<sup>839</sup> Wischmeyer, 1. Korintherbrief, in: Paul. Leben - Umwelt - Werk - Briefe, 190.

<sup>840</sup> Schrage, Der Erste Brief an die Korinther, 206.

<sup>841</sup> Garland, 1 Corinthians, 589.

καὶ γὰρ ἐν ἐνὶ πνεύματι ἡμεῖς πάντες εἰς ἓν σῶμα ἐβαπτίσθημεν (v 13a)  
 εἴτε Ἰουδαῖοι εἴτε Ἕλληνες (v 13b)  
 εἴτε δοῦλοι εἴτε ἐλεύθεροι (v 13c)  
 καὶ πάντες ἐν πνεύμα ἐποτίσθημεν (v 13d)

**And** indeed, in one **Spirit we all** were baptized into one body (v 13 a)  
 whether Jews or Greeks (v 13b)  
 whether slaves or freed (v 13c)  
**and we all** were made to drink from one **Spirit** (13d)

## 4.2.2 Linguistic Analysis

*Style and Structure:* “In one Spirit we all were baptized” (v 13a) runs parallel to “we all were made to drink from the same Spirit” (v 13d). Both sentences form an “inclusio” for the rest of the text. “Whether Jews or Greeks” (v 13b) is parallel to “whether slaves or freed” (v 13c) and Jews and Greeks, slaves and freed stand in opposition to one another. εἰς ἓν σῶμα (v 13a) is also parallel to ἐν πνεύμα (v 13d).

*Syntax and Semantics:* In the preceding section Paul initially uses two verbs in the second person plural. οἶδατε (“you know”) and ἦτε (“you were”, v2 ), whereas in v 13a he employs the personal pronoun ἡμεῖς (“we”), thereby including himself and the Corinthians among those who have received God’s spiritual gifts vv 4-11. The conjunction γὰρ connects the previous section (vv 4-12) to v 13, while the καὶ in v 13a corresponds to the καὶ in v 13d. πάντες in v 13d takes up πάντες in v 13a, which of course intensifies ἡμεῖς in v 13a. The ἡμεῖς (“we”) stresses the inclusive character (cf. “We were buried therefore with him,” Rom 6:4).<sup>842</sup> πνεῦμα in v 13a is linked to the πνεῦμα in v 13d which makes the intimate relationship between ἐν σῶμα (v 13a) and ἐν πνεύμα (v 13d) possible. “In one Spirit” in v 13a and “one Spirit” in 13d denote the primary source of all gifts, which is “one Spirit” (1 Cor 12:4), “one Lord” (v 5) and “one God” (v 6; cf. Eph 4:5-6). And because all gifts come from the same source, they function like the human body, which is made up of many parts, but remains one body.<sup>843</sup>

Paul uses also two aorist passive verbs — ἐβαπτίσθημεν (v 13a) and ἐποτίσθημεν (v 13d). Gordon D. Fee opines that this is most likely “a piece of semitic parallelism, where both clauses make essentially the same point.”<sup>844</sup> Frederick W. Grosheide, furthermore maintains that “this is a figurative language.”<sup>845</sup> Those who were baptized are those who drank from the

<sup>842</sup> Cf. Garland, 1 Corinthians, 596.

<sup>843</sup> Cf. Collins, First Corinthians, 458.

<sup>844</sup> Fee, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 605.

<sup>845</sup> Grosheide, Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians, 293.



same Spirit.<sup>846</sup> Paul emphasizes the reception of the Spirit in the sense that it is the source of unity of those who are baptized. The verbs *ἐβαπτίσθημεν* (“were baptized”, v 13a) and *ἐποτίσθημεν* (“were made to drink”, v 13d) remind the Corinthians of what they have become, and of their experiences of God’s Spirit through baptism. What they are now was initiated by God, but the disunity and factions among them contradict what they are, members of Christ’s body (v 27). Even though they are many, they should not forget that they are one body (12:12).

The conjunction *εἴτε* (“whether”) occurs twice each in vv 13b and 13c, and connects four plural nouns — *Ἰουδαῖοι* and *Ἕλληνες*, *δοῦλοι* and *ἐλεύθεροι*, which form opposite pairs. *εἴτε*, therefore, negates their discriminatory validity.

*Pragmatics:* The short text emphasizes the universal nature of the Christian initiation and God’s unmeritorious spiritual gifts to the members of the community. The different spiritual gifts should be used in the unification of the community, for God is not the author of disunity (1 Cor 14:33). There are no longer discriminations for those who are “in Christ Jesus” (Rom 3:22; cf. Eph 2:13, 14, 18). David E. Garland precisely summarizes 1 Cor 12:13 as “the diversity and interdependence of members of the body.”<sup>847</sup> The text stresses the need for “unity in diversity” or “unity in plurality,” but not uniformity because individual integrity remains.<sup>848</sup>

### 4.2.3 Detailed Exegesis

This subsection handles concisely the main concepts especially the ones that have been deliberated in the text, Gal 3:27-28 and 6:15a.

#### 4.2.3.1 All Were Baptized into One Body and One Spirit (v 13a)

*καὶ γὰρ ἐν ἐνὶ πνεύματι ἡμεῖς πάντες εἰς ἓν σῶμα ἐβαπτίσθημεν*

The beginning of the sentence is unusually emphatic. *καὶ γὰρ* (“and indeed”) suggests that the sentence will now elaborate upon the body metaphor introduced in the preceding verse. V 13a takes up the claim that the body is one (12:12) and explains how the members have become one body through baptism and through the reception of the same Spirit.<sup>849</sup> The

<sup>846</sup> Cf. Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 478: “Indeed the following clause, which speaks of ‘drinking’ the Spirit, implies that the baptism of which Paul speaks is one of water.”

<sup>847</sup> Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 588.

<sup>848</sup> *Ibid*, 590.

<sup>849</sup> Cf. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 601.

verb βαπτίζω (“to dip” or “to immerse”) occurs here in its aorist passive form, ἐβαπτίσθημεν. We were all baptized through one Spirit and into one body.<sup>850</sup> The inclusive language is very obvious here. “We all” (ἡμεῖς πάντες) belong to Christ (cf. Rom 6:5-6). “We all” stand above ethnic limitations of Jews and Greeks and social categorizations of slaves, freed and freeborn. The reason is because “we all” were baptized with or into one Spirit, which initiated all of us into the one body of Christ (1 Cor 12:27). David E. Garland underscores this point. “The ‘all’ is repeated for emphasis, and the basis of their unity is their common experience of the one Spirit.”<sup>851</sup> All of us who now form members of the one body of Christ were in former times bound in segregations.<sup>852</sup> According to Frederik W. Grosheide, this means that “the Spirit dwells in the church and works His gifts; the church is thereby constituted as a unity but manifests also a great diversity.”<sup>853</sup>

“Baptized into one body, through the same spirit” indicates also that the incorporation into the body of Christ does not depend only on baptism, but also on the power of the Spirit. Frederik W. Grosheide again emphasizes that “all these different people become one body by baptism, they form the body of the church and that is accomplished by the one Spirit. Baptism receives significance only if there is an activity of the Spirit.”<sup>854</sup> This claim has a positive consequence for the Corinthians because “where that work of the Spirit is wrought, people entirely different from one another form one body, a body which according to verse 12 may be called ‘Christ’.”<sup>855</sup> The Corinthians “share one and the same union with the risen Christ through baptism ‘in the one Spirit’ and thus belong to the ‘one body’.”<sup>856</sup>

One of the problems is the Corinthians’ distorted understanding of spiritual gifts, which they received through their baptism. It seems that the elitists’ regard for the manifestations of the Spirit has exacerbated their disunity.<sup>857</sup> But the Spirit is given for the mutual benefit of the members (cf. 12:11; 14:33). Just as the human body functions symbiotically, the gifts of the Spirit should be used interdependently. Each individual is given a gift for the good of the

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<sup>850</sup> Cf. Garland, 1 Corinthians, 591: “What he means by baptism here is not clear. He could have in mind ‘water baptism’, which took place at conversion, or a figurative Spirit baptism, which occurred when the new convert is immersed in the Spirit ... The point is that every Christian has been made a part of one body and immersed in (or by) the Spirit.”

<sup>851</sup> Ibid, 590.

<sup>852</sup> Cf. Grosheide, Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians, 292.

<sup>853</sup> Ibid, 291.

<sup>854</sup> Ibid, 293.

<sup>855</sup> Ibid, 293.

<sup>856</sup> Fitzmyer, First Corinthians, 478.

<sup>857</sup> Cf. Fee, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 582.

community and no gift is of more or less importance. Therefore, members of the body of Christ should accept humbly their spiritual gifts without pretentiously flaunting them or belittling other people's gifts or even envying one another's spiritual gifts. All the gifts are of equal value, but if there is to be any "over-compensation, it is to be for the less favoured."<sup>858</sup>

#### 4.2.3.2 Whether Jews or Greeks (v 13b; cf. Gal 3:28a)

*εἴτε Ἰουδαῖοι εἴτε Ἕλληνες*

The collective nouns "Jews" and "Greeks" denote the basic distinctions that separated people in the then world. People were judged from their ethnic origin, religious affiliation and cultural identity. But all believers, no matter what their diverse religious, ethnic or cultural backgrounds may be, now share one and the same union with Christ (Gal 3:28).<sup>859</sup> In Christ all the old distinctions are obliterated, not in the sense that one is no longer a Jew or a Greek, but in the sense that these ethno-cultural, socio-religious distinctions and classifications have lost their significances. "This is the earliest instance in Christian literature of 'the church of God' recorded as an entity set over against Jews and Greeks in human history."<sup>860</sup> Paul thus wants God's church to be attractive to both Jews and Gentiles.

The socio-cultural background to Paul's assertion ("whether Jews or Greeks") is "what some Palestinian Jews had tried to do, when games played in nudity were introduced along with the Hellenistic gymnasium in Jerusalem. It was during the secularizing reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanes"<sup>861</sup> (cf. 1 Macc 1:14-15). In these nudity games, one notices who is circumcised and who is not. Paul uses a known example to show that it makes no difference whether one comes from the Jewish or Greek ethnic origin. There is no need to deny one's ethnic identity, for no ethnic identity is universal. Furthermore, one's physical condition or ethnic mark of identity has no bearing on the grace of his or her vocation, and to try to alter that condition or identity would be a misunderstanding of God's creative act.<sup>862</sup>

The reception of baptism and God's gift of the Spirit supersede particular ethno-cultural and socio-religious sentiments. Although the ethnic prejudices and social stereotyping among the Corinthians were supposed to have been "submerged into the water of baptism"

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<sup>858</sup> Ibid, 622.

<sup>859</sup> Cf. Fitzmyer, First Corinthians, 478.

<sup>860</sup> Ibid, 403.

<sup>861</sup> Ibid, 307.

<sup>862</sup> Ibid, 307.

and “the deeds of the flesh put to death” (cf. Rom 8:13; Col 3:5) in the community of God’s people, “all too frequently these evils survive the experiences of baptism, dry themselves off, and form cankers on the body” of Christians.<sup>863</sup> The Corinthians should know that their baptismal initiation has washed away the ethnic and sociological barricades that previously alienated Jews from Greeks.<sup>864</sup> But because this is not the case, Paul reminds them that their ethnic and socio-religious sentiments should have no effects on their new ways of life in Christ.

The segmentation of people into cliques is a product of human depravity which spurs individuals to treat their ethno-cultural differences as a pretext for reinstating ethnic divisions, but for Paul “what might polarize the world should not divide the churches.”<sup>865</sup> Human classifications and worldly divisions must not be practiced in the church. The Corinthians are now baptized in the name of Christ (cf. 1 Cor 1:13), therefore, membership into the covenant community has become a matter of the heart and not an outward sign or ethnic mark.<sup>866</sup>

#### 4.2.3.3 Whether Slaves or Freed (v 13c; cf. Gal 3:28b)

εἴτε δοῦλοι εἴτε ἐλεύθεροι

“Slaves,” “freed slaves” or “freeborn” were the basis of social status and legal identification in Jewish and Greco-Roman societies.<sup>867</sup> The number of slaves in Corinth was enormous. Slaves prospered because the new city offered to them greater opportunities for upward mobility than were present elsewhere. There were freed slaves who remained in a state of master-apprenticeship relationship. Robert S. Nash underscores this point. “Much of the early population of the Roman colony of Corinth consisted of freed persons who remained in a client-patron relationship with their former owners.”<sup>868</sup> Persons might choose to become temporarily slaves as a means of improving their economic circumstances, and if they became slaves to a rightful person, they could even enhance their social status.

However, those enslaved were denied most of the privileges offered to citizens.<sup>869</sup> A slave was regarded as an “animated tool” (*empsychon organon*, Aristotle, *Nicom. Ethics*

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<sup>863</sup> Garland, 1 Corinthians, 592.

<sup>864</sup> Cf. Ibid, 592.

<sup>865</sup> Ibid, 592.

<sup>866</sup> Cf. Ciampa and Rosner, 1 Corinthians, in: Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament, 715.

<sup>867</sup> Cf. Pate, The End of the Age Has Come, 198.

<sup>868</sup> Nash, 1 Corinthians, 208.

<sup>869</sup> Ibid, 208.

8.11.6), as having no rights (*nullum ius habet*), but was obliged to serve only his master. On the other hand, slaves had certain advantages “and these made some of them prefer to remain in slavery.”<sup>870</sup> In spite of the apparent disadvantages of being a slave, some household slaves were treated cordially, their masters sponsored their training. It is very probable that the unnamed members of the household of Stephanas were slaves (cf. 1 Cor 1:16; 16:15). Jerome Murphy-O'Connor affirms that “while legally disadvantaged, such house slaves often enjoyed a standard of living and education denied to those born free, and could look forward to exercising their trained talents in freedom. Only then would they have to provide for themselves ...”<sup>871</sup>

These advantages notwithstanding, the institution was a despicable one, which devalued the dignity of the human person.<sup>872</sup> Being a slave was a stigma and even when the slave was freed, he or she remained obedient to the former master. Jerome Murphy-O'Connor illustrates this. “Erastus [Rom 16:23; cf. Acts 19:22; 2 Tim 4:20] gives us a privileged insight into a section of the population of Corinth into which Christianity made inroad. However much Erastus may have achieved, he would never have felt fully at ease among the freeborn. As with others of his class, the stigma of his servile origins blighted every pressure ... Erastus imagined that those who looked at him saw not the *quaestor* but merely an ex-slave.”<sup>873</sup>

For Paul, however, being a freed slave or a slave does not matter. Paul interchanges the acts of freedom with slavery “in Christ” (cf. 1 Cor 7:17-24; Rom 1:1).<sup>874</sup> Whoever is called by the Lord should not worry about being a slave or freeborn. What is important now is being called by the Lord and living out one's vocation in the Lord. Helmut Merkein remarks with regard to 1 Cor 7:17-24: “*Die Verse 17-24 bringen einen kurzen Exkurs: Wer Christ wurde, muss deshalb nicht unbedingt die Lebensverhältnisse, in denen er berufen wurde (in diesem Sinne spricht Paulus hier von Berufung = Stand), verändern. Wie für Verheiratete und Unverheiratete, so gilt das auch für Juden und Nichtjuden (beschnitten/unbeschnitten sein) und ebenso für → Sklaven und Freie. Entscheidend ist die innere Neugestaltung der Lebensverhältnisse aus der Berufung durch Gott und der Zugehörigkeit zu Christus (V. 22f).*”<sup>875</sup> What Paul does here is to relativize social standing. His point is that social status is immaterial (cf. 1 Cor 9:19). One's

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<sup>870</sup> Fitzmyer, First Corinthians, 309.

<sup>871</sup> Murphy-O'Connor, Paul. A Critical Life, 271-272.

<sup>872</sup> Cf. Pate, The End of the Age Has Come, 199.

<sup>873</sup> Murphy-O'Connor, Paul. A Critical Life, 269-290.

<sup>874</sup> Cf. Horsley, 1 Corinthians, 103.

<sup>875</sup> Merkein, Stuttgarter Neues Testament, 330.

earthly situation presents no disadvantage in fellowship with God, rather, each person is challenged to live the Christian life at the level within which he or she is called.<sup>876</sup> Judith L. Kovacs illustrates this. “It is possible to be a slave and yet free, and to be a free man (or woman) and yet a slave. When is the one who is a slave not a slave? When he/she does everything for the sake of God, when he/she acts without pretense ... On the other hand, when is a free person a slave? Whenever he/she does something base in service of men (and women), either because of gluttony or the love of money or power. Indeed, such a person is the most servile of all even if he/she is ‘free’.”<sup>877</sup>

One of the factors that made the gospel attractive to slaves is the fact that it embodies the paradox they lived. Its central thesis that Christ died under torture corresponds to their condition. Although they are classed as weak, “they knew their own power, and thus would understand without difficulty the idea, revealed in the life of Christ” (cf. 2 Cor 12:9).<sup>878</sup> Christianity introduced slaves and freed slaves into a society committed to looking at them primarily as part of the people of God. It gave them also a space in which they could flourish in freedom and in love (Gal 5:13). Paul formulates his fundamental principle of evangelization (cf. 1 Cor 9:19), whether those he will win over be weak or knowing (cf. 1:25), slave or freed (1 Cor 12:13c), what is important is just faith in Christ.

#### 4.2.3.4 All Were Made to Drink from One Spirit (v 13d)

*καὶ πάντες ἐν πνεῦμα ἐποτίσθημεν* (v 13d)

The aorist passive verb *ἐποτίσθημεν* (“we were made to drink”) comes from the verb *ποτίζω* — “to drink,” “to water.” It can also be used metaphorically to mean “to saturate a field with water” or “one’s mind with the Spirit of Christ” (cf. 1 Cor 3:6, “I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God grants the increase”). Whatever the specifics of Paul’s analogy may mean “the point is that the Spirit saturates the church’s body and that all Christians were imbued with the same Spirit.”<sup>879</sup> With the phrase “we all were made to drink from one Spirit,”

<sup>876</sup> Cf. Pate, *The End of the Age Has Come*, 200.

<sup>877</sup> Kovacs, *1 Corinthians*, 119.

<sup>878</sup> Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul. A Critical Life*, 270.

<sup>879</sup> Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 591.

Paul emphasizes the inclusive character of the Christian community. All were given the same Spirit to drink, echoes also Paul's description of Israel's experience in the desert. The Israelites were "baptized into Moses" (cf. 1 Cor 10:2-4) and they drank also from the same spiritual drink (cf. Ex 15:22-25; Ps 78:15-16).<sup>880</sup>

Paul speaks of the Spirit as the source of life (cf. 2 Cor 3:6) and the source of miracle and power (cf. Gal 3:5). He alludes to the source of the spiritual gifts in the Corinthian community as "drinking from the same source" (cf. Isa 55:1). The one Spirit becomes the source of all gifts. It is as if Paul is saying that all the trees in a park are watered from the same source. If, then, one Spirit has formed us and has brought us together into one body (cf. 1 Cor 12:12), he also gives the same watering to all. The Spirit unites those who were once divided alongside Jews and Gentiles, slaves and freed, now they have become "one body in Christ" (cf. 1 Cor 12:12; Gal 3:28). If you drank from the same Spirit and if you are "one body in Christ" (cf. 1 Cor 12:12, 27), why then make so much of your individual differences?<sup>881</sup> Why are there rivalries among Christians?

The disunity among the Corinthians is not the work of God's Spirit (cf. 1 Cor 14:33, "for God is not a God of confusion but of peace"). If spiritual gifts are misunderstood by the recipients, it is certainly their fault, because our common fallen nature often causes both pride and distrust to prevail among us and when it comes to the work of the Spirit, many forget that God is the source and the giver of all gifts. Nonetheless, unity is the result of the common life in the Spirit.<sup>882</sup> Wolfgang Schrage affirms: "*Mit der durch den einen Geist vollzogenen Taufe aller (V 13a) wird dieser eine Geist zugleich allen als Gabe, Kraftquelle und Einheitsband der Geistesgaben mitgeteilt ...*"<sup>883</sup> All have received their spiritual gifts from God and the one Spirit works differently according to the individuals' gift in the community.

*Conclusion:* Paul emphasizes the work of the Spirit as the source of unity. He amplifies this unity by speaking of the common agency and experience of the same Spirit in the same baptism that proclaimed and marked the Corinthians' turning to Christ and their new identity as people of God. All the members participated in this experience independent of their ethnic origin, pre-Christian status and cultural background. Any theology that might imply that this one baptism in which believers were baptized with or in one Spirit might mark off some post-

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<sup>880</sup> Cf. Ciampa and Rosner, 1 Corinthians, in: Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament, 737-738.

<sup>881</sup> Cf. Kovacs, 1 Corinthians, 206.

<sup>882</sup> Cf. Fee, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 607.

<sup>883</sup> Schrage, Der Erster Brief an die Korinther, 218.

conversion experiences or a status enjoyed only by some Christians attacks and undermines Paul's arguments. Paul's constant use of *ἐν* and *πάντες* constitutes a direct onslaught against categorization or elitism within the Christian community. The expression "all were baptized in the same Spirit" reflects the transcendence of Jews-Gentiles, slaves, freed-slaves and freeborn divisions.<sup>884</sup>

The Christian community, therefore, is not to honour those who come from particular ethnic origins and those of greater social status. She is to be counter ethnic and cultural sentiments, counter socio-religious hierarchy and should bestow the same honour on all.<sup>885</sup> According to Anthony C. Thiselton, Paul "rebukes 'the strong' who seem to think that only those of similar social status and similar spiritual gifts are 'real' Christians."<sup>886</sup> The Corinthians should not forget the role of the Spirit. Whatever they do should be guided by the unity of the baptized and under the influence of the same Spirit. Wolfgang Schrage avers that "*Der Geist verbindet die Getauften zur Einheit des Leibes Christi. Daß diese Einheit des Christusleibes sich nicht menschlicher Initiative verdankt und nicht von der Heilsgeschichte oder Gesellschaft vorgegeben ist, zeigt die Aufzählung der beiden Gegensatzpaare mit ἔτε ... ἔτε. Der Leib Christi umfaßt weder nur die heilsgeschichtlich oder gesellschaftlich Privilegierten noch nur deren Antipoden. Vielmehr finden sich Juden und Griechen, Sklaven und Freie mit ihrer Gegensätzlichkeit im Leib Christi zu einer neuen Einheit zusammen.*"<sup>887</sup>

#### 4.2.4 What of Male and Female?

What of the phrase "neither male and female" (Gal 3:28c)? Why is 1 Cor 12:13 silent on this issue? According to Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "speculation runs wild when commentators try to determine why Paul omits here the third one, 'male or female,' even though there is no reason why he should mention it."<sup>888</sup> The letter to the Corinthians is not the same as the letter to the Galatians, and the problems in Galatia are also not the same as in Corinth — ritual circumcision (cf. Gal 3:28; 5:6; 6:15) and Christ or law (Gal 5:4), as opposed to elitism and spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12-14). However, some scholars (Wolff, Hays, Horsley) insist that Paul did

<sup>884</sup> Cf. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 997-998.

<sup>885</sup> Cf. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 595-597.

<sup>886</sup> Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 990.

<sup>887</sup> Schrage, *Der Erster Brief an die Korinther*, 216.

<sup>888</sup> Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 478.



not include this phrase in his condemnation of ethno-cultural and socio-religious stratifications in Corinth because he wanted the distinction between male and female to be continued and because of the troubles this has caused in the Galatian communities,<sup>889</sup> but “it is most likely that ‘male and female’ are omitted (cf. 1 Cor. 7:21) because the primary division in the church was sociological ... Paul affirms that in Christ — and only in Christ — are these ethnic and sociological differences negated.”<sup>890</sup>

It is hard to prove that Corinthians knew of the tradition in Gal 3:26-28. All we can do is to speculate around this hypothesis as Wolfgang Schrage emphasizes. *“Ob die Überlieferung in Gal 3,26-28 den Korinthern bekannt gewesen und von ihnen zur Begründung der Überbewertung der Glossolalie als Sprache der neuen Welt herangezogen worden ist ... läßt sich ebenfalls nur vermuten.”*<sup>891</sup> It could also be that Paul borrowed the phrase “male and female he created them” from Gen 1:27 and used it when and where he wanted.

Paul is even accused of “inconsistence” and “self-contradiction” (cf. also 1 Cor 11:3, 5; 14:34).<sup>892</sup> But Paul’s letters are “occasional writings” meant for specific needs of individual communities and not systematic theological treatises or dissertations. Moisés Silva underscores this point. “It would seem unreasonable to expect the apostle to develop a seminary text in systematics by means of those letters. Even his lengthy Epistle to the Romans, which deals extensively and methodically with fundamental theological concepts, cannot be treated as an academic dissertation; it too was occasioned by very concrete and practical historical problems.”<sup>893</sup> Furthermore, 1 Corinthians is not just a reprint of Galatians, but a different body of writing, therefore, there are bound to be variations based on the community’s need.

Nevertheless, what Paul says on the issues of Jews and Greeks, slaves and freed, circumcised and uncircumcised, male and female (Gal 3:28; 5:6; 6:15) applies also to other churches.<sup>894</sup> Hence Paul instructs the Corinthians: “as I directed the churches of Galatia, so you also are to do” (1 Cor 16:1). His aim is to construct principles that will enable him to win

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<sup>889</sup> Cf. Garland, 1 Corinthians, 592.

<sup>890</sup> Ibid, 592.

<sup>891</sup> Schrage, Der Eerster Brief an die Korinther, 208.

<sup>892</sup> Cf. Silva, Interpreting Galatians, 143: “Among recent writers who believe that Paul’s letters are self-contradictory, few have argued the case more vigorously than the Finnish scholar Heikki Räisänen. He claims not merely that one can find inconsistencies between two letters that Paul may have written at different times to different churches; at least with regard to his teaching on the law, the apostle allegedly cannot give a substantive explanation of his views in even one letter without contradicting himself.”

<sup>893</sup> Ibid, 144.

<sup>894</sup> Bruce, The Epistle to the Galatians, 190.

some people for Christ (1 Cor 9:22-23). In support of the principle espoused, Paul adds that he has ordered likewise in all the churches (*καὶ οὕτως ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις πάσαις διατάσσομαι*, 1 Cor 7:17). This order looks forward to the future application of the principle. Therefore, “his principle ... has universal applicability. His ruling to the Corinthians is the same to churches elsewhere.”<sup>895</sup>

Having just finished with the issue of marriage in 1 Corinthians 7 and the behaviour of man and woman in chapter 11, it would appear tautologous and even out of context to bring in male and female in 1 Cor 12:13. “His omission of ‘male and female from ... v 13 probably reflects Paul’s remembrance of his argument in 11:2-16 and his inclination not to reopen the issue he had addressed there.”<sup>896</sup> Most probably, Paul left out male and female because the issue was irrelevant to the crisis in the Corinthian community. Part of the issues in 1 Corinthians 12 is the “use” and “misuse” of spiritual gifts, which caused disunity.<sup>897</sup> The overall fact that Paul maintains is that in the church of Christ ethnic origin, socio-cultural differences, sex and gender roles and classifications have been swallowed up. Even when male and female are not mentioned here, Paul’s position in Gal 3:28 should prevail.

### 4.3 Philemon 15-16: The Oneness of the Slave and the Master

Phlm 15-16 is centered on another practical aspect of Paul’s theology. Paul moves the master-slave relationship from rebellion and bullying to a paternal (Phlm 10) and consanguineous level, but all “in the Lord” (v 16).

#### 4.3.1 The Letter to Philemon

The letter to Philemon is the shortest letter of Paul.<sup>898</sup> Paul writes this letter from prison (vv 1, 10-11, 13, 23-24) in Ephesus at about 55 AD.<sup>899</sup> The letter deals with the case of a slave called Onesimus, who disengaged himself from his master’s services, but now he needs Paul’s help, which will enable him to restore a good relationship with his master.<sup>900</sup> Markus Barth and Helmut Blanke affirm that “the epistle to Philemon discusses in some detail one

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<sup>895</sup> Nash, 1 Corinthians, 206.

<sup>896</sup> Ibid, 363.

<sup>897</sup> Cf. Garland, 1 Corinthians, 588.

<sup>898</sup> Baumert, Studien zu den Paulusbriefen, 131.

<sup>899</sup> Bormann, Philemonbrief, in: Paulus. Leben - Umwelt - Wert - Briefe, 273.

<sup>900</sup> Cf. Bruce, The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians, 193.

specific and personal problem: How is Philemon, a member of the church at Colossae, to be true to his faith in dealing with the runaway slave Onesimus, who has recently become a Christian?"<sup>901</sup>

Paul converted Philemon, who is a wealthy and an influential man, whose house is also used as a community church. Michael Wolter avers. *"Er (Philemon) ist von Paulus zum Christentum bekehrt worden (19), und wir dürfen ihn uns als recht wohlhabend vorstellen: Philemon besaß nicht nur ein Haus, in dem sich eine christliche Gemeinde versammeln konnte (2), sondern auch (vielleicht sogar mehrere) Sklaven. Einer dieser Sklaven hieß Onesimus (10.16)."*<sup>902</sup>

The letter is a private communication between Paul and Philemon. According to F. F. Bruce, "Philemon is Onesimus' master to whom Paul's very personal plea is directed."<sup>903</sup> Paul wants Philemon to take back Onesimus no longer as a slave but as an adopted child (Phlm 10) and a beloved brother "in the Lord" (v 16).

#### 4.3.2 Philemon 15-16

The remote context is the whole letter, Phlm 1-25. Paul and his fellow-worker Timothy send their greetings to the brothers and sisters that meet in Philemon's house (vv 1-3). Paul is satisfied with the cordiality in the community and hopes to visit them. He closes the letter with greetings from him and his co-workers (vv 23-25).

The immediate context is vv 8-20. Paul makes a request on behalf of Onesimus. Although he has the power to ask Philemon to take Onesimus back, he prefers to request him to do that out of love. Being imprisoned he has need of Onesimus, but he sends him back as "a part of my heart" (v 12). He pledges to pay for whatsoever Onesimus' absence has cost Philemon (vv 18-19). Lukas Bormann explains. *"Das Verhalten des Onesimus, der sich von seinem Herrn entfernt hatte, hat eine Schuld im Sinne einer ausstehenden Wiedergutmachung verursacht ... Diese Schuld soll Philemon entweder aus eigenen Stücken erlassen oder von Paulus einfordern."*<sup>904</sup> The reason why Paul will pay for what Onesimus' absence has cost is because Onesimus has become a beloved brother in the Lord (v 16). Unlike Gal 3:28 that

<sup>901</sup> Barth and Blanke, Colossians, 20-21.

<sup>902</sup> Wolter, Der Brief an die Kolosser. Der Brief an Philemon, 227-228.

<sup>903</sup> Bruce, The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians, 200.

<sup>904</sup> Bormann, Philemonbrief, in: Paulus. Leben - Umwelt - Werk - Briefe, 274.

contains the universal principles of neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor freed, male and female, Phlm concentrates only on slave and freed, i.e., the master-slave relationship.

### 4.3.3 Text

<p>Τάχα γὰρ διὰ τοῦτο ἐχωρίσθη πρὸς ὥραν, ἵνα αἰώνιον αὐτὸν ἀπέχῃς, οὐκέτι ὡς δοῦλον ἀλλὰ ὑπὲρ δοῦλον, ἀδελφὸν ἀγαπητόν, μάλιστα ἐμοί, πόσω δὲ μᾶλλον σοὶ καὶ ἐν σαρκὶ καὶ ἐν Κυρίῳ.</p>	<p>Perhaps for this he was separated from you for a while, in order that you might have him forever, no longer as a slave, but more than a slave, a beloved brother, chiefly to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.</p>
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The text can be structured in *stichoi* form as follows:

Τάχα γὰρ διὰ τοῦτο ἐχωρίσθη πρὸς ὥραν (v 15a)  
 ἵνα αἰώνιον αὐτὸν ἀπέχῃς (v 15b)  
 οὐκέτι ὡς δοῦλον (v 16a)  
 ἀλλὰ ὑπὲρ δοῦλον (v 16b)  
 ἀδελφὸν ἀγαπητόν (v 16c)  
 μάλιστα ἐμοί (v 16d)  
 πόσω δὲ μᾶλλον σοὶ (v 16e)  
 καὶ ἐν σαρκὶ (v 16f)  
 καὶ ἐν Κυρίῳ (v 16g).

Perhaps for this he was separated from you for a while (v 15a)  
 in order that you might have him forever (v 15b)  
 no longer as a slave (v 16a)  
 but more than a slave (v 16b)  
 a beloved brother (v 16c)  
 chiefly to me (v 16d)  
 but how much more to you (v 16e)  
 both in the flesh (v 16f)  
 and in the Lord (v 16g).

#### 4.3.3.1 Linguistic Analysis

*Style and Structure:* Verse 15a seeks for the reason why Philemon and Onesimus were separated from each another, while verse 15b affirms that they will never be separated again. “Being separated for a while” and “in order that you might have him forever” stand in contrast to one another. According to Larry J. Kreitzer, “in verse 15b Paul contrasts the temporary separation with an eternal reconciliation between the two men.”<sup>905</sup>

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<sup>905</sup> Kreitzer, Philemon, 26.

Verse 16a shows a parallel construction to verse 16b, but at the same time the two remarks stand in opposition to one another. Being “a beloved brother” (v 16c) nullifies the formal slave-status of Onesimus, who has also become Paul’s adopted child (v 10). Being “a beloved brother” (v 16c) clarifies the relationship between “no longer as a slave” (v 16a) and “more than a slave” (16b), and forms the basis of vv 16d and 16e, which are also parallel to one another. Verse 16f, finally, is parallel to v 16g, but verse 16g elevates the relationship from the level of the “flesh” (ἐν σαρκί) to the level of existence “in the Lord” (ἐν Κυρίῳ).

*Syntax and Semantics:* The adverb τάχα (“perhaps”) seeks for the reason why Onesimus was separated (ἐχωρίσθη) from Philemon and the implied agent in the aorist indicative passive ἐχωρίσθη is probably God.<sup>906</sup> “Paul’s introductory word ‘perhaps’ (*tacha*) seems to warn that absolute knowledge about how and why things happen rests with God alone.”<sup>907</sup> The conjunction γὰρ (“for”) “introduces an added reason that prompts Paul’s decision and his plea for Onesimus,”<sup>908</sup> while the preposition διὰ (“because of”) together with the demonstrative pronoun τοῦτο (“this”) refers to the Christian status of Onesimus and connects this to verse 15b. The phrase πρὸς ὥραν (“for a while”) does not seem to denote a specified time. Paul does not say how long it took Onesimus to find to him, how long Onesimus was with him and how long it will take him to go back to Philemon. The phrase “for a while,” however, stands in opposition to “forever” (αἰώνιον). *“Bezeichnend ist ... die Zeitangabe, die Paulus hinsichtlich der Entfernung bzw. Trennung macht: ‘für kurze Zeit’, wörtlich: ‘für eine Stunde’. Diese Zeitangabe trifft ... im Blick auf die dann vorgenommene Gegenüberstellung mit ‘auf immer’ oder ‘ewig’ zu ...”*<sup>909</sup>

The final conjunction “in order that” (ἵνα, 15b) supplies one of the reasons why Philemon should welcome Onesimus back, so that he might have (ἀπέχῃς) him forever. There is a sharp contrast between “to be separated” (χωρίζομαι) and “to have back” (ἀπέχω). The adjective αἰώνιον (“forever”) implies a theological hope of eternal life, not excluding the life on earth (ἐν σαρκί, v 16f), whereby Philemon and Onesimus will never be separated “in the Lord” (ἐν Κυρίῳ, v 16g).<sup>910</sup> The meaning is, it was the will of God that you were temporarily separated, and now it is his will that you will be “in the Lord” (v 16g) “forever” (v 15b).

<sup>906</sup> Cf. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 216.

<sup>907</sup> Melick, *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, 364.

<sup>908</sup> Fitzmyer, *The Letter to Philemon*, 112.

<sup>909</sup> Wengst, *Der Brief an Philemon*, 65.

<sup>910</sup> Kreitzer, *Philemon*, 26.

The adverbial particle *ὥς* (“as”, v 16a) and the preposition *ὑπέρ* (“more than”, v 16b) stand in opposition to one another. Being “a slave” (*δοῦλος*) and “a brother” (*ἀδελφός*) also stand in opposition. The adverb *οὐκέτι* (“no longer”, v 16a) negates the prolonged slavery-status of Onesimus, while the preposition *ὑπέρ* (“more than”, v 16b) places him definitely above the status of a slave. The noun *ἀδελφός* (v 16c) unites all three men in consanguineous relationship, while the personal pronouns *ἐμοί* and *σοι* (vv 16d, e) enhanced by *μάλιστα* and *πόσω* ... *μᾶλλον*, respectively, show the intimacy that now exists between Paul and Philemon.

The conjunction *καὶ* in v 16f relates with the *καὶ* in v 16g. In the same way, the preposition *ἐν* in v 16f corresponds to the *ἐν* in v 16g; both are locative and emphasize the equality as human beings (*ἐν σαρκί*) and as Christians “in the Lord” (*ἐν Κυρίῳ*).

*Pragmatics:* The text exemplifies the disintegration of institutionalized slavery and inequality of persons both on social and religious levels. “This letter stands as a model for approaching social concerns which grow out of the transformed life of a Christian.”<sup>911</sup> Paul does not want anybody to be treated as a slave, rather, he wants people to relate with one another as brothers and sisters. The slave-master relationship has no more place in the house of God and in the community of the Lord.

#### 4.3.4 Textual Interpretation

##### 4.3.4.1 He was separated from you (v 15a)

*Τάχα γὰρ διὰ τοῦτο ἐχωρίσθη πρὸς ὥραν* (v 15a)

With the adverb “perhaps” (*τάχα*) Paul seeks for an answer to why Onesimus was separated from Philemon. He is very careful in stating the possible reasons for their separation (v 18). “Actually the adverb (*τάχα*) introduces a cautious added thought.”<sup>912</sup> The letter is silent on “where and when the separation first occurred,”<sup>913</sup> but the outcome of their separation is a good one. Paul sees the will of God as one of the reasons for their separation. As a result of their separation, Onesimus has become Paul’s adopted child (*ὃν ἐγέννησα*, v 10; cf. 1 Cor 4:17; 1 Tim 1:2; 2 Tim 1:2; Titus 1:4), useful to both Paul and Philemon (cf. *σοὶ καὶ ἐμοὶ εὐχρηστον*, v 11).

<sup>911</sup> Melick, *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, 336.

<sup>912</sup> Fitzmyer, *The Letter to Philemon*, 112.

<sup>913</sup> Kreitzer, *Philemon*, 26.

Furthermore, the separation enabled Onesimus to become a Christian (v 16). “Being a begotten (adopted) child” (v 10), “being useful” (v 11) and “being a Christian” (v 16) have consequences. The three concepts “respectively relate to social change, communal life, and the mind of Christ.”<sup>914</sup> The slave has become a begotten son (ἐγέννησα, v 10), which is a position of honour, and rather than being a mere instrument in the hands of the master (cf. δοῦλος, “set a slave to work and you will find rest”, Sir 33:26), Onesimus has become a beloved brother (v 16c). *“Paulus stellt die Beziehung zwischen dem Sklaven Onesimus, seinem Besitzer Philemon und sich selbst dar. Die Beziehungen werden über wechselseitige Verpflichtungen definiert und als reziproke Austauschbeziehung verstanden.”*<sup>915</sup> Conversion and baptism in the name of Christ (cf. Gal 3:26-28; Acts 10:48) imply a radical change in the areas of social and religious self-understanding between a slave and the master.<sup>916</sup>

Paul sends Onesimus back on a different footing and hopes that Philemon will welcome him without punishment. Paul also hopes that Philemon will see the hand of God in what has happened to Onesimus. Richard R. Melick rightly maintains that God constructs his plans above human events and circumstances. “Paul knew that from personal experience ... Paul never condoned Onesimus’ actions, just as he never called evil good. Yet he saw how God could triumph over sin by grace. Onesimus evidenced that in his life. Paul took opportunity, therefore, to apply this understanding of God’s providence to the situation at hand.”<sup>917</sup>

Paul does not say that Onesimus fled (ἔφυγεν) from his master Philemon, rather, he uses the more euphemistic verb χωρίζομαι, “to be separated.” This means that Onesimus was separated “for a while” (πρὸς ὥραν) from the household in which he served, and now Paul is sending him back, as more than a slave (v 16b), namely as a beloved brother (v 16c).<sup>918</sup> Paul downplays the length of time that Onesimus was away (πρὸς ὥραν) and may be saying: It is not too bad that he was away for some time. Please welcome him back. Klaus Wengst attests. *“Aber tatsächlich war die Zeit der Abwesenheit des Sklaven Onesimus vom Haus Philemons so kurz nicht, geschweige denn ‘ein Stündchen’ oder gar ‘einen Augenblick’. Sie umfasste den Weg von Kolossä nach Ephesus und zurück, den wahrscheinlichen Aufenthalt des Onesimus in der Subkultur von Ephesus, bis er den Wunsch nach Rückkehr empfand, und die auch nicht sehr kurz zu veranschlagende Zeit seines Kontaktes mit Paulus. Man wird sich also einige Wochen*

<sup>914</sup> Melick, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, 344.

<sup>915</sup> Bormann, Philemonbrief, in: Paulus. Leben - Umwelt - Werk - Briefe, 274.

<sup>916</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, In Memory of Her, 217.

<sup>917</sup> Melick, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, 364.

<sup>918</sup> Cf. Fitzmyer, The Letter to Philemon, 112.

*vorzustellen haben.*"<sup>919</sup> The time it took Onesimus to locate where Paul was imprisoned (v 10), the conversion period and the time it will take Onesimus to reach Philemon's house again is a rather long time, which Paul simply describes as "a while."

#### 4.3.4.2 That you might have him forever (v 15b)

*ἵνα αἰώνιον αὐτὸν ἀπέχῃς* (v 15b)

Paul advances another reason why he is sending Onesimus back to Philemon. They will be reconciled forever (v 15b). Philemon should welcome Onesimus as a fellow Christian and a beloved brother in the Lord (v 16c, g). This request is necessary because Philemon does not know that Onesimus has now become a begotten child of Paul (v 10) and a fellow Christian. Their formal slave-master relationship was a temporary relationship, probably characterized by bullying and separation, but their present fellowship "in the Lord" (v 16g) makes it possible for Philemon "to have back" (*ἀπέχω*) Onesimus as "forever" (*αἰώνιον*, v 15b). There were usually conflicts between slaves and their masters, but after separation, their relationship with one another would suffer still greater setbacks if not irreparable damage. Klaus Wengst affirms this. *"Wenn aber ein entlaufener Sklave – auf welchem Wege auch immer – zu seinem Herrn in das alte Verhältnis zurückkehrt oder zurück gebracht wird, kann die Flucht schlechterdings nicht als etwas Positives angesehen werden, sondern kann nur als Störung eben dieses Verhältnisses gelten. Paulus muss also ein anderes als das Verhältnis von Herr und Sklave im Blick haben."*<sup>920</sup> Onesimus' case has become a different issue because before he was a run-away slave, but now he has become a Christian and a beloved brother (v 16c).

Although the separation may have been bad for Philemon (v 18), Paul claims that God has turned their separation into a good omen (cf. Rom 8:28). According to Joseph A. Fitzmyer, the separation has been turned into an act of divine providence for Onesimus which Paul would not want to thwart. Hence, Paul "emphasizes that Onesimus has been separated from Philemon so that Philemon can have him back forever as a Christian and brother."<sup>921</sup> Paul hopes that the relationship between Philemon and Onesimus will not end in this life, but last on in the age to come. *"Wenn Philemon den Onesimus 'auf immer' zurück erhält, dann wird hier menschliche Zeit auf Gottes Ewigkeit hin transzendiert."*<sup>922</sup>

<sup>919</sup> Wengst, Der Brief an Philemon, 65.

<sup>920</sup> Ibid, 65.

<sup>921</sup> Fitzmyer, The Letter to Philemon, 112-113.

<sup>922</sup> Wengst, Der Brief an Philemon, 66.



Philemon and Onesimus will be together forever (*αἰώνιον*). The expression “being together forever” has an Old Testament correspondence (cf. Ex 21:6; Deut 15:17). However, there is a difference here. Although Onesimus remains a slave, he is Philemon’s and Philemon will be his forever. F. F. Bruce affirms that “whatever their earthly relationship might be from now on, henceforth Onesimus was Philemon’s ‘forever’ (and equally Philemon was Onesimus’).”<sup>923</sup>

The verb *ἀπέχω* (used here in the aorist subjunctive *ἀπέχης*) may mean either “to have back” or “to have in return” or “to have in full” (cf. Phil 4:18).<sup>924</sup> Philemon and Onesimus have been separated for a while (*πρὸς ὥραν*), but now Onesimus is coming back as a new person. Their new relationship, though still “in flesh” (v 16f) will continue “forever” (v 15b) “in the Lord” (v 16g). Therefore, the word “forever” (*αἰώνιον*) has probably a double meaning here. “The providential separation of Onesimus from Philemon ‘for a while’ may mean that the slave is now returning more faithful for lifelong service; but Paul may also be alluding to the new relationship existing between them: Paul, Philemon, and Onesimus are now Christians, related in an eternal sense that not even death can undo.”<sup>925</sup> Therefore, their relationship “in the Lord” (v 16g) supersedes their relationship “in the flesh” (v 16f).

#### 4.3.4.3 More than a Slave (vv 16a-b)

*οὐκέτι ὡς δοῦλον ἀλλὰ ὑπὲρ δοῦλον*

How did Paul come in contact with Onesimus? Put differently, how did Onesimus come to know Paul? The answers to these questions are open. Perhaps Epaphras of Colossae, the evangelist of the Lycus valley (cf. Col 1:7; 4:12), who is also described as “Paul’s fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus” (Phlm 23) brought him to Paul because “he knew that Paul would help him in his predicament. We cannot be sure.”<sup>926</sup> Paul was probably imprisoned Ephesus, Caesarea or Rome and its distance would be hard for a slave to travel without being recaptured by slave dealers. Norbert Baumert affirms: “*Onesimus sei, so die allgemeine Auffassung, ein entlaufener Sklave (V 10), der Paulus im Gefängnis aufsucht. Sich als solcher von Kleinasien nach Rom oder Cäsarea durchzuschlagen, ist allerdings angesichts der Sklavenjäger, die*

<sup>923</sup> Bruce, The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians, 217.

<sup>924</sup> Cf. Fitzmyer, The Letter to Philemon, 113.

<sup>925</sup> Ibid, 113.

<sup>926</sup> Bruce, Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free, 400.

*überall auf die fugitivi angesetzt sind, praktisch unmöglich ... Der Rückweg wäre jedoch genau so riskant gewesen wie der Hinweg.*"<sup>927</sup>

Paul writes this letter from prison (Phlm 11, 13; cf. Acts 28:16, 30-31). The warders would not have allowed a run-away slave free access into the prison cell without questioning him. Slaves were branded and their attires betrayed their status in the society.<sup>928</sup> Furthermore, free citizens as well as freed slaves made efforts to show that they were different from slaves, above all the identity of a run-away slave could not have been hidden.

Slaves were also used as errand persons. Could it be that Onesimus was sent to Paul by the Christian community that worshipped in Philemon's house, but that he did not come back when he should and that is why Paul writes the letter to Philemon? But the community was a religious group. Before Onesimus could be sent as the community's representative, he should have been a Christian. But he only became Paul's "child in the faith" when Paul was still in chains (Phlm 10-11). Norbert Baumert affirms. *"Wenn Onesimus bereits in Gemeindeangelegenheiten ausgesandt wurde, muß er doch vorher schon Christ gewesen sein."*<sup>929</sup> Paul could have formulated his request differently, such as: He is a Christian like us, why not welcome him back? He has only done the duty you sent him to do, what is wrong with that? Norbert Baumert concurs. *"Die Bitte müßte also anders formuliert sein, etwa: Er ist schon in Christus frei geworden, so gib ihm nun auch die bürgerliche Freiheit."*<sup>930</sup>

A slave whose life was endangered was "permitted to seek sanctuary at an altar."<sup>931</sup> That altar might also be the hearth of a private home. The head of the family was then obliged to give the slave the necessary protection that he or she needed, while persuading him or her to return to the master. He would use his good office to mollify the master's anger. If the slave refused to return to his or her master, the protector was obliged to put him or her up for an auction and whatever amount he realized, he had to hand that over to the master. But the letter to Philemon is not only a document on the return of Onesimus the slave, but a letter to a Christian friend, which does not describe the worth of the slave, the goods he had on, the conditions for bringing him back, etc.<sup>932</sup> Paul would have preferred to continue staying with

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<sup>927</sup> Baumert, Studien zu den Paulusbriefen, 132.

<sup>928</sup> Cf. Ibid, 132.

<sup>929</sup> Ibid, 134.

<sup>930</sup> Ibid, 132.

<sup>931</sup> Bruce, The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians, 196.

<sup>932</sup> Ibid, 196-197.

Onesimus because of the services he was rendering to him (v 13), but he sends him back on a new footing: as a Christian and “a beloved brother” (v 16).

Paul acknowledges that Onesimus is a slave, but this is immediately qualified by the antithesis: more than a slave.<sup>933</sup> Onesimus left Philemon’s house as a run-away slave, but Paul sends him back to his master no longer as a slave, “but more than a slave.” What made him “more than a slave” is his conversion to Christ, which has also made him an “adopted son” of Paul (cf. v 10) and “a beloved brother” (v 16c; cf. also vv 7, 20) “in the Lord” (v 16g).

Paul juxtaposes “as a slave” (ὡς δοῦλον) with “more than a slave” (ὕπερ δοῦλον). Onesimus is legally a slave, however, he is also a Christian. Paul regards the slavery status of Onesimus as nullified (οὐκέτι ὡς δοῦλον) by his Christian conversion (vv 10, 16c; cf. Gal 3:28c). Joseph A. Fitzmyer expresses their intimacy in the Lord. “As a Christian, the slave is set ... on a par with his master in the sight of the Lord ... He (the slave) partakes with him (his master) of the Lord’s Supper and shares with him the kiss of peace.”<sup>934</sup> Hence, Richard R. Melick rightly concludes that “Paul taught equality.”<sup>935</sup>

#### 4.3.4.4 Onesimus the Beloved Brother (vv 16c-e)

ἀδελφὸν ἀγαπητόν, μάλιστα ἐμοί, πόσω δὲ μᾶλλον σοὶ

Onesimus is no longer a slave but a beloved brother in the Lord. Paul plays on the technical word ἀδελφός (cf. v 20). Onesimus has become “a beloved brother” (v 16c), “a begotten child” (v 10) of Paul and “a fellow Christian” (v 16g). These are status names that have consequences. Lukas Bormann explains. “*Die sozialen Folgen der Christuswirklichkeit sind Statusveränderungen. Onesimus wird vom Sklaven zum Bruder und Teilhaber. Philemon verzichtet auf seinen Status als Herr. Die wirtschaftliche Bedingung ist die Übernahme der damit verbundenen materiellen Folgen. Paulus sagt sie verbindlich zu, möchte aber wohl Philemon ermuntern, darauf zu verzichten.*”<sup>936</sup> As Christian brothers, they “belong to each other for eternity as well as at time.”<sup>937</sup> By calling Onesimus a brother, Paul takes their

<sup>933</sup> O’Brien, Colossians, Philemon, 286.

<sup>934</sup> Fitzmyer, The Letter to Philemon, 114.

<sup>935</sup> Melick, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, 344.

<sup>936</sup> Bormann, Philemonbrief, in: Paulus. Leben - Umwelt - Werk - Briefe, 277.

<sup>937</sup> Bruce, The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians, 217.

relationship to a consanguineous level, whereby they are to see themselves as coming from the same father, God (cf. Gal 3:26).<sup>938</sup>

Onesimus is a dissident slave who must have defrauded Philemon in some way but by sending him back as “a fellow-Christian and as a partner in the service of the gospel to which Philemon like Paul is dedicated,”<sup>939</sup> Paul reconciles the two Christian brothers. They are now co-workers in the Lord (Phlm 2, 24). “We are God’s coworkers” (1 Cor 3:9; cf. 2 Cor 6:1) is a magnificent Pauline maxim. It is here that the figure of the master-slave relationship breaks down and the equality of the coworkers is conjoined. According to Alain Badiou “all equality is that of belonging together to a work.”<sup>940</sup> F. F. Bruce is of the opinion that by sending Onesimus back to the master as a beloved brother and a coworker of Christ, Paul brings the institution of slavery into “an atmosphere where it would only wilt and die.”<sup>941</sup> Where the master and his slave are “united in affection as brothers in Christ, formal emancipation would be a matter of expediency.”<sup>942</sup> Paul thus presents Onesimus as having undergone identity transformation, which makes him a beloved brother in the Lord.<sup>943</sup> “Clearly,” says Joseph A. Fitzmyer, “Onesimus does not return as the same person who departed from Philemon’s house.”<sup>944</sup>

The relationship between Paul and Onesimus is a changed one. Before, Paul likens their relationship to that of a father and the son (v 10). Now he calls Onesimus “a beloved brother” (v 16c). If Paul’s relationship with Onesimus has changed to father-son relationship, thereby making both of them brothers “in the Lord” (v 16c, g), then, Philemon should also welcome Onesimus as a beloved brother (v 16c) because he will be more useful to him (v 11) as a brother than only as a slave (vv 16a-c). Onesimus’ rebellious slave-character has been overcome by his being “begotten” by Paul (v 10) and by his faith in Christ. “For Paul, the new life in Christ made a radical difference.”<sup>945</sup> As a run-away slave, Onesimus was useless to Philemon, but as a Christian brother, Onesimus is useful to Paul and Philemon as well (v 11). Onesimus’ position as a slave meant that he belonged to the household of Philemon, but did not enjoy the freedom of the sons and daughters of God (cf. Rom 8:21b). But now Paul

<sup>938</sup> Cf. Bormann, Philemonbrief, in: Paulus. Leben - Umwelt - Werk - Briefe, 277.

<sup>939</sup> Bruce, The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon and to the Ephesians, 199.

<sup>940</sup> Badiou, The Foundation of Universalism, 60.

<sup>941</sup> Bruce, The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians, 197-198.

<sup>942</sup> Ibid, 198.

<sup>943</sup> Cf. Bormann, Philemonbrief, in: Paulus. Leben - Umwelt - Werk - Briefe, 277.

<sup>944</sup> Fitzmyer, The Letter to Philemon, 113.

<sup>945</sup> Melick, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, 361.

introduces him as a beloved brother (v 16c) and “a full member of the Christian household. In doing this, he spoke to the spiritual realities that transcend earthly physical/economic situations.”<sup>946</sup> According to Joseph A. Fitzmyer, Paul’s argument reaches its climax when he says that Onesimus “is a ‘brother,’ because he is, like Philemon himself, a Christian, an adopted child of God through baptism (Gal 4:5; Rom 8:15), and a ‘new creature’ (2 Cor 5:17). This is the fundamental appeal that Paul is making to Philemon.”<sup>947</sup>

Paul qualifies their brotherly relationship with a superlative and comparative construction: “Chiefly to me” (v 16d) “but how much more to you” (v 16e). Paul compares what Onesimus has been to him with what he expects Onesimus to be to Philemon. Peter T. O’Brien opines that “there is thus a double comparison. Onesimus has been a beloved brother to Paul in the highest sense. Even more will he be a beloved brother to Philemon, both as a slave and as one bound to him ‘in the Lord’.”<sup>948</sup> With the phrase “but how much more to you,” Paul expects Philemon’s readiness to accept a Christian brother, to surpass what he (Paul) did when Onesimus was with him, and he hopes that Onesimus will be even more useful to Philemon than he was to him. Paul uses the pronouns *σοι* and *ἐμοι* (“you” and “me”, vv 16 d, e) all in the dative case to underscore “the personal relationships between Onesimus and Philemon on the one hand, and Onesimus and himself on the other.”<sup>949</sup>

#### 4.3.4.5 In the Flesh and in the Lord (vv 16f-g)

καὶ ἐν σαρκὶ καὶ ἐν Κυρίῳ

Paul sees the temporary separation between Philemon and Onesimus as a positive phenomenon (v 15). Without the separation Onesimus would have remained a slave until manumission or death. Without the separation Onesimus might never have become a Christian. But thanks to their separation, he is now a member of Christ’s church, of which they (i.e., Onesimus, Philemon and Paul) are parts (cf. Eph 5:30), and therefore, a deeper relationship that will never come to an end now exists between them. Whereas the master-slave relationship is a relationship “in the flesh” (v 16f), the brotherly relationship into which the three men have entered is a relationship “in the Lord” (v 16g). Relationships that are grounded “in the flesh” (v 16f) are limited to the earthly life and marked by social

<sup>946</sup> Ibid, 365.

<sup>947</sup> Fitzmyer, *The Letter to Philemon*, 114.

<sup>948</sup> O’Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, 286.

<sup>949</sup> Ibid, 285.

authoritarianism, while relationships that are grounded “in the Lord” (v 16g) endure forever in mutuality (v 15b). For the Lord, whose love and grace endure forever (cf. Ps 136:1-26) is the source of their unity.

Philemon is being requested to live mutually with Onesimus because “in the Lord” the bullying and commanding of a slave-master have lost their place. “The expression of mutuality is an important element in Paul’s prescription for Christian relationships.”<sup>950</sup> Paul hopes that Onesimus will be given the same warm reception that he could have gotten if he was coming to visit his friend Philemon (v 18). The request Paul is actually making, however, is a hard one. For “even the most forgiving of Christian masters will normally find it difficult to exclude a note of disapproval on finding the prodigal servant back again at his door.”<sup>951</sup> But Paul claims that their common fellowship (*κοινωνία*) should supersede the anger and the pride of a slave-master whose slave has disobeyed and should be punished for his disobedience according to the law and as a sign of warning to other slaves. Paul insists: We are brothers “in the Lord” (v 16g). Having served Paul in prison, Onesimus has already taken part in ministering to the saints (cf. Rom 15:25-31; 1 Cor 16:15; 2 Tim 1:16-18) and in the evangelical works (Phlm 13). He is now to be treated as a member of Christ because “in Christ Jesus” (Gal 3:28), the master-slave relationship has lost its stronghold (Phlm 16).<sup>952</sup>

*Summary:* Paul is concerned with the principles of slavery. He sends Onesimus back to Philemon (v 15). He wants Philemon not only to accept Onesimus back to his household (vv 8-9), but to treat Onesimus as “a beloved brother in the Lord” (v 16c, g), because he is now “more than a slave” (v 16b). Unlike Gal 3:28 that has three pairs of opposites: Jew/Greek, slave/free, male and female, the letter to Philemon has only one pair: slave and free, here called “beloved brother” (cf. 1 Cor 7:22-24). And now, slave and free are one in the Lord (Phlm 15-16; Gal 3:28d).

#### 4.4 Oneness of All in Deutero-Pauline Letter

This subsection is concerned with the extension of the teaching of Paul by a community leader, who uses Paul’s name and a similar way of writing to fortify his own authority and

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<sup>950</sup> Barclay, Colossians and Philemon, 117.

<sup>951</sup> Bruce, The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians, 218.

<sup>952</sup> Ibid, 218.

strengthen the authenticity of his teaching in the community. The letter to the Colossians has its own character, distinct features and a specific form that make it a deuterio-Pauline work.

#### 4.4.1 Deutero-Pauline Letters

Some of the letters (e.g., Colossians, Ephesians and 2 Thessalonians) previously attributed to Paul as their author are now being contested by some scholars who maintain that Paul is not their author. *“Diese sog. deuteropaulinischen Briefe werden mit dem Stilmittel der literarischen Fiktion an die von Paulus gegründeten Gemeinden in Thessaloniki, Kolossä und Ephesus geschrieben.”*<sup>953</sup> They are classified as deuterio-Pauline letters. Bernhard Heininger explains.

*Der Tod des Paulus bedeutete für das frühe Christentum zwar eine scharfe Zäsur, er war aber keineswegs das Ende der paulinischen Theologie. Schon zu Lebzeiten des Apostels trugen und prägten die Mitarbeiter zu einem erheblichen Teil die paulinische Mission; die Protopaulinen allein erwähnen etwa 40 Personen, die als Mitarbeiter des Apostels zu betrachten sind. Man darf vermuten, dass sich die Arbeit des Paulus innerhalb dieses großen Mitarbeiterkreises kaum auf reine Organisationsfragen beschränkte, sondern speziell im engeren Mitarbeiterkreis eine intensive theologische Arbeit stattfand, deren literarischen Niederschlag die pseudepigraphischen Paulusbrieve darstellen. Gerade die in der Forschung als Deutero- und Tritopaulinen bezeichneten Briefe belegen, dass das Erbe des Paulus nicht nur gepflegt, sondern auch theologisch reflektiert und einer veränderten Situation angepasst wurde.*<sup>954</sup>

Paul is a significant figure whose unquestionable writings have continued to influence the ongoing life of the Christian churches. What is rather open to dispute is: “Where does Paul’s writing stop and that of his successors commence?”<sup>955</sup> Oda Wischmeyer explains: *“Paulus ist die Person, die in der frühesten Christenheit die größte Wirkung entfaltet hat ... Seine Schüler treten als eigene Gemeindeschriststeller auf ohne allerdings ihre Namen zu nennen. Sie schreiben pseudonym, d.h. im Namen ihres Lehrers Paulus.”*<sup>956</sup> Paul’s personality is used as a back-up authority, and that is why some letters are called deuterio-Pauline.

#### 4.4.2 Colossians as a Deutero-Pauline Letter

The letter to the Colossians stands in between three schools of thought: Those who are for, those who are against Paul’s authorship and those who are for Timothy’s co-

<sup>953</sup> Heininger, Die Rezeption des Paulus im 1. Jahrhundert, in: Paulus. Leben - Umwelt - Werk - Briefe, 349.

<sup>954</sup> Ibid, 349.

<sup>955</sup> Horrell, An Introduction to the Study of Paul, 112.

<sup>956</sup> Wischmeyer, Einführung, in: Paulus. Leben - Umwelt - Werk - Briefe, 347.

authorship. Paul's authorship or non-authorship has consequences. According to John M. G. Barclay, "a decision for Paul would require that Colossians be taken into account when assessing Paul's theology, but if the letter proves to be pseudonymous and post-Pauline, it would reveal something about the adaptation of Pauline theology in the generation after his death."<sup>957</sup> Indeed, placing Colossians within the history of the development of early Christianity has proved to be an absorbing quest on a variety of fronts. Such fronts include, for instance, the increasing "institutionalization of the early church" and its code of household duties (Col 3:18-25) which are undoubtedly "patriarchal,"<sup>958</sup> and its relationship with the equality expressed in Gal 3:28b-c.

*Paul's Authorship:* Markus Barth and Helmut Blanke, F. F. Bruce, Jung Hoon Kim, etc. belong to those who affirm Paul's authorship of the letter to the Colossians (cf. e.g., Col 4:18 and Gal 6:11). They maintain that "the Epistle to the Colossians ... affirms Pauline authorship. The recommendation of Tychicus and Onesimus, and the greeting list (Col 4:7-17) contain biographical information which in substance and character closely resemble the content of the letter to Philemon, whose authenticity is not disputed. The presentation of Paul's high and full apostolic self-consciousness in Col 1:24-2:5; 4:3-4 complements the substance of Gal 1; 2 Cor 3:10-13 ..." <sup>959</sup>

They reject the "spurious theory"<sup>960</sup> — i.e. the opinion that the doctrines contained in Colossians are irreconcilable with Paul's teachings — which is critical of the historicity, the literary content and the syntaxes of the letter. The irreconcilable teachings would include: "you have put on the new self" (Col 3:10), "you have risen with Christ" (Col 2:12; cf. Col 3:4; Rom 6:5), in fact, "a tradition-bound authoritarianism and clericalism have crept into the preaching of the gospel and claim apostolic origin (Col 3:18-4:1)."<sup>961</sup> But these differences, they maintain, do not mean that Paul is not the author of the letter, they rather postulate Paul's adaptation of the letter to different situations. According to F. F. Bruce, the argument against Pauline authorship boils down to the feeling that the author of the letters to Galatians, Corinthians, Philemon and Romans could not have adapted himself as the author of Colossians. But this argument "imposes an unwarranted limitation on Paul's intelligence, versatility and originality." Paul takes up some of the opponents' terms and "shows how the

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<sup>957</sup> Barclay, Colossians and Philemon, 12.

<sup>958</sup> Ibid, 12-13.

<sup>959</sup> Barth and Blanke, Colossians, 117.

<sup>960</sup> Ibid, 114-115.

<sup>961</sup> Ibid, 115.



truth which they vainly try to convey is embodied in Christ, the perfect revelation of God.”<sup>962</sup> Paul chooses new themes because of the issues at stake. “This employment of the distinctive vocabulary of the false teaching in what has been called a ‘disinfected sense’ goes some way to account for the difference in terminology which has been discerned between this letter (and Ephesians) on the one hand and the ‘capital’ letters on the other.”<sup>963</sup> Therefore, Paul’s employment of the distinctive vocabulary of the false teachers accounts for the differences in terminology.<sup>964</sup> Furthermore, that the body “is used in Colossians and Ephesians in correlation with ‘head,’ rather than (as in the earlier letters) with ‘spirit,’ is granted; but this provides no compelling reason for denying that the writer of the earlier letters could also have been the author of these two.”<sup>965</sup>

Jung Hoon Kim debunks scholars’ view that the letter contains a number of *hapax legomena*. Paul’s capital epistles contain also *hapax legomena* even when they are not numerous. Differences in vocabulary might have been caused by Paul’s argument against the so-called “Colossian heresy” (cf. 2:8-23). Jung Hoon Kim rejects also the arguments that are focused on style and structure of the letter, claiming that changes in an author’s style and structure of writing are a fairly common phenomenon in antiquity. Paul does not necessarily have to use all his concepts in every epistle. In any case, neither the language nor style and theology seem to be decisive in establishing an argument against Pauline authorship of the letter.<sup>966</sup> Markus Barth and Helmut Blanke accuse those who reject Pauline authorship of the letter to the Colossians of oversimplification. “Some nineteenth – and twentieth – century books on Colossians make decisions on authenticity or spuriousness primarily on the basis of word statistics. This method may have its merits but also suffers from oversimplification of difficult issues and all too rashly drawn conclusions.”<sup>967</sup> With the aforementioned arguments they uphold Pauline authorship of the letter.

*Timothy’s co-authorship:* Timothy is named as co-sender of the letter (cf. Col 1:1; Phlm 1). Could it be that he also co-authored it with Paul? The supporters of Pauline authorship say no. Whatever differences there are in style and structure between Colossians and other letters, they should be seen as owed to Pauline initiative (cf. Col 4:18). If Paul and Timothy are

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<sup>962</sup> Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon and to the Ephesians*, 29.

<sup>963</sup> *Ibid*, 29.

<sup>964</sup> Cf. *Ibid*, 29.

<sup>965</sup> *Ibid*, 30.

<sup>966</sup> Cf. Kim, *The Significance of Clothing Imagery in the Pauline Corpus*, 152-153.

<sup>967</sup> Barth and Blanke, *Colossians*, 57.

in any way joint-authors of this letter, “the probability is that, while the literary style might be Timothy’s, the ultimate authorship would be Paul’s.”<sup>968</sup> Therefore, both Colossians and Ephesians took shape within “the circle of Paul and his co-workers” (Col 4:10-12; Eph 6:21-21; cf. Phlm 23-24) but the person who is to be recognized as the proper author of Colossians and Ephesians is Paul.<sup>969</sup>

*Non-Pauline Authorship:* Colossians was written much later than the other letters of Paul (ca. 70-75 AD).<sup>970</sup> According Michael Wolter Paul is not the author of Colossians because of the following reasons.

*(a) Der Kol enthält außer 34 ntl. Hapaxlegomena, d.h. Wörtern, die sich sonst nirgends im NT finden, noch 28 Wörter, die in den übrigen Paulusbriefen (außer 2 Thess und Pastoralbriefe) fehlen, sowie 25 Wörter, die er nur mit dem von ihm abhängigen Eph ... gemeinsam hat. - (b) Umgekehrt fehlen im Kol eine ganze Reihe von spezifisch paulinischen Begriffen, wie z.B. hamartia (Sünde) im Sing, die Rechtfertigungsterminologie (dikaïosynê; dikaïoun), nomos (Gesetz), eleutheria (Freiheit), sôtêria (Heil), kauchasthai (sich rühmen), (epaggelia) Verheißung), (koinônia) Teilhabe jeweils mit ihren Stammverwandten sowie das Verb pisteuein (glauben) und die Anrede '(meine) Brüder' ... (c) Der Kol weist gegenüber den anderen Paulusbriefen etliche Stileigentümlichkeiten auf wie z.B. die Bildung von Genitivketten (z.B. 1,5.13.27; 2,2.12), eine Vorliebe für die figura etymologica (1,11.29; 2,11.19), den Gebrauch von ho estin ('das ist') ohne Rücksicht auf das Geschlecht des Bezugsworte (1,6.8.12.29); 2,15; 3,4), den 'Gebrauch von lose aneinandergehängten finalen oder konsekutiven Infinitiven' ... (d) Als inhaltliche Differenzen werden vor allem genannt: die kosmischen Dimensionen der Christologie (1,15-20), die Leib-Christi-Vorstellung (Christus als Haupt des Leibes: 1,18; 2,19) der Gedanke der universalen Kirche (bei Paulus ist die Ekklesia immer nur die Ortsgemeinde) und die Eschatologie (anders als Röm 6,5.8 sind die Christen zufolge Kol 2,12f.; 3,1 bereits in der Taufe mit Christus auferstanden).<sup>971</sup>*

Furthermore, the main issue in Colossae is not the law and the quest for ritual circumcision. Paul meets the Galatians with the alternative, either the law or Christ (cf. Gal 5:2-4), but in Colossians the choice has to be made between the head who is Christ and the lower cosmic powers (cf. Col 2:19), “and the asceticism mentioned in 2:21-23, including the possible prohibition of marriage, must have stemmed from other quarters.”<sup>972</sup>

Another distinguishing feature of Colossians is the fact that the warnings are not systematically arranged. The issues therein are dotted here and there. Michael Wolter maintains: “Die Mahnungen sind nicht auf eine konkrete Situation bezogen, sondern fordern zu einem bestimmten dauerhaften Verhalten auf ... Die einzelnen Mahnungen stehen relativ

<sup>968</sup> Ibid, 30.

<sup>969</sup> Ibid, 32.

<sup>970</sup> Cf. Heininger, Die Rezeption des Paulus im 1. Jahrhundert, in: Paulus. Leben - Umwelt - Werk - Briefe, 349.

<sup>971</sup> Wolter, Der Brief an die Kolosser. Der Brief an Philemon, 27-28.

<sup>972</sup> Barth and Blanke, Colossians, 29.

*unverbunden ... es gibt höchstens Stichwortverknüpfungen und thematische Kristallisationskerne, um die herum sich zusammengehörige Mahnungen gruppieren. Als ein solcher fungiert z.B. 3,18-4,1 das Sozialgefüge des Hauses, an dessen Mitglieder sich die Haustafel-Paränese wendet.”<sup>973</sup>*

Furthermore, Paul did not evangelize the Lycus valley. Many of the believers there never met him personally (cf. Col 2:1) and he was not personally acquainted with the members of the churches in Colossae. He had certainly met some members of those churches like Philemon of Colossae, but “the preaching of the gospel and the planting of churches in the Lycus valley were evidently the works of Epaphras” (cf. Col 4:12).<sup>974</sup> Thus, the writer could have used Paul’s name to strengthen his authority within the community. According to Bernhard Heininger, the writers of the letters to the Colossians, Ephesians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus used Paul’s name and authority to strengthen the weight of their letters. *“Sie leihen sich die literarische und gemeindeleitende Autorität des Paulus, um die Gemeinden nach seinem Tode leiten und weiterentwickeln zu können.”<sup>975</sup>* Oda Wischmeyer elaborates this. *“Hier stärken sich nachpaulinische Gemeindeleiter untereinander, indem sie sich die Autorität des Apostels und seiner bekanntesten Mitarbeiter sichern. Insgesamt vermitteln die deuteropaulinischen Briefe und die Pastoralbriefe Grundanliegen paulinischen Denkens und apostolischer Gemeindeleitung in neue Situationen hinein. Entscheidend ist, dass die paulinischen Impulse der literarischen Gattung des Gemeindebriefes, der Entwicklung theologischen Denkens und der Ausarbeitung einer eigenen Gemeindeftheologie bzw. Gemeindeverfassung von seinen Schülern in seinem Namen weiterverfolgt werden, andererseits aber neuen Situationen angepasst und dementsprechend entwickelt werden.”<sup>976</sup>* The Letter to the Colossians, therefore, witnesses to the changing conditions within the Pauline communities. Markus Barth and Helmut Blanke (although they are defenders of Pauline authorship) rightly maintain that Colossians “sums up in large measure the leading themes of the Pauline writings, together with the central motif of Paul’s ministry as apostle to the Gentiles. But it does more than that: It carries the thought of the earlier letters forward to a new stage.”<sup>977</sup>

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<sup>973</sup> Wolter, *Der Brief an die Kolosser*, 171.

<sup>974</sup> Cf. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon and to the Ephesians*, 14.

<sup>975</sup> Heininger, *Die Rezeption des Paulus im 1. Jahrhundert*, in: *Paulus. Leben - Umwelt - Werk - Briefe*, 350.

<sup>976</sup> Wischmeyer, *Einführung*, in: *Paulus. Leben - Umwelt - Werk - Briefe*, 347.

<sup>977</sup> Barth and Blanke, *Colossians*, 229.

The type of charismatic leadership which Corinthians and Galatians bear witness to is no longer in question in the letter to the Colossians. The writer uses Pauline terminologies, and in the name of Paul and his authority he endorses conventional ideas of hierarchical relationship found within the society.<sup>978</sup> While the letters to the Galatians, Corinthians and Philemon appeal to the idea of equal treatment of Christians, the letter to the Colossians is concerned with promoting harmony through submission to a hierarchical social order (cf. Col 3:18-4:1; Eph 5:22; 6:5). The author of the letter to the Colossians draws upon the familiar Pauline theme of oneness to support an argument for a distinctly Christian lifestyle (cf. Col 3:15-17). The reward of the members is to be a spiritual inheritance while equality within the community seems to have been forgotten.<sup>979</sup>

The baptized are already risen with Christ (Col 2:12-13; cf. 3:4). Roman Kühschelm distinguishes between the prevailing “realized eschatology” in Colossians and the predominant “future eschatology” in Pauline letters. *“Der Ausblick auf die Parusie und die künftige Vollendung tritt ... zurück, bleibt aber als Sinnhorizont erhalten. Dass in der Taufe ein 'Ausziehen des Fleischesleibes' (V.11), ein Ablegen aller ängstlichen Hörigkeit gegenüber irrealen Mächten (vgl. 2,20) erfolgt, wird mit dem Taufgeschehen als Mitbegrabenwerden erklärt. Anders als Röm 6,4-11 streicht Kol aber den Gegenwartscharakter der darin geschenkten Christusgemeinschaft heraus: Die Glaubenden sind in der Taufe schon mit Christus auferweckt worden und nehmen an seiner Herrschaft teil.”*<sup>980</sup> In Colossians, baptism coincides with the resurrection from death (cf. Col 3:1-4) but in Paul the two are not only differentiated, rather, resurrection remains a future event (cf. 1 Thess 4:13-18).

The “putting on of Christ” (Gal 3:27) is now called the “putting on of a new self” (Col 3:10). The writer modifies the Pauline imagery of “new creation” (Gal 6:15) to “new self” (Col 3:10). Colossians 3:14 speaks of putting on love as the perfect bond of unity. Paul speaks of faith working through love (Gal 5:6). Through baptism the “old self” is already dead and the “new self” lives on with the resurrected Christ, but for Paul, Christians are still requested to put to death the deeds of the flesh and then live a spiritual life (cf. Rom 8:13; Gal 5:24).

*Conclusion:* The letter to the Colossians reveals not only the thinking of Paul but also the teachings of some church leaders in their different communities, who claim Paul's

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<sup>978</sup> Cf. Hogan, “No Longer Male and Female”, 48-49.

<sup>979</sup> Ibid, 50-51.

<sup>980</sup> Kühschelm, Zwischen Schon und Noch-Nicht, in: Zeit schenken - Vollendung erhoffen, 88-89.

authority and attempt to bring “Paul’s teaching to bear on a new generation of believers.”<sup>981</sup> Paul’s “fellow-workers” were more than simply agents of Paul. They were community leaders, who also represented the members and settled issues in the absence of Paul. “Thus not only had Epaphras worked for the congregation and reported concerning it, but he also interceded for his fellow Christians as continuously as Paul (Col 1:7-8; 4:12).”<sup>982</sup> In order to continue leading the community as Paul did, such Christian leaders needed the authority and “authenticity” of Paul.

Traditionally, scholars accepted Paul as the author of Colossians, Ephesians, 2 Thessalonians, first and second Timothy and Titus, but today most theologians uphold the opposite “on the basis of differences in vocabulary and style, theology and ethics, and the level of church order and organization which is presupposed.”<sup>983</sup> Therefore, Colossians belongs to deuterio-Pauline letters and we are using it as an example of the further development of the oneness of Christians during or after Paul’s death.

What then does the writer of the letter to the Colossians see as the source of unity? What are the problems in Colossians and how does the author attempt to restore unity in Colossae?

#### **4.4.3 Col 3:9-11**

The larger context is 3:1-25. The author admonishes Christians who have in baptism already died and risen with Christ to seek the things that are in heaven, where Christ sits at the right hand of God. He urges them to kill everything that is earthly — sexual vices, impurity, uncontrolled passions, evil desires, greed, etc. — because “you have died with Christ” (v 3). According to F. F. Bruce, Colossians are urged to now “act and speak and think therefore so as to make it plain that this ‘death’ is no mere figure of speech, but a real event which has severed the links which bound you to the dominion of sin.”<sup>984</sup> As the renewed people of God, they are instead to be clothed with compassion, generosity, humility, gentleness and patience. They are also to forgive one another because the Lord has forgiven them. Above all, the word of Christ should find a home in them — by teaching and advising each other in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns, doing everything in the name of the Lord (vv 16-17).

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<sup>981</sup> Horrell, *An Introduction to the Study of Paul*, 5.

<sup>982</sup> Barth and Blanke, *Colossians*, 17.

<sup>983</sup> Horrell, *An Introduction to the Study of Paul*, 5.

<sup>984</sup> Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon and to the Ephesians*, 139-140.

Wives are to obey their husbands, while husbands are to love their wives. Children are to respect their parents while parents are not to irritate their children. Slaves are to be obedient to their masters at all times. The Lord whom they serve through their masters will reward them. Masters are to be fair to their slaves, knowing that they too have a master in heaven — Christ (vv 18-25).

The immediate context is 3:5-17, which is often given the heading “The old and the new self.”<sup>985</sup> Christians are new men and women in Christ; they are to live like those who are being renewed in Christ. They are “to put to death” (*νεκρώσατε*, v 5) the catalog of vices in their lives, because they have said goodbye to their old ways of life. “In the “new self” there is also no room for comparisons between ethno-cultural marks of identity, nationalities and social stratifications. The addressees are to put on love which binds everything together in perfect harmony and let the peace of Christ find a place in their hearts. Whatever they do should be done in the name of the Lord.

#### 4.4.3.1 Text

<p><i>μὴ ψεύδεσθε εἰς ἀλλήλους, ἀπεκδυσάμενοι τὸν παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον σὺν ταῖς πράξεσιν αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐνδυσάμενοι τὸν νέον τὸν ἀνακαινούμενον εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν κατ’ εἰκόνα τοῦ κτίσαντος αὐτόν, ὅπου οὐκ ἔνι Ἕλληνα καὶ Ἰουδαῖος, περιτομὴ καὶ ἀκροβυστία, βάρβαρος, Σκύθης, δοῦλος, ἐλεύθερος, ἀλλὰ πάντα καὶ ἐν πᾶσιν Χριστός (Col 3:9-11).</i></p>	<p>Do not lie to one another, having put off the old man with his practices, and having put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge, according to the image of the one who created him, where there is neither Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free but Christ is all in all.</p>
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The text is rearranged to correspond to the sequence the issues therein will be treated. Its arranged structure is as follows:

*μὴ ψεύδεσθε εἰς ἀλλήλους* (v 9a)  
*ἀπεκδυσάμενοι τὸν παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον* (v 9b)  
*σὺν ταῖς πράξεσιν αὐτοῦ* (v 9c)  
*καὶ ἐνδυσάμενοι τὸν νέον* (v 10a)  
*τὸν ἀνακαινούμενον εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν* (v 10b)  
*κατ’ εἰκόνα τοῦ κτίσαντος αὐτόν* (v 10c)  
*ὅπου οὐκ ἔνι Ἕλληνα καὶ Ἰουδαῖος* (v 11a)  
*περιτομὴ καὶ ἀκροβυστία* (v 11b)  
*βάρβαρος, Σκύθης* (11c)  
*δοῦλος, ἐλεύθερος* (11d)  
*ἀλλὰ πάντα καὶ ἐν πᾶσιν Χριστός* (11e).

<sup>985</sup> Cf., eg., Merklein, *Stuttgarter Neues Testament*, 390.

Do not lie to one another (v 9a)  
 having put off the old man (v 9b)  
 with his practices (v 9c)  
 and having put on the new self (v 10a)  
 which is being renewed in knowledge (v 10b)  
 according to the image of the one who created him (v 10c)  
 where there is neither Greek and Jew (v 11a)  
 circumcised and uncircumcised (v 11b)  
 barbarian, Scythian (v 11c)  
 slave, free (v 11d)  
 but Christ is all and in all (v 11e).

#### 4.4.3.2 Linguistic Analysis

*Style and Structure:* Verse 9a defines what the Colossians should no longer do because they have “put off” the old man with his practices (vv 9b-c). Having “put off” the old man (v 9b) is constructed parallel to having “put on” the new man (v 10a), and both statements stand in opposition to one another. Hence, verses 10a-b refer back to the Colossians’ severed life from the “old man” with his practices (vv 9a-c). Being renewed in knowledge (v 10b) serves as a source of strength for the “new man” (v 10a) against the old man and his practices (vv 9b-c). Those who now live according to “the image of the one who created [them]” (v 10c) are those who “have risen with Christ” (cf. 2:12; 3:1-4). Colossians have said goodbye to their old ways of life (v 9), therefore, they should remain within the new self (v 10a). The overall structure clearly shows: *“Im Kolosserbrief ist die Begrifflichkeit ganz auf die Ebene der sittlichen Weisung verschoben worden (so freilich auch schon in Röm. 13,14). Beim Stichwort 'neuer Mensch' denkt der Verfasser infolgedessen nicht an Christus (anders Paulus in Röm. 13,14; vgl. auch später Eph. 2,15); sondern er denkt an die persönliche 'Erneuerung', das 'Erneuert-Sein' des einzelnen Menschen.”*<sup>986</sup>

Verses 11a-d offer four parallel pairs of antithetic or polar groups. V 11b semantically repeats v 11a but in an inverted order. Even though *βάρβαρος* and *Σκύθης* (v 11c) are demarcated from each other with a comma, they denote two ethnic groups like *Ἕλλην καὶ Ἰουδαῖος* (v 11a). The conjunction *ἀλλὰ* connects v 11e with the whole of v 11. V 11e holds the different groups mentioned in vv 11a-d together, and at the same time contrasts the inclusive nature of Christ with their divisions and oppositions.

The writer uses inclusive nouns *Ἕλλην ... ἀκροβυστία ... Σκύθης* and binds them together with “Christ ... all and in all” (v 11e). The repeated *πάντα/πᾶσιν* in v 11e, expects the

<sup>986</sup> Lindemann, Der Kolosserbrief, 58.

Colossians to know that the different groups in vv 11a-d belong to Christ and that they are in Christ, who is “all and in all”.

*Syntax and Semantics:* V 9a begins with a prohibition, consisting of *μὴ* and the present imperative middle *ψεύδεσθε*. The verb *ψεύδω* (“to lie” or “to cheat”) states what is not expected of the Colossians and corresponds to the imperatives *νεκρωσατε* (“put to death”, v 5), *ἀποθέσθε* (“put off”, v 8) and *ἐνδύσασθε* (“put on”, v 12). The reciprocal phrase *εἰς ἀλλήλους* (“to one another”) contextualizes the negated imperative “do not lie” (v 9a). The reason for this command is the fact (rendered as a participle construction) that they have “put off” (*ἀπεκδυσάμενοι*) the old man (v 9b) and his practices (*σὺν ταῖς πράξεσιν αὐτοῦ*, v 9c) and have “put on” *ἐνδυσάμενοι*, (v 10a) the new man. *τὸν παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον* (“the old man”, v 9b) is contrasted with *τὸν νέον* (“the new man”, v 10a). *σὺν ταῖς πράξεσιν αὐτοῦ* (“with his practices”) summarizes the ills and vices exemplarily listed in vv 5 and 8, that include: sexual immorality, evil, covetousness, slander and foul languages.

The present passive participle *ἀνακαινούμενον* (“being renewed”, derived from *ἀνακαινίζω*, “to renew”, v 10b) suggests an ongoing process that moves towards its perfection in true knowledge. *εἰς* is locative here, “in true” or “in full knowledge.”<sup>987</sup> *εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν* is employed here in an absolute sense.<sup>988</sup> The noun *ἐπίγνωσις* (“knowledge”) has nothing to do with academic knowledge (cf. 2:8, which argues against the “philosophy” in Colossae), rather, it means the “understanding and the knowledge of God’s mystery, of Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (2:2b-3). The phrase *ἀνακαινούμενον εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν* (“being renewed in knowledge”, v 10b) indicates that the action of the new self (v 10a) is an ongoing one. It has in view “the readers’ progressive increase in the ability to recognize God’s will and command ... something which the old man did not possess. This true knowledge leads to a conduct that is in conformity with the Creator’s will.”<sup>989</sup> The personal pronoun in *κτίσαντος αὐτόν* (“who created him”) refers back to the man (*ἄνθρωπον*, v 9b).

The relative adverb *ὅπου* (“where”, v 11a) is locative, denoting the sphere where one has “put off” the old man and his practices (v 9b-c) and “put on” the new man (v 10a) or where there are no longer discriminations among the groups mentioned in verses 11a-d. It refers also to the believing community or the “new self” or to “being in Christ”.<sup>990</sup> *οὐκ* negates all

<sup>987</sup> Cf. MacDonald, *Colossians and Ephesians*, 138.

<sup>988</sup> Cf. O’Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, 192.

<sup>989</sup> *Ibid*, 192.

<sup>990</sup> Cf. Barth and Blanke, *Colossians*, 414.



possible forms of discrimination between *Ἕλλην καὶ Ἰουδαῖος, περιτομή καὶ ἀκροβυστία, βάρβαρος, Σκύθης, δοῦλος, ἐλεύθερος*. Although *ἐν* is rendered negative by *οὐκ*, it is here an emphatic equivalent of *ἐστίν*.<sup>991</sup>

*Ἕλλην* ("Greek") is a non-Jew or a Gentile who is not circumcised, while *Ἰουδαῖος* ("Jew") is a person who is born of Jewish parents or a Gentile who accepted circumcision and ritual bathe, and became like the Jew. In the phrase *Ἕλλην καὶ Ἰουδαῖος* ("Greek and Jew"), the Greek is named first. In Pauline letters (e.g., Gal 3:28; Rom 10:12; 1 Cor 12:13), however, Jews are mentioned "as an expression of their privileged place in salvation history. Here the order is reversed, probably because the majority of the readers were Gentile Christians (cf. 1:21, 22; 2:13)."<sup>992</sup> The position of honour and preference is now given to the Greek, who is set in opposition to the Jew. "*Aber auch die aus griechischer Sicht behauptete Klassifizierung der Menschen gilt nicht mehr.*"<sup>993</sup>

*περιτομή καὶ ἀκροβυστία* ("circumcision and uncircumcision") is a variant of "Jew and Greek" (cf. 1 Cor 1:24; 10:32; 12:13; Gal 3:28; 5:6; 6:15), but having reversed the traditional order of Jew and Greek to Greek and Jew, the writer now repeats the formula – in chiastic order – with the terms "circumcision and uncircumcision," which are, of course, set in opposition to one another.

*Βάρβαρος* and *Σκύθης* denote two different ethnic groups. The noun *Βάρβαρος* ("barbarian") refers to all those who do not know Greek language and culture,<sup>994</sup> while *Σκύθης* ("Scythian") is a person who comes from the tribe settling around the Black Sea, now southern Russia,<sup>995</sup> or in the north of Hellas,<sup>996</sup> or at the Caspian sea.<sup>997</sup> Barbarian and Scythian are probably set in opposition to one another. However, this opinion is not shared by all commentators.<sup>998</sup>

<sup>991</sup> Cf. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 187.

<sup>992</sup> O'Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, 192.

<sup>993</sup> Lindemann, *Der Kolosserbrief*, 58.

<sup>994</sup> Cf. Barth and Blanke, *Colossians*, 416.

<sup>995</sup> Cf. MacDonald, *Colossians and Ephesians*, 139.

<sup>996</sup> Cf. Gnllka, *Der Kolosserbrief*, 190.

<sup>997</sup> Cf. Lindemann, *Der Kolosserbrief*, 58.

<sup>998</sup> Cf. Gnllka, *Der Kolosserbrief*, 190: "*Das dritte Paar beschreibt keinen Gegensatz, vielmehr bildet der Barbar den Gegenpol zum Griechen. Der Barbar ist zunächst der, welcher nicht griechisch spricht, die griechische Kultur nicht kennt. Darum mischt sich mit dem Wort der Eindruck des Unzivilisierten, Barbarischen, Wilden. Der Skythe ist für die Antike der Inbegriff der Unkultur. Schon Herodot IV, 59-82 beschreibt ihre absonderlichen und grausamen Sitten und Gebräuche.*"

*δοῦλος καὶ ἐλεύθερος* are social constructs and categorizations of persons. A *δοῦλος* ("slave") is part of the property of the master, who has legal rights over him or her,<sup>999</sup> while *ἐλεύθερος* ("free") is a free citizen or anyone who is born of free parents or freed slaves. "*Der Gegensatz von Sklaven und Freien ging als sozialer quer durch die Gesellschaft.*"<sup>1000</sup>

*πάντα καὶ ἐν πᾶσιν Χριστός* ("Christ is all and in all") is a Christological phrase, which briefly reiterates the high Christology that the author set forth in 1:15-20.<sup>1001</sup> The conjunction *καὶ* ("and") suggests that both parts of the phrase are important. *πάντα ... Χριστός* ("Christ is all") states in an emphatic way that Christ is the only thing that matters, while *ἐν πᾶσιν* ("in all") means that Christ permeates and indwells all the members of the new self, regardless of their ethnic origin, religious identity and class differences.<sup>1002</sup>

*Pragmatics*: The text serves as a universal condemnation of ethnic, socio-cultural and religious stratifications. "There is a strong focus on ethnic divisions and perceptions of cultural inferiority."<sup>1003</sup> The "one who created man" (1:15-16) is the God of the universe and Christ is the Lord of "all and in all," in whom there is no room for discriminations.<sup>1004</sup> Col 3:11, thus appeals to a Christo-centric cosmology. Christ is the head of "all things" (Col 1:18; Eph 1:22) and "all things" exist "in Christ" (Col 3:11e). For Margaret Y. MacDonald, the phrase underscores the cosmic power of Christ. "In Col 3:11 the contrast between the old ethnic and cultural divisions and the new cosmic reality in Christ is emphasized. The cosmic power of Christ is also celebrated in the hymn of 1:15-20."<sup>1005</sup> In Christ, all things hold together (cf. also 2:19).

The Gospel breaks down all ethno-cultural, social and religious barriers by overturning the offenses that the different groups mentioned might cause to each other's natural sensibilities. The writer's previous exhortations (3:1-4) find concrete expression and application in the injunctions like "put to death" (v 5), "put away" (v 8), "do not lie" (v 9a) and "put on" (v 12). The Colossians have "put off" the old man (v 9b) and have "put on" the new man (v 10a), which is being renewed in knowledge (10b).<sup>1006</sup> Within the realm of the new self,

<sup>999</sup> Cf. MacDonald, Colossians and Ephesians, 193: "A slave in the ancient world was, legally speaking, not a person but a piece of property".

<sup>1000</sup> Gnllka, Der Kolosserbrief, 190-191.

<sup>1001</sup> Cf. Moo, The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon, 273.

<sup>1002</sup> O'Brien, Colossians, Philemon, 193.

<sup>1003</sup> MacDonald, Colossians and Ephesians, 138.

<sup>1004</sup> Ibid, 149.

<sup>1005</sup> Cf. Murphy-O'Connor, Paul. A Critical Life, 240.

<sup>1006</sup> O'Brien, Colossians, Philemon, 194.

there is no inferiority of one class to another or of ethnic backgrounds because “Christ is all and in all.”

#### 4.4.4 Detailed Exegesis of the Text

##### 4.4.4.1 Do not Lie to One Another (v 9a)

*μὴ ψεύδεσθε εἰς ἀλλήλους*

Verse 9a begins with the prohibition “do not lie” that is followed by other imperatives (cf. “see to it”, 2:8). Joachim Gnllka rightly observes that “*der Abschnitt ist einleitend von Imperativen beherrscht.*”<sup>1007</sup> The negative imperative *μὴ ψεύδεσθε* reinforces the catalogue of vices mentioned in verses 5 and 8,<sup>1008</sup> and it is also a warning against the Colossians’ old ways of life: You used to tell lies to one another as though they were the most natural things to do, but now you have done away with such conducts.<sup>1009</sup> Therefore, you have to stop telling lies because you have “put off” the old man with his practices (v 9b-c). According to Richard R. Melick, “the basic reason is the Christian’s new character, the new self. The presence of the new self has broad implications for all of life, particularly to personal value.”<sup>1010</sup> The side effects of untrustworthy promises and pledges are enormous on the individual Christian, the Christian community where he or she lives and the society at large. Therefore, the Colossians are to stop lying (*μὴ ψεύδεσθε*) to one another. Peter T. O’Brien opines that the phrase *εἰς ἀλλήλους* (“to one another”, v 9a) “shows that the exhortation has particular reference to believers in their relations within the Christian community. This, of course, in no way suggests that Christians could take the question of truth less seriously when speaking to outsiders.”<sup>1011</sup> In the “new self” (v 10a) which is continually being renewed with the true knowledge (v 10b), there is no room for liars (v 9a).

Was lying a particular sin in Colossae? Why does the author single it out in v 9a? Richard R. Melick is of the opinion that “perhaps it is sufficiently grievous in itself to be mentioned alone ... Even further, this sin represents the ultimate violation of trust. No

<sup>1007</sup> Gnllka, *Der Kolosserbrief*, 178.

<sup>1008</sup> Cf. Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 265: “From a strictly grammatical point of view, vv. 9a-11 ground the prohibition ‘do not lie to one another’ in v. 9a. But conceptually these verses provide the basis for all the commands and prohibitions in vv. 5-9a.”

<sup>1009</sup> Cf. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 146.

<sup>1010</sup> Melick, *Philippians, Colossians and Philemon*, 294.

<sup>1011</sup> O’Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, 188.

community can exist without its members telling the truth.”<sup>1012</sup> Lying comprises more than verbal lies, it also denotes deception, falsehood, etc.<sup>1013</sup> The forbidding of lying could also be because of the warning “see to it that no one makes a prey of you by philosophy and empty deceit” (Col 2:8). Since 1:5 identifies the gospel with the truth, it is possible that the lying the author forbids is “the kind of speaking against the true faith that the false teachers were engaged in.”<sup>1014</sup> Joachim Gnllka, too, avers this. “*Der Imperative mag auch warnend an die Häretiker gerichtet sein.*”<sup>1015</sup> However, many commentators do not accept this application. Douglas J. Moo, for instance, claims that the mutuality emphasized by “each other” stands against it.<sup>1016</sup>

Furthermore, the prohibition “do not lie” probably alludes to the Scripture and the tradition. “*Es ist möglich, daß dabei unmittelbar an das Gebot aus 2. Mose 20,16 (5. Mose 5,20) gedacht ist.*”<sup>1017</sup> Lev 19:11b, too, forbids lying to one another and possibly reflects the Decalogue commandment which forbids the bearing of false witness against one’s neighbour (Ex 20:16; Deut 5:20; cf. Acts 5:3-4; James 3:14; 1 John 1:6).<sup>1018</sup> The letter to the Ephesians elaborates on this issue. “Therefore, put away falsehood, let everyone speak the truth to his neighbour, for we are members of one another” (4:25).

#### 4.4.4.2 Having Put off the Old Man with His Practices (vv 9b-c)

ἀπεκδυσάμενοι τὸν παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον σὺν ταῖς πράξεσιν αὐτοῦ

The “old man” (ὁ παλαιὸς ἄνθρωπος) is a representative term, which denotes the personality ruled by impurity, covetousness, slander, foul languages, etc. (vv 5, 8) and refers also to the sinful humanity as a whole. According to Peter T. O’Brien, the term “the old man” (τὸν παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον, 9b) and the opposite “the new man” (τὸν νέον, 10a) “do not simply describe an individual’s condition (e.g., one’s old, bad character and the new, Christian character), but they also carry corporate associations denoting an old and a new order of existence.”<sup>1019</sup>

<sup>1012</sup> Melick, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, 293-294.

<sup>1013</sup> Ibid, 294.

<sup>1014</sup> Moo, The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon, 265.

<sup>1015</sup> Gnllka, Der Kolosserbrief, 185.

<sup>1016</sup> Cf. Moo, The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon, 265: “The prohibition is more likely a general one, singling out lying as a particularly clear form of community sin.”

<sup>1017</sup> Lindemann, Der Kolosserbrief, 57.

<sup>1018</sup> Cf. MacDonald, Colossians and Ephesians, 137.

<sup>1019</sup> O’Brien, Colossians, Philemon, 189.

The practices of the “old man” include the vices listed in vv 5 and 8, while the practices of the “new self” are the virtues mentioned in v 12, where the Colossians are asked to “put on” (ἐνδύσασθε) a compassionate heart. The practices of the old man include “fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry” (3:5), hence the warning “put to death therefore what is earthly in you” (3:5).<sup>1020</sup> The aforementioned habits are personal actions and designate the acts of the old man’s way of life. According to F. F. Bruce, what the author “really has in mind is the practices and attitudes to which his readers’ bodily activity and strength had been devoted in the old life.”<sup>1021</sup> Therefore, “positive Christian social relationships are mandatory.”<sup>1022</sup> Everything (τὰ πάντα, v 8) that was done in connection with the old man is to be “put off” (v 9) and the “new self” should be “put on” (v 10a). *“Der alte Mensch weist sich durch seine Praktiken, seinen Lebensstil aus. Dieser ist abgetan.”*<sup>1023</sup>

#### 4.4.4.3 Having Put on the Renewed Self (v 10a)

καὶ ἐνδυσάμενοι τὸν νέον

The image of “taking off” and “putting on” a new self, especially in ethical context, occurs also outside the letter to the Colossians (cf. Rom 13:14; Eph 4:22-24).<sup>1024</sup> Joachim Gnilka explains: *“Das Bild vom Anziehen bestimmter Eigenschaften oder Lebensbestimmtheiten ist schon dem Alten Testament vertraut und auch der zeitgenössischen stoischen Philosophie bekannt ...”*<sup>1025</sup> It may have also other backgrounds. It “may reflect a background of changing clothes in relation to the rite of baptism.”<sup>1026</sup> A change of clothes is a natural symbol for a change in life or situation.<sup>1027</sup> But there is something radically new in the Colossians’ concept of the “new self.” *“Radikal ist das Bild vom Kleid im Kolosserbrief durch den neuen Menschen. Die Stoa ist von der wesentlichen Gutheit des Menschen überzeugt und fordert nur ein Leben secundum naturam. Nach der Gnosis ist das ewige Ich im dafür prädestinierten Menschen grundgelegt. In den Mysterien spielt die Sittlichkeit keine besondere Rolle. Kol 3,10 redet demgegenüber vom neuen Menschen in einer umfassenden*

<sup>1020</sup> Cf. Barth and Blanke, Colossians, 402.

<sup>1021</sup> Bruce, The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon and to the Ephesians, 141.

<sup>1022</sup> Melick, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, 293.

<sup>1023</sup> Gnilka, Der Kolosserbrief, 186.

<sup>1024</sup> Cf. Barth and Blanke, Colossians, 408.

<sup>1025</sup> Gnilka, Kolosserbrief, 187.

<sup>1026</sup> Beale, Colossians, in: Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament, 866.

<sup>1027</sup> Cf. Moo, The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon, 266.

*Neugestalt.*"<sup>1028</sup> Because the new self is within the Christian, it has the power of continuous regeneration (v 10b).<sup>1029</sup>

All those who are united with Christ have "put on the renewed self" (ἐνδυσάμενοι) and the old self is replaced (ἐνδύω, "to invest with clothing") with the new self. Before the Colossians "put on the new self" (v 10a), they were under different vices (3:5-9), but through faith-union with Christ (cf. 2 Cor 5:17; Eph 4:15-16), they have "died" (cf. νεκρώσατε, v 5) to sin. What they have "put off" is their old way of life, which changes "the whole personality" that was once prone to "rebellion against God."<sup>1030</sup> Joachim Gnllka further affirms: "*Jeder ist ein neuer Mensch geworden, darum soll er erneuert werden.*"<sup>1031</sup> This new self, consequently, is not a static self but a progressive way of life. "*Der νέος ἄνθρωπος hat die Kraft, sich zu erneuern. Dies bleibt die Lebensaufgabe (Part. Präsens), die wiederum aus der Gnade lebt (Passivum).*"<sup>1032</sup> Those who have "put on the new self" are constantly being renewed (ἀνακαινοῦται, cf. 2 Cor 4:16) as the Christ-like power "is being reproduced more and more in the believer's life."<sup>1033</sup> Since the Colossians have put on the "new self," to return to their old ways of living would be to subject themselves under the bondage of the elemental principles of the world (στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου, 2:20, cf. 2:8).

The metaphor of "putting off the old self" and "putting on the new self" connotes also that the fallen nature "has been mortified and a new nature has been assumed in union with Christ's death and resurrection"<sup>1034</sup> (cf. Rom 6:4-6). The writer urges Colossians to "strip off the old self" and "put on the new self." "That which is now to be 'cast off' is marked as a relic of the past that is not suited for the present."<sup>1035</sup>

The means of initiation into the "new self" is baptism (cf. Col 2:12). All those who are baptized have put on the new self and have already been raised with Christ (cf. 2:12-13; 3:1-4). At the moment of baptism the "old self" is shedded off and the "new self" is put on. "*Die alte Existenz ist endgültig abgetan, die Taufe ist zur Grundlage der neuen Existenz geworden.*"<sup>1036</sup>

<sup>1028</sup> Gnllka, Kolosserbrief, 187-188.

<sup>1029</sup> Cf. Ibid, 187.

<sup>1030</sup> Cf. Bruce, The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon and to the Ephesians, 104.

<sup>1031</sup> Gnllka, Kolosserbrief, 187.

<sup>1032</sup> Ibid, 187.

<sup>1033</sup> Bruce, The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon and to the Ephesians, 146.

<sup>1034</sup> Kim, The Significance of Clothing Imagery in the Pauline Corpus, 162.

<sup>1035</sup> Barth and Blanke, Colossians, 406.

<sup>1036</sup> Maisch, Der Brief an der Gemeinde in Kolossä, 224.

The Colossians should not forget that the “old self” and the “new self” have contrasting characteristics, because baptism marks the boundary between “the power of darkness” and “the kingdom of God’s son.”<sup>1037</sup> They should, therefore, go for the higher things that are above where Christ is (3:2). F. F. Bruce avers. “Don’t let your ambitions be earthbound, set on transitory and inferior objects. Don’t look at life and the universe from the standpoint of these lower planes; look at them from Christ’s exalted standpoint.”<sup>1038</sup> Colossians are to judge everything by the standards of the “new self” and not by those of the “old self.”<sup>1039</sup>

In the sphere of this “new self,” there are no longer ethnic, social status or class discriminations (3:11). This claim is emphasized with the expression Christ is all and in all (v 11e) and all things are in Christ. Furthermore, Christ is the head of the body, the church, *καὶ αὐτός ἐστιν ἡ κεφαλὴ τοῦ σώματος, τῆς ἐκκλησίας* (1:18; cf. 2:19), the prototype of all creation (*πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως*, 1:15). Therefore, there is no need to discriminate against those whom God created through Christ, for everything belongs to Christ, the mediator (1:15-20) of the recreated humanity. “Here ... Christ is presented as the agent of God in the whole range of his gracious purpose toward the human race, from the primeval work of creation, through the redemption accomplished at history’s midpoint, on to the new creation which the divine purpose will be consummated.”

#### 4.4.4.4 Being Renewed in Knowledge (v 10b)

*τὸν ἀνακαινούμενον εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν*

The locative preposition *εἰς* (“in”) shows where the Colossians are being renewed. They are being renewed in knowledge according to the image of the one who created them (v 10c). The source of the renewal here is not God’s Spirit (cf. “life in Spirit”, Rom 8:9; “the Spirit knows the thought of all”, 1 Cor 2:10-11; “the works of the Spirit”, Gal 3:2). Knowledge (*ἐπίγνωσις*) is not the mundane knowledge (*φιλοσοφία*) that the writer was talking about (Col 2:8), it is the knowledge which comes from knowing and doing the will of God. Philosophical knowledge received negative connotations in 2:8-15, the passage which is dealing with the philosophy in Colossae. Here, God’s knowledge is set against the mundane knowledge. Helmut Merklein affirms. “V. 8 enthält die erste direkt Auseinandersetzung mit den Irrlehren. Sie nennen ihre

<sup>1037</sup> Barclay, Colossians and Philemon, 93.

<sup>1038</sup> Bruce, The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon and to the Ephesians, 134.

<sup>1039</sup> Ibid, 134.

*Lehre Philosophie, Weisheitslehre, und gründen sie auf menschliche Überlieferung und die Elementarmächte der Welt (vgl. Gal 4,9f).*"<sup>1040</sup> Colossians, thus, are warned of deceits inherent in "philosophy," "sophistry" and "elemental principles of the world," which are "not of Christ" (Col 2:8; cf. 2:19).<sup>1041</sup> According to 3:10b, however, they have received the true knowledge "of Christ" (cf. 2:2). F. F. Bruce explains. "The 'knowledge' (gnôsis) that was held out to the Colossians was a distorted and imperfect thing in comparison with the true knowledge accessible to those who, through their union with Christ, had been transformed by the renewing of their minds. This true knowledge was, in short, nothing less than the knowledge of God in Christ, the highest knowledge to which human beings can aspire."<sup>1042</sup> Their continuous growth in true knowledge will guarantee their being renewed in the image of the one who created them (v 10c).

#### 4.4.4.5 According to the Image of the One who created him (v 10c)

*κατ' εἰκόνα τοῦ κτίσαντος αὐτόν*

On the basis of their identification with Christ's death and resurrection through baptism (cf. 2:12; 3:1-4), the Colossians are to live according to the resurrected new self and not like those who belong to the old self (3:5-4:6).<sup>1043</sup> At the background of the teaching of the "renewed self" is the image of Christ (cf. Col 1:15; 1 Cor 15:49). Joachim Gnllka explains. "*Der neue Mensch ist Bild des Bildes, Abbild des Urbildes.*"<sup>1044</sup> He expands this. "*Der christologische Bezugspunkt ist ... entscheidend für den neuen Menschen. Er macht das spezifisch Christliche im neuen Menschenbild aus. Nur ist er eigenartig verschlüsselt ausgedrückt: die als Lebensaufgabe zu vollziehende Erneuerung erfolgt gemäß dem Bild dessen, der ihn, nämlich den neuen Menschen, geschaffen hat. Schöpfer ist Gott, Eikon aber ist Christus, der in 1,15f Schöpfungsmittler genannt wurde ... Eikon Gottes zu sein war so für den Menschen ein Konzept, das letztlich als Verheißung angelegt gewesen ist. In Christus, der*

<sup>1040</sup> Merkley, Stuttgarter Neues Testament, 389.

<sup>1041</sup> Cf. Pate, *The End of the Age has Come*, 51, footnote 16: "The phrase 'principles' [*stoicheia*] of the world' occurs three times ... (Gal. 4:3; Col 2:8, 20). Its meaning is contested, with three major possibilities: (1) principles such as an alphabet, elementary religious beliefs, or mathematical propositions; (2) the four elements of the universe as enumerated in ancient Greek Philosophy (earth, water, air and fire); (3) angelic beings that control the earth and astronomical bodies."

<sup>1042</sup> Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon and to the Ephesians*, 148.

<sup>1043</sup> Cf. Beale, *Colossians*, in: *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 865.

<sup>1044</sup> Gnllka, *Der Kolosserbrief*, 188.



*Eikon schlechthin, wird dem Menschen die Gottebenbildlichkeit und mit ihr seine wesentliche Würde erneut gewährt.*"<sup>1045</sup> The dignity of man and woman comes from the fact that they are created in the image of God (cf. Gen 1:27), which is continuously being renewed through faith-union in Christ (cf. Col 2:12; Eph 2:5-6; 4:16).

The renewed self, therefore, "puts on God's image." It is not an illusion but a reality of life for all those who have risen with Christ as Rudolf Hoppe affirms: "*Den neuen Menschen angezogen zu haben, bedeutet nicht die Illusion des idealen Seins, sondern die Realisierung des Willens, sich stetig zu erneuern, Neuschöpfung durch den Schöpfungsmittler Christus (vgl. 1,15f.) an sich geschehen zu lassen. Solche Daseinsweise führt zur Erkenntnis, d.h. aber zur Erkenntnis des Gotteswillens.*"<sup>1046</sup> The renewed image of the new self "involves the reckoning of one's former self with its desires and propensities to be dead" and "putting on the new self" in Christ, whom they will be like when he comes in his glory (3:4).<sup>1047</sup>

Colossians have "put on" a Christ-like image. The "new self" is the resurrected existence of the new age (cf. Isa 65:17) that is acquired by incorporation into the risen Christ.<sup>1048</sup> And what does this mean for those who by faith have been united with Christ? The motivating power which enables them to follow the new way of life "is imparted by Christ from the glory in which he now lives. Since his people share his risen life, their interests are now centered on him."<sup>1049</sup>

The difficulty arising from the teaching of Colossians 3:10 is that believers now live on two different planes. As long as mortal life endures they belong, on the one hand, already to the age to come, while temporally they are still involved in this present difficult age (cf. 3:1-4). And "so long as they live in this world, the old nature persists like a dormant force which may spring into action at any time."<sup>1050</sup> The solution to this dilemma is to "seek the things that are above where Christ is" (3:1). They are already renewed in knowledge (3:10), therefore, they belong to the realm where there is no longer discrimination because Christ is "all and in all" (3:11e).

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<sup>1045</sup> Ibid, 188.

<sup>1046</sup> Hoppe, Epheserbrief/ Kolosserbrief, 143.

<sup>1047</sup> Cf. Bruce, The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon and to the Ephesians, 104.

<sup>1048</sup> Cf. Beetham, Echoes of Scripture in the Letter of Paul to the Colossians, 240-242.

<sup>1049</sup> Bruce, The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon and to the Ephesians, 131-132.

<sup>1050</sup> Ibid, 142.

#### 4.4.6 The Formula of Oneness (v 11)

ὅπου οὐκ ἔνι Ἑλλήν καὶ Ἰουδαῖος, περιτομή καὶ ἀκροβυστία, βάρβαρος, Σκύθης, δοῦλος, ἐλεύθερος, ἀλλὰ πάντα καὶ ἐν πᾶσιν Χριστός.

This formula is modelled towards the transformation formula of oneness in Gal 3:28. However, the Colossians' formula is somewhat different from Gal 3:28. Rudolf Hoppe summarizes Col 3:11 thus: *“Die tatsächliche Trennung der Menschheit wird an vier Gegensatzpaaren exemplarisch dargestellt ... (vgl. Gal 3,28; 1 Kor 12,13). Das läßt darauf schließen, daß sich die Kirche mittlerweile in der griechischen Welt festgesetzt hat ... In der Anrede an die Gemeinde malt der Verfasser das Bild der Kirche als den Ort, wo qualifizierende Unterscheidungen überholt sind. Denn die Gemeinde lebt schon gegenwärtig in der Vorwegnahme der eschatologischen Zukunft, die durch Christus erfahrbar und lebbar eröffnet ist. Er hat durch Kreuz und Auferweckung alle Barrieren überwunden (vgl. 1 Kor 15,28).”*<sup>1051</sup>

##### 4.4.6.1 No Longer Greek and Jew (v 11a)

ὅπου οὐκ ἔνι Ἑλλήν καὶ Ἰουδαῖος

The phrase “where there is no Greek and Jew” differs from corresponding Pauline phrases (e.g., Gal 3:28; 6:15; Rom 3:29; 1 Cor 12:13). The prior position of Greeks before Jews is noteworthy.<sup>1052</sup> The author gives the position of authority and preference to the Greeks. Joachim Gnllka maintains, *“daß die verbreitete Scheidung von Juden und Griechen (= Israel und die Gojim im Jüdischen) nur hier im Neuen Testament in der umgekehrten Reihenfolge Griechen und Jude geboten wird. Man wird zumindest sagen können, daß das Griechische an Interesse gewonnen hat.”*<sup>1053</sup> It is no longer a conflict between Jew and Greek (cf. Rom 1:16; 2:9-10; 3:9; 10:12; 1 Cor 1:24; 10:32; 12:13; Gal 3:28), but a conflict between Greek and Jew.<sup>1054</sup> But why this change? Opinions vary on this issue and “a series of commentators has tried to explain the further peculiarities of this verse by means of the special situations in the Colossian community.”<sup>1055</sup>

<sup>1051</sup> Hoppe, Epheserbrief/Kolossierbrief, 144.

<sup>1052</sup> Cf. Barth and Blanke, Colossians, 415.

<sup>1053</sup> Gnllka, Der Kolossierbrief, 191.

<sup>1054</sup> Cf. Maisch, Der Brief an die Gemeinde in Kolossä, 228.

<sup>1055</sup> Barth and Blanke, Colossians, 415.

When the author says that there is “no Greek and Jew,” it is because in the Colossian church(es), Jews were the minority. There certainly was a migration of Jews to the Lycus valley (Josephus, Ant. 14:112-113), and there are also evidences which point to Jewish settlement in the Lycus valley and in Phrygia,<sup>1056</sup> but the Greeks now have the upper hand in the Colossian community.

Unlike Paul who is “not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek” (Rom 1:16), the author now speaks of the Greeks first, before the Jews. However, he reminds the Greeks and the Jews that in Christ the old order is a bygone and the new order is the “new self” being renewed in the image of Christ, in whom there are no longer ethnic categorization like Greeks and Jews. Christ is the image of God, the one through whom the universe is created and is reconciled with God (Col 1:19-20). Therefore, Greeks as well as Jews are reconciled with God through faith-union “in Christ” (2:12; cf. Eph 2:11-18).

#### 4.4.6.2 No Longer Circumcised and Uncircumcised (v 11b)

*περιτομή καὶ ἀκροβυστία*

Having changed the traditional formula of “neither Jew nor Greek” (cf. Gal 3:28; 1 Cor 12:13) to no longer “Greek and Jew,” the author now repeats the formula in a chiasmic form: circumcised and uncircumcised. The rite of circumcision and ritual laws remain cardinal issues in Jewish-Gentile relationships. “In resisting the pressures of pagan forms of worship, the synagogues in the diaspora insisted upon circumcision, keeping the Sabbath, and dietary observances.”<sup>1057</sup> Here, the Colossians are reminded that there should be no discriminations based on the ethnic mark of circumcision because they are already circumcised with a spiritual circumcision. Theirs is a circumcision that was not made with the human hand (*καὶ περιετμήθητε περιτομῇ ἀχειροποίητος*). It is not a circumcision that entails the removal of the foreskin (Col 2:11; cf. Eph 2:11), but “being renewed in knowledge” (Col 3:10b). Therefore, physical circumcision has no meaning for those who are being renewed “in Christ.” Rudolf Hoppe affirms that *“Beschnittenheit und Unbeschnittenheit sind nur noch von relativer*

<sup>1056</sup> Cf. Bruce, The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians, 8: “Jewish settlement in Western Anatolia can be traced back to quite an early date: apparently there were Jewish exiles in the Lydian city of Sardis in the time of the prophet Obadiah.”

<sup>1057</sup> Barth and Blanke, Colossians, 15.

*Bedeutung.*"<sup>1058</sup> F. F. Bruce opines that "the old order is past and done with; it proclaims that a new order has been inaugurated."<sup>1059</sup> They should know that the uniqueness of the person of Christ, in whom the plenitude of deity is embodied (2:9), "the perfection of the redeeming and reconciling work which he accomplished by his death on the cross, and the spiritual liberty enjoyed by all who by faith were united with him"<sup>1060</sup> supersede physical circumcision. Therefore, after Christ's death and his resurrection the old practices of physical circumcision are no longer relevant.<sup>1061</sup>

#### 4.4.6.3 No Longer Barbarian and Scythian (v 11c)

*Βάρβαρος, Σκύθης*

Besides the Greeks and the Jews, the author introduces two other ethnic groups – barbarians and Scythians. Barbarians are all those who are non-Greeks and do not know the Greek culture and language. "To the Greeks, all non-Greeks were 'barbarians' (*barbaroi*, a word which probably imitated the unintelligible sound of foreign languages)."<sup>1062</sup> It also means "a designation which differentiated a foreigner from one's own people in a depreciatory way on the basis of language, culture, and morals ..."<sup>1063</sup>

The Scythians are also non-Greeks.<sup>1064</sup> However, it remains difficult to state exactly who the Scythians were and where they were located in history.<sup>1065</sup> They did police duty in Athens in the fifth and fourth century B.C., and their policemen were "figures of fun in Attic comedy because of their uncouth ways and speech."<sup>1066</sup> Scythians were also described as "little better than wild beasts."<sup>1067</sup> Although commentators do not agree on what the roles of Scythians in antiquity were,<sup>1068</sup> the purpose of the formula is quite clear. It serves to underscore the fact that "in the new self" all ethnic classifications are swallowed up. The

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<sup>1058</sup> Hoppe, Epheserbrief/Kolossierbrief, 144.

<sup>1059</sup> Bruce, The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians, 105.

<sup>1060</sup> Ibid, 27.

<sup>1061</sup> Cf. Beale, Colossians, in: Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament, 863.

<sup>1062</sup> Bruce, The Epistle of Paul to the Romans, 77.

<sup>1063</sup> Barth and Blanke, Colossians, 416.

<sup>1064</sup> Ernst, Skythen, in: Herders Neues Bibellexikon, 699.

<sup>1065</sup> Cf. MacDonald, Colossians and Ephesians, 139 and Gnllka, Der Kolosserbrief, 190.

<sup>1066</sup> Bruce, The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians, 150.

<sup>1067</sup> O'Brien, Colossians, Philemon, 193.

<sup>1068</sup> Cf. Barth and Blanke, Colossians, 415: "There are no indications of a specific function of Scythians in the society there. We can say only with some certainty that listings such as these were variable in part, so that a common basic group could be expanded in different ways."

author imitates the Pauline formula in Gal 3:28, as he emphasizes de facto that “the gospel overrides cultural frontiers” and that the categorizations of persons have no place for those who are “in Christ.”<sup>1069</sup> Rudolf Hoppe affirms: *“Dieser Gegensatz (Barbaren, Skythen) ist durch Christus genauso überwunden wie die bei den Griechen gemachte Unterscheidung zwischen Sklaven und Freien.”*<sup>1070</sup>

#### 4.4.6.4 No Longer Slave and Free (v 11d)

δοῦλος καὶ ἐλεύθερος

Unlike the phrase “slave and freed” in Gal 3:28b which is on the second position, this oppositional pair is in Col 3:11 moved to the fourth position. Ingrid Maisch affirms. *“Das zweite Paar der alten Formel 'Sklave, Freier' (vgl. Gal 3,28; 1 Kor 12,13) ist durch die Erweiterungen an die vierte Stelle getreten. Es bezieht sich nicht auf einen natürlichen, durch Geburt hergestellten Unterschied (Griechen, Jude; vgl. auch Mann, Frau in Gal 3,28) sondern auf den sozialen Status von Menschen, der sich durch wirtschaftliche oder militärische Umstände (Verkauf von Kriegsgefangenen) verändern kann.”*<sup>1071</sup> The distinctions between slaves, freed slaves and freeborn are human phenomena. They are social constructions that identify some people as slaves and others as freed, which are sometimes based on their economic well-being.

For the Greeks as well as for the Romans a slave had no legal right. He or she was not a person but “a piece of property,” “a thing,”<sup>1072</sup> “a living tool,” “an inanimate person.”<sup>1073</sup> Ingrid Maisch emphasizes this point. *“Das herausragende Merkmal der Sklaverei ist die institutionalisierte Rechtsunfähigkeit und Rechtlosigkeit von Menschen, die nicht als Personen, sondern als Eigentum eines anderen gelten.”*<sup>1074</sup> Some slaves were used in doing menial jobs such as housekeeping, furrowing and sometimes as means of sexual gratification. Against the view that slaves were simply living properties in the hands of their masters, Tatha Wiley opines that “persons have rights and obligations. Property has neither.”<sup>1075</sup>

<sup>1069</sup> Cf. Bruce, The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians, 150.

<sup>1070</sup> Hoppe, Epheserbrief/Kolossenerbrief, 144.

<sup>1071</sup> Maisch, Der Brief an die Gemeinde in Kolossä, 229.

<sup>1072</sup> Cf. Fitzmyer, First Corinthians, 309.

<sup>1073</sup> Bruce, The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians, 150.

<sup>1074</sup> Maisch, Der Brief an die Gemeinde in Kolossä, 230.

<sup>1075</sup> Wiley, Paul and the Gentile Women, 82.

In Colossians, the master-slave relationship persists in private homes and business life (Col 3:22; cf. Eph 6:5), but within the church it has been “swallowed up” because of the new self “in Christ” (3:11). The author “treats the distinction in status between the slave and the free person as irrelevant in the new order.”<sup>1076</sup> If a Christian slave became a leader in the church, he would be entitled to receive due respect from his Christian master. But the Christian slave would not presume on this new relationship or make it an excuse for serving his Christian master less assiduously; on the contrary, he would serve him more faithfully because of their new relationship in Christ. And if the Christian slave has an unbelieving master, he is to serve him still more faithfully because the reputation of Christ and his body, the church (Col 1:18; Eph 1:22-23) is bound up with the quality of his service to his earthly master. Masters are enjoined to treat their slaves justly and fairly, because they also have a master in heaven (cf. Col 3:22-25; 4:1; Eph 6:5-9).<sup>1077</sup>

Unlike the letter to Philemon, where Onesimus has become an adopted child (Phlm 10) and a beloved brother “in the Lord” (16) and 1 Cor 7:17-24 where slaves are encouraged to seek their freedom, slaves in Colossia are urged to remain obedient to their masters as God will judge those who disobey this teaching (Col 3:22-25).<sup>1078</sup> Therefore, slaves remained slaves outside the church, but within the Christian community “the old relationship is transformed by the new. We might say that the distinction of social function remains but the distinction of class is destroyed — because all are brothers in Christ.”<sup>1079</sup> Within the Christian community (but only within the community) there are no longer slaves and freed or as Joachim Gnilka affirms: “*Entscheidend ist, daß in der Kirche alle diese menschlichen Differenzierungen ihr Sachlichkeit und Bedeutung eingebüßt haben.*”<sup>1080</sup> In the body of Christ, there is no room for slave, freed slave and free or a master-slave relationship. “*Weil Christus unterschiedslos alle Menschen angenommen hat, werden von Menschen gemachte Unterscheidungen und Klassifizierungen im Christus-Leib bedeutungslos, zerbrechen irdische Maßstäbe. Ein neues Verhältnis der Menschen zueinander ist ermöglicht.*”<sup>1081</sup>

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<sup>1076</sup> Bruce, The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians, 168.

<sup>1077</sup> Ibid, 168.

<sup>1078</sup> Ibid, 168.

<sup>1079</sup> Ibid, 150.

<sup>1080</sup> Gnilka, Der Kolosserbrief, 191.

<sup>1081</sup> Ibid, 192.

#### 4.4.6.5 But Christ is All and in All (v 11e)

*ἀλλὰ πάντα καὶ ἐν πᾶσιν Χριστός*

With the indefinite pronoun *πάντα* the writer draws the conclusion: “All things are in Christ.” Conspicuously absent in this construction is the pronoun “you”, *ὁμεῖς* (cf. Gal 3:28d) which would have made all Colossians one “in Christ,” but the absence gives room for the difference between Colossians and Galatians. In Colossians, Christ is acclaimed as the centre and focus “of all things” (cf. Col 2:10). Creation comes into existence in him and from him, all things cohere in him. No power is before or beyond him, for he is the head of every ruler and authority; moreover his death and resurrection effected the reconciliation of all things, both in heaven and on earth (Col 1:15-20; cf. Eph 2:14-15). Christ is the “mystery” hidden through all time, in him are found all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col 1:26-29; 2:2-3). The confession of 3:11 could hardly be more apt: “Christ is all and in all” (cf. “that God may be all in all”, 1 Cor 15:28; “the fullness of him who fills all and in all”, Eph 1:23).

According to John M. G. Barclay, “the Christian faith stakes out its claim in the widest possible terms. It is no new-fangled or minority cult, pandering to the special interests of a small pocket of humanity.” Its truth is neither one truth among others, nor is her Lord just “a recent arrival in a world of many competing gods.” The letter lays a Christian claim on the whole life, the whole of humanity, the whole history and the whole of the universe, all in the name of Christ.<sup>1082</sup> Furthermore, he maintains that “the author of Colossians has produced a document that depicts Jesus Christ as the beloved Son and total revelation of God, as redeemer who in eternity holds the whole created world (including the invisible powers) in his hand, as the mediator of forgiveness, reconciliation, and peace, and as guarantor of eternal and master of daily life. The writer intends to show that Jesus Christ triumphs over and outrules the complicated ways recommended or imposed by the Religion.”<sup>1083</sup>

The expression “all and in all” has allusions to Stoic sources (cf. also Sir 43:27). “All things, or the all (*pan*), were seen as dependent upon, and constituted by the deity or divinity, with or without personal qualities.”<sup>1084</sup> The writer uses similar stoic language of divinity when he speaks here of “Christ is all and in all” (cf. 1 Cor 15:28; Eph 1:22-23; 4:6). Markus Barth and

<sup>1082</sup> Cf. Barclay, Colossians and Philemon, 92-93.

<sup>1083</sup> Ibid, 44-45.

<sup>1084</sup> Barth and Blanke, Colossians, 11.

Helmut Blanke aver that “the world is encircled and ruled throughout by God.”<sup>1085</sup> Likewise, Christ encompasses the whole of the church and at the same time indwells her (Col 3:11e). Christ, therefore, is the head of “all” and “all” are in Christ.

Those who have “put on the renewed self” are those who are in the one body of Christ, the church (Col 1:18, 24). What is emphasized by the body of Christ is the idea of unity, because the “new self” embraces the totality of all believers.<sup>1086</sup> And in the unity of that body there is no room for old cleavages. This is, as F. F. Bruce explains, because “the Christ who lives in each of his people is the Christ who binds them together in one.”<sup>1087</sup> Ingrid Maisch affirms. *“Es gibt nur die Einheit in Christus. Die alte Wirklichkeit mit ihrer Aufspaltung in nationale, ethnische, religiöse, kulturelle und soziale Gruppen gilt für die Getauften nicht mehr; sie ist 'in Christus' aufgehoben.”*<sup>1088</sup>

*Conclusion:* The author begins Col 3:9 with the imperative: “Do not lie” to one another. Lies have moral and social consequences in the community. He then moves on to the concepts of “old man and his practices.” He requests the Colossians “to put on” the new self (3:10), and makes a universal claim in 3:11. Christ is head of his body, the church (cf. 1:24b) and all things exist in him (3:11). The author, therefore, rejects the categorization of persons based on ethnic identity marks, religious way of life and social status. The concepts Greeks and Jews, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarians and Scythians, slaves and freed are examples of discordances. Christian love of one’s neighbour, however, does not look at the national origin, at religion or cultural refinement, or social position.

Now that you have become “the new self in Christ,” live like Christ. Having died and risen with Christ in baptism (Col 2:12), you have said goodbye to your old ways of life (3:1-9); therefore, you have done away with all those things that were characteristic of the “old man and his practices” (3:5, 8, 9). It is not only the sinful habits and attitudes that are to be done away with; the artificial barriers that divided human beings are also rendered useless (3:11). Within the community of those who have put on “a new self” in Christ all barriers are irrelevant; indeed, they have no existence any more.<sup>1089</sup>

This “new self” is being renewed after the model of Christ who is the image of God (1:15); and on the other hand, the “new self” belongs to the corporate humanity which reveals

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<sup>1085</sup> Ibid, 417.

<sup>1086</sup> Cf. Kim, The Significance of Clothing Imagery in the Pauline Corpus, 167-169.

<sup>1087</sup> Bruce, The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians, 151.

<sup>1088</sup> Maisch, Der Brief an die Gemeinde in Kolossä, 227.

<sup>1089</sup> Cf. Bruce, The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians, 148-149.



itself in the Christian community's ways of life. In the unity of the church-organism there is no room for the old divisions. *"Erneuerte Welt ... ist der Christus-Leib. Für die alte Menschheit sind Trennung und Spaltung signifikant. Sie sind ein Zeichen der Gottentfremdung. Im Christus-Leib, in der Ekklesia, sind sie aufgehoben."*<sup>1090</sup> Hence, the consequence of "putting on a new self" is the "dissolution of all ethno-cultural and socio-religious differences."<sup>1091</sup>

#### 4.5 Gal 3:26-29; 6:15; 1 Cor 12:13 and Phlm 15-16 compared with Col 3:9-11

The above passages share common concepts such as "Jews and Greeks," "slaves and freed" and variables like "baptized in the name of Christ," "receiving the same Spirit," "putting on Christ," "male and female," "circumcised and uncircumcised," "beloved brother in the Lord," "putting off the old man," "putting on the new man," "barbarians and Scythians." Col 3:10-11 encompasses not only the mentioned pairs of opposites, it has also the conclusive phrase of "Christ is all and in all." In Col 3:10-11 "the wording is more general."<sup>1092</sup> Col 3:10-11 is so universal that Joachim Gniska describes it as utopic. *"Der Abschnitt hat zum zentralen Gedanken den neuen Menschen. Der daraus sich ergebende Anspruch ist groß und könnte als Utopie erscheinen. Bei näherem Hinsehen erblickt man zunächst nichts spezifisch Christliches. In der Wiederholung der Lasterpentaden (VV 5,8) schließt sich der Text an vorgegebene stoische und jüdische Wertvorstellungen an. Das Menschenbild aber, das hinter den ethischen Imperativen steht und die eigentlichen Maßstäbe setzt, ist Christus."*<sup>1093</sup>

Nicole Frank compares specifically Col 3:11 and 1 Cor 12:13 with Gal 3:28. She opines that 1 Cor 12:13 is a variant expression of the formula of oneness while Col 3:11 is an adaptation from Gal 3:28.

*Mit dem ... Vers Kol 3,11 wird erneut ein traditionelles Schema aufgegriffen, das als direkte Adaption der entsprechenden paulinischen Formel betrachtet werden muss: Mit dem Einheitsschema, das seine paulinische Vorlage in 1 Kor 12,13 und Gal 3,28 findet, wird durch den Anschluss mit ὅπου der Ort jenes erneuerten Menschen des Vorgängerverses bestimmt: ὅπου οὐκ ἔνι Ἕλληνας καὶ Ἰουδαῖος, περιτομή καὶ ἀκροβυστία, βάρβαρος, Σκύθης, δοῦλος, ἐλεύθερος, ἀλλὰ [τὰ] πάντα καὶ ἐν πᾶσιν Χριστός. Die Übereinstimmung mit 1 Kor 12,13 und Gal 3,28 ist offensichtlich, doch in Anbetracht der Tatsache, dass sich durch die Bekleidungsmetapher die Parallelen mit Gal 3,28 auch auf den jeweiligen Vorgängerverses ausdehnen, liegt die Annahme nahe, dass der Galaterbrief hier die direkte Vorlage des Verfassers bildet."*<sup>1094</sup>

<sup>1090</sup> Gniska, Der Kolosserbrief, 189.

<sup>1091</sup> Cf. Kim, The Significance of Clothing Imagery in the Pauline Corpus, 167-169.

<sup>1092</sup> Bruce, The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians, 149.

<sup>1093</sup> Gniska, Der Kolosserbrief, 192.

<sup>1094</sup> Frank, Der Kolosserbrief, 272.

There is no mention of baptism and the role of the Spirit in Col 3:9-11, but “putting off the old” and being renewed in the “new self” replace the role of the Spirit (cf. 2:12-13).<sup>1095</sup> The image (εἰκών) of God and knowledge (ἐπίγνωσις) of Christ are underscored in place of “putting on Christ” (Gal 3:27) or “drinking from the same Spirit” (1 Cor 12:13).<sup>1096</sup> But the issue of knowledge does not feature in the aforementioned Pauline texts, where Christians are rather empowered through the Spirit, by the act of baptism and through faith in Christ Jesus (cf. Gal 3:2-3, 28; 1 Cor 12:13).

The author of Col 3:11 also brings in more ethnic groups (βάρβαρος, Σκύθης) that are not mentioned by Paul (cf. Rom 1:14). Although the third pair of Gal 3:28c, “male and female” is absent in Colossians, as well as in Gal 6:15; 1 Cor 12:13 and Phlm 15-16, the writer seems to adopt the text rather from Gal 3:28 and 6:15, and not from 1 Cor 12:13 or Phlm 15-16 as Nicole Frank concurs: *“Zwar stimmt Kol 3,11 gegenüber Gal 3,28 im Wegfall des Begriffspaars Mann-Frau (ἄρσεν καὶ θῆλυ) wiederum mit 1 Kor 12,13 überein, doch auch die Dreigliedrigkeit der Begriffspaare spricht stärker für eine direkte Adaption des Galaterbriefes als für eine literarische Abhängigkeit gegenüber 1 Kor 12,13.”*<sup>1097</sup>

What Paul demands of those who have “put on Christ” (Gal 3:27) and as such have become “a new creation” (6:15; 2 Cor 5:17), Colossians demands of those who have “put on the new self” (cf. Col 3:10). It is not only that the writer uses the already known traditional formula to suit his purpose, he also converts the naming order by placing Greeks before Jews. The reason for this could be the empiric domination of Greeks over Jews at his time. The old Pauline motif reflects the story of the expansion of Christianity and her proclamation of “equal salvation-right for all” beyond Jewish borders (cf. Gal 3:28). According to Michael Wolter, this means *“die soteriologische Gleichstellung der Heiden mit den Juden innerhalb der christlichen Gemeinde zu proklamieren und damit das Privileg der Synagoge zu nivellieren.”*<sup>1098</sup> This point, however, is weakened by Colossians, which speaks from the perspective of Greek converts and no longer from the Jewish side. *“Diese Pointe wird durch die Voranstellung des 'Griechen' durch den Verf. des Kol zumindest abgeschwächt. Erkennbar wird darin, daß die historische Situation, auf die die Tradition bezogen ist, in seiner Gemeinde 'nicht mehr aktuell' ist ... und*

<sup>1095</sup> Cf. Kim, The Significance of Clothing Imagery in the Pauline Corpus, 167.

<sup>1096</sup> Bruce, The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians, 148.

<sup>1097</sup> Frank, Der Kolosserbrief, 272.

<sup>1098</sup> Wolter, Der Brief an die Kolosser, 182.

*daß er das Gegenüber jetzt 'aus der Perspektive der griechisch sprechenden heidenchristlichen Gemeinde' formuliert."*<sup>1099</sup>

The foreigners (barbarians, Scythians) are those who neither speak Greek nor know the Greek culture. They were treated as outsiders within the society.<sup>1100</sup> The only place where Paul uses "barbarian" as an ethnic identification is in Rom 1:14, *Ελλησίν τε καὶ βαρβάρους, σοφοῖς τε καὶ ἀνοήτοις ὀφειλέτης εἰμί*, "I am obliged to both Jews and barbarians, both to the wise and the foolish." Here, he is not comparing the barbarians with the Jews, rather he refers to the Gentiles and all those to whom he has become responsible for their wellbeing in Christ. Nicole Frank explains. *"Während die einzige paulinische Parallele in Röm 1,14 βάρβαρος als ethnische Kontrastierung zu Ἕλληνα ausweist (ergänzt durch Ἰουδαῖος als religiöse Kontrastierung; vgl. Röm 1,16), wird im Kolosserbrief mit Σκύθης ein Begriff verwendet, der innerhalb des Neuen Testaments singulär ist."*<sup>1101</sup> There is a structural change from the proto-Pauline texts to the stereotyping of barbarians and Scythians in Colossians. However, in Christ these stereotypings are obsolete as Col 3:11 says. *"Solche extremen Formen stereotyper Antithetik sind in Christus überwunden und in ihrer trennenden Kraft aufgehoben."*<sup>1102</sup>

Moreover, there is an inverted repetition of "Greeks and Jews" in "circumcised and uncircumcised" (Col 3:11). Why this tautology? Paul uses "Jews and Greeks" (Gal 3:28) or "circumcised and uncircumcised" (6:15), but Colossians combines the two, which does not happen in proto-Pauline letters. This could be an indication of a situation different from the Pauline era, and points to the dominance of Greeks over Jews.<sup>1103</sup>

The writer of the letter to the Colossians seems to have completed the borrowing from Pauline letters when he speaks of "circumcised and uncircumcised" combined with "but Christ is all and in all." Paul speaks of "circumcised and uncircumcised" together with a varying conclusion; "but what counts is being a new creation" (Gal 6:15); "but faith expressing itself through love" (5:6); "but keeping God's commandments" (1 Cor 7:19). The author of Colossians closes with "but Christ is all and in all." There are, however, no discussions of any conflicts between the circumcised and the uncircumcised, rather the Colossians are said to be circumcised with the spiritual circumcision in Christ (Col 2:11). The issues addressed in 3:5-9 are the vices which the Christians are to avoid. As a result of their "circumcision in Christ,"

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<sup>1099</sup> Ibid, 182.

<sup>1100</sup> Ibid, 182-183.

<sup>1101</sup> Frank, Der Kolosserbrief, 274.

<sup>1102</sup> Ibid, 275.

<sup>1103</sup> Ibid, 273-274.

their attitudes and actions are to reflect their “new self,” which includes compassion, humility, forbearance and love, the bond that ties all together (3:12-17). They are “to know” that they are in union with Christ, the head of the “new self” (cf. 3:10).

Hierarchy obviously plays a great role in the Colossian church. Gal 3:28 speaks of the equality of male and female in Christ, but in Colossians the hierarchical structure is seen as a norm, which leaves open the dichotomy between the ideal that is claimed to be (Col 3:11) and the reality of what is said (3:18-4:1). There is a total denial of the equality of male and female as women are to be under the authority of their husbands (cf. 3:18). The imperative *ὑποτάσσεσθε* brings out the subordinate role of women. Slaves too are to remain obedient to their masters at all times (3:22). The expression *ὡς ἀνῆκεν ἐν Κυρίῳ* (3:18) reminds the women of their duties to the Lord, which reflect themselves in their obedience to their husbands and masters.<sup>1104</sup> According to Nicole Frank, Col 3:18 still builds a religious wall between the male and the female. *“Der kolossischen Haustafel, insofern konsequent, als just jene Gleichstellung in eine starke textimmanente Spannung zu Kol 3,18 treten würde, wo diese Geschlechterdifferenz auf praktischer Ebene nicht nur bestätigt, sondern zugleich hierarchisierend ausgedeutet und religiös untermauert wird.”*<sup>1105</sup> F. F. Bruce affirms “that structure, hierarchical as it was, was left unaltered, apart from the introduction of the new principle, ‘as is fitting in the Lord’ ... The authority of the husband, father, and master continued to be exercised, but only ‘as was fitting in the Lord’.”<sup>1106</sup> Unlike Pauline texts where differences are completely rendered irrelevant (Phlm 15-16; Gal 3:28), in Colossians the hierarchy is maintained outside the community.

Paul sends Onesimus back to Philemon no longer as a slave but as “a beloved brother in the Lord” (Phlm 16). The letter to the Colossians encourages slaves to serve their masters well because “the reputation of Christ and Christianity is at stake.”<sup>1107</sup> In their faithful services to their earthly masters, they are fulfilling the will of God (cf. Col 3:22-25). The attempts to balance the social differences in Col 4:1 seem to be mere political maneuver.<sup>1108</sup> The author of Colossians makes a religious statement but leaves the Christian community almost in the same form with the social structure.<sup>1109</sup>

<sup>1104</sup> Cf. Barth and Blanke, Colossians, 434-435.

<sup>1105</sup> Frank, Der Kolosserbrief, 272.

<sup>1106</sup> Bruce, The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon and to the Ephesians, 163.

<sup>1107</sup> Ibid, 168.

<sup>1108</sup> Cf. Frank, Der Kolosserbrief, 273.

<sup>1109</sup> Cf. Wolter, Der Brief an die Kolosser, 183.

The universal principles of oneness of all in Christ, as they are postulated by Paul in Gal 3:28; 6:15; 1 Cor 12:13 and Phlm 15-16 have undergone a metamorphosis. Col 3:9-11 seems to adapt the issue of oneness in Pauline letters to a different religious community and within a different milieu. That the author appeals also to the institutionalization of the church, the patriarchal roles and the household codes go a long way to buttress the fact that Col 3:9-11 is different from the aforementioned Pauline texts.

#### 4.6 The Diachronic and Synchronic Questions of the Texts

Διαχρονικός comes from the combination of two Greek words, *chronos*, “time” and *dia*, “through.” The diachronic question is: What are the historical and linguistic changes in our texts? In our case, how has Gal 3:26-29 changed through the time? The quest for the traditional sources of the text shows that Paul took from what he deemed necessary in Jewish tradition,<sup>1110</sup> the Qumran community and early Christian liturgy,<sup>1111</sup> and with these materials he formulates his text in 3:26-29. In addressing the issues in Galatia, Paul uses inclusive languages, for instance, “sons and daughters of God” (v 26), “you all” (v 28).<sup>1112</sup> The diachronic development of 3:26-29 is seen clearly in Col 3:9-11. The author initially introduces the imperative: “Do not lie,” reverts the first representative concept “Greeks and Jews,” repeats this in a chiasmic order with “circumcised and uncircumcised,” introduces new ethnic groups, “barbarians and Scythians,” moves the position of “slaves and freed” to a fourth place, before drawing a cosmic Christological conclusion of “but Christ is all and in all.”

Style, syntax and semantics of 6:15; 1 Cor 12:13 and Phlm 15-16 share the same features with Gal 3:26-29. For instance, the expression “we all” stands for Corinthians who are baptized with the same baptism and received the same Spirit (1 Cor 12:13),<sup>1113</sup> which is equivalent to “as many as” those who have “put on Christ” in Gal 3:27. Paul, Philemon and his slave Onesimus have become “brothers in the Lord” (Phlm 16).<sup>1114</sup> However, a synchronic analysis of the texts shows that each text was meant for a particular community, and was developed for their own specific need. There is a development and variation of thought in all

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<sup>1110</sup> Cf. Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 217.

<sup>1111</sup> Cf. Thyen, *Als Mann und Frau geschaffen*, 144.

<sup>1112</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 217.

<sup>1113</sup> Cf. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 590.

<sup>1114</sup> Cf. Barth and Blanke, *Colossians*, 20-21.

the texts. Even though the author of Gal 3:26-29, 6:15; 1 Cor 12:13 and Phlm 15-16 is Paul, the texts were developed at different times, places and for various purposes.<sup>1115</sup>

Col 3:9-11 represents a latter development, which could have come from one of the “co-workers” of Paul.<sup>1116</sup> It is an adaptation of Pauline texts to a later Christian community which had new issues such as Greek and Jews, barbarians, Scythians, the hierarchy of the members, etc.<sup>1117</sup> The required subordination of women and slaves in Col 3:18-25 stands in opposition to the thesis of Gal 3:26-29.<sup>1118</sup> The concept of equality among the members of the communities in Galatia seems to have been forgotten.<sup>1119</sup> Finally, we do not know exactly how the author of Col 3:9-11 came to his universal conclusion, “Christ is all and in all” (v 11), but the structure, style, syntax and semantics are close to that of Gal 3:26-29.<sup>1120</sup>

#### 4.7 The Open Questions in the Texts

Gal 3:26-29 addresses sensitive issues. It is the only text where Paul includes “neither male and female” (v 28). It fuses all the well known antithetical concepts together: Jews and Greeks, slaves and freed, male and female are one “in Christ.” But in Jewish and Greco-Roman societies freed slaves were regarded with contempt, and treated like pieces of rags. Slaves were made to work like donkeys and were seen as “inanimate objects” or “talking tools” in the hands of their masters.<sup>1121</sup> Paul counteracts these practices by sending Onesimus back to Philemon as his adopted child (Phlm 10) and a “beloved brother in the Lord” (v 16). What is to be the new status of Onesimus? We do not know if Philemon responded to Paul’s plea and sent Onesimus back to continue his serving or retained him in the former kind of household service that he was in before their conflicts began.<sup>1122</sup> What happens to the other slaves in Philemon’s possession? Must he now set all of them free? When Onesimus is set free without ransom, who takes up his place? Paul acts as a guarantor and says, “whatever debt he owes you, put it on my own account” (Phlm 18) and “I will pay” (v 19). How is Paul going to pay this debt while in prison? Who welcomes a run-away slave into the house without risking his or her corrupting other slaves or even initiating a rebellion against their master? Are we sure that

<sup>1115</sup> Cf. Horrell, *An Introduction to the Study of Paul*, 5.

<sup>1116</sup> Cf. Heininger, *Die Rezeption des Paulus im 1. Jahrhundert*, in: *Paulus. Leben - Umwelt - Werk - Briefe*, 349.

<sup>1117</sup> Cf. Thyen, *Als Mann und Frau geschaffen*, 139.

<sup>1118</sup> Cf. Barclay, *Colossians and Philemon*, 12-13.

<sup>1119</sup> *Ibid*, 50-51.

<sup>1120</sup> Cf. Heininger, *Die Rezeption des Paulus im 1. Jahrhundert*, in: *Paulus. Leben - Umwelt - Werk - Briefe*, 350.

<sup>1121</sup> Cf. Chirichigno, *Debt-Slavery in Israel and the Ancient Near East*, 150.

<sup>1122</sup> Cf. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 189.

Onesimus will not rebel again as he did before? Is it possible to speak of equality in a world divided between slaves, freed slaves and freeborn, rich and poor, employers and employees?

There are “neither Jews nor Greeks” (Gal 3:28; 1 Cor 12:13; cf. Col 3:11). Jews and Gentiles are to see themselves as children of God (cf. Gal 3:26) and heirs of the Abrahamic promise (v 29). They are to realize that being circumcised or uncircumcised does not count for anything (Gal 5:6; 6:15; 1 Cor 7:19; cf. Col 3:11). But what happens to the superiority-inferiority complexes between these ethnic groups? What becomes of the role of the written and oral *Torah* in the life of Jewish Christians? Is it as simple as Paul confirms: “In Christ Jesus you all are one” (Gal 3:28d)? Are there really no longer ethnic, social and religious discriminations? Is it really possible to speak of unity in diversity (1 Cor 12:13) in a world full of ethnic, socio-religious and cultural intolerance?<sup>1123</sup>

Gal 3:28c elevates females to the same level with males when it states that there is “neither male and female” (cf. Gen 1:27; 2:21-22). In the ancient world women were seen but not heard. The first letter to the Corinthians maintains, *κεφαλή δὲ γυναικὸς ὁ ἀνὴρ*, (“man is the head of the woman,” 1 Cor 11:3), whereas in 1 Cor 11:5 women are to pray and prophesize in the churches (cf., however, later interpretations like 1 Cor 14:34; 1 Tim 2:11-15). Which of these texts corresponds to the authorial meaning? The ethno-cultural and socio-religious differences between male and female, both in the churches and in secular societies, have continued to widen. What has become of the socio-religious and ethno-cultural equality as pronounced in Gal 3:28?

Paul did not assign liturgical functions to women. Is this also in keeping with the culture of the time? But Junia is regarded as “famous among the apostles” (Rom 16:7) and Phoebe is a “deacon of the church in Cenchrea” (Rom 16:1). Since there is “neither male and female”, does this give women equal opportunity even in the hierarchy of the church? What of Euodia and Syntyche, the women who laboured for the gospel together with Paul (Phil 4:2-3)? Does this give women the power to preach the gospel in all the churches? These questions remain open and they show the difficulties inherent in the texts and in their application.

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<sup>1123</sup> Cf. Lieu, *Neither Jew Nor Greek*, 2.

## 4.8 Summary of the Section

Paul summarizes in Gal 6:15 what he wrote in 3:26-29 and 5:6. He wants the Galatians to know that what eventually counts is “faith working through love” (5:6b) and that the love of one’s neighbour supersedes circumcision and uncircumcision because anyone who is “in Christ” is “a new creation” (6:15b; 2 Cor 5:17). “Being in Christ” (Gal 3:28), loving your neighbour (5:6b) and keeping God’s commandments (Rom 7:12; 10:8-10; cf. Lev 19:18; 1 Cor 7:19) are more important than ritual circumcision.

Paul reiterates what he said in Galatians 3:26-29; 5:6; 6:15 in 1 Cor 12:13. “We all” are baptized into one Spirit. What is important is not whether you are a Jew or a Gentile, circumcised or uncircumcised, but that you are baptized into one Spirit. With the inclusive phrase “we all” Paul seeks to unite all those who are baptized into the realm of “a new creation in Christ” (2 Cor 5:17). The one Spirit is the source of the unity as “we all” were “made to drink from the same Spirit” (1 Cor 12:13).

Paul ridicules the institution of slavery by calling Onesimus his (“begotten”) adopted child (Phlm 10) and “a beloved brother ... in the Lord” (v 16). The slave-master relationship characterized by bullying and separation is changed into a consanguineous father-son relationship, whereby Paul, Philemon and Onesimus now see one another as members of the same family of God (cf. Gal 3:26). A son or a brother has rights and privileges, while a slave has none. Onesimus is a son and a brother who now inherits the Abrahamic blessing (cf. Gen 12:2-3; 18:18; Gal 3:29) and the right to live with his master, Philemon, as a brother in the Lord (Phlm 16).

The author of the letter to the Colossians summarizes and interprets Paul’s letter to the Galatians for his community in Colossae. He prefers the reversed order of “Greek and Jew,” repeats it with “circumcised and uncircumcised” and gives the position of preference to the Greeks (Col 3:11). He introduces two other ethnic groups: barbarians and Scythians and makes a universal claim that is coherent with his “cosmic Christology.” The ideal he states in Col 3:10-11, however, is sometimes described as a utopic and a political maneuver because he leaves the structures of hierarchy untouched (Col 3:18-25).<sup>1124</sup>

In spite of its close relationship to proto-Pauline texts, Col 3:9-11 is different from Gal 3:26-29; 6:15; Phlm 15-16 and 1 Cor 12:13. This can be seen from the initial warning: “Do

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<sup>1124</sup> Cf. Frank, *Der Kolosserbrief*, 272.



not lie to one another" (v 9a), because lack of trust will destroy the community's unity, and also from its conclusive statement: "Christ is all and in all" (v 11e). Gal 3:26-29 deals on "you are sons and daughters" (v 26a), because "you have put on Christ" (v 27b), therefore "you all are one" (v 28d), and 6:15 rejects the principles of "circumcision and uncircumcision" (v 15a) but upholds "a new creation" (v 15b; cf. 2 Cor 5:17). Phlm 15-16 elevates the slave to a consanguineous level of "a beloved brother ... in the Lord" (vv 16c, g) and Corinthians received the same Spirit (1 Cor 12:13).

Even though scholars agree that Paul is the author of 1 Corinthians, Galatians and Philemon and disagree on who wrote Colossians, the formula in Gal 3:26-29; 5:6; 6:15; 1 Cor 12:13; Phlm 15-16 and Col 3:9-11 is saying the same thing in different ways: "You all received the same Spirit" (1 Cor 12:13), "you all are one in Christ" (Gal 3:28), in Christ there is no longer a master-slave-relationship (Phlm 16), because "you have put on a renewed self" and "Christ is all and in all" (Col 3:11). "You all are one in Christ" is the basic idea and argument expressed differently in all the analyzed texts. The difference is that the author of the deutero-Pauline letter in Col 3:9-11 tries to interpret Paul's teaching to the Galatians, with respect to new questions and problems posed by the situation of his Christian community.

## Chapter Five: The Theology of Oneness of Christians

### 5.1 Oneness

The theme of oneness (ἐνότης) is rooted in the numeral ἓξ – μία – ἓν (“one”) as used by Paul, for instance in Gal 3:28.<sup>1125</sup> Paul uses “one” in various constructions and within different contexts: Equal in respect to office and standing (1 Cor 3:8); “one in Christ” (Gal 3:28d); “one body” and “one flesh” (1 Cor 6:16); “in one Spirit ... in one body” (12:13); “one body in Christ, but individually members of one another” (Rom 12:5).<sup>1126</sup> Although Christians are many (πολλοί), they are children of one God (Gal 3:20; Rom 3:30; 1 Cor 8:6), and they form one body in Christ (cf. 1 Cor 12:12, 27) and in his church (cf. Col 1:18). Paul delineates the different groups of people who are “one in Christ” (Gal 3:26-29; 6:15; 1 Cor 12:13; Phlm 15-16; cf. Gal 5:6; Col 3:11). The essence of their oneness is their faith in Christ Jesus (Gal 3:26). Christians are “one in Christ,” regardless of religious affiliation, ethnic heritage, legal and social status, gender identity and sexual orientation.<sup>1127</sup> Oneness is also of theological importance because it emphasizes the unity of the church, demonstrates “*das Bewusstsein der Einheit der Kirche*”<sup>1128</sup> and illustrates the unity of the trinity (Matt 28:19).

The theme of oneness has numerous definitions. It generally means “the equality, state or fact of being one (as in thought, spirit or purpose).”<sup>1129</sup> Catherine Soanes and Sara Hawker see oneness as “the state of being unified, whole or in harmony,”<sup>1130</sup> and Miroslav Kocûr explains it as “the designation of the quality or condition of being the same in substance, composition, nature, properties, or in particular qualities under consideration, absolute or essential sameness, oneness.”<sup>1131</sup> Oneness, therefore, is a harmonious relationship between those whose ethno-cultural, socio-religious, legal status, sex and gender are different from each another, but their being sons and daughters of God and having the same “faith in Christ Jesus” (Gal 3:26), “being clothed with Christ” (3:27), receiving the same Spirit (1 Cor 12:13) and co-heirs to the Abrahamic promise (Gal 3:29) render all their differences irrelevant (3:28).

But the oneness of all “in Christ Jesus” does not mean the annihilation of ethno-cultural, socio-religious, economic, sex and gender differences in the secular society, rather,

<sup>1125</sup> Cf. Moulton, ἓξ, in: The Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised, 119.

<sup>1126</sup> Cf. also Matt 19:5-6; Jn 10:30; 17:21; Eph 2:14-16; 4:4-6; 5:31.

<sup>1127</sup> Cf. Hove, Equality in Christ?, 69.

<sup>1128</sup> Ernst, Eins/Einheit, in: Herders Neues Bibellexikon, 165.

<sup>1129</sup> Oneness, in: Webster’s New Encyclopaedic Dictionary, 701.

<sup>1130</sup> Soanes and Hawker, Oneness, in: New Compact Oxford English Dictionary, 707.

<sup>1131</sup> Kocûr, National and Religious Identity, 39.

it means the respect of these differences, because these factors are part of the human existence. What is taken away among the members of the Christian community is their dominant role in their relationship with one another.<sup>1132</sup> Mark J. Edwards avers that “differences of race or condition or sex are indeed taken away by the unity of faith,” but these differences remain “embedded in our moral interactions.”<sup>1133</sup> Christians, therefore, see their differences as diversified gifts from God (1 Cor 12:4-11; Rom 12:5-8), who unites them “in Christ” (1 Cor 12:12-13).

### 5.1.1 God is One

Paul affirms that there is only one God (Gal 3:20; Rom 3:30; 1 Cor 8:6). This affirmation “expresses more than God’s jealousy of other gods and a rebuttal of the pagans’ polytheism,”<sup>1134</sup> rather, it incorporates “henotheism, the belief in one God without asserting that he is the only God,”<sup>1135</sup> and the worship of one God, without denying the existence of other gods (monolatry). Erich Zenger affirms. *“Das Bekenntnis wird im Judentum (vgl. Maimonides + 1204) wie im Christentum (vgl. Mk 12,28-34) monotheistisch nach Art von [Deut] 4,35.39 verstanden, obwohl es im Kontext des ersten Gebotes monolatrisch gemeint ist.”*<sup>1136</sup> God is one, he is the “I am who I am” (Ex 3:14). According to Becking and others, the author of the Hebrew text uses a rare, alternative form of the verb *hjh* – “to live” or “to be” (Ex 3:14) and explains it as “a first millennium Hebrew verbal form ‘I am’ (Ex 3:12, 14; Deut 31:23; Ho 1:9) to establish the meaning of the more ancient form *YHWH*.”<sup>1137</sup> Yahweh is the national God of Israel, but he is not the only deity to be worshiped. Johannes C. De Moor attests that “the idea of exclusive worship of Yahweh is a development and not the status quo.”<sup>1138</sup> But the affirmation of the Shema “our God is one and the only Yahweh” (Deut 6:4) is certainly a rejection of who is not “our God” (cf. Deut 6:14). And the “Shema” is “a variation of the Jewish monotheistic confession.”<sup>1139</sup> It is also an imperative, a command “to listen” or “to hear.” Israel strongly believes in this “Shema” and any other god or goddess is not only a threat to Yahweh’s absolute oneness, he or she is definitely not “our God” (cf. Deut 6:14-15).

<sup>1132</sup> Cf. Lieu, “Neither Jews Nor Greeks”, 2.

<sup>1133</sup> Edwards, *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians*, 51.

<sup>1134</sup> Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, 464.

<sup>1135</sup> Metzger, *Lexical Aids for Students of New Testament Greek*, 9.

<sup>1136</sup> Zenger, *Stuttgarter Altes Testament*, 317.

<sup>1137</sup> Becking, et alii, *Only One God?*, 86.

<sup>1138</sup> Moor, *The Rise of Yahwism. The Roots of Israelite Monotheism*, 3.

<sup>1139</sup> Kuula, *The Law, the Covenant and God’s Plan*, 110.

As “a trained rabbinic exegete,”<sup>1140</sup> Paul simply affirms that God is one (Gal 3:20). Nicholas T. Wright calls Gal 3:20 the “Christianized Shema.”<sup>1141</sup> It is a theological belief that “God is one” (Rom 3:30; 1 Cor 8:6) and beside him there is no other equal god or goddess (4:8). Jörg Pesch affirms that the belief implies: “*Gott ist souverän, verlässlich und bleibt sich selbst und seiner Schöpfung treu ... Gottes Einheit bedeutet auch, daß es keinen Gott neben Gott gibt ...*”<sup>1142</sup> Therefore, this “one God” is the creator and there is no alternative god or goddess to him. He stands over and above all the created order (cf. Gen 1:1-2:3; Ps 102:25; Isa 41:4; Jn 1:1-3).

Paul distinguishes the Christian henotheism from other known devotions in the Greco-Roman world (cf. “elemental spirits of the universe,” Gal 4:3; “so-called gods in heaven or on earth,” 1 Cor 8:5; “dumb idols,” 12:2) as he rejects the plurality of gods, which was “almost universally accepted in varying ways among his pagan contemporaries as legitimate manifestations of ‘the divine’ or ‘the god and goddess’; insisting that for Christians there is only one God.”<sup>1143</sup> Furthermore, the devotion of the early Christians has its own distinctive character, which is a binitarian reverence that includes both God as the only true God and his exalted Son, Jesus Christ as the messiah. Hence, Paul writes: “For us there is one God, the Father from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist” (1 Cor 8:6; cf. Phil 2:6-11).<sup>1144</sup> The prominent Christological title that Paul attributes to Jesus Christ, “Lord” (Gal 1:3; 1 Cor 12:3; Rom 10:9; 1 Thess 1:1), reflects his belief that Jesus Christ is fully divine.<sup>1145</sup>

Paul consistently thinks of the theme of “one God” in reference not to the distinctiveness of Israel (cf. Deut 7:6) but to the universality of salvation (Gal 3:13-14). If God alone is worthy of praise and worship, this one God cannot be the God of a single nation, rather, he must be the God of all nations (cf. Ps 22:27; 86:9; 117:1). This conviction informs Paul’s thought in Gal 3:20, and in his explanation of the inclusive will of God, Paul emphasizes the unity of God and the fact that those who are his children (3:26) are “one in Christ” (3:28c-d). According to Timothy George, “when Paul quoted Old Testament texts and examples, drawing on the best traditions of rabbinic exegesis in which he was trained, he fully expected that such proclamation, whether verbal or written, would have a spiritual transforming effect

<sup>1140</sup> Murphy-O’Connor, Paul. A Critical Life, 40.

<sup>1141</sup> Wright, The Climax of the Covenant, 134.

<sup>1142</sup> Pesch, Einheit/Einzigkeit/Einfachheit Gottes, in: Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart, 1167.

<sup>1143</sup> Hurtado, One God, One Lord, 1.

<sup>1144</sup> Cf. Kremer, “Sohn Gottes”, in: Bibel und Liturgie, 8.

<sup>1145</sup> Cf. George, Galatians, 208.

on his hearers and readers.”<sup>1146</sup> God’s people, therefore, are now drawn from the whole world and his sovereignty and supremacy over deities are made known in the social constituency of nations.<sup>1147</sup> God is no longer the private and unique God of only one nation, rather, he is also the God of Gentiles (cf. Rom 3:29). F. F. Bruce affirms that “since the God of Jews and Gentiles is one, it is fitting that he should provide one way of salvation for both — the way of faith.”<sup>1148</sup> This one God can now be worshipped among the nations and “in an alien soil” as opposed to the rabbinic question: How can we worship Yahweh in an alien soil? (cf. Ps 137:4). In the community of God’s people “the ethnic specific features slip into the background.”<sup>1149</sup> The substance of Paul’s gospel of God’s oneness is such that it can be presented on universalistic terms. It is a gospel of one God who provided a means of salvation for all through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Gal 3:13-14).<sup>1150</sup>

### 5.1.2 Children of One God

All the Christians are children of one God (Gal 3:26). The imagery of the oneness of God’s children derives from the unity of those who are descendants from the same father, a *topos* which is carried further in their being heirs to the Abrahamic promise (3:29).<sup>1151</sup> If there is only one God (Gal 3:20; Rom 3:30; 1 Cor 8:6), those who belong to him should be one in him because they are his adopted children and God desires the unity of his children.<sup>1152</sup> Were there to be two or more “people of one God,” the whole theological scheme would lapse into some sort of paganism, with each ethnic group possessing its own god. Henotheism, therefore, demands as its corollary a united people of God, who share in the “theological identity of *Imago Dei*” (cf. Gen 1:27),<sup>1153</sup> which elevates them above all ethnic origin, sex and gender, social categorization and culture-bound restriction of roles. This is a result of their initiation “into Christ” (Gal 3:27), which brings them into the realm where God is the Father and all are brothers and sisters in Christ (3:26, 28). And because they are his adopted sons and daughters, God has sent the Spirit of his son into their hearts which cries out “Abba, Father” (4:4-6). In

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<sup>1146</sup> Ibid, 205

<sup>1147</sup> Cf. Longenecker, *The Triumph of Abraham’s God*, 56-57.

<sup>1148</sup> Bruce, *Epistle to the Galatians*, 179.

<sup>1149</sup> Jervis and Longenecker, *Gospel in Paul: Studies on Corinthians, Galatians and Romans*, 84.

<sup>1150</sup> Cf. Ibid, 175.

<sup>1151</sup> Cf. Hietanen, *Paul’s Argumentation in Galatians*, 134-135.

<sup>1152</sup> Cf. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant*, 172.

<sup>1153</sup> Johnson, *She Who Is*, 70.

their daily interactions, therefore, Christians are to bear in mind that they are sons and daughters of one God.

Paul's ethical teaching, e.g., in Gal 3:28; 5:6; 6:15; 1 Cor 7:19; 2 Cor 5:17; (cf. Gal 5:14; Rom 13:8-10) is widely known among the early Christians (cf. Lev 19:18 as alluded in James 2:8-9; 1 Jn 4:21). It can be traced back to the ethical teaching of Jesus who equally emphasizes the love of God and the love of one's neighbour (cf. Mk 12:29-31; Matt 22:36-40). Paul accentuates the logical connection between theory and practice. He does not inculcate Christian doctrine simply in order that his readers might have a firm intellectual grasp of it, but insists that it must find expression in the community's daily life.<sup>1154</sup> Before God and "in Christ Jesus" all the Christians stand on equal footing like a common podium.<sup>1155</sup> Their new identity "in Christ" enables them to receive God's promised blessing to the nations (Gen 12:3; 18:18; 22:18). The Christians' confession of one God and one Lord (cf. Eph 4:5) marks them out sociologically as well as theologically.<sup>1156</sup> When one has "put on Christ" (3:27) and is aglow with "the one Spirit" (1 Cor 12:13), other human classifications are not important. As soon as the Christ-like nature takes over the individual's identity, what remains is the fiery aura of Christ, and all diversities of ethnic origin, social conditions and bodily forms are taken away by this aura of Christ.<sup>1157</sup> When Paul says that "you all are God's sons" (Gal 3:26) he means you have one form and character, that of Christ. You all are clothed in the form not of an angel or an archangel but of the Lord himself (3:27).<sup>1158</sup>

## 5.2 The Theology of Oneness of Christians

Faith comes through the hearing of the message of the gospel (3:2; Rom 10:17). Those who accept this faith, accept also baptism in the name of Christ (3:27) and through baptism they receive the Spirit (1 Cor 12:13). God gives these spiritual gifts unmeritoriously to those who believe in him.

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<sup>1154</sup> Cf. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon and to the Ephesians*, 138.

<sup>1155</sup> Kahl, Brigitte: *Galatians Re-Imagined*, 282.

<sup>1156</sup> Cf. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant*, 132.

<sup>1157</sup> Cf. Edwards, *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians*, 51.

<sup>1158</sup> *Ibid*, 51.

### 5.2.1 Oneness of All in Faith

“Faith is the assurance of the things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen” (Heb 11:1). It is “a divine gift of God” (cf. Eph 2:8) and one of the fruits of the Spirit (Gal 5:22), which comes through the hearing of the message of faith (Rom 10:17). William Barclay defines it as “that loyalty which is the foundation stone of life and of religion ... that in which a man (or woman) believes and by which he (or she) is prepared to stand.”<sup>1159</sup> According to Kari Kuula, faith is a comprehensive term that refers “to one’s acceptance of the Christian message and living according to moral and social requirements associated with it.”<sup>1160</sup> The Christian faith, therefore, is a way of life, which reflects the teachings of Jesus Christ, through which Christians relate joyfully not only with those of the same ethnic origin, social status, sex and gender, religious or cultural affiliation, but also with those who have different ethno-cultural backgrounds, socio-economic status and religious worldviews, without discriminations (cf. Lv 19:17-18; Lk 10:26-28; Jn 15:17). This is because the coming of faith (Gal 3:23-25) “introduces a new equality of communication between God and humanity,”<sup>1161</sup> and all those who share the same faith have vested themselves with what Wilhelm Egger calls the evangelical identity mark: “*Dadurch will Paulus die Galater zum Bewußtsein ihrer evangeliumsgemäßen Identität führen.*”<sup>1162</sup>

The justification of Christians is based on “faith in Christ Jesus” (3:26; cf. Hab 2:4). The righteous (*δίκαιοι*) are those who believe in Christ. They will be saved on ground of their faith “in the name of the Lord” (cf. Rom 10:13; 1 Cor 1:2; Acts 2:21), because no one is reckoned within the covenant community on the basis of the works of the law (Gal 2:16).<sup>1163</sup> Paul is saying that membership into the Christian community is not demarcated by national boundaries but based on faith which is the fulfillment of the promise God made to Abraham (cf. Gen 12:3; Gal 3:6; Rom 4:3). What is common to Paul (Gal 1:1), to the Judaizers and to the Galatians is their justification “through faith in Christ Jesus” (3:26b). “Faith in Christ,” therefore, is the most fundamental thing and anything else is secondary.<sup>1164</sup> Paul wants the Galatians to be conscious of the fact that those who are “in Christ” have undergone a metamorphosis which Wilhelm Egger describes as “*Umwandlung des Menschen in eine neue*

<sup>1159</sup> Barclay, *Many Witnesses, One Lord*, 28.

<sup>1160</sup> Kuula, *The Law, The Covenant and God’s Plan*, 65.

<sup>1161</sup> Kocûr, *National and Religious Identity*, 12.

<sup>1162</sup> Egger, *Galaterbrief. Philipperbrief. Philemonbrief*, 28.

<sup>1163</sup> Cf. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant*, 148.

<sup>1164</sup> Cf. Murphy-O’Connor, *Paul. A Critical Life*, 206

*Existenz*.”<sup>1165</sup> Those who believe in Christ evaluate their relationship with one another on ground of this faith. Paul speaks simply of “those of faith” (3:9), “those who believe” (3:22) as the defining character of those who belong to the distinctively new socio-economic and ethno-religious movement established by Christ.<sup>1166</sup>

The Galatians are to know that having become Christians from a pagan background, they do not need to become Jews in order to belong to the people of faith (Gal 2:14-16). The conclusion is that the Galatians are not second-class citizens among the people of God (cf. Eph 2:19). Their “faith in Christ” supersedes all ethnic identity marks (Gal 5:6; 6:15; 2 Cor 5:17) acquired through the works of the law (Gal 3:2-3).<sup>1167</sup> If ethnic origin and national loyalty are allowed to remain as the key factors in determining the people of faith, then, there will not only be Jews and Gentiles, but Athenians and Romans, Galatians and Ephesians, Africans, Scythians, Asians, *ad infinitum*, and all these groups would be competing to uphold their ethnicity and national identity in God. But “faith in Christ” Jesus has become the unifying factor for all those who believe in him. Paul understands Christ, therefore, as the Messiah who is “carrying the significance of the one ‘in whom’ the people of God is summed up precisely as the people of God.” Therefore, Nicholas T. Wright avers that “many of Paul’s frequent incorporative expressions cluster together in vv 26-29 in just that passage when the worldwide church is affirmed to be one through faith in Christ Jesus.”<sup>1168</sup>

### 5.2.2 Oneness of all in Baptism

The process of religious purification took a new turn through baptism. Unlike ritual purification (Lev 14:6-7), baptism washes away sins (cf. Acts 2:37-38), initiates the believer “into Christ” (Gal 3:27; Rom 6:3; Col 2:12), and serves as the validating rite of entry into the Christian community. Although baptismal liturgy obviously varies from one community to another (cf. the different terminology of “putting on Christ,” Gal 3:27b; “baptized into Christ,” Rom 6:3; “baptized into one body,” 1 Cor 12:13; “buried with him,” Col 2:12; “putting on a new man,” Col 3:10), it remains the only means of initiation in the Christian community.<sup>1169</sup> F. Bruce explains. “When Paul appeals to the logic of baptism, he means that the power of the

<sup>1165</sup> Egger, Galaterbrief. Philipperbrief. Philemonbrief, 29.

<sup>1166</sup> Cf. Dunn, The Theology of Paul’s Letter to the Galatians, 53-55.

<sup>1167</sup> Cf. Wright, The Climax of the Covenant, 163.

<sup>1168</sup> Ibid, 165.

<sup>1169</sup> Cf. Hogan, “No Longer Male and Female”, 194.



Spirit, which is the source and stay of the new life, enables the believer to shake off the old bondage, however, its form might have varied from one form to another.”<sup>1170</sup> All those who are baptized are metaphorically “clothed with Christ” (Gal 3:27) and “were made to drink from one Spirit” (1 Cor 12:13). The baptisand is generally regarded as rising from the water of baptism to a new way of life, having been “buried with Christ” (*συνετάφημεν αὐτῷ*, Rom 6:4). The Christian baptism is not only sex-neutral, it is also embrative (cf. “we all” in 1 Cor 12:13).<sup>1171</sup> One confirms and practises the “faith in Christ Jesus” by accepting baptism. Faith in Christ Jesus and baptism in the name of Christ Jesus are indeed not two distinct experiences but equal parts of the whole process of initiation (cf. Col 2:12). The acceptance of baptism is the expression of one’s faith in Christ Jesus, and without one’s faith in Christ, “the application of water, even accompanied by the appropriate words, would not have been baptism.”<sup>1172</sup> Paul views baptism as a transformative event in the lives of all believers. The Christ-like identity which they now have comes from the acts of baptism (Gal 3:27b).<sup>1173</sup> The Christians’ identity in Christ is universal in nature and frees all from the exclusive characters of the rituals of the law (5:1).<sup>1174</sup>

Through the rite of baptism all the community members manifest their newly constructed worldview, and then affirm for themselves the new significance and coherence of “being one in Christ” (3:28). Those who were formally categorized as the “secondary other” and marginalized by the significant “other” (cf. Eph 2:11-18) are now “one in Christ” (Gal 3:28) through baptism (3:27).<sup>1175</sup> Baptismal initiation, therefore, becomes “a positive identity-marking event for the marginalized community members.”<sup>1176</sup> After the rite of baptism, what was formally seen as anomalous human relationship is turned into normality because baptism dissolves all conventionalities. The dissolution motif means equal opportunity for all the baptized: Gentiles now have become authentic members of the Christian community without becoming Jews and Jews are authentic members of the community as well, even though they are circumcised (cf. Rom 2:25-29; 1 Cor 7:17-19; Gal 5:6; 6:15), and all these are effected through the rite of baptism.

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<sup>1170</sup> Bruce, Paul, Apostle of the Heart Set Free, 282.

<sup>1171</sup> Cf. Wiley, Paul and the Gentile Women, 63.

<sup>1172</sup> Bruce, The Epistle of Paul to the Romans, 136.

<sup>1173</sup> Murphy-O’Connor, Paul A Critical Life, 205.

<sup>1174</sup> Cf. Kocûr, National and Religious Identity, 79.

<sup>1175</sup> Cf. Asano, Community-Identity Construction in Galatians, 180.

<sup>1176</sup> Ibid, 198.

### 5.2.3 Oneness of All in Spirit

The starting point for all Christians is the hearing of the message of faith (Gal 3:2), the reception and the effect of the Spirit (3:5; cf. Rom 10:17; 1 Cor 12:13). Paul appeals to the common beginnings and similar experiences of all Christians.<sup>1177</sup> It is significant to know that God supplies (Gal 3:5: *ἐπιχορηγῶν*, present participle of *ἐπιχορηγέω*, “to supply” or “to furnish”) his Spirit to the Gentiles without the works of the law. God is holy and his Spirit is also holy, and the Jews are called “a holy nation, a chosen race, a people set apart” (Deut 7:6; 14:2), the Gentiles, however, are usually called “Gentile sinners” (Gal 2:15) or “Gentile idolaters.”<sup>1178</sup> But now those who were said to be “Gentile sinners,” who knew nothing about the legalism of the law have received God’s Spirit “through faith in Christ Jesus” (3:26). That God gives his Spirit to the Gentiles independent of the works of the law, shows that the appointed time has come (4:4-6), “God has visited his people” (Lk 7:16), and demonstrates also that God has no favourites (Gal 2:6; Rom 2:11; Acts 10:34). Both Jews and Gentiles now share the same experience of receiving God’s Spirit. Paul, therefore, places “the Gentile sinners” and “the righteous Jews” on the same platform and declares that this is possible through the effect of God’s Spirit. John M. G. Barclay affirms that “the Galatians’ experience contradicted normal Jewish expectations: They did not receive the Spirit *ἐξ ἔργων νόμου* (3:2, 5),”<sup>1179</sup> which shows that the reception of the Spirit does not depend on the rituals of the law.

In order to become true children of God and inheritors of the Abrahamic promise (3:26, 29), the Galatians needed faith, and that they have now received the Spirit shows that God has accepted their faith in Christ Jesus. God grants his favour (*χάρις*) to those whom he loves (cf. Ps 127:2) and not to those who observe the works of the law (Gal 3:2, 5; cf. Rom 3:31; 4:4-5). The Galatians are, therefore, to continue “in Spirit” because it is the Spirit of the risen Christ. “The Spirit, the determining factor of the Galatians’ Christian identity, is appealed to as their only appropriate standard of behaviour”<sup>1180</sup> (cf. 1 Cor 12:13).

<sup>1177</sup> Cf. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul’s Letter to the Galatians*, 61.

<sup>1178</sup> Kocûr, *National and Religious Identity*, 56-57.

<sup>1179</sup> Barclay, *Obeying the Truth*, 85.

<sup>1180</sup> *Ibid*, 85.

### 5.3 The Transformation Formula of Oneness

In Gal 3:28, Paul forms a ring around human categorizations and stratifications. He simply negates these known categories with the affirmation of “being one in Christ Jesus.”

#### 5.3.1 Jew and Greek are One in Christ

Jews make distinctions between themselves and the Gentiles who stand outside the covenant community of God’s people (cf. Gen 17:14; Gal 2:11-15; Eph 2:11-16). To enter this community of God’s chosen people (Deut 7:6), one has to accept the laid down rules, the rituals of the law. But it is difficult to enter a group whose membership is defined by ethnic identity. Unfortunately, “being a Jew” or “being a Gentile” is an ethnic qualification. An important part of the problem is: If the unifying factor among the people of Israel is their common descent from Jacob, as the name which they call themselves implies (cf. Gen 32:28), how could they accept converts? How could they treat these converts? Could converts ever be integrated fully into the Israelite community? On the other hand, if Yahweh’s message is directed to all humanity, how could the Israelites fail to admit all those who sought for a comfort within Yahweh’s domain? Insofar as the Jews later understood themselves as sharing a common ancestry, how could those with different ancestries fit into the Israelite community?<sup>1181</sup> And if the people of Israel understood themselves as having a common religion, how could a converted Gentile fit into the religious community dominated by Jews?

To accomplish the welcoming of Gentiles into the Jewish religious community, persons were categorized as proselytes, God-fearers and sympathizers.<sup>1182</sup> Proselytes (which is derived from the noun *προσήλυτος*) are those who have accepted circumcision and the observation of the rituals of the law, which are the climax of the Gentile’s integration into the Jewish religious community. The God-fearers (*σεβόμενοι τον θεόν*) on the other hand are those who are attracted to Judaism, have taken up some elementary obligations upon themselves, but are not fully integrated into the Jewish religious community through circumcision.<sup>1183</sup> In other words, “*σεβόμενοι τον θεόν* are those who revere God but fall short of the final commitment of circumcision.”<sup>1184</sup> Therefore, God-fearers demonstrate their varying levels of attachment

<sup>1181</sup> Cf. Porton, *The Stranger Within your Gates*, 7-8.

<sup>1182</sup> Cf. Wiley, *Paul and the Gentile Women*, 61.

<sup>1183</sup> Cf. *Ibid*, 61.

<sup>1184</sup> Asano, *Community-Identity Construction in Galatians*, 104-105.

to Judaism by mere admiration to the Jewish culture, or by selective practices of some customs and beliefs, which are different from their original lifestyle. Some people, proselytes, chose to integrate fully into the Jewish religious community through the rite of circumcision, while others remained at the level of God-fearers. There were also sympathizers who were mere benefactors.<sup>1185</sup> This status does not presuppose a religious way of life but is more of “a political and social act.”<sup>1186</sup> There is no doubt that there existed a secular relationship between Jews and non-Jews. It is hard to know the exact relationship that these non-Jews had with the synagogue, but it is most likely that “there existed a group of non-Jews who were honoured within the Jewish community for some reasons.”<sup>1187</sup>

But how did Jews understand the boundary between them and the proselytes on the one hand and the boundary between proselytes and God-fearers on the other side?<sup>1188</sup> The Noachide Code (the prohibition of blasphemy, murder, idolatry, theft, eating of flesh prepared by non-Jewish butchers and legal recourse) is used either to condemn a Gentile or to bring him or her to the level of God-fearers. The underlying point is that Jews and Gentiles were still separated from one another and proselytes were only treated as a subclass of the Israelites. Although they are converted and have joined the people of Israel, these circumstances do not negate their Gentile origin.<sup>1189</sup>

Paul rejects the categorization of persons (Gal 5:6; 6:15; 1 Cor 7:19), as he maintains that God’s promised blessing to the nations (cf. Gen 12:3; 18:18; 22:18), which began in Abraham and his descendants (Gen 15:1-6), has found its final fulfillment in Christ (Gal 3:29), in whom there is neither Jew nor Gentile (3:28). The ethnic principles of ritual initiation and bathe have become irrelevant. Therefore, there is no room for a Jewish-Gentile dichotomy “in Christ Jesus” (3:28).<sup>1190</sup> Paul’s argument is a defense of the cordial relationship between Gentiles *qua* Gentiles with the Jews.

The issue of Jew-Gentile identity might have been specifically acute for Gentiles who were drawn to Pauline communities in Galatia. They left the “pagan gods” of the civic religion (Gal 4:3, 8) for the one God (3:20), and yet, they were lacking the ritual law of circumcision and so they were not welcomed among the Jews.<sup>1191</sup> To balance this situation for the good of

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<sup>1185</sup> Cf. Lieu, “Neither Jew Nor Greek”, 37.

<sup>1186</sup> Ibid, 38.

<sup>1187</sup> Horner, Listening to Trypho, 175.

<sup>1188</sup> Cf. Asano, Community-Identity Construction in Galatians, 99-113.

<sup>1189</sup> Cf. Ibid, 99-113.

<sup>1190</sup> Cf. Hove, Equality in Christ?, 106.

<sup>1191</sup> Cf. Wiley, Paul and the Gentile Women, 62.

the Gentiles, Paul speaks of God as Father (1:3), because the idea of God as Father is one which is deeply rooted in all the religious traditions of the Mediterranean world.<sup>1192</sup> It indicates “the equivalent of a blood-tie between God and those begotten by him, with all the overtones of family solidarity and obligation to kin thus involved.”<sup>1193</sup> In the house of God, Jews and Gentiles are “one in Christ Jesus” (Gal 3:28) and in welcoming a person into the house of God through the rite of baptism (3:27), ethnic rituals prescribed by the law of circumcision (cf. Gen 17:10-14) are irrelevant. Without passing through the laid down procedures of ritual laws or the rules and regulations of the scribal laws, the Gentiles are sons and daughters of God (3:26), as Paul rejects all the legal obligations that are simply obstacles on the way of faith for the Gentiles (5:6; 6:15; 1 Cor 7:19). As “a reformer” and “a social and political radical,”<sup>1194</sup> Paul pursues his reformatory activities in a very emphatic way. He brings the uncircumcised Gentiles into the Christian community (Gal 2:1, 3) and declares that “there is neither Jew nor Greek” (3:28; 1 Cor 12:13) because “Christ has set us free from the curse of the law” (Gal 3:13), therefore, let us now live as brothers in the Lord (cf. Phlm 16). He calls the Gentiles children of God (Gal 3:26) and heirs of the Abrahamic promise (3:29), thereby allowing them to share in the inheritance of Abraham (Gen 22:18) and the sonship of Christ (Gal 3:29).<sup>1195</sup>

Paul regards particular ethnic identity promotion as the case of “the old things that have passed away” (*τὰ ἀρχαῖα παρῆλθεν*, 2 Cor 5:17), when all those who were outside the Jewish religious community were excluded from God’s promised blessing to Abraham (cf. Gen 22:18). In Christ Jesus, however, the era of national religion has passed away and all those who are “one in Christ” are “a new creation” (Gal 6:15). The passing away of ethnic and national principles opens the way for all the nations, regardless of ethnic identity. Jews and Gentiles can equally come to Christ. The focus of the people of God is no longer on a tribal mark, because the Jesus event is universal (3:13-14) and embracing (cf. *ἡμεῖς πάντες* in 1 Cor 12:13a).<sup>1196</sup> The era of exclusive ethnological worship of God has gone (cf. “how can we sing the songs of the Lord in a foreign land,” Ps 137:4). Christ is the revelation of God apart from the rituals of the law (Gal 3:2). This means that in Christ Jesus there is neither Jew nor Greek

<sup>1192</sup> Cf. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul’s Letter to the Galatians*, 61.

<sup>1193</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>1194</sup> Horrell, *An Introduction to the Study of Paul*, 2.

<sup>1195</sup> Cf. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul’s Letter to the Galatians*, 92.

<sup>1196</sup> Cf. Hove, *Equality in Christ?*, 106.

categorization (Gal 3:28; 1 Cor 12:13; cf. Col 3:11) as all the demands of national barriers have been transcended in Christ (cf. Eph 2:14).

### 5.3.2 Slave and Freed are One in Christ

In the Greco-Roman Empire as a whole and within the provinces, the areas of politics, legal status, social and economic lives were governed by the distinctions between slaves, freed slaves and freed. It was an environment permeated with pagan practices, aristocratic institutions, and the common observances of the emperor's cult. Within these environments, slaves were considered socially dead.<sup>1197</sup> They were seen as outsiders because they were introduced into the society of the freeborn without a genealogy. Slavery obliterated a person's prior identity and enslavement thus had a homogenizing effect that "blotted out differences in origin, ethnicity, culture and religion."<sup>1198</sup> All the slaves experienced social excommunication and unless they were manumitted, they did not even occupy a place at the very bottom of the social hierarchy. The slave state was a pitiable one. They were bought and sold at trade fairs, as well as through individual agreements among slave-dealers. Roman jurists and Jewish rabbis were concerned about fraudulent slaves and stipulated that the buyer had to be informed of the possible defects and offences at the time of the sale. The physical examination of slaves was humiliating.<sup>1199</sup> Like animals they were hit by their masters without incurring indemnity (cf. Ex 21:20-21). Slaves were sexually exploited. The phenomenon that the slave-master would sleep with and have children with the slave girl is taken for granted. The slavery state, however, implied also a desexualization, and without power and authority the male slave was not considered a proper man.<sup>1200</sup> The freeborn and freed slaves were eager to distinguish themselves from slaves, who lacked the characteristic traits of adults.

Slave owners also saw slaves as potentially dangerous to their wealth and their family's life. The slave was a stranger who had, however, access to the most intimate and private realm of the master's family life and so could cause havocs. Slaves were believed to be lazy. They were seen as thieves eager to steal their master's property and so precautions were taken in dealing with them. Whenever a master was killed or had misfortune, the first suspects were

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<sup>1197</sup> Cf. Hezser, *Jewish Slavery in Antiquity*, 26.

<sup>1198</sup> *Ibid*, 34.

<sup>1199</sup> Cf. *Ibid*, 383.

<sup>1200</sup> Cf. *Ibid*, 10.

the slaves who were presumed to be mischievous. The punishments meted out on slaves were considered legitimate, even if the evidences against them were thin.<sup>1201</sup> It was only after manumission that a slave was considered a citizen as Catherine Hezser affirms. “The slave had no patria, but emancipation gave him (or her) not only a city but a home.”<sup>1202</sup>

These class differences and prejudices notwithstanding, cordial relationships occasionally existed between slaves and their masters. The Rabbinic stories employed the figure of the worthy slave who was a “disciple of sages” eager to study the Torah. The distinctions between slaves, freed slaves and freeborn were sometimes blurred. There existed blurred boundaries between slaves and animals on the one hand and slaves and free persons on the other, which caused situations that were “fraught with ambiguity.”<sup>1203</sup> Slaves worked side-by-side with freed and could rise to prominence after their manumission. “Although slaves were basically seen as property and compared with cattle, they were also treated as human beings capable of rational thinking and informed decisions.”<sup>1204</sup> However, attributing reason to slaves and seeing them as responsible subjects rather than irresponsible objects often simply served to protect the slaves’ owners against having to pay for the damages caused by them. The slave who deliberately destroyed the property of the master or that of the neighbour was bound by law to suffer the consequences.<sup>1205</sup>

Paul rejects the aforementioned prejudices and classisms (cf. Gal 3:28; Phlm 10, 16) because God created no one as a slave.<sup>1206</sup> According to Bernard O. Okwuegbu, “it is only before societal laws ... described as ‘the miserable laws of death’ and not according to those laws that are given by the gods that the categorization of people as slaves retains their validity.”<sup>1207</sup> To this effect, Paul introduces the principle of “comprehensive egalitarianism”<sup>1208</sup> and a consanguineous relationship between the slave and his master (Phlm 16) as a counter position to the principle and validity of slavery, a principle that is contradictory to the Deuteronomic Code (Deut 23:15-16) as Philip H. Towner opines that “Paul was returning him (Onesimus) to his owner – the very thing that Deut 23:15-16 forbids.”<sup>1209</sup> Furthermore, with

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<sup>1201</sup> Cf. *Ibid*, 384-386.

<sup>1202</sup> *Ibid*, 29.

<sup>1203</sup> *Ibid*, 22.

<sup>1204</sup> *Ibid*, 26.

<sup>1205</sup> Cf. *Ibid*, 67.

<sup>1206</sup> Cf. Asano, *Community-Identity Construction in Galatians*, 195.

<sup>1207</sup> Okwuegbu, *The Emergence of Christian Identity in Paul’s Letter to the Galatians*, 114.

<sup>1208</sup> Asano, *Community-Identity Construction in Galatians*, 198.

<sup>1209</sup> Towner, 1-2 Timothy and Titus, in: *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 918.

the elevation of the slavery state of Onesimus to consanguineous level (Phlm 16), Paul ridicules the institution of slavery.<sup>1210</sup> He therefore, shows that slave and freed are “one in Christ” in whom there is neither slave nor freed (3:28; 1 Cor 7:22-24; 12:13).

Paul repeatedly contrasts the differences between freedom and slavery. E.g., Abraham had two sons – one from Hagar, the slave woman and the other from Sarah, the freed woman (Gal 4:22-26). Paul stresses further the notion of freedom in his letter to the Romans (cf. also “the glorious liberty of the children of God,” Rom 8:21). Paul condemns those who came into the community to spy on his freedom (2:4), because “Christ has set us free; stand fast therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery” (5:1).

### 5.3.3 Male and Female are One in Christ

Women were regarded as powerless and the society demanded total submission from them. Lacking control over property and over personal freewill, they were considered as the lower class of the society (cf. Col 3:18-22; 1 Tim 2:11; 1 Pt 3:1). They had little decision-making power as they were there to fulfill the will and wish of their husbands. The main role of a woman was the bearing of children. Robin Scroggs emphasizes this culture of male’s world. “In sum, despite the important exceptions, public culture of these centuries was male oriented, and the apposite intellectual and, indeed, affective partner to a male was another male. Wives in general had a much lower educational level than did the men. They were not chosen as wives, by and large, for intellectual or romantic reasons: they were not, therefore, sought out as companions by their husbands. That males would seek out other males for companionships of various sorts, if there were no taboos in the matter, is not surprising.”<sup>1211</sup> It was generally accepted that females were inferior to males and by the time of their adulthood even educated women were married, keeping close to women’s quarters and having as their primary concern the affairs of the house. Robin Scroggs underscores this. “Certainly public life was the property of the male. Only males could vote or hold public office ... a professional male could probably spend his entire day, once he left house until he returned, without ever having to speak to a woman.”<sup>1212</sup> This does not mean that there were no women of power and influence. There were powerful women such as Hellenistic queens,

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<sup>1210</sup> Cf. Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 260.

<sup>1211</sup> Scroggs, *The New Testament and Homosexuality*, 23-24.

<sup>1212</sup> *Ibid*, 23.



wives and mothers of the Roman emperors, business women, etc.<sup>1213</sup> These women could make and unmake imperial succession, influence cases and rulings (cf. Matt 27:19), but they exercised these power through the men, while, as far as the public arena was concerned, they remained “as hidden as if they had no power at all” and “when one looked around at the voters, the court cases, the meetings of the city officials, the larger political organizations, the local ‘city councils,’ or the senate of Rome, one would see nothing to suggest that the ‘men’s club’ was not in complete control.”<sup>1214</sup>

The Jewish prayer of thanksgiving is an epitome of the exclusion of women from religious duties. The excerpt from this reads: “Blessed are you Lord, God of our fathers, God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob for not creating me a woman.”<sup>1215</sup> This prayer of thanksgiving was recited as if women were not part of the creation history and members of the believing community. The reason for this is that “exclusivism was part and parcel of Judaism.”<sup>1216</sup> The ritual law was sex-specific, formulated from the male perspective, which marks the rights, prerogatives and obligations of men. The sign of the covenant was male circumcision (cf. Gen 17:10-14) and only the circumcised males were regarded as legible for leadership among the members of the covenant community (cf. 1 Cor 14:34). The males were also heads of families (cf. Gen 3:16; Eph 5:23) and women were depicted as part of the properties of their husbands (cf. Ex 20:17). According to Tatha Wiley, “Israelite-born women ranked not only below the Israelite males but also below male converts who acquired the status of Israelite males by conversion.”<sup>1217</sup> There were also categorizations among the female folk as distinctions were made between a freeborn woman, a slave woman and a converted woman. A slave woman had no freewill of her own but a converted woman was believed to have purified herself according to the ritual laws of conversion. Gary G. Porton affirms that “given the choice between marriage to a freed slave woman and a marriage to a female convert, Israelite men prefer the latter because it is assumed that the convert has guarded her chastity in preparing to convert. The slave woman, however, has been readily available to all who desired her because she did not have the power to protect herself even if she wished.”<sup>1218</sup>

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<sup>1213</sup> Cf. Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 205-207.

<sup>1214</sup> Scroggs, *The New Testament and Homosexuality*, 22-23.

<sup>1215</sup> Singer, *The Standard Prayer Book*, 6.

<sup>1216</sup> Wiley, *Paul and the Gentile Women*, 80.

<sup>1217</sup> *Ibid*, 84.

<sup>1218</sup> Porton, *The Stranger Within your Gates*, 43-44.

In contrast to the patriarchal society, Paul declares that there is neither male and female “in Christ Jesus” (Gal 3:28). Paul was in danger of losing the males and females who formed part of his charismatic communities in Galatia. He, therefore, mounts an intense counter argument (cf. 5:2-6) which challenges the Judaizers who were competing with him for the hearts and minds of the Gentile women and men as he rebukes those suspected of “betrayal”<sup>1219</sup> and curses his opponents (cf. *ἀνάθεμα*, 1:8), wishing castration to those who will choose circumcision (5:12; cf. Phil 3:2) but promising equality to both male and female “in Christ Jesus” (Gal 3:28). To promise covenantal equality to Gentile males without undergoing the process of circumcision was a hard nut to crack, but to extend the covenantal equality to Gentile women was for the Judaizers to go quite beyond the pale. To accept women and men on equal basis without requiring that they adapt to the Jewish way of life as mandated by ritual laws and ritual bathe was surely not acceptable to the Judaic evangelists and zealots. But Paul rejects patriarchy and breaks Judaic religious and ritual laws as he claims that there is neither male and female in Christ Jesus.

It was only the males who could lead the religious assembly. In the *bet ha-knesset*, the Synagogue assembly (cf. later interpretations of Paul, e.g. 1 Cor 14:34; 1 Tim 2:11-12) women were separated from the sanctuary.<sup>1220</sup> This was done for moral reasons — women were regarded as seductresses. The male who served in the sanctuary had to be protected from potential distractions. However, these rules don’t seem to matter for Paul. He not only welcomes women within the Galatian communities (Gal 3:28), he assigns ecclesiological titles like “deacon” (*διάκονος*, Rom 16:1); “co-worker” (*συνεργός*, Rom 16:3; cf. Phil 4:2-3) and “apostle” (*ἀπόστολος*, Rom 16:7) to both male and female. However, not all commentators share this view. Norbert Baumert, for instance, opines that Paul’s assignment of hierarchical titles (such as *διάκονος*) to women does not mean that they had official roles as leaders, preachers and apostles in their communities.

*Aber folgt daraus, daß sie in ihrem 'offiziellen' Aufgabenfeld in allem den Männern gleichgestellt waren, etwa in der Mitsprache bei einer 'Gemeindeversammlung'? Bis zum Beweis des Gegenteils ist doch anzunehmen, daß sie ihre Aufgaben innerhalb des sozio-kulturellen Rahmens ihrer Gemeindeordnung versahen. Und daß diese einer Frau bei einem Gottesdienst nicht nur die Verlesung eines Schrifttextes, sondern auch eine Auslegung in Form einer Predigt (Lk 4,16.20f; Apg 13,15.42) übertrug, dafür gibt es keine Hinweise. Nirgends wird von einer Frau gesagt, daß sie 'predigte' (Apg 14,3.9.21.25 etc.). Und wo gibt es im profanen Bereich ein Zeugnis für eine öffentliche Rednertätigkeit einer Frau? 'Verkündigung' durch eine Frau hatte also eine andere Gestalt. Das wird nicht erwähnt, weil es selbstverständlich ist. Der Begriff ist noch nicht 'amtlich'*

<sup>1219</sup> Wiley, Paul and the Gentile Women, 54.

<sup>1220</sup> Ernst, Synagoge, in: Herders Neues Bibel Lexikon, 723.

*geprägt. So müssen wir wohl davon ausgehen, daß die frühen Christen – auch bei gleichem Namen – unter diakonos bei Mann und Frau eine je geschlechtsspezifische Ausprägung mitdachten.*<sup>1221</sup>

Richard W. Hove, too, emphasizes the limited spiritual context in which male and female are said to be equal in Christ, and opines that “they are equally justified by faith (v. 24), equally free from the bondage of legalism (v. 25), equally children of God (v. 26), equally clothed with Christ (v. 27), equally possessed by Christ (v. 29), and equally heirs of the promises to Abraham (v. 29) ... There is no reason to claim that Galatians 3:28 supports an egalitarianism of function in the church. It does plainly teach an egalitarianism of privilege in the covenantal union of believers in Christ ... This means that it is an erroneous interpretation to say that ‘all one’ in Christ means that there are no distinctions within the body.”<sup>1222</sup>

However, Paul’s approach to the male and female issues is quite innovative and different from the ways in which some commentators (e.g., Baumert, Hove) deal with the same issue (cf. Phil 4:2-3).<sup>1223</sup> It is particularly important to look critically at “the body” as the analogy of “being one in Christ”. In antiquity, the gender hierarchy was maintained and rationalized within the society as well as in the early church (cf. Gen 3:16b; Col 3:18; Eph 5:22; 1 Tim 2:12), but these limitations of equality and functions in the Christian community are clearly opposed to the position of Paul. The issues in Gal 3:26-29 are to be taken up altogether and not to be separated from one another. Paul’s choice of antitheses is to assert the abolition of the ethnic, religious, and social status, sex and gender privileges enjoyed by the Jew over the Gentile, the free over the slave, the male over the female.<sup>1224</sup> Paul “is concerned with practical church life in which men and women (like Jews and Gentiles, slaves and free persons) are here and now fellow-members”<sup>1225</sup> of the Christian community and “part of Christ’s body” (1 Cor 12:12, 27), the church (cf. Col 1:18; Eph 1:23).

The theological view that women were neither leaders nor preachers in the early Christian communities seems hard to sustain because, for instance, the division between Euodia and Syntyche and their followers was a serious matter as the two women had major voices in the coordination of events within the house church in Philippi (cf. Phil 4:2-3). It is unlikely that Euodia and Syntyche were merely “emergency” replacements of the leaders,

<sup>1221</sup> Baumert, *Frau und Mann bei Paulus*, 186-187

<sup>1222</sup> Hove, *Equality in Christ?*, 18.

<sup>1223</sup> Cf. Asano, *Community-Identity Construction in Galatians*, 112.

<sup>1224</sup> Cf. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 149.

<sup>1225</sup> Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 189.

rather, they were community leaders.<sup>1226</sup> This claim is based on two reasons. 1. “If Paul makes an assertion, we may assume that, at least, those to whom he writes may be in danger of overlooking what he asserts, and at most, someone has explicitly denied it; in between those two extremes there is a range of feasible suggestions, including the possibility that his audience have forgotten what he now reminds them about.”<sup>1227</sup> 2. If the early Christian communities did not build sanctuaries that were modeled after the synagogue assemblies, but consisted of “little house assemblies” like the church in Philemon’s house (Phlm 1), the prayer group in Corinth (1 Cor 11:5), the congregation in the upper room (cf. Acts 1:12-14), then it is most probable that women not only joined in the prayers (cf. 1 Cor 11:5) but made contributions during the assembly because everybody saw what was going on, heard and understood what was said and could also make contributions without hindrances. In this context the leading role of women comes out very prominently in Phil 4:2-3. Therefore, one of the biggest scandals of the Pauline community seems to be that “the status and prerogatives reserved for elect men of Israel had been offered to pagan women.”<sup>1228</sup> Tatha Wiley rightly maintains that “the experience of God grounds the egalitarianism of the assemblies.”<sup>1229</sup> In using the baptismal formula to signal the redemptive equality experienced among male and female in Galatia, Paul speaks directly to those who are jeopardizing the equality of the members, as well as to those whose membership is threatened.<sup>1230</sup> Through faith “in Christ Jesus” and by being sons and daughters of God (Gal 3:26), the dichotomy between male and female is overcome and a new communal unity is created.<sup>1231</sup> “The foundational reality underlying the social unity Paul describes as the members being ‘one in Christ’ was religious experience shared in kind by women and men.”<sup>1232</sup>

In fact, Rom 16:1-15; Phil 4:2-3 and the statement of Gal 3:28c all show that women as well as men were community leaders. And that quality was a practical way of life in the early Christian community. “*Mann und Frau sind vor dem Herrn gleich ... was sich vor allem in der von Frauen ausgeübten Rolle in den Gemeinden zeigt (vgl. Phil 4,2f; Röm 16,1-3,6f.12.*”<sup>1233</sup> The role of women should not be down played because they are women. Hanneliese Steichele

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<sup>1226</sup> Cf. Reumann, Philippians, 626.

<sup>1227</sup> Barclay, Mirror-Reading a Polemical Letter, 84.

<sup>1228</sup> Wiley, Paul and the Gentile Women, 101.

<sup>1229</sup> Ibid, 95.

<sup>1230</sup> Ibid, 102.

<sup>1231</sup> Ibid, 96.

<sup>1232</sup> Ibid, 95.

<sup>1233</sup> Egger, Galaterbrief. Philipperbrief. Philemonbrief, 29.

emphasizes: *“Es ist nicht zulässig, den Begriff ‘Diakon’ bei Phoebe, nur weil sie eine Frau ist, anders und geringer als in Phil 1,1 zu bewerten. Es darf allerdings auch nicht die Funktion der männlichen und weiblichen ‘Diakone’ in den paulinischen Schriften mit dem späteren, klar umrissenen Diakonenamt der frühen Kirche einfach gleichgesetzt werden.”*<sup>1234</sup> In this regard, the early church was unique, as male and female had equal roles in the Christian community.

### 5.3.4 You All Are One in Christ

All those who have “put on Christ” are one (εἷς) in him (Gal 3:27-28). Their identity “in Christ Jesus” (ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ) is the motivating factor that helps them to “overcome the boundaries and isolationism at work within different groups.”<sup>1235</sup> Those who are “one in Christ” are no longer the people of God with a homogeneous culture (cf. Gen 17:9-14); they are now the people of God with a diversity of culture and what really counts is being “a new creation” (Gal 6:15; 2 Cor 5:17; cf. Col 3:10), “faith working through love” (Gal 5:6) and “keeping God’s commandment” (1 Cor 7:19). “Being one in Christ” (Gal 3:28) might also have other meanings, such as: “Those who belong to Christ have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires” (Gal 5:24; cf. Rom 6:4-8; Col 2:12; 3:1-4), but the locative sense of “being one in” is particularly significant. It signals the level in which Christians exist “in Christ Jesus.”<sup>1236</sup> Those who are “in Christ Jesus” now live in a community of believers who share in the Christ-like identity.<sup>1237</sup> This does not suggest that Christians no longer have ethnic, social or sexual identities and differentiations in personality, rather these differences have been swallowed up “in Christ.” Paul envisages Christian unity to mean the coming together of diverse members, who are joined as children of God through “faith in Christ Jesus” (3:26) and by the “one Spirit” (1 Cor 12:13), and who live in harmony with one another.<sup>1238</sup> The reason is that the one God (Gal 3:20; Rom 3:30; 1 Cor 8:6) is also the God of the plurality of people, and the testimony of God’s unifying and transforming power is evident in the Christian community where the plurality of persons becomes “one in Christ.” This is possible within the Christian community in this life already.<sup>1239</sup>

<sup>1234</sup> Steichele, Diener/in, Diakon/in, in: Münchener Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, 85.

<sup>1235</sup> Kocûr, National and Religious Identity, 80-81.

<sup>1236</sup> Cf. Ibid, 65.

<sup>1237</sup> Cf. Bruce, The Epistle to the Romans, 112.

<sup>1238</sup> Cf. Longenecker, The Triumph of Abraham’s God, 66-67.

<sup>1239</sup> Cf. Bruce, The Epistle to the Galatians, 189.

Before the coming of Christ, Gentiles were not allowed to enter the inner sanctuary of the temple in Jerusalem, rather, they remained within the court of the Gentiles,<sup>1240</sup> but after the coming of faith (Gal 3:23-25), “we all” (1 Cor 12:13) have direct access to God “through faith in Christ Jesus” (Gal 3:26; cf. Rom 5:1). Faith in Christ Jesus, therefore, is the key factor, which opens the way to the Christians’ unity and at the same time relativizes the basic elements of discrimination that previously existed among them, as Wilhelm Egger explains: *“Die Aussage, daß die Unterschiede von Jude/Heide, Sklave/Freier, Mann/Frau ihre Bedeutung verloren haben, ist nicht eine rein religiöse Aussage über die Gleichheit aller vor Gott unter Beibehaltung bestimmter religiös, sozial oder geschlechtlich bedingter Rollen, sondern eine Aussage über soziale Änderungen, die sich konkret in der Gemeinde vollziehen ... Das Leben der Gemeinde bestätigt so die Integrationskraft des Glaubens: in Christus sind alle 'einer'.”*<sup>1241</sup>

Differences and categorizations only exist for those who are not “one in Christ.”<sup>1242</sup> Timothy George, however, avers that “to be of the seed of Abraham means to belong to Christ, to have a share in the new humanity of the last Adam, in whom there is no East or West, no South or North.”<sup>1243</sup> Paul is saying that distinctions such as white and black, rich and poor, first world and third world categorizations have completely lost their significance for all those who are “in Christ Jesus”. According to Bernard O. Ukwuegbu, if to “put on Christ” (3:27b) is not only to be “baptized into Christ” (3:27a), but also means “to imitate Christ” or “to play the role of Christ within the community,” then it is an imagery for the consequences of the already changed status, which occurred at baptism for all those who are “in Christ.”<sup>1244</sup> It is not only socio-religious or ethno-cultural roles that are changed, the ontological categories are also modified in the pneumatic moment of initiation (Gal 3:27; 1 Cor 12:13). In place of the ethno-cultural and socio-religious polarity of the cosmos, there is a unity of “all in Christ Jesus” (Gal 3:28; Col 3:11). The old cosmic order has its pairs of opposites, but the “new creation” found only “in Christ Jesus” is marked with Christological unity which lacks those antitheses and pairs of opposites. In the Christian community, members are to accept one another based on their identification with and “in Christ Jesus.”

With the different metaphors of “being clothed with Christ” (Gal 3:27b), “Christ lives in me” (2:20), “baptized into Christ” (Rom 6:3; cf. Col 2:12), Paul gives the solution to the

<sup>1240</sup> Cf. Ernst, Synagoge, in: Herders Neues Bibellexikon, 723.

<sup>1241</sup> Egger, Galaterbrief. Philipperbrief. Philemonbrief, 29.

<sup>1242</sup> Cf. Kocûr, National and Religious Identity, 83.

<sup>1243</sup> George, Galatians, 248.

<sup>1244</sup> Cf. Ukwuegbu, The Emergence of Christian Identity in Paul’s Letter to the Galatians, 311.

problem of how God's promised blessing to Abraham (Gen 22:18) now applies to all the nations, and with the statement "you all are one in Christ" (Gal 3:28d) and with the designation "seed of Abraham" (3:29), he states the reasons for the cordial relationship that should exist between all those who have become heirs to the gospel he preaches (1:6). "Faith in Christ Jesus" forbids "every rigid classification of identity on the basis of social or religious segmentations and with it, every course to the law as norm and boundary *ad extram* for defining Jewish and Gentile identity."<sup>1245</sup> "Being in Christ" is not the establishment of a completely new physical universe of matter and form, a known world of cause and effect, which is "held together by forces of gravitational attraction at the molecular level,"<sup>1246</sup> rather, Paul envisages the establishment of a realm of existence, a sphere of life "crucified with Christ" (2:19-20). Paul himself belongs to this sphere where different ethno-cultural and socio-religious standards are applied, where different rules are followed, where different habits are formed, where different ways of life are practised, and where different forms of *ethos* exist, but all "in Christ Jesus" (cf. Gal 3:28; Gal 6:15; 2 Cor 5:17).<sup>1247</sup>

#### 5.4 Oneness of All in the Abrahamic Promise

A promise (ἐπαγγελία) is the announcement of what is to come. God promised Abraham that he will be the father of many nations and that his offspring will be as numerous as the stars of heaven (cf. Gen 12:1-3; 18:18; 22:17-18). The fulfillment of this promise is that "those of faith" are counted among the children of Abraham (Gal 3:9, 16, 29). Nicholas T. Wright attests that "these comprise all, Jews and Gentiles alike, who believe in God; Abraham is the father of all believers."<sup>1248</sup> All those who believe in God have become his children (3:26) with Abraham as their father in faith (Gal 3:29; cf. Rom 4:13-16). Those who in this way belong to the children of Abraham are his spiritual descendants, following his example of faith (Gal 3:6). Paul creates what modern anthropologists describe as a "fictive kinship group."<sup>1249</sup> Christians have left their blood families to join the family of Abraham. They are citizens of Jesus' community (cf. "those who do the will of God are my brothers, sisters and mother", Mk 3:35) with Abraham as their forefather.<sup>1250</sup>

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<sup>1245</sup> Ibid, 321-322.

<sup>1246</sup> Longenecker, The Triumph of Abraham's God, 37.

<sup>1247</sup> Cf. Ibid, 37.

<sup>1248</sup> Ibid, 113.

<sup>1249</sup> Wiley, Paul and the Gentile Women, 55.

<sup>1250</sup> Ibid, 56.

Paul uses the Abrahamic tradition which is so central to the Galatian debate (Gal 3:6, 8-9, 16, 18, 29) but he carefully omits the mention of Abraham's circumcision (cf. Gen 17:24-27).<sup>1251</sup> His argument on the single seed of Abraham (Gal 3:16) serves the purpose of persuading the Galatians to know that their identity as children of God and partakers in God's promised blessing to Abraham (cf. Gen 12:1-3) is securely based on "faith in Christ Jesus" (cf. Gal 3:26). According to F. F. Bruce, "when at last Abraham was circumcised, his circumcision was but the external seal of that righteous status which God had bestowed upon him long before, by virtue of his faith. Quite plainly it was faith, not circumcision, that God required of him ... the case of Abraham shows that circumcision or uncircumcision is irrelevant to a man's status before God."<sup>1252</sup> Abraham's faith in God now serves as a role model for the Galatians (3:6). "Abraham, accordingly, is the true father of all who, like him, believe in God and take him at his word. He is the father of uncircumcised believers, for he was uncircumcised when his faith was reckoned to him for righteousness; he is the father of the circumcised believers too, not so much on the ground of their circumcision as on the ground of their faith."<sup>1253</sup> This should be self-evident to the Galatians because the faith which brings about the marvelous works of the Spirit among them (Gal 3:3-5) is the same faith which led Abraham to the righteousness of God. Since it is on faith that the covenant relationship with God is established, the same faith is the distinctive characteristic of those who share in the covenant relationship thus established with Abraham.<sup>1254</sup>

Paul's teaching on the faith of Abraham is a daring challenge to the Judaizers. The reason is that the "proselytes, who might have been regarded as Abraham's children by adoption, were not permitted to call him 'our father'."<sup>1255</sup> The proselytes had to say "Abraham your father in faith," while Jews would call Abraham "our father in faith," just to show that the Jews are different from the Gentiles. It would be still more of a derogatory statement to the Judaizers to hear that the Gentiles are now children of Abraham without undergoing circumcision which, in their view, does not even allow them to call Abraham their father in faith. But the main reason why the Galatians are children of Abraham is because the gracious promise which God made to Abraham belongs to a totally different realm from that of Jewish

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<sup>1251</sup> Cf. Barclay, *Obedying the Truth*, 87.

<sup>1252</sup> Bruce, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 112.

<sup>1253</sup> *Ibid*, 112.

<sup>1254</sup> Cf. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul's Letter to the Galatians*, 82.

<sup>1255</sup> Bruce, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 111.



ritual law.<sup>1256</sup> Paul is constructing a community for those who believe in Christ. The statements on sonship and daughtership of those who are Christ's (3:26b, 28d, 29a) form the climax of the discourse that Paul addresses to the Galatians. The relationship among the members of this community is determined by the measure of their participation in Christ's life (cf. 2:19-20). God promised to redeem the children of Abraham through the coming of the Messiah (cf. Micah 5:2-3; Ps 89:4-5) and now that Christ has come (Gal 3:23-25), his redemptive death on the cross is the fulfillment of the Abrahamic promise (3:29).<sup>1257</sup>

## 5.5 Oneness of All in Christ (Summary)

The gospel which Paul preaches is the one gospel and there is no other (Gal 1:6-7) and the God who called him (1:1) is the "one God" (3:20; Rom 3:30). The baptized Christians in Galatia (Gal 3:27) who worship the "one God" belong to the children of God (3:26). They are among the "Israel of God" (6:16) because they have only one Lord — Jesus Christ (1 Cor 8:6; cf. Eph 4:5). They have one father (Gal 3:26) and they belong to the single seed of Abraham (3:16, 29). They are called to treat one another as brothers and sisters "in the Lord" (cf. Phlm 16) because they "are Christ's" (Gal 3:26b, 28d, 29a), whom they have "put on" in baptism (3:27). If Paul's teachings on Christian's freedom from the works of the law (2:16; 3:2; 5:1-6; 6:15), on non-discrimination and non-stratification (3:28) should have any force within the communities in Galatia, it must affect their practical lifestyle. Without a demonstration of how the gospel provides a framework for the moral and social issues that emerge among them, the concern of the Galatians would not have been fully addressed.<sup>1258</sup> Paul undertakes to emphasize the socio-ethical and religious implications of "being one in Christ" (3:28d). The coming of Christ is the end of the guardian's era of the law (3:23-25; cf. Rom 10:4) which implies also that the socio-religious customs, ethnic marks of identity, sex and gender constructions are not to take precedence over "faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:26). The ethnic ritual laws have ceased to be the official requirement for entrance into the covenant community (5:6; 6:15; 1 Cor 12:13; cf. also Col 3:11). "Faith in Christ" expressed through the acceptance of baptism is now the distinguishing mark of Christian identity (Gal 3:26-27). Paul

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<sup>1256</sup> Cf. *Ibid*, 113.

<sup>1257</sup> Cf. Kocûr, *National and Religious Identity*, 69-70.

<sup>1258</sup> Cf. Longenecker, *The Triumph of Abraham's God*, 80.

empties “the works of the law” (2:16; 3:2) of all the relevance they had in order to refute their status as the defining identity mark for those who are “one in Christ Jesus” (3:28).<sup>1259</sup>

Paul’s teaching on “being one in Christ” (3:28) has rich theological connotations. It is based on the ulterior motif of union with Christ (2:19-20; cf. Rom 14:8), and the Pauline identification of Christians as those who drank from the same Spirit (1 Cor 12:13) is an all-encompassing characteristic, so that the Christian’s personal identity becomes intricately bound to, and intertwined with that of Christ and the Spirit (cf. Rom 8:9-11).<sup>1260</sup> A possible analogy to the oneness of all “in Christ” is our relationship with the air that surrounds us. We are sustained when we breathe in the air and unless the air is in us, we will not have life. Unless the Christian is in Christ and Christ is in him or her the spiritual life in him or her will die (cf. 1 Cor 8:6b). Therefore, John the Evangelist rightly maintains that “separated from me [Christ] you can do nothing” (Jn 15:5). Christ is the standard by which Christians judge all things, the voice they continually listen to, the presence that is always and forever with them in life and in death.<sup>1261</sup> Therefore, when Christ is in the Christian and the Christian is in Christ, he or she sees the world from Christ’s own perspective.<sup>1262</sup>

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<sup>1259</sup> Cf. Ukwuegbu, *The Emergence of Christian Identity in Paul’s Letter to the Galatians*, 307.

<sup>1260</sup> Cf. Longenecker, *The Triumph of Abraham’s God*, 63-64.

<sup>1261</sup> Cf. Barclay, *Many Witnesses, One Lord*, 35.

<sup>1262</sup> Cf. Longenecker, *The Triumph of Abraham’s God*, 67.

## Chapter Six: The Hermeneutics of Gal 3:26-29 and Its Applications

How do Christians who come from different ethno-cultural backgrounds, having different socio-religious worldviews, divergent sexual orientations and belonging to different religious denominations interpret and apply Gal 3:26-29? What does this text mean for Christians of today and what are the hermeneutical differences therein? What was in Paul's mind when he wrote the text and how would he interpret this text if he was in the position of modern scholars? Is the oneness of Christians in Christ limited or unlimited? Put differently, what are the hermeneutical implications and possible applications of the principle of oneness in Gal 3:26-29? How has Gal 3:26-29 been applied by different Christian communities?<sup>1263</sup> What role does ethno-cultural, socio-religious life of a given community and a denomination play in the hermeneutical application of our text? And what role does authority and the effort to preserve it play in its application? According to Chinedu A. Amadi-Azuogu, there is "a conflict of interests, in which consideration is made to favour more the authority which one wields"<sup>1264</sup> than the quest for the oneness of all in Christ.

### 6.1 Meaning of Hermeneutics

Hermeneutics comes from the verb *ἐρμηνεύω* ("to explain," "to interpret" or "to translate").<sup>1265</sup> It is used rather differently. "In its most general sense hermeneutics refers to the art and theory of interpretation, particularly the interpretation of texts."<sup>1266</sup> It denotes the process of using languages to bring out the meaning that is hidden in a text,<sup>1267</sup> which "could be reached only by employing an interpretative strategy from outside the text."<sup>1268</sup> It is also the process of bringing to clarity what is unintelligible in a given text.<sup>1269</sup> According to G. T. Montague, hermeneutics is "the art (rather than the science) of getting in touch with the spirit

<sup>1263</sup> Cf. Luzbetak, *Church and Cultures*, VXII: "The task of incarnating the gospel in the minds and hearts of a people, in allowing Christ to be born here and now, lies principally with the local Christian community – with the people themselves under the guidance of the Holy Spirit in communion with the universal church – and not with the 'outsiders,' however helpful, and indeed necessary, they may be."

<sup>1264</sup> Amadi-Azuogu, *Biblical Exegesis and Inculturation in Africa in the Third Millennium*, 58.

<sup>1265</sup> Cf. Moulton, *ἐρμηνεύω*, in: *The Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised*, 166.

<sup>1266</sup> Godzieba, *Hermeneutics*, in: *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 786.

<sup>1267</sup> Cf. *Ibid*, 786: "The earliest uses of *hermêneuein* and its cognates (*hermêneus* [interpreter], *hermêneia* [interpretation, explanation]) carry the wider connotation of a process of bringing something from ambiguity or unintelligibility to understanding, primarily through the use of language."

<sup>1268</sup> *Ibid*, 786.

<sup>1269</sup> Cf. Godzieba, *Hermeneutics*, in: *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 786.

of the author.”<sup>1270</sup> It seeks to understand the authorial meaning or “the hidden sense” of the text within the milieu of the author and also looks at how scholars have interpreted and applied the text.

In its biblical context, however, it means “the principles and methodology of interpreting biblical texts.”<sup>1271</sup> Gerd Schunack opines that hermeneutics is a reflection on the teachings of the New Testament. *“Neutestamentliche Hermeneutik befaßt sich, als Lehre und Reflexion des Verstehens, der Interpretation und verantwortlicher Vermittlung neutestamentlicher Texte, mit den hermeneutischen Erfahrungen, die sich dabei einstellen.”*<sup>1272</sup> The New Testament biblical hermeneutics is also concerned with the interaction of the text with the present day realities because hermeneutics is progressive and not static. *“Hermeneutische Aufgabe ist, die Texte und ihre Sache gegenwärtigem Wirklichkeitsverständnis und Wahrheitsbewußtsein zu vermitteln. So sind die Texte Gegenstand hermeneutischer Arbeit, zugleich sind sie ihrerseits schon kritisch vergegenwärtigende Interpretation der Geschichte Jesu Christi als eschatologischem Heilsgeschehen.”*<sup>1273</sup> This is because man and woman experience events and situations differently, a fact which is often based on their ethno-cultural and socio-religious environments, as well as economic conditions. The events and the experiences in life are not practically the same, and at the same time, these issues are not to be deferred *ad infinitum* because Scripture speaks even today to man and woman in their daily lives.<sup>1274</sup> The essence of biblical hermeneutics, therefore, is to understand what the text says to the reader in his or her present situation. *“Als Objekte des Verstehens geben sie — mehr oder weniger eindeutig — zu verstehen, daß von Gott im Namen Jesu Christi (d.h. christologisch begründet) zu reden ist und was von Gott im Namen Jesu Christi zu sagen ist. In diesem sie konstituierenden Geschichtsbezug sind die Texte Anrede, deren Wahrheitsanspruch notwendig macht, die Verstehensvoraussetzungen und Bedingungen in der Sprachlichkeit und Geschichtlichkeit menschlicher Existenz aufzusuchen.”*<sup>1275</sup> Biblical texts are made to apply to what happens to the individual or in society but because the texts are sometimes read outside their contextual situations, hermeneutics demands a lot of efforts, and rejects preconceived meaning of the

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<sup>1270</sup> Montague, Hermeneutics, Biblical, in: New Catholic Encyclopedia, 796.

<sup>1271</sup> Farkasfalvy, Inspiration and Interpretation, 11.

<sup>1272</sup> Schunack, Hermeneutik, in: Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart, 1651.

<sup>1273</sup> Ibid, 1651.

<sup>1274</sup> Cf. Bruce, Epistle to the Galatians, 156 and Hays, Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul, 106.

<sup>1275</sup> Schunack, Hermeneutik, in: Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart, 1651.

texts. *“Distanz und Fremdheit der Texte erfordern hermeneutische Arbeit, sind aber als Kritik eines traditionellen Vorverständnisses oder fundamentalistischer Immunisierung auch hermeneutisch produktiv, indem sie an die Kontingenz der Texte erinnern und sie einer vereinnahmenden Applikation entziehen.”*<sup>1276</sup> Hermeneutics, therefore, brings out the hidden meaning of the text and makes this present to the new situation in the life of Christians.<sup>1277</sup>

## 6.2 Biblical and Contemporary Problems of Hermeneutics

Hermeneutics has a general and also particular meanings, i.e. it has nuances of definitions, and its use is approached differently. Therefore, the biblical and contemporary hermeneutics and the problems therein are to be handled here.

### 6.2.1 Biblical Hermeneutics

A. J. Godzieba opines that “in antiquity and in the medieval world the principles of interpretation were understood to apply most often to texts, particularly religious texts and especially to individual textual cases where the meaning was unclear or difficult to extract.”<sup>1278</sup> Before the science or the art of hermeneutics was introduced,<sup>1279</sup> interpretation of texts was a daily way of life by which the early Christians tried to make the biblical texts meaningful to their religious lives. According to G. T. Montague, “the common human experience of seeking the meaning of words, discourse, and events is elevated to a scholarly level in the science of biblical interpretation ... The arrival of scientific tools of analysis meant that Scripture could be examined like any secular text, with the supposed abstraction from any faith stance. Once that happened, however, the need was felt to find the relevance of the ancient text to contemporary life, whence the science – and some would say the art – of hermeneutics developed.”<sup>1280</sup> With this scientific development put in place, biblical hermeneutics now concentrates on the biblical texts.

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<sup>1276</sup> Ibid, 1651-1652.

<sup>1277</sup> Cf. Wall, *Reading the Bible from within our Traditions: The Rule of Faith in Theological Hermeneutics*, in: *Between Two Horizons. Spanning New Testament Studies and Systematic Theology*, 93.

<sup>1278</sup> Godzieba, *Hermeneutics*, in: *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 786.

<sup>1279</sup> Cf. Montague, *Hermeneutics, Biblical*, in: *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 791. This was developed into a scholarly science in the seventeenth century.

<sup>1280</sup> Montague, *Hermeneutic, Biblical*, in: *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 791.

It is difficult to state exactly when biblical hermeneutics and its interpretative application began,<sup>1281</sup> but there are biblical evidences which show the use of interpretation and the application of texts to the needs of those who are hearing them. An instance is the case of Ezra the priest. Before Ezra interpreted the “law of Moses” (cf. Ex 20:1-17; Lev 19) for the people of Israel, he brought the book of the law before the assembly of men, women and all those who could understand what is to be said, then, he and the Levites read from it (Neh 8:1-9), “and they gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading” (8:8b), i.e., by translating, explaining and interpreting the law of the Lord so that all those who were present could understand what was read. What Ezra and the Levites did is a well-known tradition in the Old Testament (cf. Daniel’s [9:2, 24] interpretation of Jeremiah 25:11-14; 29:10).<sup>1282</sup> Esther Menn underscores the fact that “the evidence in the *Tanak* is strong enough to indicate that interpretation of traditional texts was an important component of Israelite culture, before, during, and most prominently, after the period of exile in Babylon.”<sup>1283</sup> Biblical hermeneutics, therefore, is part of the tradition and culture of the people of Israel, which was inherited by New Testament Christians, but they did this with modifications that suited their community’s “faith in Christ Jesus” (Gal 3:26). Danis Farkasfalvy attests that “the use and interpretation of Scripture by the early Christian church is not a mere imitation of a practice pre-existent in Judaism but a new theological program based on the apostolic faith in Christ.”<sup>1284</sup> The Christocentric character of the interpretation and application of the Old Testament Scripture is what distinguishes Christian hermeneutics from the Torah-based hermeneutics.<sup>1285</sup> This is also evident in Gal 3:26-29, which has a strong basis in texts of the Old Testament (Ex 4:22; Hos 11:1; Gen 18:18; 22:18), and Qumran tradition (IQS 3:7-9) that find fulfillment in Christ, the seed of Abraham (Gal 3:29).<sup>1286</sup>

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<sup>1281</sup> Cf. Hauser and Watson, *A History of Biblical Interpretation*, 1: “The history of biblical interpretation begins at that unknown point in time when the first biblical traditions were created (‘biblical tradition’ is used here to mean any materials such as laws, stories, sayings, pieces of poetry, hymns, oracles, etc. that subsequently found their way, after incorporation into larger bodies of material, into the biblical text as we now have it).”

<sup>1282</sup> Cf. Menn, *Inner-Biblical Exegesis in the Tanak*, in: *A History of Biblical Interpretation*, 61.

<sup>1283</sup> *Ibid*, 61.

<sup>1284</sup> Farkasfalvy, *Inspiration & Interpretation*, 23.

<sup>1285</sup> Cf. Menn, *Inner-Biblical Exegesis in the Tanak*, in: *A History of Biblical Interpretation*, 61-62.

<sup>1286</sup> Cf. Marshall, *The Meaning of the Verb 'Baptize'*, in: *Dimensions of Baptism*, 15.

### 6.2.2 Contemporary Problems of Hermeneutics

The hermeneutics of texts has always posed problems to commentators who have different worldviews as well as to those who live in different cultural milieus, and those living within different cultures, because the texts are progressively interpreted. There is a gap between the disciples of Christ who are the original interpreters of God's revelation in Christ and the interpreters of later years. The contextual situations of the text are different from the contemporary situations and as such, the gap makes it likely for interpreters who are not careful to run the risk of fundamentalism. Craig Bartholomew and others opine that "what is needed is the courage to probe deeply into the material and to anticipate growth, change, and transformation in the very struggle for divine truth."<sup>1287</sup> According to Alan J. Hauser and Duane F. Watson, "gifted interpreters often go beyond and challenge many of the factors which they share with others in their community, and one must therefore be especially sensitive to those points at which such interpreters part company with their contemporaries or intellectual compatriots. The apostle Paul would be an excellent example."<sup>1288</sup> Paul's interpretation of God's promise to Abraham bypasses the legalism of the law (Gal 3:6-9, 16, 18, 29), a teaching which is quite different from all Jewish interpreters of his time as J. Louis Martyn concurs. "Paul asserts that God is now creating the church by his elective word, incorporating human beings into the one seed of Abraham, Christ ... The implications are shocking, for the resultant picture portrays God's election of ancient Israel neither in the Abrahamic promise nor in the giving of the Sinaitic law."<sup>1289</sup> Paul, therefore, serves as a model for many interpreters, who seek to interpret and to apply biblical texts to their own life situation and that of their community.

The private interpretation of biblical texts gained more supporters since the reformers' "rejection of the Catholic use of church authority, tradition, and allegory to interpret the Scripture."<sup>1290</sup> Following Martin Luther's principle of *sola scriptura*, they claimed that the Bible "stands above all other authority, be it tradition, the inner witness of the Spirit, church authority or philosophy."<sup>1291</sup> However, not all commentators accept the Scripture as its own interpreter. G. T. Montague maintains that this claim establishes "a canon within the canon,"

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<sup>1287</sup> Bartholomew, Greene, and Möller, *Renewing Biblical Interpretation*, XVI.

<sup>1288</sup> Hauser and Watson, *A History of Biblical Interpretation*, 7.

<sup>1289</sup> Martyn, *Galatians*, 349-450.

<sup>1290</sup> *Ibid*, 787.

<sup>1291</sup> Montague, *Hermeneutics, Biblical*, in: *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 793.

which lacks also scriptural support.<sup>1292</sup> According to Alan J. Hauser and Duane F. Watson, there is no doubt that the Bible has its own authority but this was for “the immediate time and community, building upon a new understanding of respected traditions from the past. Even when reference was made to a previous authority figure such as Moses and the law he gave to Israel, the ‘law of Moses’ was the law as perceived at that particular moment for that particular community.”<sup>1293</sup> Therefore, biblical interpretation should neither be static nor an “authority of its own” because the New Testament writers did “appeal to authority” as it is exemplified in the Pauline letter to the Galatians (compare Deut 6:4 with Gal 3:20; Rom 3:30 or Gen 22:15-18 with Gal 3:6, 8-9, 19, 29).<sup>1294</sup>

### 6.3 Hermeneutical Applications of Gal 3:26-29

This work has its own unique character. It is applied to Nigerian cum African society that is mannish. This subsection looks at the traditional institutions and hierarchical way of life that make the realization of the oneness of Christians difficult.

#### 6.3.1 Baptismal Application

The rite of baptism described by Paul as *Χριστὸν ἐνεδύσασθε* (“you have put on Christ,” v 27; cf. Rom 6:3) remains the means of initiation of Christians into the community of God’s children as Heinz Giesen affirms: *“Nach dem Zeugnis des Neuen Testaments ist die Taufe Initiationsritus, d.h., sie gliedert den Täufling in die Gemeinschaft der an Christus Glaubenden ein ... Die Taufe übereignet den Täufling so nicht nur Christus, sondern fügt ihn in das gesamte Heilsgeschehen ein, das mit Jesu Namen in Zusammenhang steht. Sie bedeutet somit Zueignung des Heils, die einen Wandel ‘in Neuheit (des) Lebens’ (Röm 6,4) ermöglicht.”*<sup>1295</sup> There is hardly any Christian community that does not use baptism as a means of initiation of its members. However, the formula and the method varies according to the religious groups (e.g., Catholicism, Seven Days Adventists and Jehovah’s Witnesses). While Jehovah’s Witnesses baptize only adults and directly in the stream (cf. Matt 3:1-6), Catholics baptize both adults and children, all in the church (cf. Ezek 36:25-27; 1 Cor 12:13).

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<sup>1292</sup> Cf. Ibid, 793.

<sup>1293</sup> Hauser and Watson, A History of Biblical Interpretation, 5.

<sup>1294</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>1295</sup> Giesen, Taufe, in: Münchner Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, 352.



In preparing to initiate their child into the community, the parents, sponsor(s) and the family members present their candidate to the church for baptism. After baptism, the minister puts a new garment on the baptisand which signifies his or her new way of life in Christ. This is accompanied by a prayer, in which the minister of the baptism addresses the baptisand. This symbolic rite of putting on a new garment after baptism is the modern application of the Pauline theology of “being clothed with Christ” (cf. Gal 3:27), which transforms the candidate into “a new creation in Christ” (cf. Gal 6:15; 2 Cor 5:17).<sup>1296</sup>

Baptism washes away sins, makes the baptisand an adopted son or daughter of God and a member of the Christian community. The baptisand who rises from the water of baptism (cf. Acts 8:38-39) is said to have died and risen with Christ (cf. Rom 6:3; Col 2:12), and to rise to the newness of life as Mathias Stubhann affirms. *“Paulus scheint zwar Verkündigung und Glauben in den Vordergrund zu stellen, aber auch für ihn ist die Taufe selbstverständlich; gerade er deutet sie als ein Mitsterben mit Christus (Röm 6,3f), bei ihm ist sie eine Geisttaufe; sie schenkt den Geist und bewirkt Gotteskindschaft (vgl. Gal 3,26). Die Taufe bringt ‘Abwaschung der Sünden (vgl. Apg 22,16; 1 Kor 6,11) ...’*<sup>1297</sup> The rite and the effect of baptism incorporates Christians into the community, which is the church (Col 1:18; Eph 1:22-23), and this is independent of ethnic origin, social status, sex and gender (Gal 3:28; cf. Matt 28:19).

### 6.3.2 Socio-Cultural Application

Culture is defined as the ethnic and socio-religious way of life which includes norms, “customs, mores, values, life styles and practices of a society.”<sup>1298</sup> It has affinity with ethnic group-identity, as each cultural group has norms and traditions that are peculiar to it. As “a missionary theologian,”<sup>1299</sup> Paul asks Peter a question. “How can you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?” (Gal 2:14). Paul does not want cultural uniformity but the unity of diversified cultures, for no culture is in itself universal but the Jesus event is God’s redemption of the whole world (cf. Gal 3:13-14; 4:5; Rom 3:9, 22-25, 29-30). Christians are “one in Christ” (Gal 3:28), but they come from different cultural backgrounds, and their individual cultural values play vital roles in the incarnation of the gospel.<sup>1300</sup> Christian liturgical worships are coloured

<sup>1296</sup> Cf. Ibid, 351-352.

<sup>1297</sup> Stubhann, Taufe, in: Herders Neues Bibel Lexikon, 731.

<sup>1298</sup> Dike, The Osu Discrimination in Igboland, 4.

<sup>1299</sup> Starling, Not My People, 1.

<sup>1300</sup> Cf. Decree Ad Gentes (on the Missionary Activity of the Church), NO 10: “The church, in order to be able to offer all of them the mystery of salvation and the life brought by God, must implant herself into these groups for

by different cultural identifications. While Christians are “one in Christ,” their socio-cultural and traditional religious practices are so apart from each that it is very hard to enforce a uniformity on all these differences. According to Brigitte Kahl, unity in diversity is the foundation upon which the gospel of Paul is built. *“Wenn die Galater als Nicht-Juden sich beschneiden lassen und damit eine Einheit-in-Gleichheit schaffen, statt ihre Andersheit 'anders' und neu im Miteinander mit den Beschnittenen zu praktizieren, verleugnen sie die grundlegende messianische Wirklichkeit (2,21; 5,2-6).”*<sup>1301</sup> What Paul wants from the Christians is the appreciation of the diversity of cultural gifts. *“Diese Einheit-in-Verschiedenheit auf dem Boden eines messianisch transformierten 'inkluisiven Judentums' ist der Punkt, an dem für Paulus die Wahrheit des Evangeliums auf dem Spiele steht.”*<sup>1302</sup>

Christians now follow Christ alongside their socio-cultural worldviews, and it is not necessary for any culture to assimilate another. Parekh C. Bhikhu explains why cultural assimilation is an unnecessary endeavour. “Cultures are too deeply woven into the lives of their members to be jettisoned at will. Most of them, further, are embedded in or at least intertwined with religion, and outsiders cannot assimilate into them without changing their religion, which they are often reluctant to do ... Total cultural assimilation therefore requires biological assimilation, and many outsiders are unwilling to pay that price.”<sup>1303</sup> There is also no need to demand socio-cultural assimilation from any group because not even two cultures are the same, therefore, the application of the gospel message to the cultural situations of different Christian groups is not going to be the same. Only Christ who is the unchanging center of Christian faith remains the same at all times (cf. Heb 13:8).

Paul advocates for the oneness of all in Christ (cf. Gal 3:28), so that the gospel message is not being adapted to a particular culture but the world’s cultures are brought to identity with the universal gospel, which is “the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith” (Rom 1:16). From Abraham who left Haran (Gen 12:1-4) to Moses who was an Israelite but grew up in the palace of the king of Egypt (Ex 2:1-10), up to the prophets (e.g., Elijah and Hosea) who struggled with local idols (1 Kings 18:20-29; 19:1-3; Hos 4:17), until Jesus and his disciples who lived within the Greco-Roman world and Judaic Judaism and finally Paul, who was a diaspora Jew (cf. Phil 3:5), there have been constant interactions of the word of God

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the same motive which led Christ to bind himself, in virtue of his incarnation, to certain social and cultural conditions of those human beings among whom he dwelt.”

<sup>1301</sup> Kahl, Der Brief an die Gemeinden in Galatien, in: Kompendium feministische Bibelauslegung, 606.

<sup>1302</sup> Ibid, 606.

<sup>1303</sup> Bhikhu, Rethinking Multiculturalism, 198.

with different cultures.<sup>1304</sup> Harry D. Deeby underscores that “the gospel has never been isolated from cultural influence, influencing and being influenced, and such relationships have been and are ubiquitous complex beyond description.”<sup>1305</sup> However, the Jesus event cannot be reduced to a particular cultural unit. This point made by Paul to the Galatians remains valid even after two thousand years of Christianity.

### 6.3.3 Denominational Application

Paul wanted to remove ethnic orientated Christianity in Gal 3:26-29 (cf. also 5:6; 6:15; 1 Cor 7:19; 12:13), however, Christians have remained divided along religious groups. As Christianity continued to spread in the world, more Christian groups have grown out of the church of the apostles. The second Vatican Council explains. “By divine Providence it has come about that various churches, established in various places by the apostles and their successors, have in the course of time coalesced into several groups.”<sup>1306</sup> The church fathers called some of these groups “religious sects,” but not even their condemnation could stop the spread. Within the early church “sectarian practices” already continued to grow.<sup>1307</sup> There were different religious groups and heterodox movements like Gnosticism, Montanism, and Marcionism.<sup>1308</sup> They were called “religious sects” because they had new teachings, which were different from the teachings and practices of the apostles and their successors. Some of these religious groups were ordaining women not only as deacons but also allowing them to share in the ministry of the hierarchical priesthood.<sup>1309</sup> According to Franjo Cardinal Seper and Jêrôme Hamer, “a few heretical sects in the first centuries, especially Gnostic ones, entrusted the exercise of the priestly ministry to women. This innovation was immediately noted and condemned by the fathers, who considered it as unacceptable in the church.”<sup>1310</sup> The Catholic church has given her reasons for rejecting the entrustment of the priestly ministry to women. “This essential reason, namely, that by calling only men to the priestly order and ministry in its true sense, the church intends to remain faithful to the type of ordained ministry willed by the Lord Jesus Christ and carefully maintained by the Apostles.”<sup>1311</sup> (Cf. however, “and he

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<sup>1304</sup> Cf. Deeby, *A Missional Approach to Renewed Interpretation*, in: *Renewing Biblical Interpretation*, 269-270.

<sup>1305</sup> *Ibid*, 270.

<sup>1306</sup> *Lumen Gentium*, NO 23.

<sup>1307</sup> *Inter Insigniores*, NO 1.

<sup>1308</sup> Cf. Hauser and Watson, *A History of Biblical Interpretation*, 50.

<sup>1309</sup> Cf. Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 209.

<sup>1310</sup> *Inter Insigniores*, NO 1.

<sup>1311</sup> *Ibid*, NO 1.

[Christ] went up on the mountain, and called to him those whom he desired; and they came to him" (Mk 3:13). In some denominations, women are raised to the hierarchical order and the Pauline claim of "neither male and female" (Gal 3:28c) serves as the justifying text for such denominational practices. This shows that the different churches are interpreting and applying the text according to their own doctrinal teachings, pastoral practices, and in keeping with the role they assign to women (cf. also later interpretations of the Pauline texts in 1 Cor 14:34; 2 Tim 2:11-12). While Catholic theology and practice have not seen "the need of women in her hierarchy,"<sup>1312</sup> the Evangelical and neo-Pentecostal theology and practice have definitely seen the necessity of women in their churches and have allowed equal roles to "male and female." Christians are "one in Christ" (Gal 3:28), but in the areas of discipline, traditional heritage, doctrinal teachings and pastoral practices they are different from one another.<sup>1313</sup>

The translation of the Scripture into the vernacular across Africa and other continents has led to the growth of a variety of indigenous churches, which reject or significantly modify or greatly adapt and syncretize the teachings of biblical writers.<sup>1314</sup> For example, John Riches advocates for "creative diversity of forms of life (as opposed to uniformity of life and practice) which has flown from the embodiment of different understandings of the texts in particular communities at particular times."<sup>1315</sup> According to him, the better way of biblical hermeneutics is "to abandon the tight insistence on uniformity of belief as a mark of orthodoxy. Why should not different people hold different beliefs at different times and different places, all of which are 'orthodox' in the sense that they express the will of God for those communities at those times?"<sup>1316</sup> The Christian communities, therefore, "should be allowed to read their Bible and interpret it within their communities' context."<sup>1317</sup> The Christian communities in Mozambique or Burundi or Somalia or Liberia attempting to reconstruct their lives after the long and devastating years of civil war should not be expected to interpret the book of Exodus in the same way as the poor and oppressed people in Asia and

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<sup>1312</sup> Ibid, NO 1.

<sup>1313</sup> Lumen Gentium, NO 23.

<sup>1314</sup> Cf. Riches, A Response to Walter Sundberg, in: *Renewing Biblical Interpretation*, 86.

<sup>1315</sup> Ibid, 86.

<sup>1316</sup> Ibid, 85-86.

<sup>1317</sup> Ibid, 86.

Latin America or as the flamboyant communities in peaceful Europe.<sup>1318</sup> This is why Craig Bartholomew and others opine that we are in “an era of uncertainty and wild pluralism in which one meaning is as good as the hundreds of others” and “as a result of this pluralism there is a pervasive sense in the academy that biblical interpretation is subjective and inescapably so.”<sup>1319</sup> The problem, therefore, is that the truth is always seen from what the interpreter wants to say.<sup>1320</sup> However, private interpretations of biblical texts can have many consequences. They can lead to “a community based interpretation,”<sup>1321</sup> which sometimes lead “to bizarre exegesis,”<sup>1322</sup> and “to vicious or silly relativism.”<sup>1323</sup> Elisabeth Isichei gives another example of the dangers of subjective interpretation and application of biblical texts especially within the African continent. “There is a widespread belief that the end is near, so that catastrophes such as famines are regarded not as human problems needing human solutions, but as signals of its approach. There is a tendency to interpret social problems in demonic terms, too. It has been suggested that Liberia is afflicted by the demon of rice shortages. There is often an emphasis on miraculous healing.”<sup>1324</sup> These instances show some of the dangers inherent in private interpretation and application of the Scripture. Rather than making efforts to develop modern cure for common diseases, and working harder to prevent catastrophes such as draught, hunger, etc. the devil is blamed in African countries for human misfortunes, natural disasters, human mistakes and common sicknesses.

Christians now read Gal 3:26-29 but they apply it differently. This, however, also entails as G. T. Montague affirms, that “churches claiming a biblical base are constantly confronted with the multiplicity of scriptural interpretations given by other churches, some of them contradictory.”<sup>1325</sup> Anthony J. Godzieba opines that “the hermeneutical problem arises precisely at this juncture of ‘same’ and ‘difference’: How does one understand the other ... when the other is like myself yet expresses an individuality which is unlikely my own?”<sup>1326</sup> When Christians branch off to their different denominational practices and theological

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<sup>1318</sup> Cf. Ibid, 86: “Reading the Bible in community means listening carefully to the text, allowing it to inform the community's understanding of its situation and to help it to see its way forward, to discern God's presence and will for them in that situation. Different texts will speak differently to different peoples.”

<sup>1319</sup> Bartholomew, Greene, and Möller, *Renewing Biblical Interpretation*, xxv.

<sup>1320</sup> Godzieba, *Hermeneutics*, in: *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 786.

<sup>1321</sup> Riches, *A Response to Walter Sundberg*, in: *Renewing Biblical Interpretation*, 86.

<sup>1322</sup> Isichei, *A History of Christianity in Africa*, 335.

<sup>1323</sup> Fowl, *The Role of Authorial Intention in the Theological Interpretation of Scripture*, in: *Between Two Horizons. Spanning New Testament Studies and Systematic Theology*, 77.

<sup>1324</sup> Isichei, *A History of Christianity in Africa*, 335.

<sup>1325</sup> Montague, *Hermeneutics, Biblical*, in: *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 791.

<sup>1326</sup> Godzieba, *Hermeneutics*, in: *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 788.

applications of Gal 3:26-29, one sees their differences. One cannot comfortably say that Catholics and the “separated brethren” are one in theory and practice. It is not possible to speak of the neo-Pentecostal and Mainline Churches as “one” in their application of Gal 3:26-29.<sup>1327</sup> Christians are followers of one Lord (Jn 13:12-14) but they follow him from different standpoints. William Barclay maintains that “it is necessary to expound the full-orbed teaching of the New Testament, to remember that, while there is one Lord, there are many witnesses ...”<sup>1328</sup> Each faith-group has its own way of interpreting the Bible, and not only that, each faith-group wants its own interpretation to be accepted as the genuine one. But genuine hermeneutics is always inclusive in character and not subjective or private. The assembly in the days of Ezra the priest was an inclusive one, that comprised men, women and all those who could understand what was being read (Neh 8:1-8). Paul’s hermeneutics of Gal 3:26-29 is also an inclusive one: “You all” (3:28d; cf. also 1 Cor 12:13: “We all” were made to drink from the same Spirit), thereby emphasizing the equality of all those who are “one in Christ.” The inclusive character of Pauline hermeneutics and its application should serve as a model for the interpreters of the Scripture.

### 6.3.4 Application to Natural Disposition

It is not only within the ethno-cultural, ecclesiological and socio-religious structures that “male and female” are handled differently (cf. Col 3:18; 1 Tim 2:8-15; 1 Pt 3:1). God created them as “male and female” and in his own image (Gen 1:27). Nature has endowed them with certain qualities that pre-dispose them for certain roles and functions. Men do not have wombs and women do not produce semen, but women have ovaries and men have sperms. When a woman gives birth, she is called a mother. Women, then, are generally defined as mothers and regarded as guarantors of the continuity of humanity. Christa Mulack concurs. “*Ausgangspunkt dieses Weltbildes ist die Erfahrung, dass das weibliche Geschlecht allein in der Lage ist, Leben zu gebären, wohingegen das männliche Geschlecht unfruchtbar ist.*”<sup>1329</sup> The woman, however, is also “infertile” when it comes to the production of the seminal fluid. In certain natural dispositions, therefore, male and female have different functions.

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<sup>1327</sup> Cf. Riches, A Response to Walter Sundberg, in: *Renewing Biblical Interpretation*, 87.

<sup>1328</sup> Barclay, *Many Witnesses, One Lord*, 116.

<sup>1329</sup> Mulack, *Jesus - der Gesalbte der Frauen*, 109.

Although they have different roles, Jerome Murphy-O'Connor opines that “equality is the issue here, not complementarity.”<sup>1330</sup> Their natural disposition is not the only issue, rather, their playing of roles in the Christian community and in the society at large. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza maintains that the oneness of “male and female” is not a biological oneness. “It is not anthropological oneness but ecclesiological oneness or unity in Christ Jesus which is the goal of Christian baptism.”<sup>1331</sup> Through baptism “male and female” are “one in Christ Jesus” (Gal 3:27, 28) and they can play different religious and socio-political roles in their communities. By similarly excluding the religious distinction between Jews and Gentiles, slaves and free, which is the opposite of Col 3:22; Tit 2:9-10; 1 Pt 2:18, Paul makes a threefold negation to popular Jewish formulas in which this threefold distinction is maintained.<sup>1332</sup> Though they are created as “male and female” (Gen 1:27), their sex and gender do not play any advantageous or disadvantageous role “in Christ Jesus.” Although their natural roles are different, their equality in Christ is not determined by those anthropological differences, rather, by their baptism in the name of Christ.

### 6.3.5 Application to the Patriarchal System

Patriarchy means “a system of society in which men hold most or all of the power.”<sup>1333</sup> In this social structure, men dominate the women and children who are at the receiving end of the social system. Political power, moral authority, family decision making and economic control are usually in the hands of men.<sup>1334</sup> In this situation, women only participate in the power of men or take and obey instructions from men.<sup>1335</sup>

African society is patriarchal in nature and character. Women seek their roles in the churches and in the society very informally.<sup>1336</sup> Bernadette Mbuy-Beya opines that “women may be honoured in the church (and society), but their rights are mostly ignored.”<sup>1337</sup> The reason is simply. African society and the church in Africa are still male oriented as Musimbi Kanyoro affirms: “In Africa the church is still male both in the ordained ministry and in its

<sup>1330</sup> Murphy-O'Connor, Paul. A Critical Life, 290.

<sup>1331</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, In Memory of Her, 214.

<sup>1332</sup> Bruce, The Epistle to the Galatians, 187.

<sup>1333</sup> Soanes and Hawker, Patriarchy, in: Compact Oxford English Dictionary, 745.

<sup>1334</sup> Cf. Johnson, She Who Is, 25.

<sup>1335</sup> Cf. Boynton and Malin, Patriarchy, in: Encyclopedia of Women's Autobiography, 453.

<sup>1336</sup> Cf. Johnson, She Who Is, 25.

<sup>1337</sup> Mbuy-Beya, Woman, Who Are You?, 7.

theology and teaching.”<sup>1338</sup> Within African society, the majority of women do not yet see the need to take up ecclesiastical and political offices.<sup>1339</sup> According to Mercy A. Oduyoye, there are minor deities, shrines and goddesses that women and men are in-charge of. The chief priest and chief priestess of these minor deities have their own entourage. In such minor deities “gender plays little and often no part in who becomes an adherent of a particular deity.”<sup>1340</sup> But among the Igbo of Eastern Nigeria, the leadership in the community worship is the prerogative of the chief priest.<sup>1341</sup> During the communal sacrifices women do not enter the sanctuary of the shrine, but after the rituals they will join the men in the social celebrations. Women are not made traditional rulers (Igwe), they are not admitted into the councils of elders or made chief priests of communal deities. They do not bless cola nuts in the presence of men, or pour libation to the Supreme Being. Mercy A. Oduyoye avers that “the divinities in the traditional religion of both the Akan and the Yoruba are associated with specific genders ... While the Source Being is not represented in any concrete form, it must not be denied, as scholars and other intellectuals insist on doing, that in popular folk imagery and talk, this Being is masculine.”<sup>1342</sup> Also in Igbo traditional religion the Supreme Being (*Chukwu*) is represented in the imagery of a male as Emefie Ikenga-Metuh avers. “*Chukwu* is the creator of the whole world. He is transcendent.”<sup>1343</sup>

African society is mannish and women are still under the influence of the traditional institutions, ritual laws and taboos. There are arranged marriages, paying of dowries, restriction to domestic work and finance, lower educational qualification of women and a high rate of unemployment of female youths. Musimbi Kanyoro opines that “women in Africa are still struggling for equal treatment, whether to access health care, education, the labour market or political rights ... The general tendency is to regard African women as secondary and inferior to men ... It is therefore a known fact that women in African count but they are not counted.”<sup>1344</sup> These aforementioned factors affect greatly the women’s daily lives. Various ritual laws are imposed on them by the men as if they belonged to a different class of the children of God (Gal 3:26), and were not part of the heirs to the Abrahamic promise (3:29). While European women are worried that their male counterparts are better paid and women

<sup>1338</sup> Kanyoro, Not Without Struggle, in: Changing Relations Between Churches in Europe and Africa, 222.

<sup>1339</sup> Cf. Oduyoye, Daughters of Anowa: African Women and Patriarchy, 5.

<sup>1340</sup> Ibid, 113.

<sup>1341</sup> Cf. Ikenga-Metuh, Ritual Dirt and Purification Rites Among the Igbo, in: Journal of Religion in Africa, 6.

<sup>1342</sup> Oduyoye, Daughters of Anowa: African Women and Patriarchy, 111.

<sup>1343</sup> Ikenga-Metuh, Ritual Dirt and Purification Rites Among the Igbo, in: Journal of Religion in Africa, 6.

<sup>1344</sup> Kanyoro, Not Without Struggle, in: Changing Relations Between Churches in Europe and Africa, 217.



are under-paid, and want equal pay for both “male and female” in the same managerial positions, the entrusting of more leadership positions (ecclesiastical and civil) to women, the right and privileges of single-parenthood, the participation of more women in political activities and more domestic work for men, African socio-systems and structures are yet to reach the level where “male and female” are given opportunities in all fields of life — education, inheritance, marriage, etc. Put differently, African men are yet to see the need for equal treatment of “male and female” in the church and in the society. Sad as it may be, for now it is still “men first” and after them, women and children, which is the exact opposite of the European order: children, women and men. On the other hand, many African women see nothing wrong with the patriarchal structure and system. According to Bernadette Mbuy-Beya “many women are so convinced of their inferiority, that they firmly believe it is inherent in their nature and part of the order established by God”<sup>1345</sup> that women should be under men. Even when some women try to agitate for the equality of all in the church and in the society, African men see this as abnormal and express shocks that women dare to challenge the African socio-religious institutions. For such Africans, it is just normal that men are leaders of patriarchal institutions, stay in leading political and managerial positions, and that they have male pastors, who preach the word of God to them and administer the sacraments of the church.

In African society, women are expected to be obedient to their husbands and to take up their socially assigned roles with ease (cf. Gen 2:18-23; Eph 5:22; Col 3:18). The African socio-religious systems still advocate for what Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza describes as “the adoption of the Greco-Roman patriarchal order of the house with its injunctions to subordination and submission of the socially weaker party.”<sup>1346</sup> According to Elizabeth A. Johnson, women have always been on the receiving end. Until very recently women “have been consistently defined as mentally, morally, and physically inferior to men, created only partially in the image of God, even a degrading symbol of evil. Women’s sexuality has been derided as unclean and its use governed by norms laid down by men.”<sup>1347</sup>

Although in the sphere of African socio-religious institutions women are generally treated as “subordinates of men,” in private homes, however, women are in charge. The man labours hard to provide for the economic needs of the family, but when he brings the money

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<sup>1345</sup> Mbuy-Beya, *Woman, Who Are You?*, 9.

<sup>1346</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 245.

<sup>1347</sup> Johnson, *She Who Is*, 26.

home, the woman manages both him and the money. Women are in charge of the kitchen and household affairs,<sup>1348</sup> and men have no business there. Mercy A. Oduyoye affirms that “women ridicule men who invade their sacred domain and haven, the only place in the home where they can exercise autonomy and make decisions that affect the whole household without having a man cast a vote or a veto.”<sup>1349</sup> It is, therefore an exception and not the rule that a man lends a helping hand in the household works, and both men and women are at home with these anomalous situations. African women strongly believe that equality should not destroy the role of men in homes. However, it is one of the desired goals of this study that one day African men will start helping out in domestic works as more women are being educated, and that more tolerance will be injected into the rigid socio-religious institutions.

The domination of the society by men is yet a global issue. According to Elizabeth A. Johnson, “in society women have for most of history been denied political, economic, legal, and educational rights – in no country in the world are these yet equal to men in practice.”<sup>1350</sup> The difference, however, is that in African society women simply allow the men to take decisions in matters pertaining to public administration, economic and social issues. The African socio-religious constructs, thus, have closer resemblance to the ancient pious Jewish society.<sup>1351</sup> For a pious Jew, women are not qualified for public offices (cf. the later interpretation of Paul in 1 Cor 14:34) but they can join in saying the Amen at the end of the prayers. Joseph A. Fitzmyer opines that some Corinthian men would undoubtedly “allow the women to join audibly in ‘Amen’ to a prayer, as in the thanksgiving of 14:16, but would exclude them from any form of active public speaking in churches.”<sup>1352</sup> Like the pious Jews of yesteryears, it does not disturb the majority of the female folk in Africa that men are in-charge of the public offices, including the church’s hierarchy. Men, on their part, justify the patriarchal society with biblical texts such as: “He (your husband) shall rule over you” (Gen 3:16b), the woman is taken from one of the ribs of the man (Gen 2:21-23), wives are encouraged to be under their husbands and husbands are to respect their wives (Eph 5:22-25), for the “man is the head of the woman” (1 Cor 11:3; cf. Col 3:18; 1 Pt 3:1-6). Often the Bible is read and implemented as if Gal 3:26-29 were not part of it. Elizabeth A. Johnson maintains that religious

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<sup>1348</sup> Cf. Keddie, *The Past and Present of Women in the Muslim World*, in: *Women and Islam*, 64: “Women controlled cooking, which many men found important, and they could keep the home neat or messy, noisy or tranquil, attractive or unattractive to the husband’s visitors.”

<sup>1349</sup> Oduyoye, *Daughters of Anowa: African Women and Patriarchy*, 53.

<sup>1350</sup> Johnson, *She Who Is*, 25.

<sup>1351</sup> Cf. Ernst, *Synagoge*, in: *Herders Neues Bibel Lexikon*, 723.

<sup>1352</sup> Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 531.

patriarchy is one of the strongest forms of patriarchal structure which “understands itself to be divinely established. Consequently, the power of the ruling men is said by them to be delegated by God (invariably spoken about in male terms) and exercised by divine mandate.”<sup>1353</sup> Therefore, “male and female” are in principle “one in Christ” (Gal 3:28), one in the faith (cf. 3:26) but the socio-religious structures favour strong patriarchy, and this is a great obstacle to the oneness of Christians.

### 6.3.6 Institutional Application

Ethnic groups have different reasons why they discriminate against each other or against outsiders. Some of the reasons are based on religious belief, skin pigmentation, cultural practices, place of birth, language barriers, etc. The Igbo of Eastern Nigeria “discriminate against each other by the primary reason of the *Osu* caste system.”<sup>1354</sup> *Osu* is a generic name. A person who is called an *Osu* is designated as one of “the god-owned slaves.”<sup>1355</sup> He or she is a living sacrifice to the gods for the wellbeing of the community members, therefore, he or she is an outcast. The *Osu* is a person no one dares to associate with, for all that is associated with him or her is said to be evil.<sup>1356</sup> The *Osu* is different from the *Ohu* (household slave), who is a person that is alienated from his or her real home. The primary problem of an *Ohu* is the inability to be a free man or woman. He or she cannot move about when or where he or she wants unless he or she is manumitted.<sup>1357</sup> However, those who are called *Ohu* (household slaves) have been released into the general society by the *Nwadiala* (freeborn), but the *Osu* have not. Therefore, the emphasis here is on the institution of the *Osu* caste system in Igbo land. The *Osu* once had a distinctively known identity: Dirty long hair. Razorblade or the shaving off of the dirty long and coiled hair was a taboo.<sup>1358</sup> Today, they are not always called *Osu* for fear of the law, but they are nevertheless discriminated at all levels and within all the communities where they live. Hence, Jude C. Mgbodukwa opines that “judging from the thinking of the Igbo people, the unannounced definition of *Osu* is something that looks like a human being, but not really a human being; something that looks

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<sup>1353</sup> Johnson, *She Who Is*, 23.

<sup>1354</sup> Dike, *The Osu Discrimination in Igboland*, 2.

<sup>1355</sup> Onwubiko, *Facing the Osu Issue in the African Synod*, 18.

<sup>1356</sup> Cf. Ejidike, *Human Rights in the Cultural Traditions and Social Practice of the Igbo of South-Nigeria*, in: *Journal of African Law*, 81-82.

<sup>1357</sup> Cf. Onwubiko, *Facing the Osu Issue in the African Synod*, 19.

<sup>1358</sup> Cf. Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, 156.

like a spirit, but not really a spirit; that thing which is but is really not.”<sup>1359</sup> The *Osu* state indicates a dilemma. He or she is needed for the services of the gods and the community, but is abhorred by fellow human beings.

The *Osu* caste system as a religious institution is man-made slavery that is as old as Igbo land.<sup>1360</sup> In this institution, some men originally were dedicated to the gods, as a means of cleansing an abomination committed in the community.<sup>1361</sup> The history has it that, in the beginning the community built a small house near the shrine and the *Osu* (“a slave of the deity, and a sacred and holy being”)<sup>1362</sup> lived near it as the messenger of the god(s). His primary duty was to keep the environment of the shrine clean. He went in and out of the shrine without problems. His daily sources of income depended on what was sacrificed to the gods. At the same time, anything the *Osu* touched was left for him and anyone who harmed him defiled him/herself. To touch the *Osu* in any form was to compete with the gods over their rightful property. The *Osu* remains till today “a cult-slave,” “a property of the gods,” “a living sacrifice” to the deities,<sup>1363</sup> and “a ‘child’ that would never grow into adulthood in Igbo socio-cultural context.”<sup>1364</sup> Jude C. Mgbobukwa laments of their situation. “The unfortunate thing is that most of those being regarded as *Osu* in modern times never had anything to do with any deity from their childhood. They are often silently reminded of the status of their ancestors (Ezek 18:2).”<sup>1365</sup> Those who are freeborn (*Nwadiala*) are arrogant on the ground of their status. They see themselves as the absolute measure of all things, and believe that in Igbo society, “some class of people must be up and some class of people must be down.”<sup>1366</sup> This class superiority and inferiority concepts are chiefly maintained through the *Osu* caste system. The *Osu* represent also a socio-religious stigma that runs through entire Eastern Nigeria. Each community identifies them with coded names. The *Osu* need not dispute these names but ignoring them does not change what they are.<sup>1367</sup> Unfortunately, the *Osu* had to live with this ethno-cultural and socio-religious stigma up to this twenty first century.

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<sup>1359</sup> Cf. Mgbobukwa, Alusi, *Osu, and Ohu in Igbo Religion and Social Life*, 20.

<sup>1360</sup> Cf. Onwubiko, *Facing the Osu Issue in the African Synod*, 10: “Though no one can talk with historical precision as regards the origin of the *Osu*, one thing is definite; their origin is based on some religio-cultural beliefs that were the consequences of a peculiar ritual process.”

<sup>1361</sup> *Ibid*, 35.

<sup>1362</sup> Dike, *The Osu Discrimination in Igboland*, 3.

<sup>1363</sup> *Ibid*, 3.

<sup>1364</sup> Onwubiko, *Facing the Osu Issue in the African Synod*, 10.

<sup>1365</sup> Mgbobukwa, Alusi, *Osu, and Ohu in Igbo Religion and Social Life*, 20.

<sup>1366</sup> *Ibid*, 31-32.

<sup>1367</sup> Cf. Dike, *The Osu Discrimination in Igboland*, 3: “Different parts of Igbo land refer to the *Osu* in varied names: it is *Adu-Ebo* in *Nzam* in *Onitsha* (this is the mixture of *Igbo* and *Igala* language) and in the *Nsukka* area it is *Oruma*

Membership into the *Osu* caste system is genealogical by nature. Anyone whose great-grandparents or parents were *Osu* automatically becomes an *Osu* from birth, and such a child is discriminated against.<sup>1368</sup> Victor E. Dike opines that “it is a social category in which membership is fixed at birth and usually unchangeable. A social status or position conferred by a system based on class; a status stratified according to ritual purity, a social class separated from others by distinctions of hereditary rank.”<sup>1369</sup> In this line, Oliver A. Onwubiko rightly maintains that “the *Osu* begets an *Osu*.”<sup>1370</sup> It is not only that the *Osu* begets an *Osu*, the *Osu* also marries only an *Osu*. The marriage system in Igbo land is a family as well as a communal affair. One’s background plays a great role in the acceptance or rejection of the marriage enquiry. Investigations are usually carried out by both families, not simply to make sure that the couple to be are not biologically related (in order to avoid incest and consanguinity), but primarily to make sure that he or she is not an outcast or that the grandparents or parents have no criminal background. A conscious marriage arrangement between an *Osu* and a *Nwadiala* is an abomination in Igbo land and no community will simply allow this to happen. The traditional rulers, the councils of elders and traditional chiefs are custodians of this ethno-religious tradition and they maintain the “lineage purity” by making sure that there are no marital relationships between the *Osu* and the *Nwadiala*. According to Victor E. Dike, “the system discourages intimate love relationship and prohibits inter-marriages between the ‘*Nwadiala*’ and the ‘*Osu*’. The *Osu* is thus expected to marry only within the group — a principle of endogamy that requires that marriages take place within the same group.”<sup>1371</sup> Therefore, the *Osu* are forced by their status to marry one another, which contradicts the Igbo system of exogamous marriage, and puts the *Osu* in a situation where no Igbo family will admit them into their family lineage.

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(slaves for the gods). At *Awgwu* area it is called *Nwani* or *Ohualusi* and it is referred to as *Osu*, *Ume*, *Ohu* at *Orlu* and *Owerri* areas. It does not matter whether it is referred to as *Osu*, *Ume*, *Ohu*, *Oru*, *Ohu Ume* and *Omoni* (*Okpu-Aja*) as used or applied in different parts of Igbo land these names connote lower and unclean class, or sub-human being.”

<sup>1368</sup> Cf. Ikenga-Metuh, *Ritual Dirt and Purification Rites Among the Igbo*, in: *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 3: “My first acquaintance with Igbo notions of *nsò* (sacred prohibition) was about thirty years ago as a child, when my parents took me to my home town Nnewi, in the north-central part of Igboland in southeastern Nigeria. On one occasion, I walked across the outstretched legs of one of my playmates. Some of my close relatives who noticed this drew me aside and told me that my action was *nsò* (sacred prohibition) because the boy was an *osu* (ritual slave). They told me to go back and reverse my action by walking across his legs again, but from the opposite direction, otherwise I as well as any member of my family who crossed my own legs would become an *osu*.”

<sup>1369</sup> Dike, *The Osu Discrimination in Igboland*, 3.

<sup>1370</sup> Onwubiko, *Facing the Osu Issue in the African Synod*, V.

<sup>1371</sup> Dike, *The Osu Discrimination in Igboland*, 6.

Chinua Achebe deplores this practice. "It was scandalous that in the middle of the twentieth century a man could be barred from marrying a girl simply because her great-great-great-grandfather had been dedicated to serve a god, thereby setting himself apart and turning his descendants into a forbidden caste to the end of time. Quite unbelievable."<sup>1372</sup> Therefore, if your parents are from the *Osu* lineage, you are an *Osu*. Your wealth and education or even Christianity do not change your status.<sup>1373</sup> Oliver A. Onwubiko underscores this. "We must admit that there are still some hopeless prisoners of tradition who are doing the much they can to frustrate all attempts to eradicate this obnoxious practice."<sup>1374</sup> Furthermore, the *Osu* are also seen as unclean and any association with them renders the associate unclean as Oliver O. Onwubike attests. "It is an abomination in Igbo land for the *Nwadiala* to marry the *Osu* because they are deemed unclean,"<sup>1375</sup> and are associated with activities considered to be beneath the freeborn status, or simply because they are the lower class of people.<sup>1376</sup> The legalism of the law debar the pious Jew from associating with the Gentiles. The Gentiles are called "the godless," "the unholy" and "the unclean" people that defile the righteous Jew.<sup>1377</sup> Similarly, in Igbo land the *Osu* is said to defile the *Nwadiala*. Although the *Osu* and the *Nwadiala* now live side by side in many towns, the invisible red tapes are there and no one dares to cross them.

One can also voluntarily or involuntarily become an *Osu*. Some of the factors that could cause voluntary dedication include: Victimization, frustration, and poverty.<sup>1378</sup> To escape a distressing situation or a threat to one's life, a man can decide to voluntarily hand himself over to the gods, and by doing so, nobody dares to touch him. E.g., an *Ohu* who was "about to be killed for sacrifice or for the burial of his master could redeem himself by becoming an *Osu* and no longer *Ohu*. *Ohu* is a more graceful state to be but in matters of life and death, it would not be strange to see an *Ohu* running to a deity for protection."<sup>1379</sup> Furthermore, if one kills an animal belonging to the deity, such as the sacred python, and if the deity refuses to accept another animal, the community will dedicate the offender to the deity. An *Osu*'s act of charity can also turn a freeborn into an *Osu*. If a woman who is an *Osu* curdles a baby, and this act is

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<sup>1372</sup> Achebe, *No Longer at Ease*, 65.

<sup>1373</sup> Cf. Dike, *The Osu Discrimination in Igboland*, 3.

<sup>1374</sup> Onwubiko, *Facing the Osu Issue in the African Synod*, 41.

<sup>1375</sup> *Ibid*, 3.

<sup>1376</sup> Cf. Mgbobukwa, Alusi, *Osu, and Ohu in Igbo Religion and Social Life*, 20.

<sup>1377</sup> Cf. Kocûr, *National and Religious Identity*, 56-57.

<sup>1378</sup> Cf. Mgbobukwa, Alusi, *Osu, and Ohu in Igbo Religion and Social Life*, 16.

<sup>1379</sup> *Ibid*, 17.

made known to the community, the child grows up as an *Osu*. Although the baby is from a freeborn family, *Osu's* charitable act has infected him or her.<sup>1380</sup> If a freeborn runs into the halt of an *Osu*, even at the peril of life, and the *Osu* protects him or her, the person has surrendered him/herself to the *Osu* world, and from that moment on, the person is an *Osu*.<sup>1381</sup> Therefore, there are many means through which one can become an *Osu*, and these means are to be avoided at all costs. For in whatever way one becomes an *Osu*, the bottom line is that the person has become the property of some god(s) and thereby an outcast. Here, fear plays a big role in the maintaining of the *Osu* caste system as Jude C. Mgbobukwa, affirms. "Aware that some *alusi* (gods) are considered to be powerful, one easily recognizes the reason why, owing to fear, a great majority of the Igbo population would not as much look the other way in pursuance of such values that might be opposed to the wishes of such *alusi* (gods). *Osu* and those things said to be consecrated to such *alusi* are the worst for such fear."<sup>1382</sup> As a rule, the *Nwadiala* has no business in the company of the *Osu* and vice-versa. All associations with the *Osu* are based on the "we and them," "they and us" dichotomy. There is always a respectable distance between the *Osu* and the rest of the community members. An open friendship with an *Osu* is punishable, sometimes by ostracism or by the appeasement of the gods.<sup>1383</sup>

Although the church in Igbo land is generally against the *Osu* cast system, some of the members of the church are not, as (e.g.) Jude C. Mgbobukwa illustrates. "Most Christians still think that church leaders have not understood what *Osu* really is. The general feeling is that to understand who he is, is to confirm and join in the ostracism."<sup>1384</sup> In some churches the *Osu* group sits separately from the *Nwadiala*. If any *Nwadiala* dares to sit among the *Osu* group, the rest of the *Nwadiala* would be wondering if he or she has become an *Osu*, and after the religious service, the *Nwadiala* who sat among the *Osu* group will find it hard to be welcomed back among the *Nwadiala*. He or she is treated as an *Osu* just for sitting among the *Osu*.<sup>1385</sup> Onwukwe Alaezi regrets the position of some Nigerian pastors in this matter. "The other set of possible setbacks about which the preachers and churches in Igbo land have woefully failed to handle has to do with idolatry and associated sins — the *Osu*-caste ... The priests of these

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<sup>1380</sup> Ibid, 16.

<sup>1381</sup> Ibid, 34-35.

<sup>1382</sup> Ibid, 14.

<sup>1383</sup> Cf. Dike, *The Osu Discrimination in Igboland*, 6.

<sup>1384</sup> Mgbobukwa, *Alusi, Osu, and Ohu in Igbo Religion and Social Life*, 42.

<sup>1385</sup> Cf. Onwubiko, *The Osu Issue in the African Synod*, 64.

churches do not want to eradicate the *osu*-pagan abomination so as not to reduce the amount of eggs, chickens, goats and yams, which they take home on Sundays.”<sup>1386</sup> If a pastor welcomes the *Osu* in the church’s council or insists on the abolition of the *Osu* caste system within the Christian community, he is going to lose most of the members. The pastor who dares to welcome an *Osu* into a leading position in the church runs the risk of losing credibility among the members or even risks his office, because “the *Osu* stigma on the entire Igbo race is general.”<sup>1387</sup> The fear of being called *Osu* debars the Igbo people from welcoming the *Osu* into leading positions, and at the same time hinders every free association within the community. Martin O. Ejidike stresses the all-inclusive nature of this problem. It is not just the problem of the church members, but the problem of the entire Igbo community. “Numerous Igbo communities are opposed to the full integration of this class of people into normal communal life. To this day, they are excluded from taking important titles or playing any significant roles in society in certain areas. Their localization within specific areas of certain towns (near shrines, for example), has also remained fundamentally unaltered, fostered by the communal system of land ownership. Attempts to eliminate discrimination against slaves, *Ohu*, and outcasts, *Osu*, through legislation have so far failed.”<sup>1388</sup> The issue, therefore, is a communal refusal to integrate all those who are classified as *Osu*. Jude C. Mgbobukwa maintains “that the problem has not much to do with ignorance about what to do as to the will to decide to do it.”<sup>1389</sup> No one wants *Osu* in public places, and those who wish to relate with them can only hide and do that, but at their own risk.

The *Osu* are also politically nobodies. They have no right to attend communal gatherings, and their opinions do not matter. It could be said, however, that there is an improvement in the treatment of the *Osu* because in the past, he or she had to ring a bell to warn the freeborn that an *Osu* was coming, however, the removal of the bell does not make the *Osu* a *Nwadiala*. The practice of the *Osu* caste system comes up to neo-slavery. Just as the slave in Greco-Roman society had no right to any socio-political or material inheritance, the *Osu* has no rights also. But while the slave may become freed (Gal 3:28b; Phlm 16), the *Osu* will never become *Nwadiala*. That the *Osu* caste system is still practiced in Igbo society up to this day “demands that considerable undertaking be given it at least for the fact that it sets

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<sup>1386</sup> Alaezi, *Ibos: Hebrew Exiles from Israel*, 176.

<sup>1387</sup> *Ibid*, 178.

<sup>1388</sup> Ejidike, *Human Rights in the Cultural Traditions and Social Practice of the Igbo of South-Nigeria*, in: *Journal of African Law*, 81-82.

<sup>1389</sup> Mgbobukwa, *Alusi, Osu, and Ohu in Igbo Religion and Social Life*, 8.



the Igbo decades back.”<sup>1390</sup> Furthermore, the *Osu* caste system contradicts the principles of neither “slave nor freed” (Gal 3:28). It is a negative way of life that demands for an urgent attention, but neither the church, the state nor the community leaders have done enough to free themselves from this ethno-cultural and socio-religious bondage.

In life and in death, the hostility towards *Osu* thrives unabated. There are no standard burial grounds and undertakers in Igbo land. Therefore, the *Osu* must bury an *Osu*. The digging of the grave, the lowering of the corpse and the closing of the grave are all done by the fellow *Osu* and not by the *Nwadiala*. One only hopes that the principle, “you all are one in Christ Jesus” (3:28d) will one day be applied to the *Osu* caste system in Igbo land. De facto is that *Osu* caste system contradiction 3:26-29, and as such needs to be totally eradicated in Igbo land.

#### 6.4 Summary of Hermeneutics and Its Applications

It is hard for all Christians to accept a particular interpretation, explanation and application of a given text. This difficulty not only arises with Gal 3:26-29, but is also experienced in other biblical texts like Rom 16:1, 3, 7; 1 Cor 7:21-24; 11:3; 14:34, etc. According to Alan J. Hauser and Duane F. Watson, “it may seem an anomaly that after more than two thousand years of biblical interpretation, there are still major disagreements today among biblical scholars about what the Jewish and Christian Scriptures say, and about how one is to interpret and understand their content.”<sup>1391</sup> However, positive efforts have been made in order to bridge this gap, and these efforts are yielding valuable results. But as long as there are different followers of Christ, different worshipers of God, various understandings and faith-oriented interpretations and explanations of biblical texts, there are also bound to be different ways of textual applications within the numerous Christian communities. Hence, “the interpretative possibilities are indefinite.”<sup>1392</sup>

There are also different cultural orientations, which form part of the reason why interpreters seem not to agree among themselves. However, one should not forget that while there is only one Lord (Eph 4:5), there are many witnesses and that each of these witnesses follows the same Lord from different theological and cultural angles. William Barclay avers

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<sup>1390</sup> Ibid, 35.

<sup>1391</sup> Hauser and Watson, A History of Biblical Interpretation, VII.

<sup>1392</sup> Ibid, VII.

that “one of the worst of all mistakes is to standardize one religious experience, and to speak and to preach as if there were no other. The New Testament has its John and James as well as its Paul. The amazing thing about the New Testament is its frank admission that there are many ways to God.”<sup>1393</sup> Therefore, the different ethno-cultural, socio-economic and religious conditions of men and women make it necessary to speak of the oneness of “all in Christ” but at the same time to remind the reader of the different hermeneutical applications. This is due to “the multi-layered richness and open-endedness of the biblical text itself; and the interplay of this diverse richness with the enormous variety in the worldviews of the various communities and individuals, living in many different ages, who have had to interpret the Scriptures in order to provide a direct and vital message for each of these communities and individuals.”<sup>1394</sup>

African way of life poses particular challenges to the “oneness” of Christians. The areas of patriarchy, socio-religious and ethno-cultural taboos, and economic structures of the continent need to be reappraised. Why should women be restricted to the kitchen? Why should they not hold leadership positions within the traditional institutions? Why must one be a male child before being legible to inherit the family’s property? These challenges are still to be handled so that the principles of “oneness” of Christians in Christ can speak to the ethno-cultural and socio-religious taboos and traditional institutions. This study advocates for the deconstruction of the socio-religious patriarchy in Africa, and wishes that the women be allowed also their God given freedom in Christ (Gal 5:1; cf. also “where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom,” 2 Cor 3:17). However, African society is strongly mannish. It is unfortunate that African men simply bully their way through in all areas of life. This should be stopped. One looks forward to the day when the society and the church in Nigeria cum African will join the developed world in their quest for the equality of “male and female,” the admission of African women and the *Osu* into those socio-religious and cultural institutions in question.

The *Osu* caste system shows very impressively the dark side of the Igbo culture as it dehumanizes and categorizes many people as semi-human beings, and treats them as outcasts within the society. This maltreatment contradicts Gal 3:26-29 as those who share the same “faith in Christ Jesus” still look at *Osu* as second-class citizens. But Paul’s theology of non-

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<sup>1393</sup> Barclay, *Many Witnesses, One Lord*, 115.

<sup>1394</sup> *Ibid*, VII-VIII.

discrimination welcomes Jews and Gentiles, slaves and freed, male and female on equal terms. Therefore, nobody should be treated anymore as an Osu in Igbo land. The obnoxious tradition of Osu cast system should not only be abrogated on the official level, it must, in practice be eradicated, “for you all are one in Christ” (3:28d).

## Chapter Seven: Evaluation and Conclusion

### 7.1 The Resume

This work takes its pivotal point from Gal 3:26-29, which is the conclusion from chapter three. Paul affirms that there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor freed, neither male and female (v 28) among the sons and daughters of God (v 26) and heirs of Abraham (v 29), and among those who have “put on Christ” (v 27), because they “all are one in Christ” (v 28d).<sup>1395</sup> Gal 3:26-29 which is only a glimpse into the life and teaching of Paul, serves as a stepping stone in this work. Anthony J. Godzieba holds it possible that “the author’s inner life is glimpsed through one particular text, while the particular text is understood as meaningful when interpreted in the context of an author’s whole life-experience and the whole of the semantic system within which it has been conceived.”<sup>1396</sup> Hence, this work also includes the analysis of other Pauline texts: Gal 6:15; 1 Cor 12:13; Phlm 15-16 (cf. Gal 5:6; 1 Cor 7:19; 2 Cor 5:17). The deuterio-Pauline tradition is exemplified in Col 3:9-11 (cf. Eph 2:11-22). Gal 3:28 presents the overview of Paul’s theology of oneness of Christians, and negates different forms of discrimination, stratification, racial profiling, sex and gender-role designation for all those who are “in Christ,” while Col 3:9-11 illustrates the extension of Pauline thought, which could have developed during or after his death at about 64-68 AD.<sup>1397</sup>

This study is divided into eight chapters. The first chapter deals with introductory issues, the historicity of the letter and the personality of Paul. Who are the Galatians? When was the letter written? Who informed Paul of what was happening in Galatia? Who are the “false brothers” (Gal 2:4)? Paul accuses the Galatians of being “bewitched” (*τίς ὑμᾶς ἐβόσκανε*, 3:1), which shows that he is aware of their being under a negative influence, but to accuse Paul himself of “delusion” is improbable. Paul has a balanced and respected personality. He attracts friends and foes around himself as a magnet attracts filings. Although it is often said that he is nothing much to look at (cf. 2 Cor 10:10), he plainly has that warm and outgoing kind of personality which draws out people’s good will and affection towards him (Rom 16:3-4). The other side of him is shown by those who would not cherish him at any price as people were rarely neutral towards him.<sup>1398</sup>

<sup>1395</sup> Cf. Hansen, Abraham in Galatians, 122.

<sup>1396</sup> Godzieba, Hermeneutic in: New Catholic Encyclopedia, 788.

<sup>1397</sup> Cf. Mehl, Der politische Raum des Paulus: Das Römische Reich, in: Paulus. Leben – Umwelt – Werk – Briefe, 5-6.

<sup>1398</sup> Cf. Bruce, The Pauline Circle, 8-9.

The letters show that Paul is a careful and a disciplined thinker. If we read his writings with the empathy that every author deserves, we will find out that his arguments are genuine. He addresses people who are going through concrete and urgent problems, and in order to meet them at their own level and at the point of their need, he is practical and ready “to use emotive language and hyperbole.”<sup>1399</sup> Judging Paul’s letters as if he is writing them for twenty first century scholars would mean to take his works out of their original context. Indeed, one wonders if Paul might not have chosen his words differently if he had known that for nearly two millennia his epistles would be given microscopic scrutiny by so many generations of scholars. Since he wrote to his contemporaries rather than to us, the unknown future generations, it is also true that he did not focus strongly on carefully coordinating his words with other letters that would also eventually find their way into the Scripture.<sup>1400</sup> When Paul wrote the letter to the congregations in Corinth or Galatia or to Philemon, his concern to confront and to resolve the problems of the specific community was predominant, and that is why some details of the discussions are different from one another. In short, Paul was not reprinting his letters but teaching and expanding what he had orally taught the community members.

The second chapter is concerned with a detailed study of Gal 3:1-29. According to John M. G. Barclay, we are entitled to know whether Paul’s arguments constituted an effective response to the Galatian crisis or not.<sup>1401</sup> Paul does his catechetical work very well. How did the Galatians come to know Christ if not through the hearing of the message of faith (3:2; cf. Rom 10:17)? How did they come to know the true gospel (Gal 1:5-7)? Certainly they were taught by Paul, and they understood most of his points. If they did not understand Paul’s teachings, there would have been no need of their reporting the new situation in their communities to him. Paul was also responding to the teaching of the Judaizers which is scripturally oriented (cf. Gen 12:3; 17:11-14; 18:18). Paul presents careful arguments to the Galatians. His arguments are convincing because they offer a wider variety of topical potentials, which include arguments from Scripture, from tradition, from experience, and from common practices. Mika Hietanen rightly maintains that “Paul puts forth his argumentation by using the full range of *logos*, *ethos*, and *pathos* elements.”<sup>1402</sup> His

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<sup>1399</sup> Ibid, 146-147.

<sup>1400</sup> Cf. Hauser and Watson, A History of Biblical Interpretation, 5.

<sup>1401</sup> Cf. Barclay, Obeying the Truth, 95.

<sup>1402</sup> Hietanen, Paul’s Argumentation in Galatians, 195.

arguments include a variety of presentational devices, irony, personal appeal, allegory, and vilification.<sup>1403</sup>

Chapter three, the core of our study, deals with a linguistic analysis of 3:26-29, the biblical and traditional sources of the text, Pauline redaction and a detailed exegesis of 3:26-29. The pronouns ἡμεῖς (“us”) in 3:13 as well as πάντες (“all”) in 3:26, 28 refer to both Jews and Gentiles. The redemptive work of Christ is universal and that is why Paul includes himself, his fellow Jews and the Gentiles in the redemptive work of Christ (cf. Rom 11:13-15). J. Louis Martyn affirms that “Paul undermines the ethnic and religious distinctions in the church by including himself, a person of Jewish lineage, with the Galatians, persons of Gentile descent.”<sup>1404</sup> The universal power of the law’s curse consists precisely of its act in differentiating and separating the observant from the non-observant, the pious from the godless and the Jew from the Gentile (Gal 2:15). In opposition to this ethnic regimentation and classification, the universal power of Christ’s death is revealed in his lifting off these differentiating factors.<sup>1405</sup> Christ “ransomed” or “redeemed” us (ἐξαγοράζω) from the curse (κατάρα) of the law (Gen 17:11-14). Christ has become a curse on our behalf (Deut 21:23; Gal 3:13). This affirmation reflects a sacrificial language that was employed in ancient Israel (cf. Lev 4:27-31).<sup>1406</sup> The blood of the sacrificial lamb cleansed the participants on the Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippur*), and Christ has become our paschal lamb (1 Cor 5:7), a lamb without blemish (1 Pt 1:19), that takes away the sins of the world (Jn 1:29). Therefore, the death of Christ is not a Jewish event only (cf. Rom 3:29), therefore, the “us” and the “all” refer to both Jews and Gentiles. Prior to Christ’s coming, the world was under the elemental spirits (Gal 4:3; cf. 4:8; Col 2:8, 20), but now the world is liberated from this enslavement.<sup>1407</sup> “In short ... the pronouns of verses [3:] 13-14 point to one of the central facets of Paul’s thought in Galatians: In essence the human race was a monolith prior to Christ’s advent, and it is the human race as a whole that Christ has liberated.”<sup>1408</sup> The work of salvation does not flow from the Jews to

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<sup>1403</sup> Cf. Ibid, 194-195.

<sup>1404</sup> Martyn, Galatians, 322-323.

<sup>1405</sup> Ibid, 327.

<sup>1406</sup> Cf. Ibid, 318.

<sup>1407</sup> Ibid, 317.

<sup>1408</sup> Ibid, 317-318.

the Gentiles, rather, it is God's salvation for all those who "were imprisoned under sin" (Gal 3:22-25).<sup>1409</sup> God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself (2 Cor 5:18-20).

When Paul said that there is "neither male and female" in Christ Jesus, he was attacking the socio-religious, ethno-cultural and political roles denied to the women within the ancient society. Paul has no problem working with women as his "coworkers" or as community leaders (Phil 4:2-3; cf. Rom 16:3) or as "deacons" or as "apostles" (Rom 16:1, 7).<sup>1410</sup> The claim that Paul forgot women in his letter to the Galatians is improbable because it lacks exegetical and historical plausibility.<sup>1411</sup> If there is any place that Paul clearly defended the role of women, it is in Galatians 3:28. And what Paul teaches in Gal 3:28 applies also to his teaching in all the churches (1 Cor 16:1).

Chapter four shows that the issue of division in the Christian communities does not only exist in Galatia, rather, it takes a new dimension in Corinth where spiritual gifts are leading to spiritual elitism.<sup>1412</sup> The master-slave relationship is also an issue in the little community in Philemon's house. Paul tells Philemon that the slave Onesimus has become his adopted child (Phlm 10) and "a beloved brother ... in the Lord" (16). Therefore, he categorically rejects slavery.

Paul was at home with the Jews (for he is a Jew, Phil 3:5), he became like the Gentiles and the Hellenistic segments of the diaspora communities (1 Cor 9:19-23), and in his socio-religious life, he shattered the ethnic mould in which categorizations were formed. Paul is familiar also with the Jewish and the Gentile disputations, with synagogues (Gal 2:1-10), workshops (3:15), civic prisons (Phlm 9), and Gentile homes (Gal 4:14), and his letter reveals a man well able to adapt the message of the gospel to a variety of audiences.<sup>1413</sup> He developed and applied strong arguments to the Gentile mission, with which he devalues all the ethnic particularities (3:28). "Paul deracinates a culturally conservative expression of the Jewish tradition and uses it in the service of his largely Gentile communities."<sup>1414</sup> He takes God's covenant with Abraham (Gen 15:7-21) and translates its fulfillment in Christ (Gal 3:29). The salvation of the elected Israel (Ex 14:30) is fulfilled in the salvation of the whole world (Gal 3:13-14). In Greco-Roman

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<sup>1409</sup> Cf. *Ibid*, 312: "By the power of its universal curse, the Law has established its own realm, and in that cursed realm no one is being set right. Why not? Doubtless because the Law has as its business to pronounce a curse (v 10); but also because the source of rectification lies elsewhere".

<sup>1410</sup> Cf. Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 219.

<sup>1411</sup> Cf. Barclay, *Mirror-Reading a Polemical Letter*, 85.

<sup>1412</sup> Cf. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 588.

<sup>1413</sup> *Ibid*, 89.

<sup>1414</sup> *Ibid*, 110.

society, classism and ethnic distinctions were a reality, but Paul sees such categorizations as merely human anomalies which the death and resurrection of Christ have rendered irrelevant. Paul employs Hellenistic categories in his explanations, e.g. the metaphor of the body that was a known category in the Hellenistic world (1 Cor 12:12-13).<sup>1415</sup> He did not invent new categories as counter principles against the existing ones, rather, he borrowed and applied the Hellenistic metaphor when he saw that the Corinthians could not live in unity (1 Cor 12). There was a discrimination of Jews and Greeks, a categorization of slaves, freed slaves and freeborn, and to counter these opposites, he simply negates these well-known categories (Gal 3:28).

The inclusion of “male and female” in Gal 3:28 and its exclusion in 5:6; 6:15; 1 Cor 7:19; 12:13 is also a remarkable item. The Corinthian crisis is obviously a different issue. It is a question of whose spiritual gift is more important in the community (1 Cor 12-14), while the problem in Galatia is the ethno-religious and socio-cultural roles that excluded women (cf. 1 Cor 11:3-5). One only needs to look at the Marcan account of the feeding of the five thousand men not to mention women and children (Mk 6:44) as well as Ex 12:37 and Num 1:26 where women are not counted in the census to know that Paul never wanted to stress the subordination of women here (cf. however, later interpretations in 1 Cor 14:34; Col 3:18; Eph 5:22-23; 1 Pt 1:5).<sup>1416</sup> Paul, therefore, should not be seen as someone who was afraid of the consequences of his teaching, which led him not to mention “male and female” in Corinth, but as a man who was addressing particular issues and situations in different communities. According to David I. Starling, “the scholarly consensus that the same writer, Paul, was responsible for Galatians, Romans and 2 Corinthians is not enough to warrant a facile assumption that the hermeneutical approaches of all three letters are identical; allowance must be made for the possibility that Paul’s understanding developed from letter to letter, or that his rhetorical use of Scripture was adapted in response to the different situations that occasioned his various letters.”<sup>1417</sup> The communities generated questions for which Paul had no ready-made answers, and “his response in each case is tailored to the particular situation, but rooted in a consistent core, which is his vision of Christ.”<sup>1418</sup>

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<sup>1415</sup> Cf. Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 157-158.

<sup>1416</sup> Cf. Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 414.

<sup>1417</sup> Starling, *Not My People*, 5.

<sup>1418</sup> Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul. A Critical Life*, VII.



After Paul's death, the issues of Greeks and Jews, barbarians and Scythians, slaves, freed slaves and freeborn become the challenges facing the Christian communities. Greeks now occupy the prominent position which is contrary to the issue of Jews and Greeks in Pauline texts (e.g. Gal 3:28; 1 Cor 12:13). Slaves and women now are to be subordinate to their husbands and masters (Col 3:18-25). Brigitte Kahl opines that "women and slaves, in particular, have often been told in the name of Paul to submit to their masters and to know their place in the order of things. It is Paul of Tarsus, rather than Jesus of Nazareth, who is more often quoted to confirm the political status quo and to silence voices for social change as faith-less and dogmatically incorrect."<sup>1419</sup> Part of the problems of those who criticize Paul based on the subordination of women and slaves in the Christian community is the presumption that the notions presented in deuterio- and trito-Pauline letters are genuine Pauline notions. This position frequently attributed to Paul by commentators is the beginning of the misunderstood and misinterpreted Paul (compare Col 3:18; Eph 5:22 and 1 Tim 2:8-15 with Gal 3:26-29; Phlm 15-16 and 1 Cor 7:22; 11:5). A comparison of Brigitte Kahl's position with Col 1:15; 3:10-11; Eph 2:11-22 and Gal 3:20b; 3:28; Rom 3:30 and 2 Cor 5:18 shows that she argues from deuterio-Pauline texts and not from Pauline letters.<sup>1420</sup>

Chapter five is centered on the theology of oneness of Christians. If Christianity is to remain a universal faith in Christ (Gal 3:13-14), then those who are "in Christ" form one body in him (1 Cor 12:12, 27), through the same Spirit which they received at baptism (12:13).<sup>1421</sup> Richard W. Hove's theory of "qualified equality"<sup>1422</sup> is difficult to sustain in a community where the founder is the servant of the members (Matt 20:25-28; Mk 10:42-45; cf. Rom 1:1). The societal standard of measurement includes wealth, social status, gender, talent, physical strength, etc. but this is not the same standard of measurement for those who are "one in Christ." In the Christian community and among God's children, Christ is the common denominator. In the society at large, fame and economic power, etc. are important, but for those who are "in Christ," these factors are irrelevant.

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<sup>1419</sup> Kahl, *Galatians Re-Imagine*, 4.

<sup>1420</sup> Cf. Wolter, *Der Brief an die Kolosser*, 171.

<sup>1421</sup> Cf. Edwards, *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture*, 51.

<sup>1422</sup> Cf. Hove, *Equality in Christ?*, 116: "In light of what we have learned about the nature of equality, we can say that 'oneness' in Galatians 3:28 does not imply unqualified equality. While the expression 'you are all one' doubtless implies some notion of equality for Jew/Gentile, slave/free, man/woman, it does not follow that men and women are equal in all regards. The lexical data will not allow this, nor does the expression 'you are all one' mean this."

Chapter six deals with the issue of hermeneutics of Gal 3:26-29 and its application to the patriarchal, socio-economic, religious and cultural systems and institutions in Nigeria cum Africa. Elisabeth Isichei rightly accuses some African pastors of “bizarre exegesis”<sup>1423</sup> because they literally read, interpret and apply the biblical texts. This study rejects the Osu caste system, as well as the relegation of women and calls for the abolition of all the institutionalized patriarchal systems that do not encourage the oneness of all “in Christ.” It affirms that the universal nature of the Jesus event makes all those who are “in Christ” one with and in him. Heinrich Schlier concurs: *“Sie sind in Christus alle zusammen Einer, der Leib Christi; sie sind es freilich so, dass jeweils jeder Einzelne im Verhältnis zum Anderen Christus ist, also deutlicher: dass sie nur noch Glieder Christi sind.”*<sup>1424</sup>

Chapter seven is the evaluation and conclusion. Chapter eight, finally contains the bibliography, the attachment of the abstract and the curriculum vitae.

## 7.2 Evaluation and Conclusion

Paul argues out his point in the whole of Gal 3. He begins the argument from 3:1-25, and the last four verses (3:26-29) follow conclusively. The Galatians are “one in Christ” because they are brothers and sisters (v 15). They are sons and daughters of God (v 26) because of their faith through which they received the Spirit at the beginning of their Christian lives (vv 2-3, 5), and they are like Abraham their father in faith (vv 6-9 and 18). It is not as if Paul suddenly mentions sons and daughters of God and heirs of Abraham in verses 26-29, rather, it is the necessary conclusion drawn from what he has said already. He assures the Galatians that they are one, their differences notwithstanding. Richard W. Hove emphasizes that “the great mercies and blessings of God are given to all God’s people, without distinctions, regardless of one’s sex, race, or social/financial background ... ‘One’ is used first in the sense of incorporation (the many in the one), and then, derivatively, for unity ... Galatians 3:28 implies that every effort should be made to create and maintain unity among God’s diverse people ... God’s people are diverse, yet stand equally before him.”<sup>1425</sup> Paul expands this principle in his letter to the Corinthians. He thinks of one in many and many in one (1 Cor 12:12-13). If Paul had lived in the twenty first century, he would have been speaking of

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<sup>1423</sup> Isichei, A History of Christianity in Africa, 335.

<sup>1424</sup> Schlier, Der Brief an die Galater, 175.

<sup>1425</sup> Hove, Equality in Christ?, 121-123.

multiculturalism or multinational cooperation. He speaks of unity in diversity and diversified unity in Corinth (cf. 1 Cor 12:4-12). The two thousand years separating us from the time the letter to the Galatians was written is a long period of time. Timothy George avers that the various expressions “and turns of argument which may be ambiguous to us were doubtless perfectly clear to the Galatians.”<sup>1426</sup> We are like “strangers” to the letter and we need efforts to get to the root of the expressions and the concepts therein. Paul seems to be speaking to us in a kind of “theological shorthand” that is not easy for us to understand. The expressions that were meaningful to the Galatians have become epigrammatic for us.<sup>1427</sup> However, given the flexibility as well as the limitations of human language and considering the time Paul wrote his letters, “formal discrepancies are inevitable (unless we want to sound totally pedantic, in which case communication is undermined rather than enhanced), and we must not assume that they imply a material discrepancy, that is, a real contradiction.”<sup>1428</sup>

Paul presents the heart of his gospel in Galatians 3:26-29.<sup>1429</sup> In Christ Jesus, all the differences in the areas of ethnicity and its identity mark (cf. Gal 5:6; 6:15; 1 Cor 7:19), social status and human classification, sex and gender categorization give way to the reality of oneness of all in Christ Jesus (1 Cor 12:13; Phlm 15-16; cf. Col 3:11). It is out of God’s own making that human beings are created differently. There are many worshippers of one God, having one faith in Christ but their faces, situations and needs are different. Therefore, they are like travelers going to the same destination on different routes. This movement is a daily struggle that has its ups and downs. The spiritualization and the eschatologization of the concept of oneness of Christians are rejected in this study because the issues at stake are not only spiritual and eschatological, but also practical. Circumcision is not only a covenant between God and Abraham (Gen 17:11-14), but a religious act as well as a sign of social belonging. The right to “belong” or “not to belong” are ethnic or nationalistic and socio-cultural constructs, which add nothing to being human even though they help in national and socio-cultural identification. It is, therefore, regrettable to experience that scholarly discussions on the theme of the oneness of Christians that reject its possibility in this world,<sup>1430</sup> which obscure the amazing good news Paul set forth in Gal 3:26-29.

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<sup>1426</sup> George, Galatians, 205.

<sup>1427</sup> Ibid, 251.

<sup>1428</sup> Ibid, 145.

<sup>1429</sup> Schreiner and Arnold, Galatians, 22.

<sup>1430</sup> Cf. Hove, Equality in Christ?, 116.

The core of this study is “being one in Christ” (vv 26b, 28d). The expression “being in Christ” provides the context in which Paul is building his arguments. Paul does not leave his arguments baseless nor does he simply say that in the society there are neither differences nor room for comparisons, but he claims that “in Christ Jesus” such differences do not matter. The community is the family of God, and within the family, all the members are equal. Equality then means the acceptance and respect of differences that normally exist in a family with different cultural backgrounds, and natural differences in strength, sex, socio-economic standings and worldviews. It would be non-Pauline theology if Jewish men and women were “to live like” non-Jews and Gentiles were to live like Jews (Gal 2:14; Rom 1:26-27). Therefore, all those who are God’s children are equal before him (Gal 3:26), and this is independent of their strength and weakness, ethnicity or nationality. None of the children of God is less a child of God.<sup>1431</sup> Paul’s treatment of equality of Christian (3:28) therefore, stands in a marked and deliberate contrast to the commonly accepted patterns of privileged status, stratification and self-assertive prejudices of the Jewish and Hellenistic societies. Timothy George maintains that “given the pervasive significances of such ethnic, socio-religious and sexual barriers within both Jewish and Hellenistic cultures, it is all the more remarkable to read Paul’s sweeping declaration of ecclesial unity and spiritual and social equality that cuts across the hostile division of such fundamental human differences.”<sup>1432</sup> Before God and in Christ Jesus the worth of the lives of the poor and the rich are the same. In a period of political, economic, and social instability,<sup>1433</sup> the society was grouped alongside Jews and Gentiles, slaves, freed slaves, men and women, but it was the difference between the secular society and the Christian community that attracted those who had no socio-economic power (among whom were slaves and the like) in the secular society to join the Christian community. According to Richard W. Hove, “all God’s people share in the same faith in Christ. Each believer should search his or her own heart, seeking to rectify any thoughts of superiority. Likewise, every person who serves as a leader among God’s people should continually strive to help all under his or her care to know and experience the truth taught in Galatians 3:28, that all God’s people are equally valuable in their equal relationship with Christ.”<sup>1434</sup>

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<sup>1431</sup> Eckey, *Der Galaterbrief*, 216.

<sup>1432</sup> George, *Galatians*, 285-286.

<sup>1433</sup> Cf. Wiley, *Paul and the Gentile Women*, 59.

<sup>1434</sup> Hove, *Equality in Christ?*, 122.

Paul makes an affirmative statement: “You all are one in Christ” (3:28d). The obliteration of the ethnic, cultural, social and religious discriminations within the Christian community is one of the most remarkable achievements of Paul’s gospel (Gal 1:6).<sup>1435</sup> He finds it necessary to eliminate them because there is no classism in respect to salvation and the grace God bestowed impartially on all (cf. Rom 3:21-26). Paul is deliberately dismantling the rituals of the law, the ethno-cultural and socio-religious identity mark because all have sinned (cf. Rom 3:9-10). The counter-cultural stand comes out clearly when he puts “the righteous Jews” and “the sinful Gentiles” (cf. Gal 2:15), the slave and the master (Phlm 16) on the same platform “in Christ Jesus.” Paul is saying that *“solche extremen Formen stereotyper Antithetik sind in Christus überwunden und in ihrer trennenden Kraft aufgehoben.”*<sup>1436</sup>

Paul’s principle of membership into the community is the same for all – the act of “putting on Christ” (3:27; cf. 1 Cor 12:13). Even though the method and way of baptism varies from community to community, the baptismal initiation rites are administered equally to all the members.<sup>1437</sup> Paul’s treatment of the situation in Galatia with the liturgical formula of the oneness of all “in Christ Jesus” strikes a new note in the theological interpretation of the concepts of the Gentiles, the role of women and the equality of all. While the teaching propagated by the Judaizers is ethnocentric in character and form, Paul interprets the “putting on of Christ” in a universal and transnational form. The discriminatory practices have lost their place among those who are “in Christ Jesus,” because they have become “a new creation” (Gal 6:15; 2 Cor 5:17), through baptism. “In other words, one ‘belongs to Christ’ through baptism, which applies motif in his understanding of baptism.”<sup>1438</sup>

In contrast to Col 3:22; Eph 6:5; 1 Pt 2:18, Paul clearly defends the equal dignity of men and women (Gal 3:28) and rejects slavery (Phlm 15-16). In the beginning, God created man and woman, in their individual nature and in his own image (Gen 1:27). That some people are said to be born as slaves is only a platonic theory and a social construct that lacks a theological basis.<sup>1439</sup> Paul thus rejects the sub-human condition and roles assigned to slaves. He does not accept that any person is worth more than another. Furthermore, in Jewish culture the slaves have no right of inheritance as they were counted among the property of the master. Paul says that those who will inherit the promise God made to Abraham are his sons and daughters,

<sup>1435</sup> Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon and to the Ephesians*, 149.

<sup>1436</sup> Frank, *Der Kolosserbrief im Kontext des paulinischen Erbes*, 275.

<sup>1437</sup> Wiley, *Paul and the Gentile Women*, 50.

<sup>1438</sup> Hartman, *Baptism*, in: *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 587.

<sup>1439</sup> Cf. Plato, *Selections from Protagoras, Republic, Phaedrus and Gorgias*, 163-164.

and he seeks to abolish the institution of slavery when he confronts the assumption of its validity with the case of Onesimus. He wants to restore to all the dignity of the human person and the freedom of the children of God (Rom 8:21). That a slave could lead the members of the Christian community in worship and still go home to serve his master depicts the difference between the Christian community and the secular society. Onesimus might still receive instructions from Philemon, but now it will be obedience gladly rendered by one Christian brother to another. "What real difference could there be for a Christian between bond and free?"<sup>1440</sup> The old order of master-slave relationship characterized by bullying and separation is transformed by their consanguineous relationship "in the Lord" (Phlm 16).

In time of persecution women showed that they could face punishment and suffer for their faith as courageously as men. According to F. F. Bruce, "the slave-girl Blandina and her mistress both suffered in the persecution which broke out against the churches of the Rhone valley in A. D. 177, but it was the slave-girl who was the hero of the persecution, impressing friends and foes alike as a 'noble athlete' in the contest of martyrdom. In the arena of Carthage in A. D. 202 a profound impression was made on the spectators when the Roman matron Perpetua stood hand-in-hand with her slave Felicitas, and both women faced a common death for a common faith."<sup>1441</sup> Whatsoever distinctions that might exist in the world at large, Paul affirms that "in Christ" there are neither slaves nor freed (Gal 3:28). "Paul would not stand idly by and see it (slavery) rebuilt, whether as a religious or as a social barrier. The only logical reason for preserving it as a social barrier would be its continuing validity as a religious barrier, and to recognize such a continuing validity, even if it were only in outward behaviour, would be to nullify the grace of God."<sup>1442</sup> If God's redeeming grace is received by faith alone and not in conformity with the rituals of the law, then, it is available to all on equal terms – through faith in Christ Jesus.<sup>1443</sup> Elisabeth Johnson avers that "one in Christ Jesus, baptized women precisely in their female bodily existence and not apart from it are *imago Christi*."<sup>1444</sup>

Paul makes the ritual principles of the law supplementary to faith. The law is holy and the commandment is holy, just and good (Rom 7:12) but they are only supplementary to salvation history. Paul's exegesis of Old Testament texts (e.g., Deut 4:6; Ps 19:7; Neh 9:13) differ sharply from the traditional Jewish way of understanding the covenant of circumcision

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<sup>1440</sup> Bruce, The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon and to the Ephesians, 150-151.

<sup>1441</sup> Ibid, 150-151.

<sup>1442</sup> Bruce, Paul Apostle of the Heart Set Free, 178.

<sup>1443</sup> Cf. Ibid, 178.

<sup>1444</sup> Johnson, She Who Is, 73.

(cf. Gen 17:9-14). In fact, he goes further than the traditional Jewish exegesis allows,<sup>1445</sup> when he says that the legalism of the law has lost its grip on those who are “in Christ Jesus” (Gal 3:28). Galatians do not need the mediatory roles anymore because they are already “in Christ” who is the goal and the fulfillment of the law (cf. Gal 4:4-6; Rom 10:4). God who is the one God (Gal 3:20; Rom 3:30; 1 Cor 8:6) does not need the principles of the law because Christ is himself the mediator (cf. 1 Tim 2:5), and not the Angel nor Moses (Ex 32-34). Christ leads men and women directly to God. If it is through faith and the power of the Spirit (Gal 3:2-3) that all are baptized (3:27), then, “you all are one” because it is the same baptism and the same Spirit that all received in Christ (cf. 1 Cor 12:13).

Another important question in this work is the realizability of the oneness of Christians. Whenever the issue of the oneness or the unity or the equality of those “who are in Christ” is raised, the concept is often regarded by commentators as “utopic ideology”<sup>1446</sup> or as only “realizable in eschatology.”<sup>1447</sup> This should not be the case because unity of the sons and daughters of God is a practical issue as J. Louis Martyn explains. “Religious, social, and sexual pairs of opposites are not replaced by equality, but rather by a newly created unity. In Christ (in what Paul will later call ‘the body of Christ,’ 1 Cor 12:13, 27) persons who were Jews and persons who were Gentiles have been made into a new unity that is so fundamentally and irreducibly identified with Christ himself ... Members of the church are not one *thing*; they are one *person*, having been taken into the corpus of the one new man”<sup>1448</sup> (Col 3:10). The deferment of Christian unity as a future event does not seem acceptable in this study because we are already living in the Messianic age. Roman Kühschelm interprets the Jesus event as the fulfillment that begins here and now because the prophesized Messiah has come and has already established a new world. “*Denn Jesus, der ‘dieser Generation’ den Anbruch der Basileia Gottes verkündet, ist eine größere Autorität als die Weislehrer und Propheten der alten Zeit, mit ihm ist etwas Neues eingetreten, das die Vergangenheit in den Schatten stellt ... Die neue Welt ist nicht eine jenseitige, in nächster Zukunft von Gott her erwartete Größe, sondern hat jetzt schon begonnen, um sich in Bälde zu vollenden. Jesu Basileia Verkündigung konzentriert sich nicht — wiewohl sie den Gerichtsgedanken kennt — auf das Ende der Geschichte, sondern auf ihre schon begonnene Verwandlung durch die unaufhaltsam sich durchsetzende,*

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<sup>1445</sup> Ibid, 225.

<sup>1446</sup> Cf. Hove, Equality in Christ?, 116.

<sup>1447</sup> Kahl, Galatians Re-Imagine, 107.

<sup>1448</sup> Martyn, Galatians, 377.

*befreiende Kraft Gottes.*<sup>1449</sup> Paul teaches us how to live in the present (cf. Gal 6:2). We are already living in the Messianic era that abhors segregation and discrimination. Heinrich Schlier explains. *“Jetzt stellt er [Paulus] den Galatern die Auswirkung und gegenwärtige Wirksamkeit des Geistes in seinen charismatischen Äußerungen vor Augen. Auch und gerade diese müssen die galatischen Christen zu dem Geständnis führen, dass das Gesetz, das keine Charismen hervorbringt, mit der messianischen Zeit nichts zu tun hat. Gott hat sich nicht an das Gesetz gebunden, um die Zeichen der Messiaszeit zu wirken.”*<sup>1450</sup>

The Christian community is a multicultural and multinational society. Therefore, unity in diversity and diversified unity are necessary for all those who are “in Christ” because people naturally tend to be tribalistic, ethnocentric and nationalistic. They are more at home with those whom they know than with those they do not know, with those who speak their mother tongue, who look and behave like them than with those who are different from them, with those sharing the same cultural background than with those of different cultural origin, with those of the same socio-economic class than with those from different economic stand.<sup>1451</sup> But God is neither ethnocentric nor nationalistic (cf. Rom 2:11; Acts 10:34), therefore, Christians need to go beyond their cultural perceptions in order to realize that others have the right to their own culture. According to Richard W. Hove, “those who love God the redeemer will progressively love what he loves — people from all walks of life.”<sup>1452</sup> The reason for this is that “God’s people are diverse, yet stand equally before him. Those who are racially, sexually, and socially different from us should be cherished and valued. There is no room for outcasts in the church, whether the discrimination be overt or subtle.”<sup>1453</sup> Unity in diversity of practices and diversified ways of life are realities that the Christian community will continue to struggle with. These realities include women ordination to priesthood and episcopacy, the recognition of homosexual and lesbian marriages, the ordination of homosexual and lesbian ministers, etc.<sup>1454</sup> The hermeneutical interpretation and application of the principle of oneness of

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<sup>1449</sup> Kühschelm, *Zeitenwende*, 66-77.

<sup>1450</sup> Schlier, *Der Brief an die Galater*, 125.

<sup>1451</sup> Wisdom, *Blessing for the Nations and Curse to the Law*, 164.

<sup>1452</sup> Hove, *Equality in Christ?*, 124.

<sup>1453</sup> *Ibid*, 123.

<sup>1454</sup> *Relatio Synodi*, NO. 55: “Some families have members who have a homosexual tendency. In this regard, the synod fathers asked themselves what pastoral attention might be appropriate for them in accordance with the church’s teaching: ‘There are absolutely no grounds for considering homosexual unions to be in any way similar or even remotely analogous to God’s plan for marriage and family.’ Nevertheless, men and women with a homosexual tendency ought to be received with respect and sensitivity. ‘Every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided’.”



Christians (Gal 3:28), therefore, vary greatly as different religious groups have different ways of following the same Lord. Richard W. Hove concurs: "It would be good for God's people to acknowledge the different hurts and needs for each other because of the truth of Galatians 3:28. As society 'progresses' in its radical distortion of sexual identity, there will be an even greater need for something such as this."<sup>1455</sup>

The theology of oneness of Christians is not only an abstract thought that should be left for the history books, but a practical and relevant issue in the modern world. Timothy George affirms that "Paul was not doing theology in abstraction."<sup>1456</sup> That raises critical questions on modern issues. E.g., what should be our attitude towards those who have made themselves "sex workers"? What of those who are made "sex slaves"?<sup>1457</sup> What of the Sinti and the Roma? What of the "we and they" and "them or us" opinions? These stratifications show that Pauline theology of oneness of Christians is highly relevant to man and woman in their different life situations. The context and setting have only changed names but they remain human realities. However, the categorization of people based on socio-economic status, religious association, ethnicity, sex or culture are all swallowed up in him "who has called you through his grace" (Gal 1:6), and in whom all things hold together (cf. Col 1:17).

In our contemporary society, the rich cultural and ethnic diversities have inspired great works in music, art, literature, etc. and yet each of these spheres of human creativity has become degraded and soiled through the perversity of racism, discrimination, bias and prejudice, xenophobia, and "otherization," etc.<sup>1458</sup> Timothy George opines that "nationality and ethnicity have been corrupted by pride" (first world and third world), "material wellbeing by greed" (the have and the have nots), "and sexuality by lust" (abortion, divorce on demand and polygamy). These have "led to the chaotic pattern of exploitation and self-destruction"<sup>1459</sup> that mark the human story from the streets of Sarajevo to Soweto, from Mississippi to

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<sup>1455</sup> Hove, *Equality in Christ?*, 123.

<sup>1456</sup> George, *Galatians*, 205.

<sup>1457</sup> Cf. Edlund and Korn, *A Theory of Prostitution*, in: *Journal of Political Economy*, 181: "Prostitution is a multibillion dollar business that employs millions of women worldwide ... Prostitution has an unusual feature: It is well paid despite being low-skill, labor intensive, and, one might add, female dominated. Earnings even in the worst-paid type, streetwalking, may be several multiples of full-time earnings in professions with comparable skill requirements. For instance, newspaper reports of earnings for prostitutes in Sweden in 1998 were as high as SEK 14,000 (U.S. \$1,750) a day (*Aftonbladet*, September 25, 1998), amounting to about a month's earnings in a regular unskilled job. The *Economist* (February 14, 1998) reported that Arabic women could make \$2,000 a night in the Gulf States, and in the same article, a Latvian prostitute claimed she averaged \$5,000 per month, 20 times the average wage. How can equilibrium earnings in a profession with only rudimentary skill and capital requirements be such that a woman can make in a day what for most women takes weeks or months?"

<sup>1458</sup> Cf. Kamali, *Racial Discriminations*, 3-5.

<sup>1459</sup> George, *Galatians*, 285.

Ferguson. Indeed, outside of “being in Christ” the primal forces represented by these aforementioned polarities are controlled and manipulated by human beings. But all those who are sons and daughters of God through faith in Christ should work hard against the enslavement of these inclinations, because a new standard and new patterns of life now distinguish members of the Christian community from non-members. They are members of Christ who are still in the world but not of the world (cf. Jn 15:19).<sup>1460</sup> However, the abuses of cultural diversities, racial profiling, etc. must not be the reason why individual differences would not be respected and accepted in the community of the faithful, rather, all are to respect what is different from their own perspectives because they themselves have also what is different from other people’s way of life. Richard W. Hove explains. “Since God’s people are one, the family of God should be characterized by unity ... Unity is a prevalent New Testament theme (e.g., 1 Cor 12:14-26; Eph 4:3-7) as it is an important public demonstration of the reality that all believers share in one Christ.”<sup>1461</sup> It is unfortunate that this reality has continued to elude Christians.

The *Osu* (“the slave of the gods”), together with the respective caste system is a monstrous issue in Igbo land that needs urgent attention. The *Osu* have tried to minimize the prejudices by migrating to cities where they are not known, and settling there for life. This should not be the case. The institution should be abolished. People should be welcomed into their own towns, by those who are their rightful family members. A life of anonymity has never been an Igbo cultural way of life. In order to eradicate the *Osu* caste system, the cooperation of the custodians (the traditional rulers, the *Igwe* in council, the chiefs, etc.) of the Igbo culture is needed. They are to assist the state and the church in their efforts to overthrow this system. If the killing of twins could be abolished, why then should it be impossible to abolish the existence of the *Osu* caste system? This system pretends to be normal, but it is not. The churches in Igbo land need to do more in order to welcome the *Osu* into equivalent positions. They will be preaching the gospel message of non-discrimination more convincingly if they do not stop at the usual and official condemnation of the *Osu* caste system, but encourage openly the association of the *Osu* and the *Nwadiala*, insisting that the *Osu* should be appointed as members of every parish council in the community, or even should be able to enter the society of Knights of St. John and St. Columba if they can afford it. These

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<sup>1460</sup> Cf. Ibid, 284-285.

<sup>1461</sup> Hove, Equality in Christ?, 122-123.

gestures would gradually lead to the abolition of the *Osu* caste system. For the *Osu* also belong to the “children of God” and “heirs of Abraham” (Gal 3:26, 29; cf. Lk 19:9). This affirmation might sound strange to those who still discriminate against the *Osu* because they find it “difficult to contain the idea that in the Kingdom of God which is the end point of human salvation, both the free-borns and the *Osu* would become one in the Lord.”<sup>1462</sup> Since the *Osu* will also enter the kingdom of God, “the duty we owe ourselves, to God, and to each of them is to break down completely the social barrier that marks them out as pariahs”<sup>1463</sup> (cf. Eph 2:14), and there is no other time to start doing this than now. The unity of Christians which knows no division between the *Nwadiala* and the *Osu* will just be the consequence of the oneness of all “in Christ.”<sup>1464</sup>

African society, traditional religion and culture are patriarchal in nature. The traditional rulers and the councils of elders are all males because only males are legible leaders of the respective institutions. Women are excluded from these traditional institutions and hierarchical offices simply because they are females. The right to succession is reserved only for male children; even when the male child is still a minor, he rules through the help of the council of elders. This reservation of main roles for males in African society, traditional religion and culture and in the Christian community, just like the continuation of the discrimination and stratification between Jews and Gentiles, slaves and freed, are directly opposed to the aim of Paul in Gal 3:26-29. Jerome Murphy-O'Connor emphasizes that “the most fundamental ministry of the church is to be the antithesis of a world which is characterized above all by divisions. Within the framework of hostile blocks (Gal 3:28), individuals are separated from one another by barriers of fear and suspicion (1 Cor 5:10-11; 6:9-10).”<sup>1465</sup> Today, the world is still crossed with massive barriers of one kind or another and human beings are scarred by the animosities cherished by one group against the other. The artificial barriers include ideological “iron curtains, colour bars, class distinctions, national and cultural divisions, political and sectarian partisanship.”<sup>1466</sup> All of these stand against the reconciliation of all in Christ (2 Cor 5:18-19; cf. Eph 2:14-16). But for those who are “in Christ” all these barriers must come down. It is not difficult to rephrase, in terms of the divisions of modern life Paul’s declaration that “in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, Jews as well Greeks, slaves as well as freed” (1

<sup>1462</sup> Mgbobukwa, Alusi, *Osu*, and *Ohu* in *Igbo Religion and Social Life*, 41.

<sup>1463</sup> *Ibid*, 46.

<sup>1464</sup> Cf. *Ibid*, 55.

<sup>1465</sup> Murphy-O'Connor, Paul. *A Critical Life*, 282.

<sup>1466</sup> Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 151.

Cor 12:13). In the unity of the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:12, 27) and in his church (Col 1:18; cf. Eph 1:23) there is no room for old cleavages because “Christ is all and in all” (Col 3:11), and all are and exist in Christ (cf. *καὶ εἷς Κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, δι’ οὗ τὰ πάντα καὶ ἡμεῖς δι’ αὐτοῦ*, 1 Cor 8:6b). According to F. F. Bruce, “the Christ who lives in each of his people is the Christ who binds them together in one. This ‘restoration of the original image of creation’ will yet be universally displayed; but how good and pleasant it is when here and now that day of revelation of the sons and daughters of God is anticipated and our divided world is confronted with a witness more eloquent than all our preaching and feels constrained to say, as in Tertulian’s time, ‘see how they love one another’.”<sup>1467</sup> It is not too late to make the theology of Paul our own as he invites us: “Imitate me as I imitate Christ” (1 Cor 11:1), and also the time is not gone “by when this note needed to be sounded.”<sup>1468</sup> The situations are certainly not the same, but Christ is the same and unchangeable in eternity (cf. Heb 13:8). Humanity changes but God does not change. This was valid two thousand years ago and it is still valid after two thousand years of “being in Christ.” Therefore, Gal 3:26-29 stands out as an ageless affirmation and challenge of Paul to the Christians.

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<sup>1467</sup> Ibid, 151.

<sup>1468</sup> Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 151.

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## Attachments: Abstract and Curriculum Vitae

### Abstract

#### (1) English Version

Paul, a trained diaspora Jew knows the hatred that exists between the Jews and the Gentiles, the socio-religious and ethno-cultural stratification between the freeborn, freed slaves, slaves, between male and female. Paul might have said the Jewish morning pray in which a male Jew thanks God that he was not created a Gentile, a slave or a woman.<sup>1469</sup> Gentiles loathe Jews because of the rituals of the law (cf. Gen 17:11-14), and other socio-religious practices like the ritual washing of the hands (cf. Matt 15:2).

After his conversion or call,<sup>1470</sup> Paul sets out to unify Jewish and Gentile Christians with the law-free gospel. For Jews and Gentiles are sons and daughters of God (Gal 3:26), inheritors of the Abrahamic promise (3:29), and because they have “put on Christ” (3:27), therefore, they are “one in Christ” (3:28). How did Paul try to unify Christians according to Gal 3:26-29; 6:15; 1 Cor 12:13; Phlm 15-16? How has this notion been developed further in deuterio-Pauline letters as exemplified in Col 3:9-11?

The focus of this research is: How do Christians in Nigeria cum Africa read, understand and apply this Pauline statement: “You all are one in Christ” (Gal 3:28)? How can one claim that Christians are one in a diversified world?<sup>1471</sup> Where are Christians one? Where are they not one? What are the hermeneutical problems therein?<sup>1472</sup> What are the possibilities of breaking down the difficult hermeneutical differences, especially when Gal 3:26-28 is applied to the ethno-cultural and socio-religious practices in Nigeria cum Africa?

This study is divided into seven chapters. The first chapter deals with introductory issues and the historicity of the letter to the Galatians. The second chapter is concerned with the study of Gal 3:1-29. Chapter three, the core of our study, handles the issues of linguistic analysis of 3:26-29 – structure, style, syntax, semantics, literary genre and pragmatics, as well as the biblical and traditional sources of the text, Pauline redaction and offers a detailed exegesis of 3:26-29.

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<sup>1469</sup> Cf. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 187.

<sup>1470</sup> Cf. Horrell, *An Introduction to the Study of Paul*, 26-27.

<sup>1471</sup> Cf. Lieu, *Neither Jew nor Greek?*, 1.

<sup>1472</sup> Cf. Hove, *Equality in Christ?*, 116.

Chapter four shows that the issue of division in the Christian community does not only exist in Galatia, rather, it takes a new dimension in Corinth where spiritual gifts are leading to spiritual elitism. Paul uses the body metaphor to show that no single part of the body is more important than the other parts.<sup>1473</sup> The master-slave relationship is also an issue in the little community in Philemon's house. Paul tells Philemon that the slave, Onesimus has become his adopted child (Phlm 10) and "a beloved brother" in the Lord (v 16). During or after the death of Paul, the issues of Greeks and Jews, barbarians and Scythians, freeborn, freed slaves and slaves become the new challenges facing the Christian communities. The author of the letter to the Colossians admonishes the Christians to know that "Christ is all, and in all" (Col 3:11).

Chapter five is centered on the theology of oneness of Christians. If Christianity is to remain a universal faith in Christ (Gal 3:13-14), then, those who are "in Christ" form one body in him (1 Cor 12:12, 27), through the same Spirit which they received at baptism (12:13).<sup>1474</sup> Chapter six deals with the issue of hermeneutics in Gal 3:26-29 and its applications to the patriarchal structures, socio-economic conditions, religious denominations as well as cultural institutions and their systems in Nigeria cum Africa. In many churches in Africa, the Bible is literally read, interpreted and applied without recourse to critical exegesis. The institutionalized patriarchy is upheld as if Gal 3:26-29 were not part of the New Testament letters. The study calls for a revisiting of those socio-economic, religious and cultural backgrounds that do not encourage the oneness of all "in Christ."

Chapter seven offers evaluations and conclusions. This work affirms that the universal nature of the Jesus event makes all those who are "in Christ" one with and in him. *"Sie sind in Christus alle zusammen Einer, der Leib Christi; sie sind es freilich so, dass jeweils jeder Einzelne im Verhältnis zum Anderen Christus ist, also deutlicher: dass sie nur noch Glieder Christi sind."*<sup>1475</sup> – The last section contains the bibliography, the abstracts and the Curriculum Vitae.

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<sup>1473</sup> Cf. Garland, 1 Corinthians, 588.

<sup>1474</sup> Cf. Edwards, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, 51.

<sup>1475</sup> Schlier, Der Brief an die Galater, 175.

## (2) German Version

Paulus, ein gebildeter Jude aus der Diaspora, kennt den Hass, der zwischen Juden und Heiden existiert, die sozio-religiösen und ethno-kulturellen Gegensätze zwischen frei Geborenen, freigelassenen Sklaven und Sklaven, zwischen männlich und weiblich. Vielleicht hat auch Paulus das Gebet gesprochen, in dem ein männlicher Jude am Morgen Gott dankt, dass er nicht als Heide, Sklave oder Frau gezeugt wurde.<sup>1476</sup> Heiden verachteten Juden wegen der Gesetzesrituale (cf. Gen 17,1-14) und anderer sozio-religiöser Handlungen wie des rituellen Händewaschens (cf. Matt 15,2).

Nach seiner Bekehrung oder Berufung<sup>1477</sup> beginnt Paulus Juden- und Heidenchristen unter dem gesetzesfreien Evangelium zu vereinen. Denn Juden und Heiden sind gleichermaßen Söhne und Töchter Gottes (Gal 3,26), Erben der abrahamitischen Verheißung (3,29), und weil sie Christus angezogen haben (3,27), sind sie alle „einer in Christus“ (3,28). Wie versuchte Paulus die Christen zu vereinigen gemäß den Aussagen in Gal in 3,26-29; 6,15; 1 Kor 12,13; Phlm 15-16? Und wie hat sich diese Idee in den deuteropaulinischen Briefen wie etwa in Kol 3,9-11 weiterentwickelt?

Der Fokus dieser Studie liegt schließlich auf der Frage: Wie gehen die Christen in Nigeria cum Africa mit dieser paulinischen Aussage: „ihr alle seid einer in Christus“ (Gal 3,28) um? Wie kann man behaupten, dass alle Christen eins sind in einer so verschiedenartigen Welt?<sup>1478</sup> Worin sind die Christen eins? Worin sind sie nicht eins? Was sind die hermeneutischen Probleme dabei?<sup>1479</sup> Was sind die Möglichkeiten, die schwierigen hermeneutischen Unterschiede zu überwinden, speziell wenn Gal 3,26-28 auf ethno-kulturelle und sozio-religiöse Sitten in Nigeria cum Africa angewendet wird?

Diese Untersuchung ist in sieben Kapitel gegliedert. Das erste Kapitel behandelt Einleitungsfrage und die historische Verankerung des Briefes an die Galater. Das zweite Kapitel betrifft die Kontextanalyse von Gal 3,1-29. Kapitel drei, das Herz dieser Studie, bietet die sprachliche Analyse von Gal 3,26-29 – Aufbau, Stil, Syntax, Semantik, literarische Gattung und Pragmatik, ebenso wie die verwendeten biblischen Motive und den traditionskritischen Ursprung des Textes, die paulinische Redaktion und eine detaillierte Exegese von Gal 3,26-29.

<sup>1476</sup> Cf. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 187.

<sup>1477</sup> Cf. Horrell, *An Introduction to the Study of Paul*, 26-27.

<sup>1478</sup> Cf. Lieu, *Neither Jew nor Greek?*, 1.

<sup>1479</sup> Cf. Hove, *Equality in Christ?*, 116.

Kapitel vier zeigt, dass das Thema der Uneinigkeit in der christlichen Gemeinde nicht nur in Galatien existiert, es nimmt eine neue Dimension in Korinth an, wo spirituelle Gaben zu spirituellem Elitarismus führen. Paulus verwendet dabei die Metapher des Leibes, um zu zeigen, dass kein einzelner Teil des Leibes wichtiger ist als die anderen.<sup>1480</sup> Die Beziehung zwischen Herrn und Sklaven ist auch ein Problem in der kleinen Gemeinde in Philemons Haus. Paulus sagt zu Philemon, dass der Sklave Onesimus nun sein adoptiertes Kind geworden ist (Phlm 10) und „ein geliebter Bruder“ im Herrn (v 16).

Beim Tod des Paulus oder bald danach wird das Thema Griechen und Juden, Barbaren und Skythen, Freigeborene, freigelassene Sklaven und Sklaven zur neuen Herausforderung für die christliche Gemeinde. Der Verfasser des Briefes an die Kolosser ermahnt die Christen zu wissen, dass „Christus alles und in allen ist“ (Kol 3,11).

Kapitel fünf konzentriert sich auf die Theologie der Einheit der Christen. Soll das Christentum ein universaler Glaube an Christus bleiben (Gal 3,13-14), dann müssen jene, die „in Christus“ sind, mit ihm einen Leib bilden (1 Kor 12,12, 27) – durch denselben Geist, den sie in der Taufe erhalten haben (12,13).<sup>1481</sup> Kapitel sechs behandelt die Hermeneutik von Gal 3,26-29 und ihre Anwendung auf die patriarchalischen Strukturen, die sozio-ökonomischen Verhältnisse, die religiösen Konfessionen, die kulturellen Institutionen und Systeme in Nigeria cum Africa. In vielen Kirchen in Afrika wird die Bibel wörtlich verstanden, erklärt und angewendet, ohne Rekurs auf eine kritische Exegese. Das institutionalisierte Patriarchat wird beibehalten, als ob Gal 3,26-29 zu den Briefen des Neuen Testaments gehörte. Diese Untersuchung verlangt nach Änderungen der sozioökonomischen, religiösen und kulturellen Hintergründe, die nicht die Einheit „in Christus“ fördert.

Kapitel sieben bietet die Auswertung und Zusammenfassung. Die Studie beweist, dass das universale Christusereignis alle, die „in Christus“ sind, mit und in ihm gleich macht. *“Sie sind in Christus alle zusammen Einer, der Leib Christi; sie sind es freilich so, dass jeweils jeder Einzelne im Verhältnis zum Anderen Christus ist, also deutlicher: dass sie nur noch Glieder Christi sind.”*<sup>1482</sup> – Der letzte Teil enthält die Bibliographie, die Abstracts und den Lebenslauf.

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<sup>1480</sup> Cf. Garland, 1 Corinthians, 588.

<sup>1481</sup> Cf. Edwards, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, 51.

<sup>1482</sup> Schlier, Der Brief an die Galater, 175.

## Curriculum Vitae

**Date of Birth:** 06. 06. 1967

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### Schools Attended with Dates

1. Obioha Primary School, Amagu, Ishiagu, 1975/1976-1980/81
2. St. Augustine Seminary, Ezzamgbo, 1980/81-1985/86
3. Bigard Memorial Seminary, Ikot-Ekpene  
(now St. Joseph Major Seminary) 1985/86-1989/90
4. Bigard Memorial Seminary, Enugu 1989/90-94
5. University of Wien, Austria, 2006/2007-2015

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### Pastoral Experiences

1. Associate Pastor, Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church, Owutu Edda, August 1994 – October 1995
2. Pastor, Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church, Owutu Edda, October 1995 – September 2003
3. Pastor, St. Anthony Parish, Ishiagu, September 2003 – April 2005
4. Lecturer, Mater Misericordia Hospital Afikpo, 2001/2002
5. Assistant Chairman, Diocesan Project Committee, 2003-2005
6. Aushilfskaplan, Zum Göttlichen Erlöser, 1200 Wien, September 2005- 2015